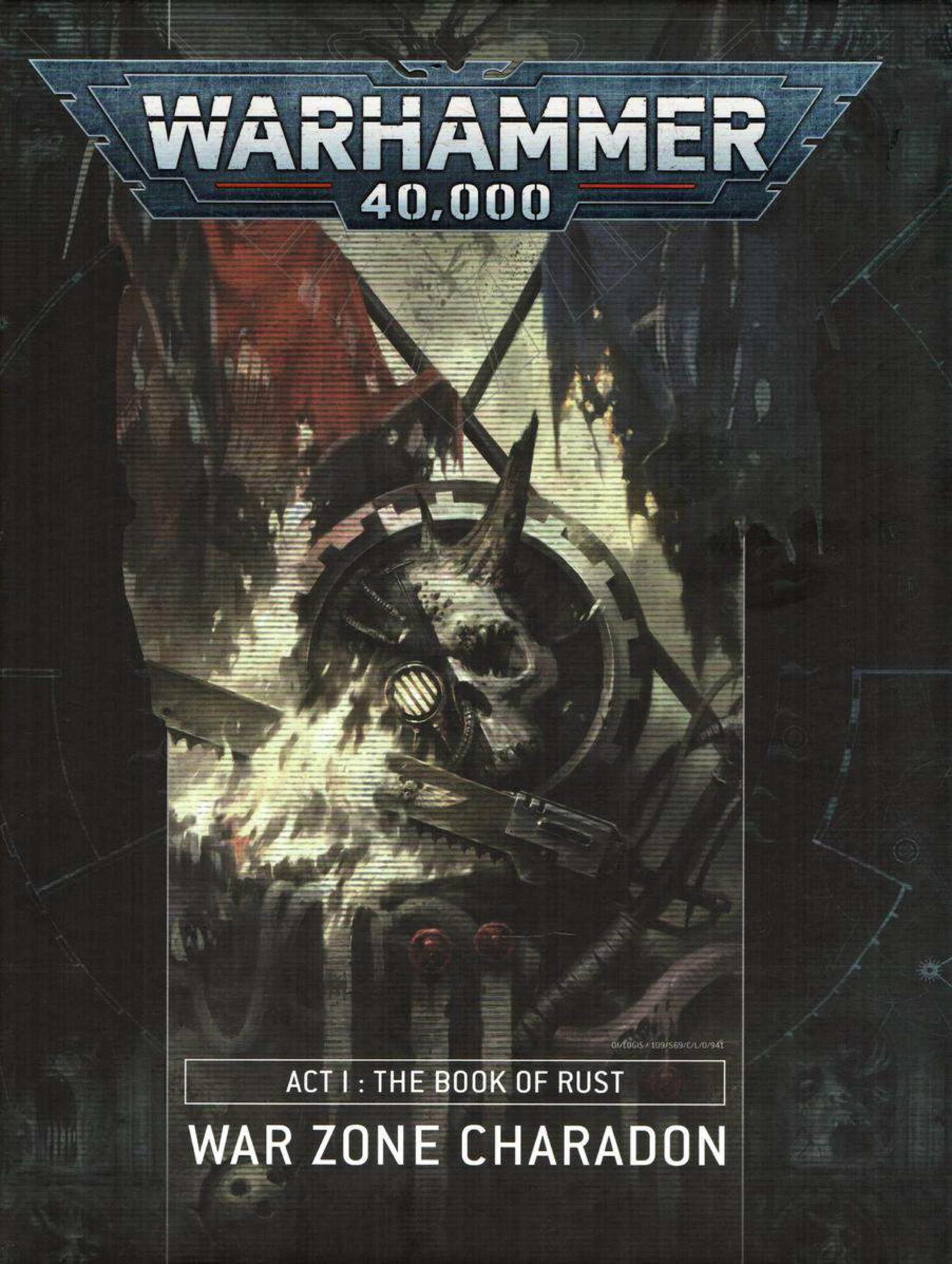
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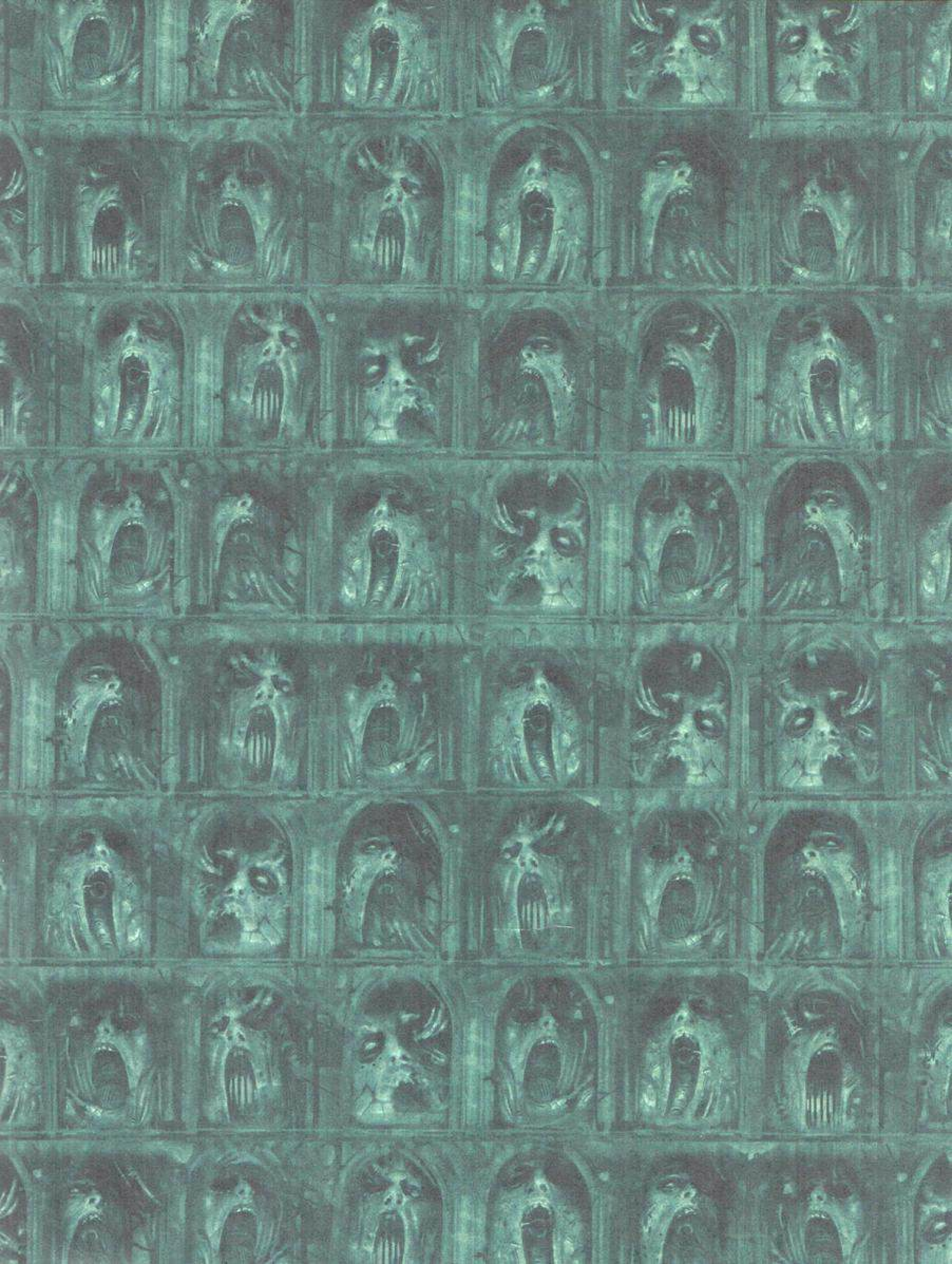
ACT I : THE BOOK OF RUST
WAR ZONE CHARADON



The galaxy burns.

With every passing day the conflagration I have set spreads further, rages higher. Fully half the Corpse-Emperor's realm lies beneath the pall. Choked, smothered, its worlds wither. Amidst the embers its armies curl and die like parchment cast to the flames.

It is not enough.

Still the corpse-worshippers defy me. Still the Dark Gods whisper their false promises. Still there are those who believe me weak, a fool, a biddable failure like my gene-sire before me. Let them all prate. Their cries of derision will turn to screams as the flames consume them.

There is work yet to be done.

You will find the Traveller and command him in my name. You and he will gather a force fit to darken the stars and with it you will plunge the Charadon Sector into anarchy.

The galaxy burns. Now let us stoke the pyre.

– *Abaddon the Despoiler*

WAR ZONE CHARADON

ACT I: THE BOOK OF RUST

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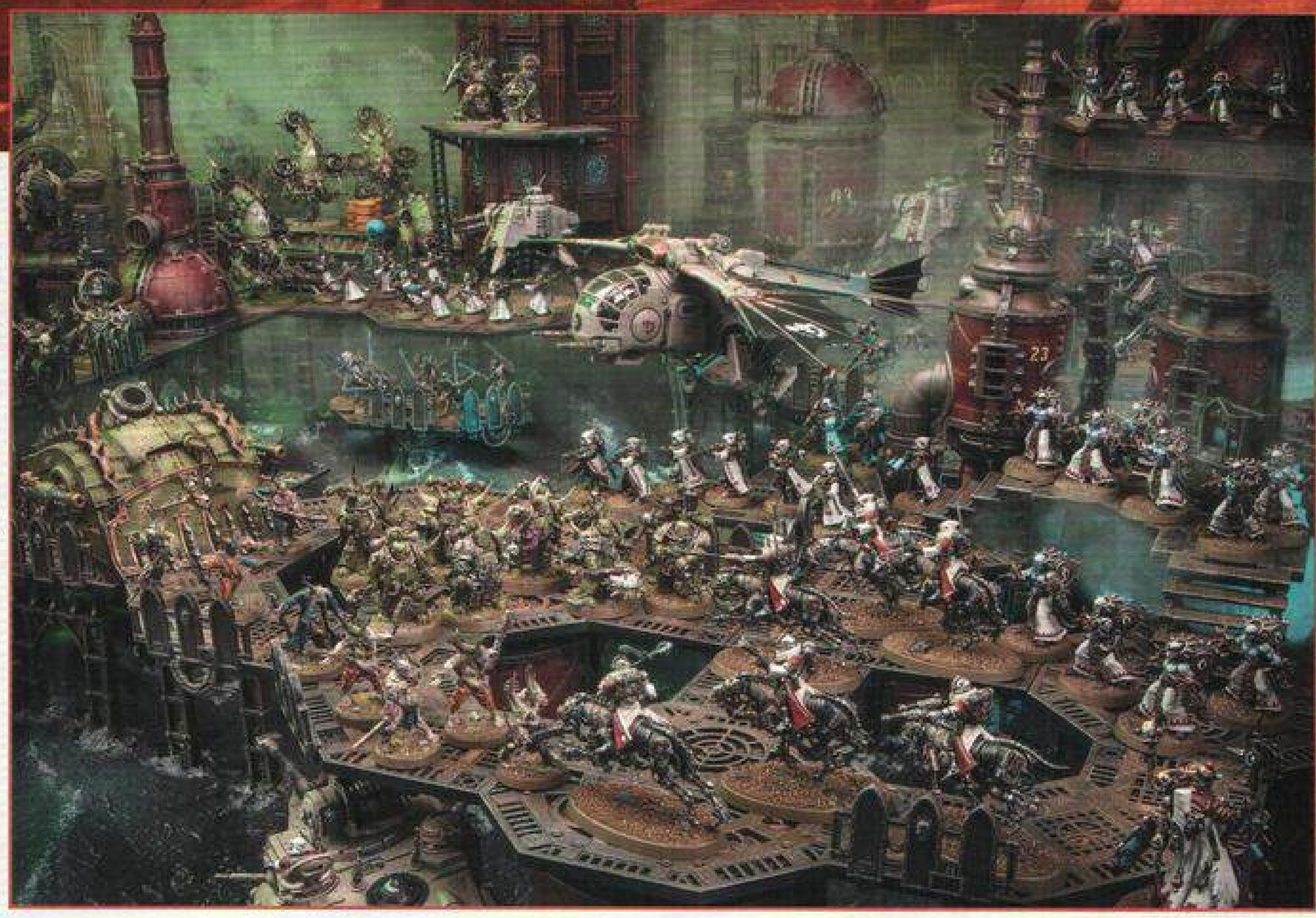


INTRODUCTION

The Great Rift tore the Imperium in two. The region known as the Imperium Nihilus was lost to shadow, its fate uncertain, its worlds beset by heretical conquerors and xenos raiders. If Humanity was to endure then the Emperor's armies had to stabilise the Imperium Sanctus – that region still lit by the light of the Astronomican – with all haste. Yet Warmaster Abaddon's plans were now in full flow, and with them his fury turned toward the Charadon Sector.

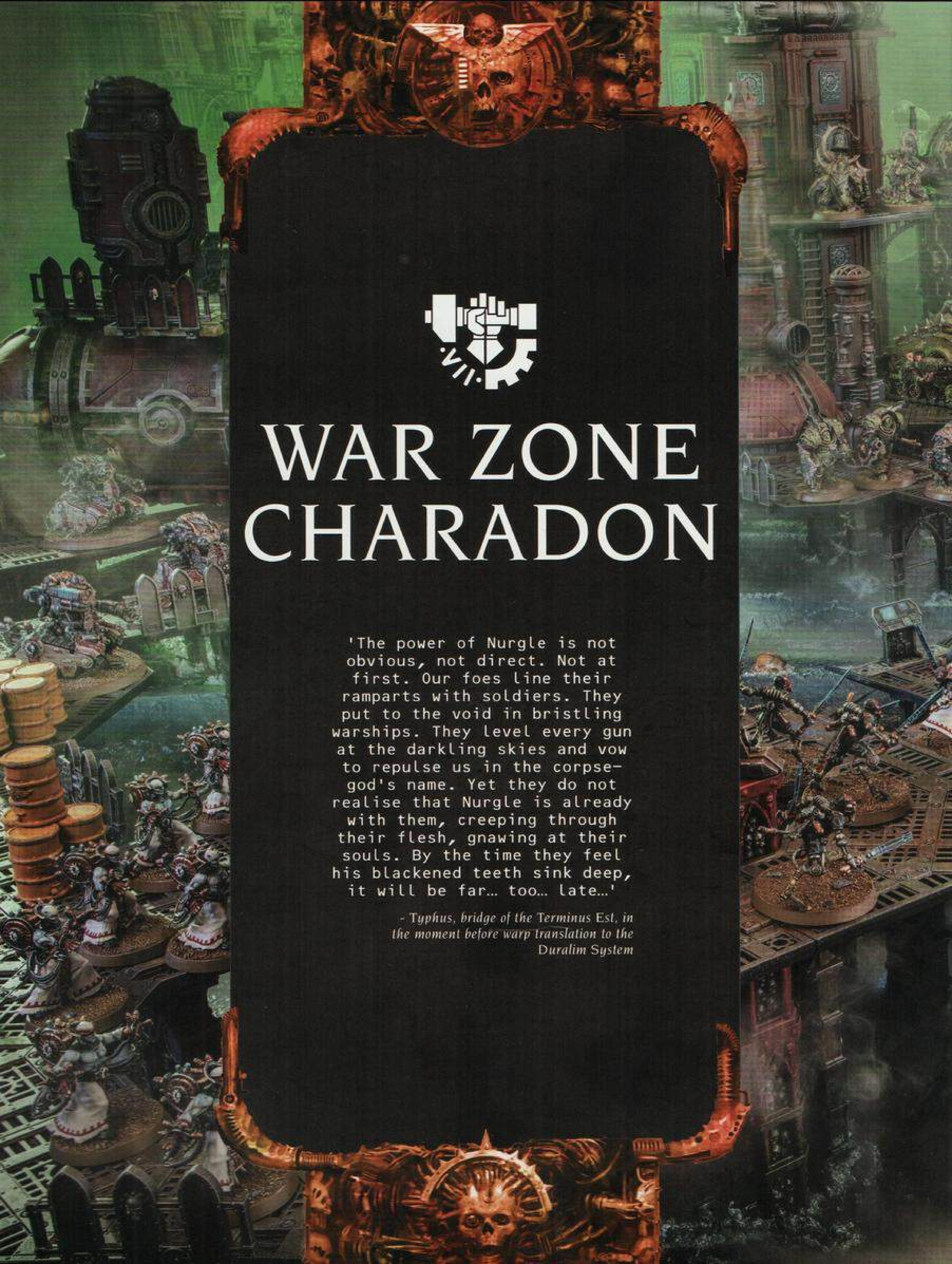
Ultimate rule of Mankind's realm flows unquestionably from Terra and the Golden Throne. Yet so vast an empire necessitates compartmentalisation. The Imperium is broken into the Segmentums Solar, Obscurus, Pacificus, Tempestus and Ultima. Each Segmentum is further divided into many sectors, each named, connected by major warp-transit routes and containing multiple sub-sectors. Even these sub-sectors in turn break down further as they contain multiple star-systems, most of which contain numerous Imperial-held worlds along with myriad perils, anomalies, piratical territories and petty xenos empires.

Deep within the Ultima Segmentum lies the Charadon Sector. Located spinward of the Ultramarines' stellar empire of Ultramar, this sector is a gateway to the wider Imperium Sanctus and a stronghold of power for the Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Crucially, it is also located within striking distance of one of only a few stable channels through the raging warp storms of the Great Rift.

The Charadon Sector has known its share of strife over the millennia. In the past few centuries alone its Palan and Anungul Sub-sectors have been all but overrun by the vast Ork empire of Charadon. Questing tendrils of the Tyranids' Hive Fleet Leviathan have pushed up through the galactic plane in almost every sub-sector of the region, though in all cases the swarming alien horrors have been driven back into the outer darkness. Most recently, the Psyphos and Palan Sub-sectors have seen further xenos invasion, this time by the eldritch legions of the Necrons' Sautekh Dynasty.

The powerhouse of defence against these threats has been forge world Metalica, whose Skitarii cohorts and Titan maniples have marched out from the Obolis Sub-sector to crush Mankind's enemies time and again. And they have not fought alone. The famed Knights of House Raven, the courageous Space Marines of the Excruciators Chapter, the warships of Battlefleet Charadon, the Battle Sisters of the Cardinal world of Alexistor, regiment upon regiment of Astra Militarum soldiery – all these and more have fought to render this sector an indomitable Imperial fortress.

Now, though, as the darkness of the Noctis Aeterna recedes and the Era Indomitus dawns in fire, so a vast host of Chaos worshippers brings doom to the Charadon Sector. The War of Rust and Slime is about to begin.



WAR ZONE CHARADON

'The power of Nurgle is not obvious, not direct. Not at first. Our foes line their ramparts with soldiers. They put to the void in bristling warships. They level every gun at the darkling skies and vow to repulse us in the corpse-god's name. Yet they do not realise that Nurgle is already with them, creeping through their flesh, gnawing at their souls. By the time they feel his blackened teeth sink deep, it will be far… too… late…'

- Typhus, bridge of the Terminus Est, in the moment before warp translation to the Duralim System

THE FURNACE HEART

Every sector of Imperial space is tremendously valuable, yet certain regions are pivotal – precious prizes that must be defended at all costs. The Charadon Sector was such a realm. The materiel output of forge world Metalica alone was crucial to Imperial war-efforts on a dozen galactic fronts, but Charadon had value far in excess of just this.

The Charadon Sector had long served as both the breadbasket and armoury for great swathes of the Ultima Segmentum. Well provided with mineral-rich planets, shimmering gas giants and sprawling belts of ore-bearing asteroids, the sector was as rich a source of raw materials as the wider Imperium could ask. Though the natural bounties of many similar holdings had long been yoked to Human endeavours or else exhausted altogether, Charadon Sector also boasted a range of agri worlds whose yield had fed its peoples with surplus to spare. Most crucial of all the bounties of the Charadon Sector, though, was its materiel output. Forge world Metalica alone had typically churned out enough guns, tanks, combat aircraft and ammunition to provision a dozen crusading armies and more every Imperial calendar year. When combined with the output of military hardware from client industrial worlds scattered through the majority of its sub-sectors, it is not hard to see why Charadon was often called the Iron Sector. At its heart lay the twinned sub-sectors of Obolis and Lirac.

OBOLIS SUB

The Obolis Sub-sector was centred upon the Metalica System and its governing forge world of Metalica. Sitting at the nexus of three comparatively stable warp channels, the Metalica System consisted of an industrialised cluster of highly productive planets. Its armoured asteroid-fortress of Ferrovigilum played host to the system's dedicated astropathic relay. Meanwhile it's deep-void naval docks – known as Solari Anchorage – acted as a staging post for a division of Battlefleet Charadon. The commander of this force, Lieutenant-Heraldus Lihua Sheridane, described the Metalican defences thusly:

'This system is damned near impregnable. It's one ring of steel within another, all the way to the orbital platforms of Metalica's Corona Industris. They might be a surly shower of closed-lipped pseudo-heretics, but these Tech-Priests know how to fortify a place.'

Metalica's outermost 'ring of steel' was formed by the three systems to which its warp channels were connected. These systems – Rhodior, Brezantius and Feiror – were known collectively as the Metalican Gates. Each contributed to the wider region through the labour of its hive and prison worlds; the output of its industrial and mining worlds; and the more unusual exports of planets such as the water world Fathom in the Feiror System or the shrine world of Humblehope in the Rhodior System. Most importantly, however, each of these systems boasted deep-void monitoring stations and multiple space-borne fortifications. Each was also governed from a ruling fortress world: Tremes in the Rhodior System, Kapston in the Brezantius System and Forthras in the Feiror System. Not only were all three of these worlds massively fortified and heavily garrisoned, each also boasted super-weapons of Metalican manufacture with the transatmospheric range to fire on invading ships to the very edge of each of their respective systems. The theory was simple and – as proven over countless centuries – tremendously effective. An invader could not assail

FORGE WORLD METALICA

Metalica is a world formed almost entirely of metal. No flora or fauna makes its home there, as all biological life has been exterminated. Even the atmosphere is inimical to life. It was not always this way, but the Tech-Priests drove to extinction all other species so their quest for enlightenment could continue at peak efficiency. Metalica is a world of hissing pistons, glowing forges and strata upon strata of industrial waste. Yet it is far from barren. The engine-driven monstrosities that growl out of its furnace complexes are born by the hundred with every new dawn. The sheer auditory barrage that rings from its gunmetal mountains is deafening, yet oddly inspiring – and all the weapons and machinery produced by Metalica can be identified by a distinct blaring sound that is purposefully made louder so that all foes might hear the industrial glory of the Omnissiah before they perish.

The hyper-pollution of the planet and its proximity to the Ork empire of Charadon have prepared its legions well for an age of war. Alongside Knightly allies from the nearby world of Kolossi, Metalica's armies have fought at the forefront of many battles, including the second and third Armageddon Wars. Indeed, it was in bloody conflict upon that accursed world that the Iron Skulls Titan Legion – formerly Legio Metalica – was all but annihilated. First Princeps Mannheim martyred himself and his Titan *Steel Hammer* during that costly conflict against overwhelming Ork forces. His successor, Wynsten VanKassen, has laboured in the fallen hero's shadow ever since to rebuild the strength of the shattered Legion. This spare and cynical tactician has husbanded the strength of his Titans with care through recent years, so that the Iron Skulls now stand at almost two-thirds the numbers of a full Titan Legion.

Metalica without passing through one of its Gate systems, which was a savagely costly and nigh-impossible feat.

The remaining systems in the Obolis Sub-sector were each valuable in their own right. The Chromyd System was Metalica's link to the Barlech's Channel warp route, and thus the Charus Sub-sector. It also played host to multiple agri worlds and mining worlds, and had a reputation for its hardy frontierspeople. The Gildras System contained a second astropathic relay station on the moon of Kobolt, watched over by the turbulent world of Motulu, home of the Excruciators Space Marine Chapter. The Duralim System was a teeming hub of population, faith and commerce ruled by the proud Cardinal world of Alexistor, whose Mandeville point connected it to Thorlaf's Strait and the neighbouring Lirac Sub-sector. Then there was the distant Alumax System, a comparative backwater forever troubled by Ork pirates, but still producing its fair share of shockmined splinter-ores and proud labour-guild workforces.

LIRAC SUB

Where the Obolis Sub-sector was an ever-bustling hub of industry, thick with void traffic and glaring with the lights of countless cities and forges, the Lirac Sub-sector was wilder – somehow more primal. The noted warrior-philosopher Shorvio had once described the region in colourful and somewhat ominous terms:

'It seemed to me – a humble pilgrim roaming the space-lanes of those stern and brooding systems – as though I walked 'neath the eye of some vast silent sentinel. Was it the eye of the Omnissiah I felt upon me as I braved the hard shadows of Kolossi, and dared the creaking walkways of the penitent camps amidst the Josyrian swamps, and fought through the stir-dust blizzards of Asmul's mining orbitals? Was it His gaze I felt, or some other, watchful thing whose regard prickled my skin and coaxed the hairs at nape of neck?'

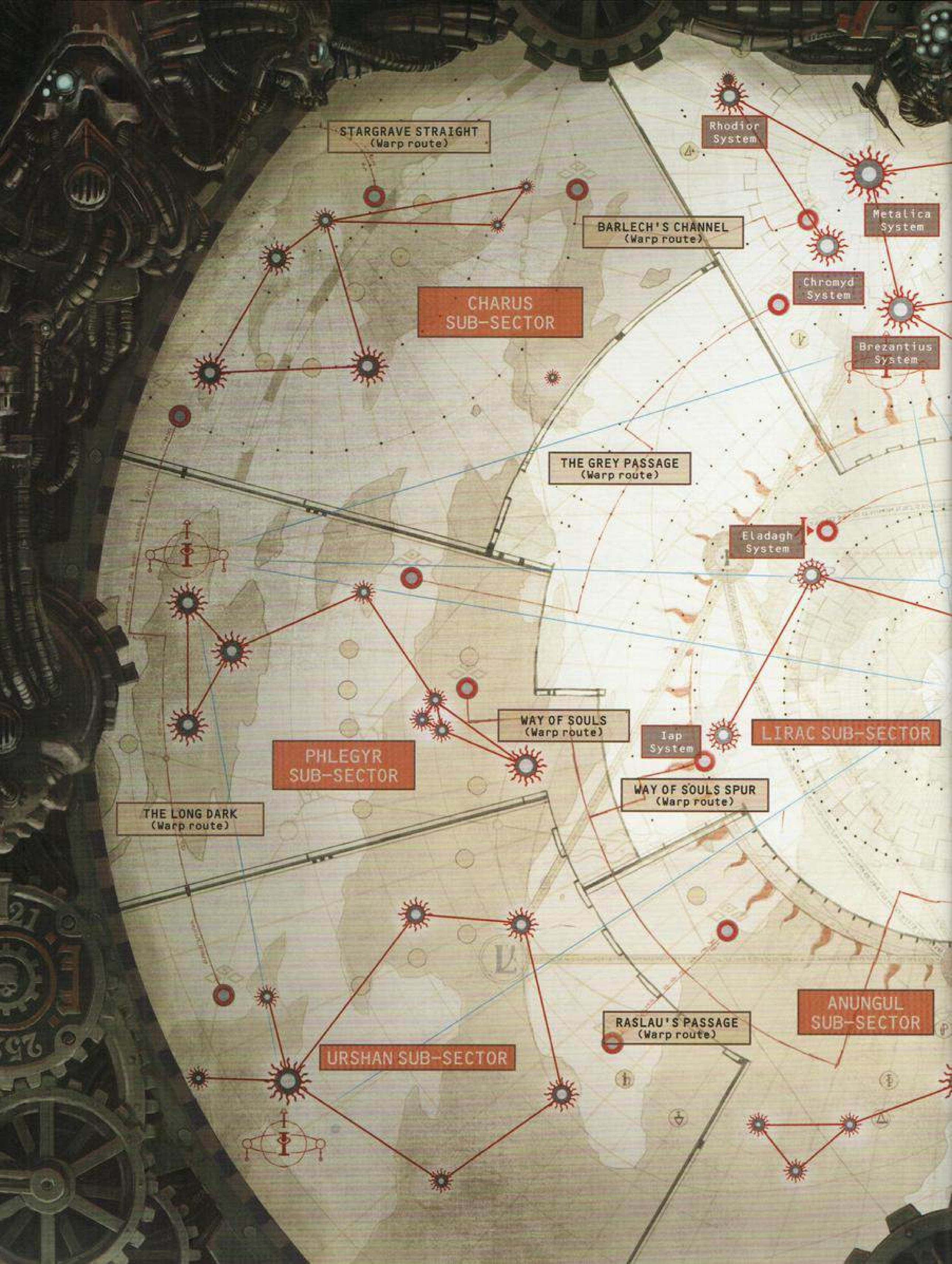
However much of Shorvio's account owed to fanciful prose, it still captured the essence of the Lirac Sub-sector. Though its systems contained more than their fair share of refinable ores, gasses and other easily-mined and valuable substances, still the Lirac Sub had resisted civilisation and settlement. Some of its worlds were hard wildernesses whose towering mountains and bleak crags were riven by constant tectonic violence. Others were home to sinister and predatory xenos species with more than a little of the supernatural about them. Humanity exploited and settled these systems, certainly, but only with the greatest struggle and often impermanently.

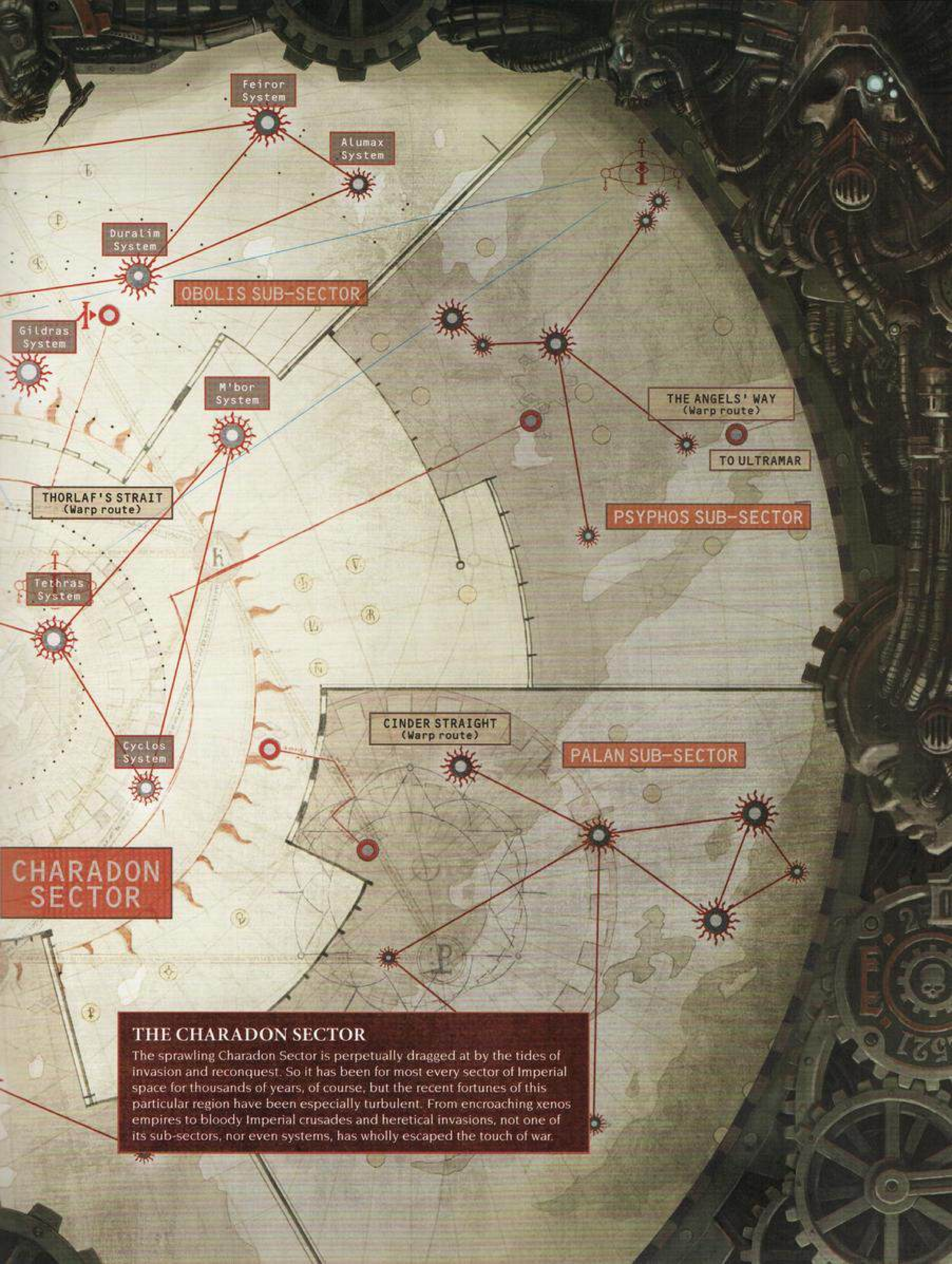
The worlds of the Cyclos System were prone to sudden and ferocious meteor storms, yet the origin point of these glassy black projectiles could never be determined. This had not prevented Imperial mining colonies and industrial centres from being established, but it did necessitate reinforced cave-dwellings, while labour had to be provided via the maximum-security prison planet of Stryx. Equally, though the M'bor System supported a clutch of inhabited and broadly productive Imperial worlds, it had a dark reputation for supernatural phenomena and malevolent void-spirits that drove away all but the hardiest or the most desperate settlers.

The Eladagh and Iap Systems were somewhat more civilised, though still their peoples faced perils enough that their faith was fiercely honed and their fortified settlements insular and untrusting. The Eladagh System was ruled by the sister cardinal world to Alexistor, a cold and austere planet known as Vikatrina. It also served as the gateway to Thorlaf's Strait, whose shipping came and went under the watchful orbital batteries of fortress world Ysarina.

Beneath the glimmer of the Iap System's binary stars, the hive moon of Josyria huddled in close orbit to the mighty – and entirely man-made – fortress world of Halcydonis. The inhabitants of these planetary bodies were oblivious to a third settled world in their system, a place of glass-like frozen ethane glaciers and violent chemical storms called Vod. Deep beneath this strange world's surface lay an Inquisitorial sanctum of the Ordo Xenos, heavily garrisoned and well-equipped to wage a secret war against the myriad xenos invaders that bedevilled the Charadon Sector.

For all these grim Imperial redoubts, the true power in the Lirac Sub-sector lay in the Tethras System. It was here that the Knight world of Kolossi orbited its ancient and bloated furnace-star. Kolossi was the home of Knight House Raven, one of the most powerful, famed and numerous of all the Questor Mechanicus Knight Houses. Only a handful of cities remained upon the surface of this ravaged world, islands of steel and smoke amidst the deep-core shafts and strip-mine canyons. The greatest of these was the Keep Inviolate, a gargantuan mountain of fortified industrial magnificence whose highest levels pierced the smog-thick atmosphere of the world. Dug into the bedrock amidst the city-fortress' foundations lay the Vault Transcendent, from which House Raven's hundreds of Knight Suits marched out to fight wars all across the Imperium. Lances of these ironclad giants strode tireless patrol routes across the worlds of the Lirac Sub-sector and sailed between it's systems aboard blood-hued macro-barges, their martial might holding back the direst heretical or xenos threats. They stood always ready, also, to march to the defence of forge world Metalica, with whom their ruling Princeps – Grevan Raven – maintained strong and binding oaths of fealty.


STARGRAVE STRAIGHT
(Warp route)
Rhodior System
Metalica System
BARLECH'S CHANNEL
(Warp route)
Chromyd System
CHARUS SUB-SECTOR
Brezantius System
THE GREY PASSAGE
(Warp route)
Eladagh System
WAY OF SOULS
(Warp route)
Iap System
LIRAC SUB-SECTOR
PHLEGYR SUB-SECTOR
WAY OF SOULS SPUR
(Warp route)
THE LONG DARK
(Warp route)
ANUNGUL SUB-SECTOR
RASLAU'S PASSAGE
(Warp route)
URSHAN SUB-SECTOR



THE CHARADON SECTOR

The sprawling Charadon Sector is perpetually dragged at by the tides of invasion and reconquest. So it has been for most every sector of Imperial space for thousands of years, of course, but the recent fortunes of this particular region have been especially turbulent. From encroaching xenos empires to bloody Imperial crusades and heretical invasions, not one of its sub-sectors, nor even systems, has wholly escaped the touch of war.

MET/CI/CHRON – 716LRC–854LRC

FIRST WARNINGS

When the Cicatrix Maledictum split the stars, the Charadon Sector lay far enough away to avoid the worst effects of the warp storms themselves. As the shadows of the Noctis Aeterna slowly lifted, however, it became apparent to Fabricator General Heptus Rho-Decima Khleng – ruler of forge world Metalica – that far more insidious dangers were drawing nigh.

The opening of the Great Rift had far-reaching effects that imperilled the entirety of the Imperium. The warp churned furiously, its convulsions rendering astropathic communication and empyric travel more difficult and perilous than ever before, even distorting the flow of time itself.

Ever resistant to the impurity of illogic, the first edict issued by Fabricator General Khleng in the disaster's wake was the establishment of a new localised method of determining date and time. The Charadon Sector would now toil under Metalican Circumscribed Chronology, measured as the number of Labour Rotation Cycles that world had turned since the opening of the Great Rift. This was but the first such Edict of Rationalisation introduced by Fabricator General Khleng, and it was enforced with such draconian fervour that it almost triggered civil conflict on several worlds. Yet the imposition Met/Ci/Chron was to prove far from the most extreme edict issued by Metalica's ruling priesthood.

OMENS OF DREAD

It began with superstitious mutterings and unnatural phenomena. On Heliotyr in the Alumax System, a prophet of doom arose from amongst the itinerant labour-dregs. His ravings were silenced by an Enforcer crackdown, but not before he led several hundred followers in an act of bloody auto-haruspexy. Superstitious panic swept Hive Achtorian on Dyroch's Reach after the aquifers of the city's middle-districts filled with stinking, clotted gore. In the M'bor System, a deviant faith-cult arose briefly on Dhaku – a group calling themselves They Who Hear The Whispers – but was exterminated by local mining clans before Imperial authorities could intercede. In Brezantius, avids on Laboritum were witnessed flying backwards through storm-troubled skies, while on Fathom in the Feiror System, the ocean depths were said to glimmer with strange luminescence. Mutant births and instances of spontaneous psychic phenomena spiked throughout the region, focussed amongst the densely populated systems of Obolis Sub. Unease and religious fanaticism grew by the day.

To the rulers of Metalica, the source of the disruption appeared obvious. As worshippers of the Machine God who had reduced their own world to sterility in their drive to optimise production, the Tech-Priests sited the proliferation of organic life in neighbouring systems as a weakness. The following extract from a litho-sermon by Dogmatus Guidiocrites Ohm demonstrated the breadth and fervour of this conviction.

'Permit no error in your cogitations, brethren. Factual absolute: the deleterious energistic crypto-spectral emissions spreading unholy discord through the Omnissiah's realm affect biological units of every order of the divine creation. Clarification: those biological units erroneously placing their spiritual optimisation in the godhead designation Emperor are also susceptible, despite erroneous convictions to the contrary. Conclusion: negative proliferating phenomena will be terminated with the discontinuation and cleansing of all biological units. Purity resides in the machine alone.'

Fabricator General Khleng was shrewd enough to recognise acting upon such extreme views would jeopardise the security of the region. He might not sympathise with what he saw as his Imperial allies' irrational attachment to human life, but he understood enacting wholesale bio-scouring on worlds other than his own would be met with hostility.

When unnatural plagues broke out across the region, however, Khleng took the opportunity to justify extreme measures. The industrial world of Ferryk in the Feiror System endured an outbreak of a bubotic engorgism that turned living flesh to rancid jelly and bloated internal organs until they burst. Amid the underhives of St Espin's Gift in Rhodior, thousands of plague-slain dead rose again. Entire provost-battalions were lost combating diseased cadavers pouring uphive from the corpse starch plants. Even the cardinal world of Alexistor did not remain sacred, a pandemic of witch-madness sweeping its pilgrim shanties until deranged mobs besieged the planet's holy sites. Meanwhile, a full-blown malefic manifestation gripped the astropathic relay on Kobolt in the Gildras System, forcing the Excruciators Chapter to deploy strike forces against the cursed

moon and stripping their valuable protection away from the sub-sector.

Khleng's response was to unleash a squadron of three Quietus-class eradication arks from secret void-hangars above Metalica. Incorporating forbidden secrets of archeotechnology and captained by Khleng's most zealous Archmagi, the craft made first for the hive world of St Espin's Gift. Ignoring vox hails from the planet's increasingly alarmed authorities, the eradication arks settled in low orbit. Then, to the absolute horror of those below, they unleashed macro-rad-cleanser batteries upon the planet. In a matter of hours, St Espin's Gift was virtually annihilated. The mountain-sized hives – already half-overrun by billions of shambling plague-zombies – were now reduced to glowing slag-lakes. The world's atmosphere was choked with the whirling ash of uncounted billions.

It was a shocking act that drew censure from frightened planetary Governors. Yet none could deny it had arrested the spread of heresy on St Espin's Gift in the most decisive of ways. Twice more the eradication arks struck upon Khleng's orders. They scoured the northern continental landmass of Borthreas, a frontier-world in the Alumax System reportedly suffering a plague of psykers. They laid waste to one of the three oublioplexes on the prison world of Unhallow in the Brezantius System after word spread of rampant mutation amongst the convicts.

Despite such drastic sterilising measures, ill omens and unnatural discord continued to spread. Fabricator General Khleng, cogitating that matters had become perilously disorderly, issued further edicts. Astropathic calls for aid pierced the churning warp from the sanctum on Ferrovigilum. Skitarii Legions, grand processions of Cult Mechanicus zealots and entire maniples of colossal Iron Skulls Titans took ship from the Metalica System, moving to reinforce the garrisons of the Metalican Gates. Orders flashed out via data-sanctified las burst and psychic autotranslithography; all planetary garrisons were to stand ready – all machine spirits should be roused and all weapons pointed to the skies. The Fabricator General's analytical auguries all suggested that something worse than mutation and plague was on its way. At this stage, no measure was classified as excessive if it solidified Metalican control of the Obolis Sub-sector. Indeed, two of Khleng's ominous rad-ships were en route to the diseased Cardinal world of Alexistor – the Fabricator General disregarding the catastrophic ramifications of rad-blasting a world holy to the Imperial creed – when the storm broke.

THE TRAVELLER

That which approached the Obolis and Lirac Sub-sectors was monstrous and unclean. Acting as a hand of Warmaster Abaddon, Akhorath Zeid of the Black Legion had sought out no less than Typhus, First Captain of the Death Guard. Speaking with his master's voice, Zeid bade Typhus set aside his own bloody crusade and gather a mighty army in Abaddon's name. Typhus – the Traveller, Host of the Destroyer Hive – was a great warlord in his own right. He despised the arrogant Lord Zeid from the first, and would normally have sought to slay the Lord Discordant for daring to issue him orders. Yet even Typhus bent the knee to Abaddon's command.

Besides, the diseased entities of the warp had whispered to Typhus of the Metalicans and their crusade of sterility. He knew of their belief that the purity of the machine could overcome all empyric contagions, and their ungrateful efforts to cleanse the fecund plagues of his master, Nurgle. Typhus saw in the Metalicans' arrogance a chance to shatter their spirit utterly by proving their beloved machines fallible to the Plague God's touch. Even as he gathered his invading host, Typhus had Biologus Putrifiers concoct a tailored plague strain they called the Nemesis Wurm. If he could deliver this malady to the very heart of the Metalican defences, it would seed the world's slow doom.

OF CHAMPIONS AND HOSTS

Between his own infamy and the weight of Abaddon's seal, Typhus amassed a vast invasion force with which to strike at Metalica. Yet the followers of the Dark Gods are rarely a cohesive force. Thus, Typhus' grand host was in truth a loose coalition of warbands, each serving their own dread champions, many of whom were bitter rivals as much as they were allies of convenience. Typhus himself brought a mighty assemblage of Death Guard vectoriums and Plague Fleet warships led by his own terrifying flagship, the *Terminus Est*. The ranks of this horrific gathering included warbands from every single Plague Company in the Death Guard, though their greatest strength lay in vectoriums of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th. These were supplemented by billions of mutants, plague cultists and diseased renegade Imperial Guard whose lives Typhus planned to spend as ready coin in the campaign ahead.

Nor did the imperious Lord Zeid fight alone. He brought with him a fleet of renegade warships and a grand stable of daemon engines and bestial Chaos Knights, backed by several Black Legion warbands. Further Heretic Astartes joined Zeid's host in the form of renegade warbands. Some were little more than handfuls of carrion-warriors while others – such as the Rapacitors, the Grey Glaives and the Brothers of Anarchy – comprised entire armies in their own right. Dark Apostle Tsorr'Kanath of the Word Bearers and the insidious Alpha Legion Sorcerer Yharron Thayl also led sizeable warbands to join Typhus' banner, pledging to aid their legions in fulfilling Abaddon's desires. Then came the abhorrent Titans of the Legio Morbidus, led by their ghastly Balequeen Lathfyr the Drowned. With them came more than a dozen Renegade Knight Houses, each adding yet more might to the invasion.

MET/CI/CHRON – 855LRC-890LRC

TRI-PRONG OFFENSIVE

The attack, when it came, fell against three separate fronts across the Obolis Sub-sector. Upon the fringes of the Chromyd, Alumax and Duralim Systems, the stuff of realspace peeled back like necrotising flesh and the warp vomited forth one spike-encrusted heretic warship after another. The Traveller had come, and he brought despair with him.

```
PARTIAL VOX-INTERCEPT
LOG 76/87/36: ORIGINATOR
HERETICAL COMMANDER (APLT)
LORD THRAXOPLASMOX///

'...GRIND THEM DOWN SLOWLY,
YE DEVOTED OF FILTH.
MAKE OFFAL AND OFFERINGS
OF THEM. RENDER THEM TO
RANCID RUIN. NO NEED
FOR HASTE UNSEEMLY. THE
GRANDFATHER DOTH SMILE
BROADEST WHEN SLOW DESPAIR
BE WRUNG FROM THEIR PUTRID
INNARDS. SEND THEM ANOTHER
WAVE, AND ANOTHER, AND YET
ANOTHER. RAIN UPON THEM
THE SWEETEST BLIGHTS AND
POXES. LET THEM SICKEN.
LET THEM WITHER. THUSLY DO
WE DISTIL TRUE DESPAIR...'

LOG ENDS / AUDIOCORRUPTION
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THE CHROMYD PUSH

The first blow fell against the Chromyd System. Though considered parochial this system was nonetheless important for it was here the warp route of Barlech's Channel made it's firmest link between the Obolis and Charus Sub-sectors. To local Imperial commanders in the path of the first Chaos offensive, it was ominous indeed that no warning preceded the invaders out of Charus Sub. And Imperial commanders there were in this system, their forces present in greater strength than the invaders had expected. The cause of this was a string of blood raids by Drukhari pirates that had bedevilled the Chromyd System for many cycles.

These raids began on the mausoleum world of Martyr's Rest. Here, the infamous Lelith Hesperax had staged a gladiatorial torture-circus of great horror and grandeur, it's elegant butchery beginning with the capital city of Purity before spreading across the globe. That conflict had swallowed the Mission of Provident Restoration, sent under Palatine Luminas to recover a relic crucial to the spiritual defence of distant Alexistor. It also triggered a flurry of copycat raids by other Drukhari war leaders seeking to outdo Lelith.

In response, the system's planetary defence militias had been reinforced by twenty regiments of Astra Militarum soldiery – including the Lumess 14th and the Savlar 88th 'Zoners' – alongside the Metalican 2nd Skitarii Macroclade led by Skitarii Marshal Decitor Septrax-Tertian. This latter was an infamous figure throughout the Obolis Sub and beyond, both for the speed and efficiency with which his elite macroclade responded to enemy threats, and the ruthlessness with which they exterminated them.

Marshal Tertian had taken command of anti-piracy operations in the Chromyd System. He had wielded both his own forces and his allies' with consummate skill, and though casualties amongst the Astra Militarum had been high enough to spur complaints from their commanders, Tertian had won decisive victories over the aliens on both the industrial world of Okharium and amidst the bioluminescent fungus-caverns of Torthusa. Unfortunately for the Imperial defenders, the same optimised dispositions that had helped them punish the xenos left them woefully ill-positioned to respond to a sudden massed Chaos invasion. Thus, Lord Thraxoplasmox found his enemies dangerously spread out.

The consequences were well illustrated beneath the crimson clouds of Okharium. A substantial force of Savlari had just completed their purge of the southern city-sprawl of Linkagar when bubotic warheads and diseased landing craft rained down. The Drukhari had eliminated most of Linkagar's Icarus auto-turrets prior to their own attack several cycles earlier. Savlar Captain Glaine Kherrus recognised that those that remained could not prevent massed heretic troop landings, and ordered his beleaguered forces into a fighting retreat through Linkagar's northern district, destroying the bridges over the chem-canals as they went. Their intent was to fall back upon prepared positions anchored by Skitarii cohorts north of the city. In a last act of spite, however, lingering Drukhari infiltrators slew Kherrus' messengers before they could bring word of his intent to the Mechanicus forces. With no saviour-psalms received, entire maniples of gun-

servitors let fly into the retreating Savlari as they came into range. By the time the bloody error had been recognised, further heretic forces had landed in flanking positions. Still tangled in one another's lines, both Imperial forces were massacred.

The glittering desert-hives of Dyroch's Reach also suffered. That world lay closest to the point at which the dozens of Chaos warships had poured from the warp, and so it was swiftly set upon. The attacking forces were led by a band of Dreadblade Knights – soon known and feared as the Company Malevolent – who smashed through the Imperial defence militias and broke open the defences of several hives. Bloody level-by-level fighting consumed every city and orbital defence battery on the planet, while the Knights roamed the deserts, preying upon Imperial supply convoys wherever they found them.

Lord Thraxoplasmox led his Death Guard forces against the agri-world of Torthusa. Seven vectoriums marched at his back, including the infamous Hollow Ones and the ravening daemon engine packs of the Gristlepus Guard. Such a potent force should have crushed the Torthusan defenders, even with Marshal Tertian leading them. Yet Thraxoplasmox was an unhurried commander, and an unimaginative one by the reckoning of his rival champions. He pushed from one cavern network to the next in a relentless, grinding fashion that allowed Tertian to repeatedly outflank his forces and bleed their strength with neatly executed raids. Still, despite a string of successful battles through the Second Strata agri-delves and the Imperitus Nocta chasm farms, the Imperial forces could not overcome the heretics' disease-warfare, unholy resilience or numerical strength. One delve fell after another, and agri-caverns filled with raddled and writhing corpses. The war for Torthusa had become a costly and dismaying deadlock.

ALUMAX BESET

With the warp whipped to fury since the Great Rift's opening, Fabricator General Khleng cogitated that even heretic warships could not launch a coordinated invasion without concentrating their efforts along stable warp channels. Khleng's assertion was proved wrong as a suppurating flotilla of plague hulks and Death Guard warships tore their way from the warp to strike with vitriolic fury at the worlds of the Alumax System. Plague Captain Oghlosmus Bilge led this second prong of the Chaos invasion from aboard his flagship, *Cankersore*. Bilge was a repugnant mound of clotted flesh and suppurating filth melded to the command deck of his warship. He was also a consummate void-commander and one of Typhus' chosen lieutenants. Bilge's warships and the diseased hosts they ferried were supported by the skull-encrusted macro-landers of the Legio Morbidus under Balequeen Lathfyr, along with a ragtag flotilla of renegade warships and traitorous Heretic Astartes.

Against them stood the under-strength Cadian 727th Army Group under Colonel Elena Broski. An eye-witness account from amongst the Colonel's aides revealed how, even with so overwhelming a force assailing the worlds under her protection, Broski remained icily calm:

'I don't think that the Colonel believed she could win. She wasn't a fool. Throne, never that. But she was Cadian, and of rank. You're not one of us, you wouldn't understand what that means, now more than ever. Cadia stands, always. So, then, must we, no matter the odds.'

Colonel Broski marshalled an effective defence around the hive world of St Bartolph's Throne, repelling heretical uprisings and Death Guard scouting parties. She also succeeded in getting an astropathic distress call out from Hive Rastigan, though with no viable astropathic duct it would be a matter of luck if any Imperial forces heard it and responded. These successes were impressive, but they were candle flames in a hurricane. The Titans of Legio Morbidus fell upon the mining world of Heliotyr, intent on seizing it's mineral wealth for their own. Defence militia forces fell back time and again, insects before the footfalls of giants. With the aid of the planet's mining collectives the Imperial defenders laid several traitor Titans low by seeding surface workings with blasting charges and pitching the god-machines into craters. The defiance couldn't last long, however; as the defenders sought to retreat underground, orbiting plague ships used their teleportaria to deploy Blightlord Terminators and floods of infectious matter into the mine workings. One platoon at a time the defenders succumbed, or were flushed to the surface to face the wrath of Balequeen Lathfyr. Heliotyr fell in less than a cycle.

Further atrocity followed as Oghlosmus Bilge turned his attention to the ongoing invasion of St Bartolph's Throne. By the nineteenth cycle of their defence, the Cadians had been forced to cede two hive cities to the invaders as well as the planet's equatorial maglev network. Yet they still held firm in the northern hives. Rather than hurling more warriors into the fray, Bilge instead had his swiftest ships run down the eradication ark *Omnissiah Optimalis* which had recently rad-cleansed the world of Borthreas. Overwhelming the ship's defenders in a vicious boarding action, the Plague Captains towed *Omnissiah Optimalis* into high orbit over St Bartolph's Throne. There they scuttled the craft and set it into a death-dive onto Hive Rastigan.

The atomic explosion vaporised the city – along with Broski and half her remaining forces – and banished the machine spirits of every shield generator and gun turret in the planet's two surviving hives. When fresh vectoriums took the fight to the defenders three cycles later, they faced rad-sickened and desperate wretches whose fight was tragically short lived.

Only one factor stopped the Alumax System from being entirely overrun. Its space lanes had long been bedevilled by the Freebooter Orks of Kaptin Dregbad Skullbusta. Now the greenskin pirate turned his hordes against the invading plague ships. The Orks managed several victories over lesser renegade warbands before Bilge ambushed and mauled their ramshackle fleet at Totha Sound. Still, the unintentional distraction allowed the dregs of the Imperial defenders to fall back to monitor station Meta-Obol Gamma 4, hidden on the very edge of the system deep within the ever-fluctuating Skothian Grav-reefs. Sporadic reports persisted of Adeptus Astartes who had responded to Colonel Broski's distress call and were even now launching hit-and-run raids against the invaders. Yet for all practical purposes, Alumax had fallen.

DEATH IN DURALIM

What sacrifices Typhus and his allies made to the Dark Gods will remain forever a mystery. Sacrifice they must have, however, for even as Bilge's plague fleet was tearing through the veil to strike at the Alumax System, so Typhus' own repulsive *Terminus Est* led an even larger heretic war fleet out of the warp directly on top of the pivotal Duralim System. Typhus, Lord Zeid and a grim assortment of rival Chaos champions led this offensive. For cycles on end the void flickered with battery fire and the bright coronae of explosions as the invaders fought one-sided engagements against Duralim's defence monitors and space platforms. Several swift Imperial frigates ran for the safety of the Brezantius and Feiror Systems, their shipmasters intending to bear warning back to the Metalica System. By the Emperor's blessings two made it away, the *Indomitable* and the *Lady Grezenta* plunging into the raging warp.

Elsewhere, war consumed the settled worlds of the system. The ancient hive world Resplendis had long maintained its magnificence by confining the lower social orders to sprawling macro-ghettos amidst its cities' underhives. Now, thanks to the sorcery of the tri-conjoined Daemon Princes known as the Cystlings, those same ghettos became breeding grounds for walking plague. Billions of plague-dead – aided by kill teams of Plague Marines and distant batteries of daemonic artillery – burst through the fortified slumgates and surged up through Resplendis' beauteous hives. Two fell within a matter of cycles while the defenders of the remaining hives were besieged atop their spires, forced to rely upon desperate supply runs by squadrons of Valkyrie gunships through Bloat-drone-infested skies.

Matters were worse still on the neighbouring hive world of Magnifiria. Thanks to carefully managed psychic upsurges and insidious traitor raids orchestrated by Lord Zeid, the rad-ship destined for Alexistor changed heading and settled above the sapphire coloured clouds of this storm-lashed world. Deaf to the pleas of the planet's defenders, the eradication ark *Necessitus-Ajax* unleashed its weaponry in a world-wide purge that lasted four full cycles. Billions died, sacrificed to the Metalican fanatics' belief that 'extraneous biological life' was undermining the world's defences. Now the Black Legion and Death Guard struck in force. *Necessitus-Ajax* despatched three macroclades of Skitarii and seething processions of the Cult Mechanicus into the now-irradiated war zone in support of what Astra Militarum soldiery survived their purge. However, against the might of Lord Zeid's Plague Marines, daemon engines and Chaos Knights – most of which shrugged off the entropic touch of the rad-storms far better than their Imperial foes – Magnifiria was a lost cause. Amongst the campaign's last casualties was the *Necessitus-Ajax* itself, slain not by traitor forces but by the vengeful blast of Magnifiria's last functioning, loyalist-held orbital battery.

IN THE SHADOWS

Typhus' invasion was focussed on Metalica. If the forge world could be infected then the strength of not only the Charadon Sector but many other Imperial strongholds besides would atrophy. The Traveller was wise enough to recognise the danger posed by the neighbouring Lirac Sub-sector, however; should House Raven come to Metalica's aid, matters would rapidly escalate. To this end he despatched Tsorr'Kanath of the Word Bearers and Yarron Thayl of the Alpha Legion to the Lirac Sub along with their warbands. Their mission was to launch hit-and-run raids against Imperial targets throughout the Eladagh, Cyclos and M'bor Systems to convince the rulers of House Raven their own system was imperilled. Distracted, the Knights would be less likely to send aid to their allies, or so Typhus hoped. Yet though his traitor allies travelled to the Lirac Sub-sector, they did so for reasons of their own. Once embedded, they held to the deep void and waited for their own plans to come to fruition.

Alexistor was a dying body, with Typhus the maggot chewing through its heart. The thought cheered him, as much as the clouds of bloated plague flies that boiled through the fume-choked air and the baying of the countless souls lost to the Mindblight.

Witch-madness, the clergy of Alexistor had called it. An inelegant term for a sublime ailment, but Typhus supposed it had served their limited needs well enough. Most of them were dead now, or else down there in the streets amidst the surging seas of the blighted, so what did it matter anyway? What protection had once been offered by Alexistor's pitiful saint had faded. As it did, so the world's statues toppled, it's domes shattered, it's shrines burned and it's oh-so-noble defenders died one by one, buried amidst heaving hordes of the very souls they had thought to save. Despair hung thick as smoke over this planet now. Typhus savoured it's sour tang, and prayed that Nurgle did so also.

The work was not yet done, however. That was what brought him to this broad rooftop plaza above the former Cathedrum Sanctus Absolis in the Petitioner City. That was why even now Typhus and his hand-picked warband advanced into a hail of bolt fire that tore through the clouds of flies and ripped apart what tatters remained of the plaza's once bountiful gardens.

The masses screamed and howled and gibbered from the streets below. Down there the Battle Sisters' extraction transports were buried beneath strata of heaving bodies.

'No escape this time, Canoness Joghilde,' rumbled Typhus, his words lent resonance by the sympathetic thrum of his Destroyer Hive.

To his right, the Blightlords of Ghorloch's Rotsouls advanced relentlessly into the enemy fire. The plaza's tiles cracked beneath their heavy footfalls. Bolt shells sparked and burst against their plague-thickened armour. Jets of corrosive slime and flurries of rune-engraved shells leapt from their own guns to bring down armoured foes half-visible through the swirling murk.

To Typhus' left, the Plague Marines of Sholgh and Myukus' squads were pressing ahead, competing with one another to shrug off the foe's attentions and prove themselves most formidable. They traded shots with the Battle Sisters, raddled statues and ornamental shrines exploding in storms of spinning marble each time a shot from either side went wide.

Typhus paid the wider battle little heed. He had seen countless like it. He would know countless more. He had eyes only for the commanding figure with the star-white blade blazing in her fist, the one whose eyes shone with zeal and whose voice rose in a defiant hymnal even as Typhus' chosen tried to bring her down. She had to know she was trapped, that her time as a figure of inspiration and defiance was at an end. Joghilde would never leave this rooftop. Still she did not give in to hopelessness. Her defiance irked Typhus.

He would end it.

The Traveller roared and pushed himself into a lumbering charge. He swung his manreaper high as Joghilde span to meet him amidst the fray. Typhus brought his rusted scythe down in a thunderous swing that should have cloven the Canoness in two. Instead she leapt back, unnaturally fast, and directed a volley of bolt shells into his chest-plate. He shrugged the shells off and went after his prey, swinging his manreaper again and again. Its blade bisected a luckless Celestian and struck the head from a marble statue, but it could not find its mark in Joghilde's neck.

Typhus' growl of frustration became a guttural laugh as the Canoness ran out of rooftop to retreat across. He swung again, a blow powerful enough to pass through a Knight's armoured knee. Somehow she parried, blade blazing with white fire in her hands, heels hanging out over the brink. The wails and screams of the blighted rose in a damned chorus, voices beseeching the Canoness to fall into their waiting arms. Instead she cried out to the tortured skies.

'Emperor, lend me the strength to do your will!'

The Canoness then lunged, haloed in white fire, and Typhus grunted as her glowing blade found its way past his guard and plunged deep into his chest. Pain was a memory long lost to him in his diseased form, but the searing blare of sensation he felt now came as close as anything had in centuries. Putrescent flesh blackened. Plague-blessed armour ran like curdled wax around the glowing blade.

'Enough!' Typhus bellowed, marshalling his psychic might and unleashing it upon the Canoness like a tidal wave. Yet even as her fiery halo was extinguished at last, even as her flesh rotted from her bones and her armour bloomed with rust, still her defiant gaze burned into him as fiercely as had her blessed blade.

OPENING MOVES

Typhus' invasion of the Obolis Sub-sector struck with such precision that its three blows fell within days of one another. Capitalising on strife spread by plagues, psychic mutation and xenos piracy, the traitor hosts invested three system-wide war fronts and maintained a punishing momentum the Imperial defenders struggled to arrest. It was an immense feat of martial coordination that only so veteran a warlord as Typhus could have achieved.

OBOLIS SUB-SECTOR
FEIROR SYSTEM
ALUMAX SYSTEM
DURALIM SYSTEM
GILDRAS SYSTEM
M'BOR SYSTEM
THORLAF'S STRAIT
(Warp route)
TETHRAS SYSTEM
CYCLOS SYSTEM
DEATH GUARD
HOUSE RAVEN
METALICA
CHAOS (OTHER)
IMPERIUM (OTHER)
ORK PIRATES
DRUKHARI

HEPTUS KHLENG

FABRICATOR GENERAL OF FORGE WORLD METALICA

Very little of the organic human remains within Heptus Rho-Decima Khleng. Over the last seven centuries the ruling Tech-Priest of forge world Metalica has systematically purged all possible organic components until only a few slivers of brain-matter and a handful of gilded vertebrae remain deep within the ironclad hulk of his body.

Heptus Khleng was once a Datasmith who served amidst Metalica's Legio Cybernetica. From the first his empathy with his Kastelan charges far outstripped any understanding he shared with fellow organics – Khleng venerated what he saw as the holy purity of these machines, and commanded them in war with an instinctive skill. Pivotal in Metalican victories on Scarvyn, in the Lanterior Purge and finally during the acquisition of Akhmar Brosk's lost datasheaves, Khleng was at last promoted to the higher orders of Metalica's Tech-Priesthood. From that day forward his rise to supreme power was meteoric. As Khleng ascended through the ranks of the Omnissian priesthood, so he replaced ever more of his flesh-body with cybernetic augments. All priests of the Omnissiah undergo such apotheosis, but in Khleng's case he exploited his authority within the Metalican Legio Cybernetica to acquire very specific and – some would say – borderline heretical augmentations.

By the time he took the mantle of Fabricator General Metalican, Khleng's machine-body was the size of a super-heavy battle tank. He moved upon a roaring cushion of gravitic thrust, was festooned with nests of mechadendrites and other servo-tools, and was wreathed in the petrochemical emissions of his industrialised form. His enormous body also contained a network of tremendously powerful cogitators whose innermost functions skirted the very precipice of the forbidden Silica Animus – artificial machine consciousness. These macro-cogitators vastly expanded the Fabricator General's mental capacity and allowed him to calculate probabilities with an almost prescient skill. To Khleng this was proof of divine revelation sent by the Omnissiah himself, and interpreted via the mechanical purity of the Fabricator General's cogitator brain.

After his ascension, Khleng spent much of his time communing with the vast network of data-tethers and electro-impulse arrays that filled his sanctum within Metalica's Forge Excelsis. Through this infospiritual interface the Fabricator General was able to observe and monitor his entire domain, to drink deep of all communications and augur data coming and going through its noosphere, and even to directly pour his motive will into his subjects' living forms. It was a state close to global omnipotence, and it led those under his charge to view Khleng with reverence. Surely, they said, he was the conduit of the Omnissiah's own will.

If this remarkable system had a flaw, it was that Heptus Khleng struggled to accept the reality of any occurrence that defied his cogitational predictions. After all, his revelations came direct from the Machine God – surely any deviation from their tenets was therefore an error in the divine cogitational code to be purged or ignored as illogical and incorrect.

HEROES OF OBOLIS

Overall command of martial operations in the Obolis Sub-sector ultimately fell to Heptus Khleng. Of course, across so vast an inter-system war zone and in the face of ferocious empyric disruption, centralised command was an aspirational ideal at best. Many were the Imperial commanders, figureheads and heroes who strove to lead their followers to victory across many hundreds of battlefronts on dozens of worlds. Each had to lead to the best of their abilities, often shorn of support or guidance and striving to overcome their own fears and doubts even as they sought to play their part in the wider Imperial war effort.

Princeps Wynsten VanKassen was one such war leader. As distress calls flooded into the Metalica System and the forge world's forces mobilised in response, VanKassen was called upon to lead his under-strength Titan Legion to reinforce the Feiror System. A spare and conservative strategist, VanKassen was determined not to lead his god-machines to the same fate that his predecessor had amidst the wastes of Armageddon.

Chapter Master Tanielu of the Excruciators also bore duty's burden as war erupted through the Obolis Sub. As fiery in temperament as the volcanic island-chains of his home world, Tanielu was chafed by the thought of taking the fight to the invaders. Known for their indomitable spirit and willingness to face down even seemingly impossible odds, Tanielu and his Chapter would need the wise counsel of their Chief Librarian – Ioanu 'The Fortress' – to steer them away from the hidden reefs of perilous hubris.

Dozens of other Skitarii Marshals and ranking Tech-Priests, Astra Militarum officers, Tempestors Prime and Adepta Sororitas heroines shared the widespread burden of command. In the coming days their choices would save or damn countless souls.

MET/CI/CHRON – 891LRC-940LRC

THE GATES BESIEGED

Typhus' invasion of the Obolis Sub-sector had been swift and devastating. The Alumax and Duralim Systems were overrun, the Chromyd System embroiled in a gruelling war of attrition. Now, as the Imperial defenders reeled, the Metalican Gates came under threat. Believing that the Metalica System itself might soon be imperilled, Fabricator General Khleng took drastic action.

VOX-ARCHIVE INTERROGUS:::

CATEGORY: REDUCTUS-TRIVIA

LOCAT: DURALIM/RESPLENDIS

EXCERPT COMMENCE:

'...SAY AGAIN. THIS IS SERGEANT ESPANZA, 56TH FOMORIAD GRENADIERS. WE ARE TRAPPED BEHIND ENEMY LINES ON INDUSTRIUM-LEVEL SIXTEEN OF HIVE VHORTIAN. IF IT TURNS OUT THAT THE EMPEROR HAS FORSAKEN US HERE, I NEED TO MAKE SURE SOMEONE KNOWS WHAT WE HAVE SEEN. ENEMY FORCES ARE SEEDING THIS LEVEL WITH... THRONE KNOWS WHAT THE DAMNED THINGS ARE. FURNACES? BOILERS? SOME KIND OF BIOLOGICAL... I DON'T KNOW. BUT WHATEVER THESE THINGS ARE THEY'RE... GROWING... AND GIVING OFF SOME SORT OF FUMES OR SPORE CLOUDS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE BUT I KNOW THEY DON'T PORTEND ANYTHING GOOD. IF YOU...'

END<PURGE DATASCREED?Y/N>

TRIAGE

It had taken many cycles for Fabricator General Khleng to reconcile the reality of the invasion against the infopurity of his data-auguries and cogitational models. During these crucial weeks the Imperial commanders on the ground and in the void had been left to fight the war on their own initiative. Eventually, Khleng issued a strategic edict that compelled his soldiery as surely as though they had been ordered by the Omnissiah himself. Metalica could not be risked. To this end, the security of the Rhodior, Brezantius and Feiror Systems became paramount. The foe had already displayed an ability to bypass conventional warp routes, and as such Khleng commanded Imperial military strength to be concentrated about Metalica and its neighbouring systems. Only in this way could the continued sanctity of the forge world be assured.

As Khleng's edict radiated outward via astropathic missive and vox-screed, so Metalican Skitarii, Servitors, war engines and even Titans obeyed without question. Those Imperial forces alongside whom they had fought for cycles found their allies suddenly deserting them. Demands for clarification received rote repetition of Khleng's decree. Some Astra Militarum regiments fell back alongside the Metalicans, unsure what else to do. Elsewhere, where retreat was impossible or faith and conviction spurred them, Imperial Guard, Battle Sisters and Space Marines fought on in defence of the worlds that the Metalicans abandoned.

In the Chromyd System, this moment would forever after be known as Khleng's Betrayal. After Marshal Tertian and his elite Skitarii extracted themselves from the Torthusan front, any glimmers of hope for stopping the inexorable advance of the Death Guard were extinguished. A seething plague-tide washed through the planet's agri-caverns. Torthusa's defending regiments were trapped and butchered, or else riddled with metaphysical maladies and forced to swear themselves to Nurgle or die the most hideous of deaths.

Torthusa did not perish alone. While Lord Thraxoplasmox had battered at its defences, still the agri-world had managed to dispatch emergency food shipments. Brave void captains had run the Death Guard blockade to supply Martyr's Rest and Dyroch's Reach. But without those desperately-needed supplies, and shorn of their Metalican allies, the bloodied defenders of both worlds succumbed to starvation and despair. Martyr's Rest, once a sacred place of eternal repose, now saw ghoulish excavations as its macro-mausolea were emptied of bones by heretical sorcerers and trophy-takers. Dyroch's Reach, meanwhile, saw unconscionable slaughter as one hive garrison after another attempted to surrender. The Renegade Knights of the Company Malevolent showed no mercy, and herded their captives into the deserts in packs before hunting them for sport.

What Imperial resistance endured in the Chromyd System now did so upon the death world of Sabhira. Boasting blade-like quartzite mountain ranges

and seething carnivorous forests, Sabhira had been settled only by the hardiest of Imperial prospecting clans. They knew how to survive the world's creeping mists, which could harden from thick green gas to crushing solid without warning. They had experience evading the wraith-like apex predators known as cacogheists. Armed with this expertise they were able to aid those Imperial forces who retreated to Sabhira's dubious sanctuary. Soon, led by a medley of Imperial officers and local clan chiefs known as the Sabhiran Swords, these ragged survivors became an effective guerilla army who drove off or slaughtered one heretic warband after another. The defenders even established hidden air bases amidst the Sabhiran wilds, their transatmospheric fighters and bombers harassing any heretic void craft that strayed too close. Goaded by the impertinence of these actions, and driven by his compulsion to methodically crush all resistance, Lord Thraxoplasmox stalled his own advance. Cycle by cycle he poured an inordinate amount of his forces into the escalating Sabhiran front.

DESPERATION SPREADS

The Imperial defenders of the Duralim System were in dire straits even before discovering that Metalican reinforcements would not be forthcoming. Typhus and Lord Zeid's combined efforts had seen multiple worlds overrun. In the void, heretic warships prowled in hunting packs, running down the last scattered Imperial naval assets one at a time.

Yet the wider Imperium had not wholly abandoned the scattered Imperial Guardsmen and Battle Sisters still fighting on the Duralim front. Having secured and cleansed the astropathic relay on Kobolt, the Excruciators employed its depleted choir and coordinated with other scattered Space Marine forces responding to distress calls from the Obolis Sub. They then struck, small but powerful combat fleets braving the raging warp to counter-attack from the Brezantius and Alumax Systems.

The Excruciators turned their personal ire upon the invaders of hive world Resplendis. Purge teams of Aggressors and Inceptors struck at the daemonic artillery hammering Hive Kenzelghar, ripping through the batteries and relieving pressure on the city's defenders. Tanielu led his veteran 1st Company – the infamous Mafau'a – in a mass drop against the city's spire. They reinforced the Vostroyan 7th, 18th and 50th, who were on the point of collapse. Leaving the exhausted Vostroyans and what remained of the city's militia and Enforcers to hold the spire, the Excruciators swept down into the zombie-choked hive below, burning and purging as they went.

The agri-world of Sustace also saw a counter-attack. A combined force of battle-brothers from the Ultramarines, Raven Guard and several other Chapters fell upon the packs of daemon engines prowling the fields. Crop plains burned from the Threfian Valley to the banks of the Saintsflow, while gunships duelled Heldrakes above the seething swamplands and fortress-studded hills of the Crakewold.

Despite these displays of defiance, the Heretic advance continued. Typhus was still troubled by the wound dealt him by Canoness Joghilde on Alexistor, which would not heal despite all his unholy blessings. Regardless, he led the final assault against Fort Consacris on Magnifiria. In a battle that lasted seven full cycles, he ended the valiant last stand of the Metalican and Cadian forces here. Even as Magnifiria's last rad-scorched bastions burned, Typhus' agents on the prison planet of Oblekh triggered massed uprisings. Vials of parasitic phages turned the world's sanctified aquifers into lethal sources of contagion. Miasmic Malignifiers rose in profusion across the Oblekhan surface even as savage internecine conflict swept the subterranean penitentia.

Worse was to come for the Imperial defenders. Determined to prevent his enemies from regaining momentum, Lord Zeid led his Black Legion warband against the Adeptus Astartes on Sustace. Unleashing a sky-darkening flock of Heldrakes, Zeid swept the skies over the Crakewold free of foes and conquered the region's forts one at a time. With such a well defended base to operate from, Zeid's raiding bands and daemon engine packs launched raid after raid that cost the Imperial defenders dear.

With most of the Duralim System under his control, Typhus turned his eyes to the Metalican Gates. For many cycles already, the Traveller had daemonic entities and elite bands of Heretic Astartes spying upon the build-up of forces in these systems. He had believed at first that concerted counter-attacks must surely be in the offing. Realising now that his enemies had opted not to purge his invasion, but simply to sever the infected systems, Typhus was darkly amused.

'The corpse-worshippers cower behind their redoubts. They think to wait us out, as though the blessings of Nurgle were some meagre fleshly ailment to be shunned and denied. They underestimate the Grandfather's generosity...'

Unbeknownst to any but his closest lieutenants, Typhus had another ally to whom he had now sacrificed the peoples of seven worlds. To the entities of the empyrean the distances of realspace mean nothing. Thus, when Typhus' summons resonated through the warp, Rotigus Rainfather answered by unleashing a vast daemonic invasion spanning both the Feiror and Brezantius Systems.

Conventional offensives would have faced the combined fleet strength of Metalica's arks and Battlefleet Charadon's warships. Instead, the daemons burst from ragged portals directly into battle. They bypassed towering bastions and the deadly attentions of vast Metalican macro-weapons, surging from shadowed corners, ripping their way through the meat of psykers' minds and forcing wide fault lines in reality. On the bullet world of Laboritum, the skies turned the colour of brass and rang with the thunderous braying of unearthly hunting horns. Geysers of blood erupted from the world's industrial sumps, clotting and contorting into nightmarish gateways through which Khorne's daemons surged. On the feudal world of Felhelm, hidden pleasure-cults sacrificed themselves in an orgiastic rampage of self-destruction. The daemons of Slaanesh writhed free of their heaped remains even before the last cultist had stopped twitching. The prison moon of Unhallow transformed over nine cycles, its slab-sided punishment citadels mutating into mazes of flowing silver through which the Daemons of Tzeentch stalked prisoners and guards alike.

It was on the oceanic world of Fathom, in the Feiror System, that Rotigus Rainfather led his own fecund legions to war. Fathom was a vast planet covered pole-to-pole in deep and turbulent oceans. It was a strange world; no explorator had ever been able to locate an ocean floor or even a solid core beneath the waves. Moreover, despite centuries of industrial-scale extraction by Metalica's aqua-harvesting rigs, water levels never appeared to drop. Fathom's waters continued to teem with bioluminescent sea life, despite rampant pollution and the hungry attentions of macro-trawler fleets. Fathom had provided for the worlds and systems around it, its generosity seemingly endless, for thousands of years.

Small wonder, perhaps, that such a place attracted the Rainfather's rheumy eye. The invasion began with unprecedented rainstorms whose droplets fell oily and stinking across rigs and trawlers alike. Cycle after cycle the rains fell. Their touch corroded metal, thickened sea water to algae-clotted sludge, and seeded a dozen strains of parasitic, bacterial and swift-spreading sickness amongst Fathom's Human population. With no foe to fight, Skitarii and Elysian airborne regiments cast about in increasing desperation for the source of the curse afflicting Fathom. At last, they discovered a suppurating mass of putrescence congealing in Fathom's northern oceans. At its centre yawned an impossibly vast maw that convulsed and vomited, and from the slicks of stinking matter it ejected, the legions of Nurgle emerged.

By the time the epicentre of the threat was detected, it was already too late. Broad islands of quivering flab and diseased gruel calved from the greater mass, each bearing phalanxes of plague daemons southward with unnatural speed. Archaeopter squadrons fought through the endless storms to perform bombing runs on these grotesque islands, and succeeded in sinking several. However, they could not stop them all. Soon enough, Trawl-Fleet Khau-77-Vek was embroiled in a hideous battle for survival against Rotigus and his personal guard of Great Unclean Ones, while aqua-rigs nine, eleven and fifteen were repelling revolting oceanic assaults.

Wave after wave of attackers beat against two of the three Metalican Gates. Thanks to Lord Thraxoplasmox's stalled advance, Rhodior remained mostly untouched. Elsewhere, however, attack waves fell in the form of heretical cults, renegade warbands and Death Guard raiding forces. Oghlosmus Bilge led several squadrons of hand-picked plague ships into the Feiror System, his campaign of terror seeing the fortress world of Forthras bombarded from orbit and the system's deep-void monitor station destroyed during the battle of Felathia Sound.

Despite this constant pressure, the massed Metalican forces held strong. Their defence networks were formed from more than simply static fortifications; dedicated hosts of Cult Mechanicus zealots hastened to meet each offensive aboard fleets of Skorpius transports. Their counter-attacks made use of the overwhelming fire of ancient Ordinatus super-weapons and, while Imperial casualties were catastrophic and nigh unsustainable, few of their battle lines suffered more than localised breakthroughs. The closest they strayed toward disaster was on Brezantius' capital world of Kapston after an armoured salient by vectoriums of the 2nd Plague Company shattered opposing Dunecrawler formations and drove fifty miles deep into Metalican-held territory. Yet here the Iron Skulls Legion proved their worth, Princeps VanKassen orchestrating an elegant series of counter-attacks that pushed the heretics all the way back to their landing zones.

WAR OF REMISSION

The war on both the Feiror and Brezantius fronts hung in the balance. Indeed, for the Imperial forces the Feiror System campaign was becoming desperate. Yet had the Imperial commanders had time to pool their strategic intelligence they would have noted that, while the heretic onslaught was savage, no sign had been seen of Typhus or Lord Zeid. Furthermore, many of the invaders were either malevolent horrors for which no explanation could be found, or else renegades and cult chattel. Before such realisations could dawn, however, the strategic situation shifted dramatically in favour of the Imperial defenders.

In the Rhodior System, panic swept Imperial command sanctums as warp anomalies were detected on the system's edge. What emerged was not a fresh heretic onslaught, but instead a small yet powerful fleet of warships from Deimos. They were led by Cryptoemissarius Presumptor Uchultor L'au, a Deimosian Archmagos whose forces included

Skitarii macroclades armed with remarkable daemon-banishing weaponry and a Strike Cruiser bearing battle-brothers of the Grey Knights Chapter. L'au herself traded only the briefest of sentiments with the Metalicans before urging her forces into battle in the Chromyd and Feiror Systems. Those worlds beset by the daemonic menace saw the greatest fury unleashed, though reports abounded that the Deimosians and Grey Knights took to purging not only warpspawn, but also those who had fought against these empyric creatures.

Seizing the opening offered by the Deimosian counter-attack, Lieutenant-Heraldus Sheradane launched her own spearhead strike with the entirety of her remaining Battlefleet Charadon assets. After a punishing string of hit-and-run engagements over Forthras, Oghlosmus Bilge and his plague fleet were forced into retreat. Their withdrawal became a disorganised rout when – amidst the glimmering dusts of the Fhorvian Nebula – Bilge's ships were caught between the pursuing Imperial flotilla and the ragtag remains of Kaptin Dregbad's warships come looking for revenge. Bilge himself was slain, his flagship pounded apart by point-blank Kill Kroozer salvoes, and bare fragments of his once-perilous plague fleet escaped the system to flee back to Alumax.

It was in the Duralim System, however, that the most telling blow fell. It was only now, as the assembled military might of the Knights of House Raven surged from Thorlaf's Strait, that Typhus discovered his Word Bearer and Alpha Legion allies had betrayed him. Both he and Lord Zeid were caught out of position by the sudden onslaught of the Knights, who came in response to the Metalicans' astropathic distress call. Strung out across multiple war fronts, and with their reserves engaged in debased rituals amidst the ruins of Imperial civilisation, the heretic forces found themselves suddenly in danger of being overwhelmed.

Typhus, who had himself been leading unholy rites on the smouldering surface of Magnifiria, listened with mounting fury to reports brought by skulking daemonic messengers. Alexistor had been retaken in less than ten cycles by an overwhelming host of crimson-armoured House Raven war engines. On Resplendis, the besiegement of it's overrun hives was broken by a combined force of loyalist Space Marines and Raven Knight lances, and the Cystlings had fallen to Chapter Master Tanielu and Chief Librarian Ioanu during the battle for Saint Bardica's Sanctum. Furthermore, the Griffonica spaceport and all its surrounding bastions were now back in Imperial hands, meaning that heretic attempts to land a counter-invasion on Resplendis would be hampered by orbital batteries all the way from Hive Saturnys to the Polorian Ocean. Even the agri-world of Sustace – which just days earlier had been the Black Legion's for the taking – had been personally targeted by Princeps Grevan and his Companions. As of three cycles ago, word had it that the fortresses of the Crakewold had been shattered by wading giants and Lord Zeid had vanished amidst the mayhem.

Typhus had prodigious forces left at his disposal; he had been husbanding the curdled cream of his invasion force for the next stage of his invasion, which had yet to come to fruition. In truth, he had not cared one way or another whether the daemonic onslaught broke through the Metalican Gates, so long as it kept the enemy occupied while he laid his final preparations. However, with unexpected enemy reinforcements arriving in alarming strength and word of his favoured lieutenants beginning to fall, he took a course of action that wounded his pride as sorely as Joghilde had wounded his body. Typhus ordered a full retreat to the Alumax System, abandoning the fading daemonic legions, risen Chaos cults and scattered renegade warbands to face the full wrath of Imperial retribution alone.

DEATH ON DHAKU

They might not have followed Typhus' orders within the Lirac Sub-sector, but the warbands of Tsorr'Kanath and Yarron Thayl had not been idle. Calling their combined forces the Disciples, they had pursued a plan of their own. Operating from the deep void, the Disciples had acted as malevolent ghosts, methodically knocking out communications infrastructure and choking off supply lines throughout the Cyclos and M'bor Systems. All the while, they had taken pains to prevent any hint of their presence reaching the notice of House Raven or any of its allies, relying upon Typhus' invasion of the Obolis Sub to draw the Knights' attention elsewhere.

Transmitting incendiary sermons wreathed in occult encryption, Tsorr'Kanath triggered carefully seeded cult cells to rise up on two worlds in the Cyclos System and three others in the M'bor System. One such cult – the Brethren Awakened – stormed the prime factory-temple on the industrial world of Ghajas, successfully detonating its coreforge and immolating twenty miles' worth of manufactorum sprawl. The Eyes of the Gods cult led an uprising of psyker-mutants that plunged the gas refinery platforms of Asmul into anarchy. A doomsday cult calling themselves the Flensed successfully slew the Planetary Governor of Amahaz and even managed to trigger a small-scale daemonic incursion. Decades of careful preparation led to a half-dozen localised and swift-burning wars that could only be fought by the local Imperial defenders. Conquest was not the Disciples' intent. Rather, they wished only to keep Imperial eyes turned away from the mining world of Dhaku long enough for them to launch their own concerted invasion of that backwater planet.

It was also discovered that the Disciples' sleeper cult on Dhaku – those calling themselves They Who Hear The Whispers – had been exterminated to the last. An entirely different but equally insidious presence had claimed the planet for its own, and had prevented word of the sleeper cult's demise from reaching the Alpha Legion. Thus, as Chaos forces made planetfall amongst the upper bore-shrines and transit hubs of Dhaku-Amkha and Dhaku-Thusk, they were met not by worshipful supplicants, but with gunfire and blasts of mining lasers. The Genestealer Cult of the Innerwyrm had claimed the barren mine tunnels and macro-caverns that served as cold store meat larders for the entire M'bor System. They were determined to fight the Disciples for their world, and to deny them whatever it was that the Heretic Astartes had come here to achieve.

Princeps Grevan, high ruler of House Raven, scowled up at the craggy hill before him. He sat his throne mechanicum within the cockpit of his Knight Warden, Ferrous Maximus, drinking in the flood of strategic data picked up by its external sensoria. Information screeds and auto-intuitions surged through the nest of augmetic cabling that coupled Grevan's cyborg body with his Throne Mechanicum. The holy nature of his enlightenment filled him with rapture: he was one with the mighty war machine that bore him into battle, one with the archived electrogheists of his ancestors; he felt the cold of the swamp-water that slopped around his Knight's armoured shins; he saw in layered data-spectra as it did, and felt the furnace throb of it's generator-heart beating in his own chest.

Yes, Grevan gloried in his oneness with the holy machine. However, the information that unity sent burning through his silica synapses was less welcome. Ahead, the largest of the Crakewold's rocky hills rose proud of the steaming swamps. The fortress that stood atop it had formerly been a bastion of Imperial authority; now it was the lair of Akhorath Zeid, the battlements a nightmare of jutting icons daubed in blood with the sigils of the Black Legion.

Guns blazed atop the fortress' walls, hurling fury down upon the crackling ion shields of Grevan's Knights arrayed in besiegement pattern about him. The Princeps had not been long upon Sustace, no more than a handful of cycles, but he had seen enough of the atrocities wrought by Akhorath Zeid to last a lifetime. It was from this fortress that Zeid had coordinated his brutal campaign of conquest. Grevan meant to bury Abaddon's emissary beneath the cursed stones of the place, or else drag the degenerate out into the Omnissiah's light to face punishment.

Grevan twitched his fingers across noospheric controls. Orders flashed out to his hand-picked warriors, the Companions.

>> Form battleline.

>> Advance lockstep to my stride-velocity.

>> Strike down any tech-abominations that present, but Zeid is mine to offer up to the Omnissiah.

Confirmation runes flashed in his peripheral vision. But before he could urge his steed forward, discordant horns rang out from atop the fortress. Their blare was a daemon's scream, an overlapping cacophony laced with scrapcode that set Grevan's teeth on edge. The hill shuddered, a tectonic rumble that rolled down through it's rocks and set the swamp-waters dancing. Ferrous Maximus growled it's approval as the fortress' massive gates slid aside and an anarchic stampede of monstrous fleshmetal beasts burst from within.

>> Zeid and his menagerie seek to break our noose.

The exload came from Lady Aleka, pilot of Iron Thunder. It brought a thin smile to Grevan's lips.

>> They will fail.

With that, Grevan sent the impulse flashing out for his warriors to advance. Daemon Engines of every diabolical pattern thundered down the hillside to meet them. Wicked metal talons tore at the ground, propelling the abominations forward. And there, in their midst, mounted astride his revolting Helstalker, came Akhorath Zeid. He was borne amidst the tide of rampaging horrors, riding hard for the Knights' lines.

As the two armies closed with one another they let fly, unleashing punishing salvoes of artillery shells and energy beams. Knightly ion shields flickered electric blue as the blessings of the Omnissiah intercepted hurtling projectiles. Unholy lightnings of nightmare black leapt wildly around Zeid's daemon engines, detonating shells and unmaking las beams before they could hit home. Yet for all this, many shots punched through to send Knights toppling backward in flames or blast daemon engines apart in showers of smouldering wreckage.

Grevan maintained his steady advance, disdainful of the enemy's bestial headlong rush. What discipline was there in such an anarchic stampede? What order? The foe did not even seem to have a plan beyond hurling themselves into his followers' guns. As he played the howling fire of his avenger cannon across the enemy's lines, Grevan cogitated furiously. Such a maddened attack did not tally with the strategic cunning he had been warned to expect from Zeid. Unless...

Auspex chimes rang a warning within Grevan's cockpit. Riding the sway of his Knight's stride, he stabbed his mechadendrites into warded link-ports and directed secondary vid-feeds skyward. There, wallowing down through the clouds, he saw an incoming leviathan. The craft was vast, bigger than the fort itself. It's hull crawled with bone spikes and brass gargoyles that vomited trails of flame and smoke.

Grevan realised with a thrill of horror that it was coming down directly atop the battle.

Madness, whispered the gheists of his ancestors. *Even the servants of the Dark Gods would not be so reckless.*

They will crush their own warriors. The lander will founder upon the hillside like a ship driven onto rocks by a storm.

Yet was it madness, or audacity Grevan wondered? The only thing that separated one from the other was failure or success. He didn't intend to give his quarry time to settle the outcome.

>> Companions, fire protocol Omnis-Annihalor. Clear me a path.

To Grevan's right, a pair of Maulerfiends launched themselves upon the Knight Errant of Sir Ikoras and bore the war engine backward. From behind him, volleys of rockets and explosive shells fell in a coordinated rain that blew apart a scuttling Defiler and reduced a trio of Venomcrawlers to sparking wreckage. Grevan pushed his steed hard, silencing topple-warnings and thermo-admonitions as they moaned through the cockpit. With a thought he fired his gatling cannon, it's hail of shells sending a fleshmetal monster reeling away aflame. With another he tilted his ion shield in time to catch an explosive shell against it. Ferrous Maximus loped on through the billowing cloud of sulphur-flame as the shell detonated.

Suddenly Zeid was there, barely ten knightly strides ahead. Even as Grevan bade auto-targeters lock onto the Lord Discordant, Zeid's steed propelled itself into an agile leap. It slammed talons-first into the Knight Paladin of Lady Ruxena, clinging to the war engine's torso like a revoltingly outsized parasite. Then it drove a dataspike proboscis through the Knight's helm-plate. Lord Zeid reared back in his saddle and stabbed with his chainglaive, driving that too through the adamantine flesh of his prey. Ruxena's Knight reeled, fighting to stay balanced with the extra weight of the Daemon Engine clinging to it. Grevan fought for a shot but enemy and ally were tangled too tightly together. He felt a terrible draining sensation from ahead, a feeling as though the motive force were being tugged from his veins like iron filings towards a magnet. Then black lightning erupted, coursing from Zeid's chainglaive and dancing across Ruxena's Knight.

A terrible scream burst through Grevan's seldom-used vox, Lady Ruxena's fleshvoice unfamiliar to his ear. Her agony was easy enough to discern amidst a roaring squall of scrapcode static. Her Knight shuddered and fell still, trapped upright in death by it's fused knee-joints.

Princeps Grevan spat a binharic oath and launched a salvo of rockets at Lord Zeid. Yet the Lord Discordant brandished his weapon, dragging the black lightning back like a web from his slain victim and sending it arcing through the air to detonate Grevan's munitions. The Princeps urged his steed forward, but at that moment a dark shadow fell across Ferrous Maximus. The lander was now perilously close. Proximity alarms howled. The damned thing was coming down right on top of them!

>> Back, full retreat, extract to safe remove.

Even as he sent the order he was turning his own steed, urging Ferrus Maximus into a swift lope across the rocky hillside. He cursed to himself as he went, feeling his chance at vengeance slipping away. It sickened him to leave Akhorath Zeid alive, but Grevan was a servant of the Machine God and thus protocol and logic came foremost in all things. He would not risk himself or his Companions just to see the Lord Discordant slain.

Grevan kept moving. He was gratified to see that his nobles had reacted with commendable skill and speed to his commands. Still, not all of them were able to escape. The punishing downdraught of the lander's thrusters all but drove Ferrous Maximus to its knees. Surely they were all about to be annihilated as the craft exploded in a fiery crash landing. Yet at the last moment the lander's hull rippled obscenely. Writhing masses of fleshmetal tendrils slithered from countless rents across the craft's underside. Most coiled downward, slamming into the hillside, cushioning its final descent and holding it level. A few lashed spitefully out, winding around the Knights of House Raven to crush and throttle.

Grevan's ancestors howled at him to turn and address, to have his Knights bring to bear everything they had upon the heretic landing craft. The Princeps knew this for the vainglory of those already beyond death's reach. At best they might actually wreck the heretical craft and be consumed by its death throes. At worst they would spend their fury for little gain, all the while being torn apart by its monstrous tendrils and the bursts of balefire leaping from its gargoyle maws.

Instead, the Princeps led his warriors in a disciplined retreat. They took the brunt of the flames on their ion shields as the heretic lander fired it's thrusters and rose, majestic and monstrous, back into the skies. They held the field, sure in the knowledge that they had broken the last stronghold of Black Legion resistance on Sustace.

Yet Akhorath Zeid had escaped their grasp. Grevan swore then and there that the Lord Discordant would not do so forever.

TYPHUS

HOST OF THE DESTROYER HIVE

Master of the *Terminus Est* and the lord of the Death Guard's 1st Plague Company, Typhus is amongst the most favoured of all the champions of Nurgle. His mind is a throbbing canker, fat with potent warp energies. His body is a hulking monstrosity of melded flesh and armour, raddled by lethal poxes and hosting one of Nurgle's most grotesque plagues.

For all his rancid blessings, it is Typhus' indomitable will that makes him so unutterably fearsome. It was he who forced his entire Legion into the service and worship of Nurgle during the dark days of the Horus Heresy. Typhus is also one of the few lords of the Death Guard who has truly pursued his own path away from the rule of the Daemon Primarch Mortarion. For millennia he has journeyed the galaxy at the head of his own personal plague fleet, captaining it from the command deck of the hideous *Terminus Est*, and in all that time Typhus has truly acknowledged only one master: Nurgle himself. Typhus fights in part to continue the Long War against the Imperium that he despises so utterly, partly to offer sacrifice and praise to his malevolent deity, and partly to further his own boundless ambitions. This lethal tri-lobe of intent lies at the heart of everything that Typhus does, and rare is the day that he allows any – even his Primarch gene-sire – to command him otherwise.

The voice of Abaddon the Despoiler, however, Typhus heeds. Some believe that this is because Typhus respects the manner in which Abaddon continues to defy daemonhood and the gods themselves, showing himself to possess a strength of purpose that surmounts even Typhus' own. Others believe that it is because Typhus yearns to give his loyalty to a new Warmaster, one who will not fail as Horus did. The most pernicious whispers hint that maybe Typhus has another agenda, that in doing Abaddon's bidding and demonstrating to him the might of the worshippers of Nurgle he in fact serves the Plague God in trying to at last tempt the Despoiler into his singular worship.

Whatever the truth, Typhus brings terrifying might to the battle for the Charadon sector. As a battlefield combatant he is amongst the most terrifying of the Dark Gods' champions to bestride the galaxy. Clad in hulking Terminator plate thickened by unholy and fecund blessings, he is tremendously hard to injure and is utterly inured to pain. Typhus wields his immense manreaper with such skill and speed that it is as though the weapon is an extension of his own limbs – so long has he fought and slain with this foul blade, that might as well be true. Those who stand against Typhus also face the dread power of his mind, for he is a powerful psyker whose abilities have been rendered all the more malignant by the opening of the Great Rift. And then, of course, there is the Destroyer Hive. This obscene plague takes the form of an ever-churning hive of insectile entities that burst forth from dripping funnels atop Typhus' back and shoulders to engulf their victims in a droning mass. Those not slain outright by this horror are left so virulently diseased that their existences are invariably short and horribly painful.

Yet Typhus is more than just a mighty warrior. He is also a keen strategist, and a walking vector for one of Nurgle's most monstrous creations – the walking plague. Typhus knows well how to construct sector-wide battle plans, how to employ the occult powers and unholy plagues of his chosen god to confound blinkered mortal foes. In short, he is as tremendously dangerous a threat as the Charadon Sector has ever faced.

THE TERMINUS EST

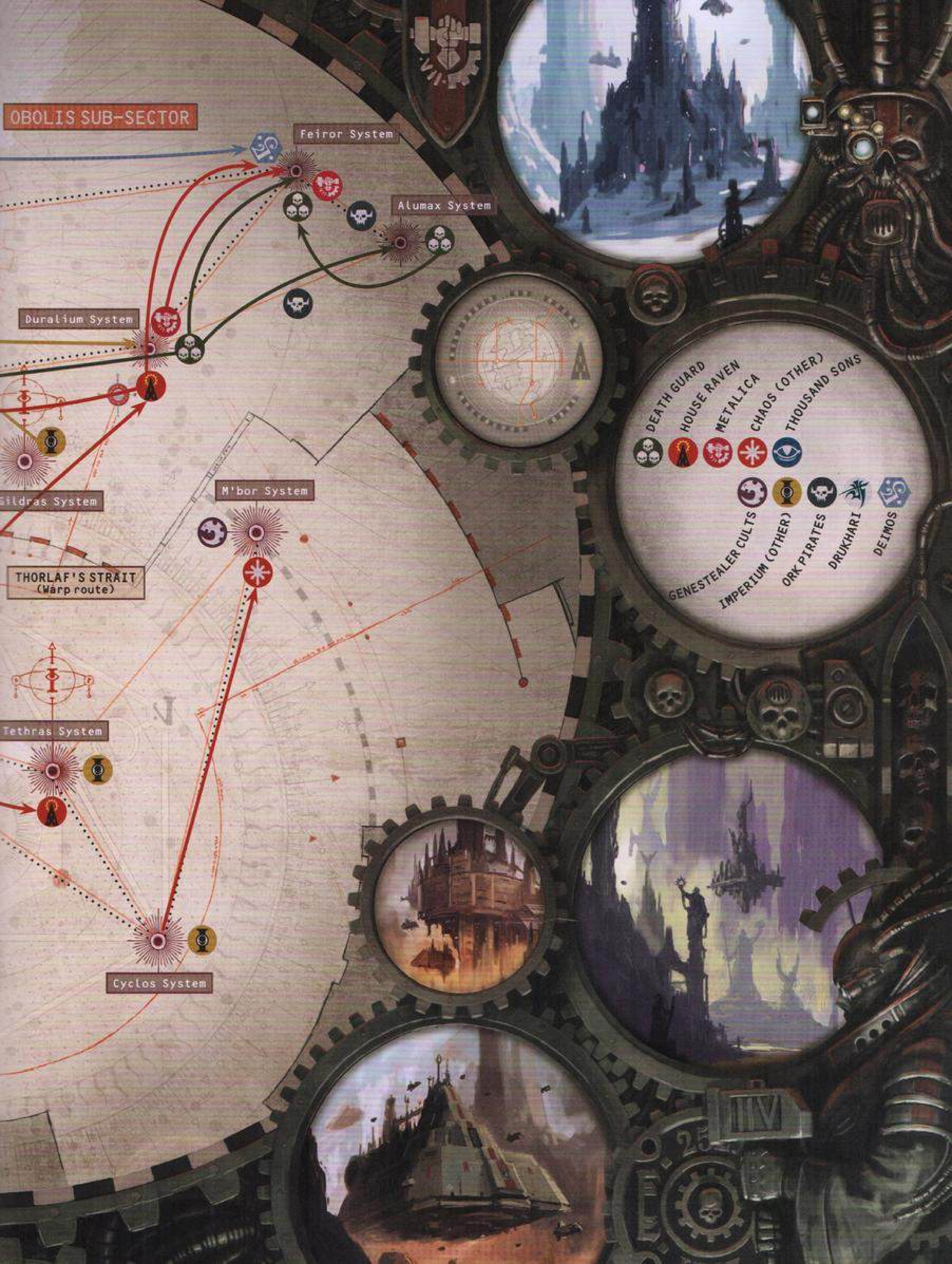
Typhus' personal flagship is a rot-raddled abomination of vast size and gruesome aspect known as the *Terminus Est*. It is whispered that this enormous void-borne assault carrier dates back to the very dawn of the Imperium – perhaps even earlier. What manner of ancient machine spirit might lurk within it none but Typhus knows for sure. Whatever the *Terminus Est* was and whatever glories it won before the touch of Nurgle is irrelevant. Now it is a plague-saturated leviathan whose damnation is as absolute as that of its master.

The *Terminus Est* might be irredeemably corrupt, but that corruption has only transformed an already formidable warship into a terrifying nightmare of a vessel. The ship's pox-laden hull is thick with biological matter and diseased growths. These absorb the impact of even the most powerful enemy weaponry, and appear capable of healing damage at an unholy rate. It's batteries spit salvoes of massive blight-shells wound about with hexegrammatic curses and seething with corruption. Even a single such projectile striking home against an enemy craft can seed swift-spreading plague-strains that rot crews, rust hulls and reduce the target to a drifting, dissolving hulk. The *Terminus Est*'s lance batteries are similarly unclean, imbued with dark sorcery to leave contagion and horror wherever they strike home.

Just as the greatest threats in battling a diseased enemy come from the infections they carry, so it is with the *Terminus Est* also. For all its firepower, the assault carrier's greatest strength lies in the heretical warriors that crowd its arming decks and the malignant lifeforms that infest its hull. The former comprise Typhus' favoured vectoriums, elite Death Guard warriors whose spearhead is ever formed of hulking Blightlord Terminators. Plague zombies in their millions also cram the ship's rusted pen-decks, ready to be released upon any foe foolish enough to board the *Terminus Est*. Then there are the many empyric phages, poxes and blights that inhabit the ship from stem to stern, not to mention it's boiling clouds of plague flies and lung-clotting spores. Attempting to board the *Terminus Est* is a death sentence, and even engaging it over the vast distances of void warfare can lead to swift and terminal infection.

STELLAR SIEGE

In response to the heretic invasion, Metalica concentrated its forces within the three systems known as the Metalican Gates. This left scattered Imperial armies to fight on, abandoned beyond the 'line in the sand' drawn by Fabricator General Khleng. The traitors met this new challenge with a mixture of daemon summoning and attritional warfare. Yet the invading hosts had reckoned without the sudden onset of Imperial reinforcements…


OBOLIS SUB-SECTOR
Feiror System
Alumax System
Duralium System
Sildras System
M'bor System
THORLAF'S STRAIT
(Warp route)
Tethras System
Cyclos System
DEATH GUARD
HOUSE RAVEN
METALICA
CHAOS (OTHER)
THOUSAND SONS
GENESTEALER CULTS
IMPERIUM (OTHER)
ORK PIRATES
DRUKHARI
DEIMOS

MET/CI/CHRON – 941LRC-989LRC

REMISSION AND RESURGENCE

The Obolis Sub-sector had been brutalised by a war that had consumed untold lives. Entire worlds were tainted beyond redemption, or reduced to irradiated hellscapes. Yet the defenders believed they had weathered the worst of the storm. With heretic forces confined to the Alumax and Chromyd Systems, a counter-assault would surely follow.

For almost a hundred Metalican cycles, the defenders of the Obolis Sub-sector had known hardship and sacrifice. Their skill at arms had been tested to the extreme in battle. Their faith had been tried more sorely still, by everything from the onslaught of unnatural abominations to the extreme deprivations of fighting in rad-blasted or disease-riddled wastelands. Entire regiments of Astra Militarum and macroclades of Metalican cyborgs had been exterminated to the last, their banners lost beneath mounds of filthy corpses, their final tales of heroism or horror never to be told. Titans of the Iron Skulls sprawled, shattered and rusting amidst the wreckage of the hab-blocks and war engines they had crushed to ruin as they fell. Adeptus Astartes warriors of a dozen Chapters and more lay amidst the battle-slain, their flesh so infested with malignancies that their precious gene-seed could never be recovered. Battle Sisters had been martyred fit to fill the prayers of their surviving comrades for centuries to come. Imperial warships hung shattered in the void, the last fires of their demise still flickering like cinders in the dark.

Yes, a steep price had been paid by the defenders for their victory, yet victory it seemed to be. On battlefronts from the fortified factory-temples of Laboritum to the volcanic jungle-isles of Motulu, the slime-spattered rigs of Fathom to the blackened macro-fields of Sustace, Imperial standards flew proud amidst ragged but heartfelt cheers. Localised conflicts still flared and died throughout the sub-sector, of course; dug-in Chaos Cultists continued to fight guerilla actions despite their masters' abandonment of them; renegade warbands launched piratical raids, their leaders caring nothing for what they saw as Typhus' craven retreat; metaphysical plagues ran rampant upon the worst-ravaged worlds, triggering localised outbreaks of violence, mutation and death. Still, many Imperial commanders believed that surely now was the time to press the advantage, to pursue the invaders' forces and harry them to destruction. Perhaps they were right. Matters were not so simple, however, not least because of the catastrophic damage done to the region's infrastructure. Between the raging warp and the devastation wrought upon many logistics and communications centres, attempting to coordinate any form of centralised Imperial strategy was virtually impossible. Just as they should have been striking hardest, the Imperial defenders instead faltered, the commanders of each system and each world pursuing their own, perilously fragmented agendas.

DECENTRALISED ACTION

Thanks to the heroic efforts of the Sabhiran Swords, the entire Chromyd front had been deadlocked for almost thirty cycles. Lord Thraxoplasmox, unable to completely uproot his hidden prey and obsessively unwilling to simply bypass them, had fed vastly disproportionate forces into the conflict in Sabhira. The death world's jungles had rotted to diseased slurry and it's last, hard-pressed defenders now battled both plague and impossible odds, but their self-sacrifice had ensured that the Rhodior System was virtually untouched by heretic forces. Under Cryptoemissarius L'au of forge world Deimos, a powerful counter-offensive was in the offing. Khleng's Betrayal was still raw for the officers of the Astra Militarum and Navis Imperialis, and thus the Metalican macroclades were all-but-excluded as the planning of this counter-push reached its conclusion.

The battered defenders of the Brezantius and Feiror Systems – those two Metalican Gates so brutally assailed by the daemonic hordes – focussed their efforts more upon consolidation than anything else. Brezantius was still bedevilled by lingering heretic forces. A ragged coalition of Heretic Astartes under Gharax the Shatterer had dug themselves into the Amalorian Trench-sprawl near Kapston's equatorial siege-belt; more lives were lost each cycle as elements of the Catskorian 88th, the Orvari 13th and the Pelorian 110th Armoured Regiments attempted to dig them out. Indeed, the Iron Skulls Legion – on the verge of taking ship for the Duralim System – was forced to divert in order to break the ongoing deadlock with their colossal firepower.

THE RUST SETS IN

No invaders had broken through the Metalican Gates. The logic-purity of Khleng's cogitational fortress remained absolute. Still, all was not as it should be in the Metalican System. Holy data flowed through his augmetic multi-cerebra from every corner of his domain. There were the rumours of walking plague on Ferrovigilum, spread by those who worked upon the transcription of an Astropath's vision. There were reports of slave uprisings and electro-corruption of labour servitors on the quarry world of Plenitas. Maniple upon maniple of Skitarii had been required to quell the largest of these outbreaks, and losses of tertiary-grade and higher organic units – not to mention interference with the planet's sacred quotas – had reached unacceptable levels. Most unsettling of all was the notable spike in data-exorcisms throughout the system. Khleng was not so foolish as to interrogate any of the deviant machine spirits in person, lest their corruption taint his divine cogitational architecture. Yet he meditated long upon the nature of these techno-spiritual intrusions, for they should not have been possible. He was all too aware of the Dark Mechanicum, of the existence of their forbidden machines and infernal datagheists. On the other hand, the Fabricator General's belief in the purity of Metalica's industrial output, it's hallowed noosphere and auto-sanctified engines was absolute. These were physical expressions of the Omnissiah's divinity. To suggest any form of corruption could gain purchase upon them was heresy that Khleng was wholly unwilling to entertain. Thus the Fabricator General meditated at the heart of his forge-shrine, trapped in a recursive logic-loop of his own creation as he once again attempted to rationalise variables he viewed as factual impossibility. Obsessing over minutiae, he continued to de-prioritise strategic missives from elsewhere in the sub-sector. So did the cycles slip by, and Imperial hopes for swift retribution fade.

The Feiror System had been hit hardest of all. The response of its surviving rulers and defenders was now hampered not only by the losses suffered, but also by ever more widespread purges led by Inquisitorial agents. Citing malefic contact and spiritual contagion, these sinister figures moved from one war zone to the next with black-armoured Tempestus Scions in tow. Fields of crackling pyres and betrayed heroes burned in their wake.

Despite this, defenders in both systems reported discovering revolting Death Guard structures proliferating like fungus in every foetid underhive and corpse-choked wasteland. They destroyed some of these Miasmic Malignifiers, and had communication been more centralised a wider campaign against them would perhaps have been orchestrated. As it was, however, many of the grotesque devices were simply marked quarantined in favour of more pressing matters.

The Duralim System was the most prepared to send pursuit after the heretic forces, for here Princeps Grevan and his Knights of House Raven held sway. Together with the leaders of surviving Adeptus Astartes contingents, heroines of the Order of Our Martyred Lady and a handful of surviving Astra Militarum officers, Grevan had forged the Duralim Court of Defence. This body had coordinated cycle-by-cycle purgation actions to stabilise the system while massing a formidable invasion force ready to hit the Alumax System. Bound by oath and protocol, Princeps Grevan awaited word from Fabricator General Khleng to give permission for him to proceed. Cycles ticked past, but still no word was forthcoming.

LAST STAND IN ALUMAX

It was Chapter Master Tanielu who at last lost patience. Knowing Grevan would not support him, he nevertheless marshalled all Adeptus Astartes in the Duralim System. Designating them Strike Force Scourge, he led elements of Ultramarines, Sons of Medusa, Iron Knights, Obsidian Jaguars and others to the Alumax System. The Space Marines found themselves faced with a system seething with corruption. Strike Force Scourge launched immediate hostilities against St Bartolph's Throne and Borthreas. Though they eliminated prominent Chaos champions and disrupted heretic control of both worlds, they were battling impossible numbers. Forced into a one-sided hit-and-run war, Tanielu dispatched swift frigates bearing warnings toward the Metalica System; the Chaos worshippers had rallied swiftly in the Alumax System, and were far from beaten.

Typhus had not been idle. Since its conquest during the early stages of the war, St Bartolph's Throne had played host to a vast coven of heretic sorcerers. They had laboured night and day within a mountainous plague fane constructed from the rubble of the planet's cities and the diseased corpses of their inhabitants. Typhus had originally intended their months-long ritual to serve as his final hammer-blow to force open the Metalican Gates, but it would instead give the heretic invaders a way back into the war, and a chance to take their enemies by surprise.

After the retreat, even as his lieutenants consolidated their positions around the worlds of the Alumax System, Typhus had knelt for thrice seven days in psychic communion with the emissaries of Nurgle. This vigil had brought him dark revelation. He knew that Lord Zeid lived, though where the Black Legion champion now lurked or why he had not yet rejoined the fight was unclear. Typhus discovered the truth of the Disciples' treachery, and resolved that – once the war for Metalica was won – he would have his vengeance. Crucially, he also gleaned arcane lore. The alterations to the numerological formulae of his grand ritual were offered as a blessing from the Grandfather, a show of the Plague God's continuing faith in his Traveller.

So enlightened, Typhus gathered an overwhelming force of Death Guard to his side. The Terminator elite of his 1st Plague Company formed the core of this force, reinforced by a further six hand-picked vectoriums. The remaining Plague Fleet warships bore this force, as well as thrice as many more daemon engines and renegade warbands. Their target was monitor station Meta-Obol Gamma 4, the last bastion of Imperial resistance holding out amidst the Skothian Grav-reefs. Even as Typhus' host bore down upon Meta-Obol Gamma 4, so the repulsive rituals within the plague fane on St Bartolph's Throne redoubled in fervour.

Forewarned by the visions of Chief Librarian Ioanu, Chapter Master Tanielu redoubled the efforts of Strike Force Scourge, who sought to break through the Nurgle-worshipping hordes to reach the plague fane. At the same time he commanded any Space Marine forces close enough to reinforce Meta-Obol Gamma 4; Typhus' intentions were unclear, but such sudden and decisive activity had to presage something terrible.

On St Bartolph's Throne, dozens of heroic Space Marines fell to pierce the sevenfold defence lines around the plague fane. Their gunships raked the heretic lines with rockets and bombs as jump troops dropped directly into the fight, firing until their munitions ran dry or they were smashed from the air. Armoured transports bore Tanielu, Ioanu and their Mafau'a veterans across the rotting Thremas Bridge and into the very shadow of the plague fane. There they were met by Rotigus Rainfather and a shambling host of his daemons, returned to seek vengeance for their defeat upon Fathom. Battle raged as fresh reinforcements poured into the fight on both sides, and the steps of the plague fane soon ran with blood and slime.

Amidst the Skothian Grav-reefs battle was joined first by warring void craft. The Imperial flotilla was almost laughably outnumbered, yet their shipmasters knew the few safe routes through the heaving gravitational forces surrounding their monitor station. So was the *Poxmulch* lured into a gravitic anomaly, the plague ship bursting messily as it was crushed. The Imperial frigate *Divinitus Aeternum* managed to bait the *Hulking Menace* and the *Repugantor* into a shuddering grav channel that tore both ships slowly apart, though not before they had hammered the plucky frigate apart with their guns. The shipmistress of the *Justice* turned her ravaged craft into an impromptu fireship and used it to drive the *Soulrender* into another reef, destroying both craft. Then came the *Terminus Est*. Unstoppable in its might, the assault carrier swept aside the last flickers of Imperial resistance to land a vast invading horde upon the monitor station. Lieutenant Sarthio of the Raven Guard led a masterful ambush on Typhus' forces, but even this was nought but a delaying action. By the time Typhus stepped over Sarthio's headless corpse, there could be no mistake; Meta-Obol Gamma 4 had fallen.

Typhus then oversaw the implantation of his final Malignifiers: immensely bloated units pulsing with dark sorcery. As they took root, so the monstrous devices completed a star-spanning mycelial network whose diseased roots thrust into the warp throughout the Obolis Sub. With a crescendo of gargling screams the denizens of the plague fane completed their ritual as the sun set bloody over St Bartolph's Throne one last time. From within the fane erupted a horrifying hurricane of rot and ruin, from which the last surviving Space Marines were forced to flee toward their shuddering gunships. Many did not make it away alive. Those who did looked down from their fleeing vessels in horror upon a world collapsing from within, consumed

FINAL DHAKU

On Dhaku, in the M'bor System, a subterranean war raged. After their initial shock at being ambushed at their landing sites, the Disciples rallied furiously and drove the Genestealer Cults back on every front. Tsorr'Kanath and his Word Bearers wrought a summoning ritual that trapped thousands of cult militia within the Ukharu Consortium carcass silos and saw them hunted to destruction by Khornate daemons. Yarron Thayl had his most devious operatives break into the enemy's vox network. Though they could not interfere with the foe's telepathic communications, still their counter-espionage saw the Alpha Legionnaires able to outmanoeuvre and ultimately defeat the cultists in the Rhassa Consortium habsprawls and at Deep-stair Thirteen. When the Disciples captured the Ceraphus macro-generatorum complex they cut power to several thousand miles' worth of tunnels and cavern-sprawls. Countless cult faithful suffocated or froze to death in the sudden darkness. For all this, the Cult of the Innerwyrm fought for every tunnel, cavern, sprawl and deep-stair. Mining vehicles churned new channels to erupt into Chaos-held positions from unexpected quarters. Purestrain Genestealers burrowed into carcasses amidst the silos, from which they could pounce on unsuspecting Chaos Space Marines and tear them apart before skittering away into ventilation ducts. Chanting masses of cult militia stood their ground against even the most overwhelming attacks, finally bringing cavern roofs down upon themselves and as they were being overrun by their enemies. The Disciples found resistance stiffest as they at last pushed down into Dhaku's Coreworks. These were the planet's most recently bored mine-shafts, yet they had cut into Dhaku's ancient structural strata. The Disciples fought the Innerwyrm's elite soldiery through a mishmash of prehistoric temples and archeotech tunnels, intermingled with the brutish industries of modern Imperial prospecting. Though their foes fought all the harder, the Disciples rejoiced for they were close now to their prize. The cult's furious resistance only indicated that they knew it too.

by pestilential magics months in the conjuring. The death of St Bartolph's Throne was apocalyptic, but it was only the beginning; the true implications of Typhus' grand ritual were yet to manifest.

MALIGNANCY UNLEASHED

The results of Typhus' grand conjuration were twofold. First came the surge of unholy energies that raced through the empyric mycelia connecting the Miasmic Malignifiers. Their rancid furnaces roared bright. Spore-thick smoke and roaring fly-swarms billowed from their chimneys while virulent daemon-bacteria erupted from their valves and pipes. Planets throughout the Chromyd, Brezantius, Feiror, and Rhodior Systems experienced sudden eruptions of Nurgle's foulest plagues. Upon countless battlefields, a poisonous green light bloomed in the rotting eye sockets of the numberless dead. Immense pyres toppled and macro-mausolea rang with groans and screams as the innumerable dead staggered upright as one across the Obolis Sub-sector. Within hours of Typhus' victory on Meta-Obol Gamma 4, vast swathes of exhausted, demoralised and dangerously outnumbered Imperial defenders were besieged by endless swarms of shambling neverdead. Temporary encampments became churning bloodbaths. Field hospitals and bunkers were transformed into desperately-held strongpoints. Chaos reigned as unnatural plagues ravaged Astra Militarum, Adeptus Astartes and Skitarii alike. Only the Adepta Sororitas and Grey Knights seemed resistant to Nurgle's entropic touch, and only the survivors of Strike Force Scourge knew of the second piece of sorcerous devilry Typhus had worked.

The rot spreading from the core of St Bartolph's Throne had consumed the entire planet and all those who remained on the surface, but it did not stop there. Black tendrils spread out into realspace, while at the planet's core the festering pit bored deeper and deeper until it tore through the flesh of realspace. Like some planet-sized maggot gnawing its way through time and space, Typhus' spell gouged a temporary tunnel through the warp. Had every Imperial vox net and astropathic channel not already been choked with panic and despair, the sudden eruption of distress calls from the Metalica System would have made clear to all where the tunnel's exit-point emerged.

Only the defenders of the Rhodior System had the breathing space to register the astropathic howls. Yet Cryptoemissarius L'au had launched her counter-attack into the Chromyd System just three cycles earlier. The greater portion of Rhodior's armed forces were currently in warp transit, unreachable by any form of communication. With the warp raging worse than ever, there was little hope of knowing when – or even if – they had reached their destination, and slimmer chance still of recalling them to aid the defence of Metalica.

The situation throughout War Zone Charadon had been reversed with shocking speed and synchrony. Where just cycles earlier the Imperial forces had been in the ascendant and the heretic invasion in remission, now the defenders teetered upon the brink of disaster. In the Alumax System, Typhus' Plague Fleet mustered with the immense god-ships of the Legio Morbidus and hosts of lesser heretic craft that swarmed thick as flies in the void. With *Terminus Est* leading the way, this dread horde surged through the roiling rot-hole in reality and out of its festering counterpart, directly into the Metalica System. Upon Metalica itself, a million brass bells tolled while sanctified fog-horns boomed out the ominous call to arms. Fabricator General Khleng was struck by a calamitous spike of augur-data and howling choral alarms that blew out three of his lesser cogitational matrices and nearly stopped his biological heart. Dragging his smouldering and twitching bulk from the depths of his sanctum, alert at last to the peril, the Fabricator General sought to coordinate a response. Yet it's seeming impossibility hampered his mental process, and with every minute that passed the situation spiralled further out of control.

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>>>BROAD CHANNEL DIRECTIVE
NOOSPHERIC EXLOAD

>>>AUTHORISE: KHLENG,
ALPHA-PRIME-ALPHA

>>>PRIORITISE: MAXIMAL
PRIMARY

IMPERATIVE: MUSTER UPON
THE METALICA SYSTEM WITH
ALL AVAILABLE MILITARY
ASSETS AS A MATTER OF
PRIMARY URGENCY. STANDARD
OPERATIONAL DOCTRINA TO
BE REPLACED WITH MAXIMAL
URGENCY INLOAD DIRECTIVE
ALPHA-PRIME-ALPHA. HERETIC
FORCES CANNOT BE PERMITTED
TO TAINT THE AUTO-PURITY
OF [STATIC] SYSTEM THROUGH
USE [STATIC] THE [STATIC]


***ALARUM
PURITAS!!***SCRAPCODE
DETECTED!!***NOOSPHERIC
CORRUPTION 7%***NOOSPHERIC
CORRUPTION
14%***NOOSPHERIC
CORRUPTION 21%***


>>>ATTEMPTING TO SEVER
CORRUPTED NODAL LINK….

>>>ATTE:PTI7G TO SE%ER
CO#>UPT7D N7DA[ >IN7…

>>>777 777 777 777 777 777
777
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The Metalican gun barge Proximedes-Ajax rumbled through the interplanetary void. It was a blocky craft, little more than a command sanctum, life support systems, auto-shrines and an enginarium agglomerated like mechanical coral about the enormous structure of twinned galvanic macro-carronades.

Aboard the ship's command sanctum, Vanguard Alpha Lhor-Vex-57 strode her endless patrol route. She paced steady as a metronome, her metal feet eliciting rhythmic clangs from the deck plating as she circled the central command pit with its banks of cogitators and muttering Tech-Priests. Directly opposite her, across the gulf of the pit, she could see Rho-Theta-91 maintaining his own patrol anti-clockwise to hers. Every two minutes and sixteen seconds they would pass by one another, before circling out for another patrol. Such was the way of her sacred duty, and it was one of which Lhor-Vex-57 never tired. She held her radium carbine at ready-lock across her chest, never relaxing her posture nor resenting its weight. She was a rotating component in the blessed machine that was her ship's bridge. The completeness of her purpose, the certainty of her place within a wider and Omnissiah-blessed whole, brought Lhor-Vex-57 a sense of absolute contentment.

> *Nine hours thirty-seven minutes seven seconds until convergence with Munis Ferrum high orbit*, Rho-Theta-91 sent to her through the noosphere.

> *Confirm*, she replied. *Significance?*

> *Positive affirmation only*, he replied, the cant of his screed managing to convey a certain self-effacing amusement at the redundancy of his own sending. *Despite the heretics' most stringent efforts, Metalica System continues to operate with the blessed purity of full efficiency. Vassal System reports portray the enemy forces in inevitable retreat.*

> *You frame the punctuality of* Proximedes-Ajax *and* Proximedes-Cerrus' *void-patrol as an abstract embodiment of this continued sanctity*, sent Lhor-Vex-57. *Comprehension. Approval. A fitting conceptualisation. So do we see the will of the Omnissiah in all things.*

Further discussion was curtailed as binharic alarms chattered through the bridge. The sodium-bright lumen pulsed crimson. Secondary data-tethers snaked down from ports in the ceiling, clunking into the spinal ports of the Tech-Priests working with sudden fervour at their cogitators below. Lhor-Vex-57 felt the noosphere pulse with augmentary data. To her surprise, she also detected trace static and excess code-fragments, purged swiftly but still disquieting by their mere intrusion. Below, in the command pit, cogitators clattered and binharic prayers intertwined as the Tech-Priests worked to discover what was awry.

Lhor-Vex-57 initiated her own threat-pattern analysis. She swept the internal noosphere and, finding no hazard returns within the physical or dataspectral architecture of the ship, turned her regard outward. Her request to commune with *Proximedes-Ajax*'s external vid-feeds was swiftly granted. Lhor-Vex-57's vision was filled with the black immensity of the void, the infinite pinpricks of light representing stars beyond even her ability to count. A wide swathe of digital interference censored the unclean sight of the Cicatrix Maledictum, and she was thankful for that. Orienting her perspective, Lhor-Vex-57 pinpointed the distant red glint of Munis Ferrum thousands of miles beyond the ship's prow. Cycling runes helped her discern the *Proximedes-Cerrus*, their sister gun barge on this patrol, a mere fifty miles off the port bow.

She also discerned something else out there, something that did not cogitate. Beyond the *Proximedes-Cerrus* a patch of space appeared distorted, warping as though she viewed it through a fisheye lens. Lhor-Vex-57 requested magnification on that patch. To her surprise, the machine spirit congregation of the external feeds blurted a confusion of broken code back at her and failed to comply.

Her request was rendered null a moment later as Lhor-Vex-57 realised the patch of distorted space was rapidly expanding. It resembled a split in the skin of realspace, she realised, a lesion through which a poisonous yellow light spilled. Recognition protocols and empyric alerts chimed warnings through the noosphere as the phenomenon expanded still further. Data-inloads informed Lhor-Vex-57 that her ship's Magos-navilocus – the closest such a craft had to more conventional naval shipmasters – had ordered the *Proximedes-Ajax* to third-tier alert protocols. The air shimmered and thickened as sanctified vents spewed incense that danced with glittering electro-conductive motes. The haze would have impaired mere biological crew; for the faithful of the Machine God, it instead accelerated their data-transfer through the local noosphere, while simultaneously warding them against malefic scrapcode or datagheists.

Lhor-Vex-57 felt the deck thrum beneath her feet. She recognised the reassuring reverberation as the machine spirits of the galvanic macro-carronades awoke. She offered a swift binharic prayer of thanks to the Omnissiah for the bellicose protection of those spirits. Threat augurs raked local space, while a constant chatter of binharic

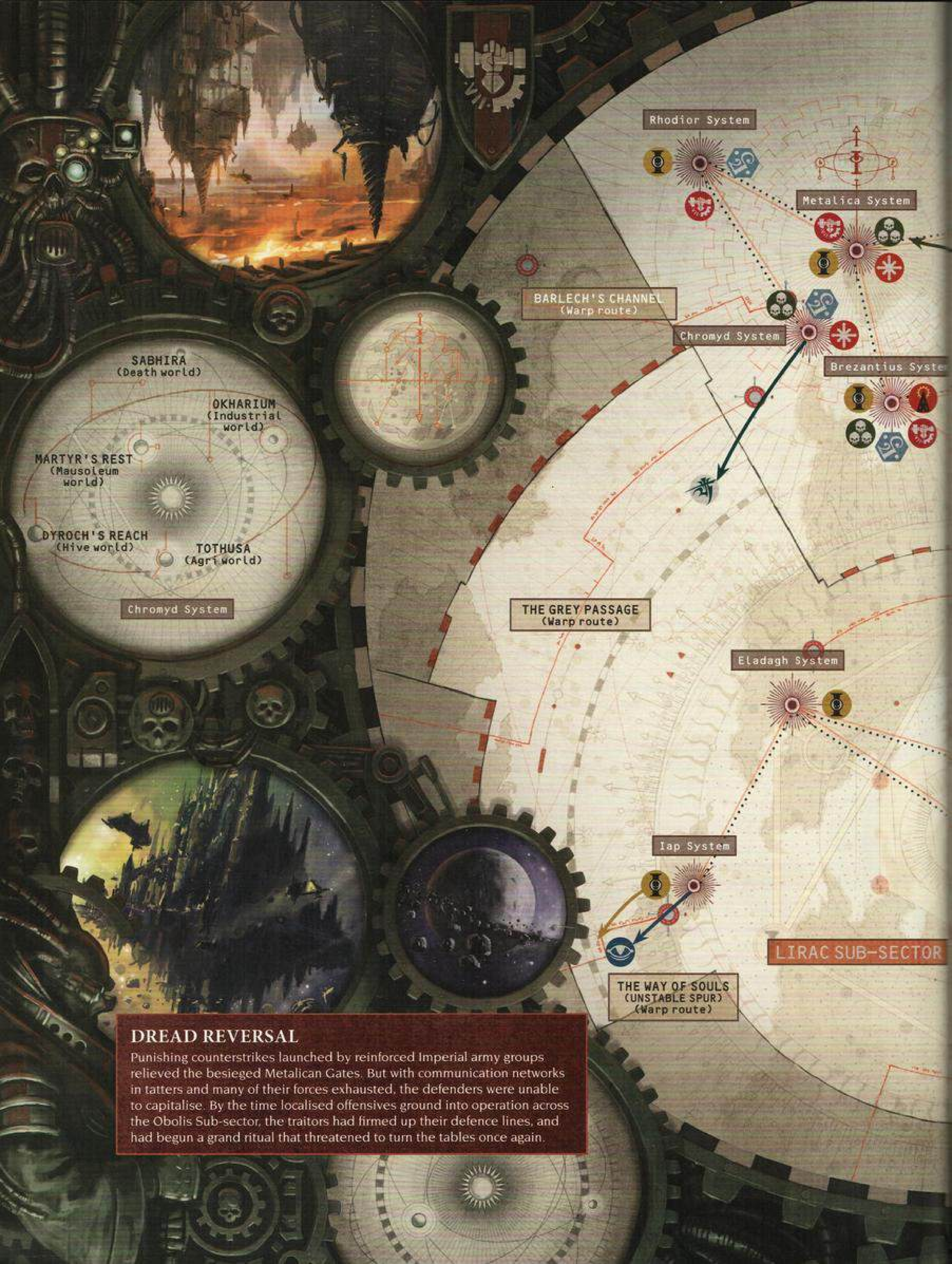
information flashed back and forth between the two gun barges in an attempt to co-cogitate the nature of the manifesting threat. For her part, Lhor-Vex-57 sent an imperative to the remaining Skitarii of her ship's garrison. Half she despatched to guard the enginarium. The rest she summoned to the command sanctum, stirring several from datapurification alcoves and back onto active duty.

A murmur of alarm rippled through the bridge, Lhor-Vex-57's datavoice amongst it. On the vid feeds, a colossal tentacle of maggot-white flesh was slithering from within the yellow light of the rift. Lhor-Vex-57 attempted to cogitate the size of the vile manifestation and failed – its scale and tangibility fluctuated impossibly within her sensorium. A violent flash of light reached her, flickering through the command sanctum's viewing ports several seconds later. The *Proximedes-Cerrus* had fired its carronades in self-defence and now the tentacle was disintegrating into a spreading slick of matter that her sensor-augurs could not decide whether to classify as organic, energistic or simply anomalous.

Lhor-Vex-57's lung-bellows hitched in surprise as more tentacles burst from the expanding rift to wind about the *Proximedes-Cerrus*. Her view blanked with sudden finality as an emergency databaffle cut her noosphere access. Corruption warnings flashed in her peripheral vision, and Lhor-Vex-57 reeled as she adjusted to being suddenly denuded of three-quarters of her external perceptive matrix.

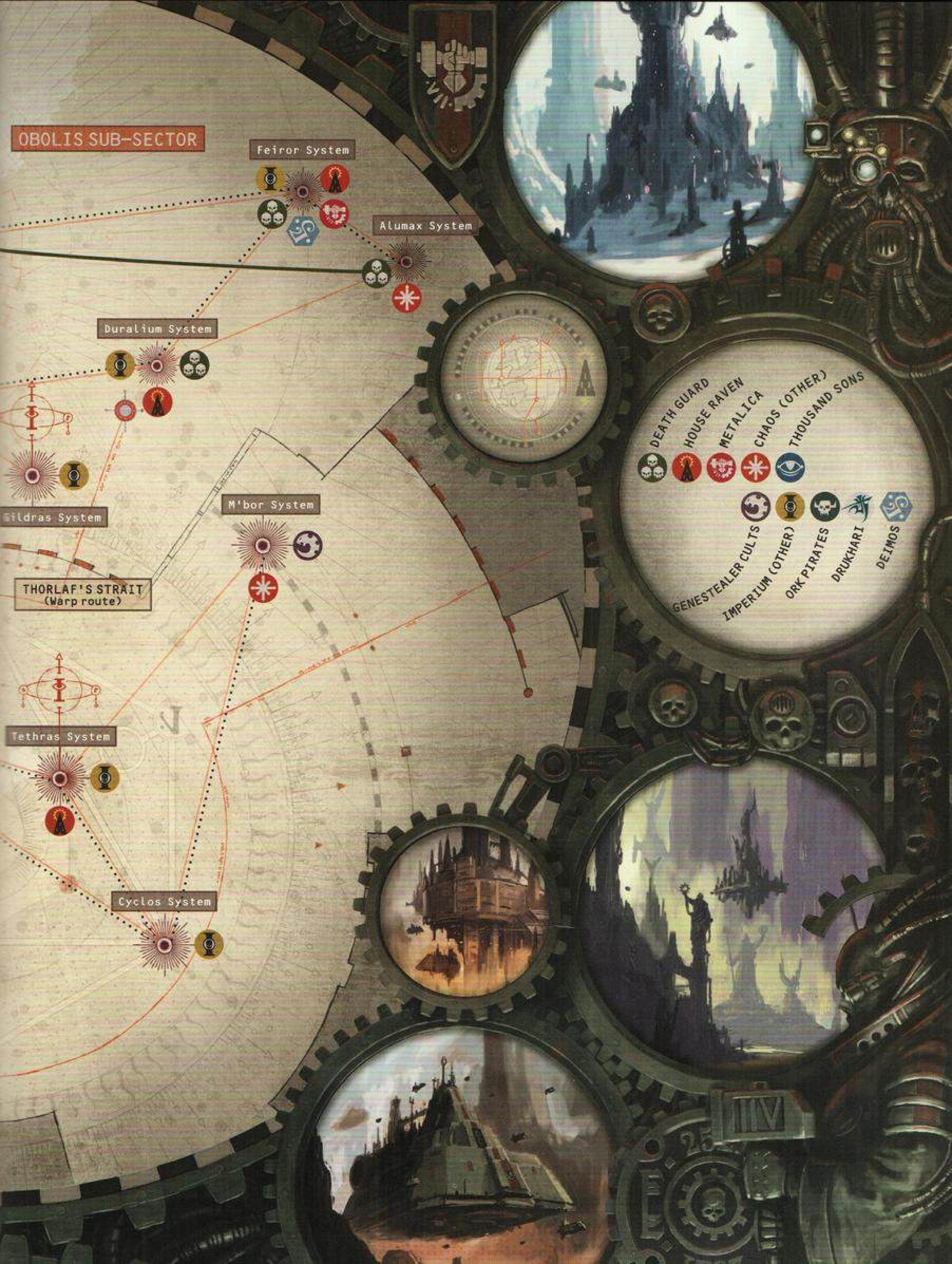
> *Interrogative: what* – began Rho-Theta-91 through a crude localised data-patch, but he got no further. Even as the command sanctum's door irised open to admit more Skitarii, the ship rocked violently. A shock wave rolled through the bridge, visible as it spread through the electroconductive haze of incense. Lhor-Vex-57 tried to cogitate what she was seeing: in its wake, the shock wave left cogitator banks sparking and furred with crawling black rust. Magi, servitors and her own Skitarii convulsed at its touch. Their augmetics flashed with sparks and seized with sudden corrosion. Their flesh-components rippled as buboes and lesions spread across them and nauseating rot set in. Lhor-Vex-57's breath came in painful rasps, her lung-bellows grinding as though they had not been maintained for a century. Her joints ached with a sudden ague and, as though in sympathy, the comforting thrum of the gun barges weapons became arrhythmic, whining and groaning.

When the first daemon mites spilled from rusted grilles and burst from the distended guts of servitors, Lhor-Vex-57 tried to shoot them. It was instinct – protocol taking over while her conscious mind rebelled at the sudden and horrific ruin of the sacred mechanism of which she had so long been a part. Her gun's faithful machine spirit rebelled. Her carbine belched acrid smoke and a dose of uncontrolled rads so potent even Lhor-Vex-57's flesh rebelled at its touch. The gun clattered from her hands, rust crawling over it even as it touched the decking. She kicked out at the tide of plague daemons, which stuttered toward her like a faulty vid-feed and flailed rusty augmetics as though to mock her own failing systems. Her metal foot caught one of the creatures in the face and it burst like an enormous pimple, spattering her with stinking pus. Its fellows shrieked in mingled mirth and rage. They spilled up her seizing legs and toppled her backwards, a binharic whine escaping her emitters. Static laced her voice. Poisonous yellow light spilled like sunrise through the ship's viewing ports. Needle fangs and maggot-tipped mechadendrites pierced her body. Lhor-Vex-57's vision filled with roaring static...



DREAD REVERSAL

Punishing counterstrikes launched by reinforced Imperial army groups relieved the besieged Metalican Gates. But with communication networks in tatters and many of their forces exhausted, the defenders were unable to capitalise. By the time localised offensives ground into operation across the Obolis Sub-sector, the traitors had firmed up their defence lines, and had begun a grand ritual that threatened to turn the tables once again.


OBOLIS SUB-SECTOR
Feiror System
Alumax System
Duralium System
Gildras System
M'bor System
THORLAF'S STRAIT
(Warp route)
Tethras System
Cyclos System
DEATH GUARD
HOUSE RAVEN
METALICA
CHAOS (OTHER)
THOUSAND SONS
GENESTEALER CULTS
IMPERIUM (OTHER)
ORK PIRATES
DRUKHARI
DEIMOS

MET/CI/CHRON – 990LRC AND COUNTING...

METALICA BESIEGED

Typhus had long been dreaded across the Imperium as a diseased boogeyman whose coming spread the threat of the swarming neverdead. Now, through dark sorcery and infernal pacts, he had wrought his curse across an entire Imperial Sub-sector. Countless Imperial servants faced the doom of being sacrificed upon the Traveller's plague-ridden altar.

The Imperial defenders christened the rupture Typhus had wrought in realspace The Sore. It was an apt title. Not only did the immense anomaly weep invading heretic hordes, but it also gushed metaphysical corruption. This was evidenced first on Munis Ferrum, a hive world of towering interlocked cities whose population had long furnished Metalica with labour-serfs and servitors. It had the poor fortune to be located perilously close to the seething fringes of The Sore, and was thus bombarded by plague flares. Each rolling shock wave swarmed with daemonic bacteria, plague flies and metalophagic rust-plagues that battered the cities and their populations alike. Datadaemons rode these plague flares, infecting servitors and transforming them into rot-fleshed homicidal berserkers. The malefic entities broke through the noospheric shielding of several Skitarii control ships in low orbit, possessing the vessels and swarming down their data-tethers to corrupt the Skitarii on the ground. Into the resultant civil war plunged gleeful heretic raiding bands and vast numbers of Dark Mechanicum priests, keen to transform Munis Ferrum into a daemonic plaguescape.

The quarry world of Plenitas and the moon-sized asteroid of Ferrovigilum were also assailed, the former by Death Guard vectoriums led by Lord Fecuthrott the Reaper, the latter by Lathfyr the Drowned and the overwhelming strength of the Legio Morbidus. On Plenitas, Fecuthrott rallied the plague cults surging through the slave population, only to find his forces facing an overwhelming deployment of Skitarii and Ordinatus war engines by the planet's uncompromising conclave of Magi-Overseers. The war there rapidly devolved into a hideous slaughter as the Death Guard herded wave upon wave of screaming cultists into the Mechanicus guns. Ferrovigilum, too, shuddered with war. The Balequeen had brought not only her Titan Legion, but also their attendant houses of Renegade Knights to bear, seeking to swiftly silence the astropathic relay there. Expecting another swift conquest, she instead found herself facing Skitarii Marshal Tertian's elites, two veteran maniples of Iron Skulls Titans as well as an entire lance of Freeblade Knights calling themselves the Forgotten Company. Though the Imperial forces were sorely outnumbered, a mixture of strategic brilliance, unflinching discipline and the Knights' unconventional heroics saw the battle rage on through Ferrovigilum's dust oceans, dome-sprawls and industrial canyons with no end in sight.

While these battles raged, Typhus turned his attention to Solari Anchorage. As a major base of operations for Battlefleet Charadon, this enormous combination of star fort and deep-void docks was far from defenceless. The vast majority of its attendant flotilla were absent, however, either engaged in the outer systems under Lieutenant-Heraldus Sheradane or lost during the valiant defence of the Skothian Grav-reefs. Solari's commanding officer, Rear-Admiral Vordkin, made the tremendously difficult decision to order his few remaining shipmasters away before the invasion hit home. Thus, even as the *Terminus Est* led the charge into the Anchorage's long guns, the Emperor-class Battleship *Mercy of the Blade* led several smaller craft in a retreat towards Metalica, escorting every support ship, repair barge and evacuation transport that could escape in time. The battle that followed was short and brutal, Typhus' ships bulling through the Anchorage's point defences and landing wave-after-wave of invaders to crush the armsmen who met them at every barricade and airlock. The defenders fought valiantly to the very last, but before the cycle was out ,Typhus was lord and master of Solari Anchorage.

As pressure increased on every front, the legions of forge world Metalica fought back where they could. Vast numbers of Skitarii and Cult Mechanicus faithful remained to garrison their home world

WAR IN THE DARK

On Dhaku, the Disciples drove home their final assault against the deepest of the Coreworks. Traitor Terminators stormed down dark corridors, stablights illuminating jutting archeotech and hissing Genestealers alike. Gunfire echoed along stone passageways that had been ancient when the Emperor took to the Golden Throne. Deformed xenos berserkers waded into bands of Chaos Space Marines. The Cult's foremost heroes led one furious counter-attack after another; their Magus drove her spearhead all the way to Deep-stair Eighty Two before being struck down in a psychic duel against Yarron Thayl. The Cult's Kelermorph – know to his kin as The Shade – commanded a raiding party who sought to slay Tsorr'Kanath before he could complete his latest summoning ritual. Instead, the Dark Apostle ushered forth the Keeper of Secrets Listho'shy'a the Sinuous, who spitted the Shade upon a blade dripping with perfumed venom. Led on by the Slaaneshi Daemon and its writhing host, the Disciples broke through into a temple of enormous scale. Its walls were formed of myriad of blocks of needle-studded silver and onyx that shifted and interlocked endlessly. Its towering columns bore swarms of screaming faces, xenos and human and things too wholly hideous to be either. Here, at the feet of a colossal humanoid statue made from swirling shadows, the Disciples cornered the Cult's Patriarch, Foresire Glutt. The battle was bloody but brief, for even this xenos abomination could not fight so overwhelming an assemblage of Chaos champions. At last the Patriarch fell, yet it was not slain. Instead, Tsorr'Kanath had his foe subdued and restrained, for in capturing the Stygian Temple the Disciples had not completed their great work, but instead had merely begun it...

and the defence platforms of its Corona Militaris. In addition to these forces, Fabricator General Khleng was able to call upon several dozen Astra Militarum regiments that had been held in reserve, along with a demi-company of the Sons of Medusa who had pledged to watch over the forge world. Turning his full cogitational might to system-wide strategy, Khleng struck at his enemies wherever he detected weakness. Precise counter-offensives drove renegade forces and a warband of Khornate Daemonkin from the battery world of Ohmex Magnifica. Hastily established traitor supply lines to the Plenitas war zone were severed, bleeding momentum from Lord Fecuthrott's Crater Valley offensive. Three successive probing attacks by heretic warships were driven back from Metalican void-space by rapid Space Marine boarding actions.

Khleng held the majority of his martial strength at bay, however, for the logic of his cogitations was inescapable. Even if he were to command an all-out offensive, and even were his armies to acquit themselves exceptionally in every battle they fought, still they would be defeated by the sheer weight of traitor forces. Typhus' invasion could not be turned back without reinforcement from the wider sub-sector. Accepting that stark truth, and working with precious little information about conditions in neighbouring systems, Khleng's strategy was bent toward delaying the enemy long enough for those reinforcements to reach the Metalican front.

There was another problem, one more immediate and still harder to wrestle with. Projections from Metalican empyro-savants and Magi-ethericus were undeniable: The Sore was expanding at a staggering rate. It's rot-black tendrils wormed their way through the void, wakes of seething corruption spreading behind them as more and more of the stuff of realspace was devoured by the warp. How big would The Sore become? Was all of the Metalica System destined to be swallowed into its depths? More pressing still was the catastrophic disruption the warp rift was causing to localised empyric currents. Even as they linked their cerebra in noospheric data-communion, the Metalican techno-clergy had to accept the very real probability that – even if reinforcements did come from neighbouring systems to aid them – disruption could tear them apart before they ever made it to the war zone. For all Khleng and his subordinates knew, it might already have happened. Either way, the priests of forge world Metalica understood that, if they were to have any chance at all of saving their world and it's divine industrial purity, they had to close The Sore and they had to do it soon.

Typhus, meanwhile, knew he held the advantage and did not intend to squander it. He had led one successful conflict after another and his blessings waxed strong until he blazed with feculent power. Even the wound dealt him by Canoness Joghilde could not slow the Traveller, though he could still not force it to close. From the command bridge of *Terminus Est*, Typhus now oversaw a brute-force assault upon the Metalican Corona Militaris. Wading through the enfilading fire of Imperial warships, defence platform plasma-cannonades and the fury of Metalican orbital batteries, the heretic fleet endured punishing casualties in order to land Typhus, his Blightlord bodyguards and a coven of Dark Mechanicum priests upon orbital platform Archimed-Tri. Employing grotesque parasite-shrines, the Dark Magi worked a fell ritual to draw pestilential data-daemons from the churning warp. Typhus himself stood against a suicidal assault by frenzied Electro-Priests long enough for the daemons to be funnelled into the cortical architecture of the platform. In an instant, Archimed-Tri's machine spirit was possessed. The explosive decoupling subroutines that would have separated the platform from its nearest neighbours were halted. Scrapcode gheists and tendrils of Ferric Blight leapt out to infect neighbouring Aristol-Sept and Pythorus-Oct platforms even as possessed defence guns trained their fire upon Imperial void ships. Under their cover, more heretic forces docked with the Corona Militaris. So began its fall. So was the staging post set for the ground-invasion of forge world Metalica.

Throughout the Obolis Sub-sector, localised conflicts continued as plague-zombie hordes surged down the corridors of embattled warships and rose in living mountains against the flanks of Imperial fortifications. On some worlds, such as Kapston, Ferryk and Sustace, the armies of the living were able to contain and purge the threat, blasting macro-swarms with concentrated artillery, burning them from habsprawls with flamers and cutting them down in hard-fought close-quarters brawls. On others, such as blighted Alexistor and daemon-cursed Fathom, the battles were more desperate and the defenders overwhelmed by their own former comrades one enclave at a time.

Fabricator General Khleng's distress call had reached a handful of Imperial command centres, and in all those who served Metalica it spurred immediate and frantic preparation. Yet even for storied heroes such as Grevan of House Raven, Chapter Master Tanielu and Princeps VanKassen of the Iron Skulls, to rally their forces while in the grip of such profound plague and entropy was nightmarishly difficult. Only on the Rhodior-Chromyd front was there any glimmer of hope, for here at least Cryptoemissarius Eau and her forces had at last broken warp and had driven Lord Thraxoplasmox back from the mangled remains of Sabhira. Yet even that conflict still hung in the balance, and showed little chance of swift resolution.

In the face of terrible and overwhelming odds, forge world Metalica now stood alone…

FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM

The Imperial forces committed to the defence of the Obolis and Lirac Sub-sectors were vast, so much so that – had the Imperium been on the offensive – they could have conquered swathes of hostile worlds. Instead, they stood resolute in defence or sallied forth on the counter-attack, spending their strength upon everything from massed naval actions and armoured sallies to desperate squad-level skirmish actions.

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

Forge world Metalica

Metalican Core Defence Reserve: 1st Macroclade, 2nd Macroclade, 5th Macroclade, 6th Macroclade.
Metalican Elite Expeditionary: 3rd Macroclade >att.Marshal Decitor Septrax-Tertian
Metalican System Defence Garrison: 4th Macroclade, 7th Macroclade.
Metalican Obolis Occupation Garrison: 8th – 14th Macroclades.
Iron Skulls >>'Legio Metalica' – 37 Engines, varying weight-classes, see app.D-56 <further information>
Cult Mechanicus Defence Auxilia – [[ERROR// DATANUMERIS INCALCULO // ATTEMPTING CORRECTIONAL CHORISTRY]]

The above provides only the most general of summations regarding the true Metalican strength during this campaign. Precise operational strengths and deployments of auto-sanctified assets such as Ordinatus weaponry or archeoreliquaries highly classified. For a people who pride themselves upon the accurate retention of data as an act of holy worship, the Adeptus Mechanicus are both infuriatingly vague and remarkably paranoid when it comes to the deployment of that data for actual practical purposes…

Forge world Deimos & Allies

It has proved supremely difficult to gain accurate information regarding the martial deployment committed by forge world Deimos during this conflict. While some of this may be attributed to their unheralded arrival within an active – and extremely chaotic – war zone, it is due in greater part to the militant secrecy and auto-erasure interrogatives that enshroud their mysterious allies. Indeed, this other force, whoever they may be, are visible only by the mysterious silence they leave amidst the strident data-choristry of the wider war zone.

ADEPTUS ASTARTES

The Excruciators Chapter

Chapter Master Dhane Tanielu
Chief Librarian Mosu Ioanu
Captain Tamu Esoa
Captain Lhapsa Mata'hu
Chaplain Usa Isolo
46 Mafau'a 1st Company battle-brothers
327 battle-brothers of the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 10th Companies
94 supporting armoured vehicles
Battle barge *Eye of the Storm*
Strike cruiser *Fireheart*
Strike cruiser *Spear of Champions*
4 Sword-class frigates *Waverider*, *Tumult*, *Bladebrother* and *Samu'asocho*

Other Chapter Elements

Ultramarines Strike Force Epathus
Sons of Medusa Strike Force Capsilion
White Scars Strike Force Vorgha
Coruscators Strike Force Sathaliel
Brazen Drakes Strike Force Lucior
>>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>KH-4<LL>'

QUESTOR IMPERIALIS / QUESTOR MECHANICUS

House Raven

Princeps Grevan, Master of the Keep Inviolate, pilot of Ferrus Maximus
Exalted Court under Heraldor Exaltos Baron Daklorn, pilot of Tempered Fury
1,216 Knight suits and attendant pilots, divided into 102 operational lances
46 Cohorts of Household Tech-guard
4,217 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport
16 Adeptus Mechanicus macro-conveyor arks

Additional Knightly Elements

3 Lances, House Terryn
2 Lances, House Griffith
5 Lances, House Atorian
2 Lances, House Minotos
7 Lances, House Taranis
>>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>KD-7.4<LV>

Freeblades

One bare line of datascript seems hardly fit tribute to such an eclectic and storied a band of heroes as the Forgotten Company. Led by Lady Halenna once Terryn, 'The Bloodstar Knight', these wandering outcasts found themselves trapped within the Metalica System when Typhus' final invasion hit home. Combining an unconventional blend of light, medium and heavyweight Knight suits with audacious – some might say insane – battlefield strategy, the Forgotten Company met Titan-class engines of the renegade Legio Morbidus head-on and triumphed on repeated battlefields. Such was but the beginnings of their heroic tale, however…

ADEPTA SORORITAS

Defenders of Alexistor

Order of Our Martyred Lady – 5 Commanderies under Canoness Commander Joghilde
Order of the Adamant Halo – 2 Commanderies
Order of the Blessed Suffering – 3 Commanderies
Frateris Militia auxilia [DATANUMERIS INCALCULO]

Additional Orders / Elements

Order of Our Martyred Lady – additional 5 Missions
Order of the Bloody Rose – 3 Missions
Order of the August Pyre – 1 Commandery
Order of the Argent Shroud – 2 Missions
>>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>KO-2<IVX>

ASTRA MILITARUM

Regimental Deployments [continued file app/GH5#K//Yua]

Cadian Shock Troops – 262 Regiments
Dyrochi Ferric Jackals – 184 Regiments
Lucor Pyretroopers – 66 Regiments
Death Korps of Krieg – 218 Regiments
Macatroth Armoured Oxen – 26 Regiments
Elysian Drop Troops – 12 Regiments
Phorax Airborne – 301 Regiments
Kadenghor Penitents – 512 Regiments
>>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>KUP.10-16.2<JKD.2>

NAVAL ELEMENTS

Metalican Void Elements

Eradication ark flotilla – [CLASSIFICATUM IMPREGNA-AJAX]

Navis Imperialis – Battlefleet Charadon

Solari Anchorage flotilla under Lieutenant Heraldus-Class Lihua Sheradane.
4 Cruiser-class void ships
13 Escort-class void ships
1 Carrier-class capital Ship

FORCES OF CHAOS

The invading hosts assembled by Typhus and Lord Zeid to strike at the Charadon Sector were as varied as they were vast. From noxious Death Guard, arrogant Black Legionnaires and assorted other Heretic Astartes, to Titanic heretic war engines, repugnant warships, seething oceans of mutated cultists and even nightmarish daemons, it was as though the warp had opened it's maw and vomited all of its countless terrors into the region.

DEATH GUARD

A note on vectoriums: being deviant worshippers of the Dark Gods, and by their very nature anathema to all forms of reason, it is important to recognise that though the Death Guard organise themselves into warbands called vectoriums, these represent no fixed numerical value or military strength. Some vectoriums encountered during this campaign numbered no more than a handful of degenerate Heretic Astartes, while others were formidable forces with the numbers and armoured support to conquer entire city-sprawls or void stations.

Typhus' Invading Hosts

Capital ship *Terminus Est* > att.Typhus 'The Traveller'
7 Plague ships – 4 Capital-class, 3 Cruiser-class
8 Vectoriums, 1st Plague Company
3 Vectoriums, 2nd Plague Company
2 Vectoriums, 4th Plague Company
1 Vectorium, 5th Plague Company
168 Armoured fighting vehicles / Daemon Engines
Neverdead [DATANUMERIS INCALCULO]

Oghlosmus Bilge's Plague Fleet

2 Space hulk-class macrovessels>> *Apocalypse Clarion >> Banechilde*
11 Capital-class plague ships
21 Cruiser-class plague ships
49 Escort-class plague ships
21 Vectoriums, 6th Plague Company
Cult / Mutant crew-dregs [DATANUMERIS INCALCULO]

Lord Thraxoplasmox's Tide of Filth

9 Plague ships, 3 Capital-class, 2 Cruiser-class, 4 Escort-class
Vectorium The Unclean, 5th Plague Company [NUMERIS FORTIS EXTREMIS] >>att.Lord Gulgh Thraxoplasmox
4 Vectoriums, 1st Plague Company
4 Vectoriums, 2nd Plague Company
4 Vectoriums, 3rd Plague Company
3 Vectoriums, 5th Plague Company
5 Vectoriums, 7th Plague Company
210 Armoured fighting vehicles / Daemon Engines

CHAMPIONS OF ABADDON

Lord Zeid's Adamantine Beasts

3 Cruiser-class void ships
2 Escort class void ships
217 Daemon Engines (37 super-heavy classification, assorted patterns abominatus)
4 Warbands, Black Legion
32 Regiments, Traitoris Militarum

Legio Morbidus

Imperator-class Engine Despair Incarnate >>att. Princeps 'Balequeen' Lathfyr
76 Engines, varying weight-classes, see app.H-777< further information>
144 Huntbands Venatarae [elite foot soldiery, see app.RKX-9]
Att. – Dark Mechanicum delegation [REDACTED, VERMILLION]

Renegade Warbands

81 Lances Questor Traitoris >House Khamyrin > House Abbatrox > House Herpetrax > House Blisterborn >>>>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>EXG14<XG4>
189 Warbands Heretic / Renegade Astartes [varying size from squad-level deployment to Adeptus Astartes Company equivalent] >Beasts of Annihilation >Helhawks >The Cleaved >Night Lords >Iron Warriors >The Thricewarped >>sub-list cont:::ex-app.>>HED666<AX95>

THE DISCIPLES

Tsorr'Kanath's Faithful

Equiv-deployment fortis >3 Companies Adeptus Astartes
27 Armoured fighting vehicles

Yarron Thayl's Subtle Blades

Equiv-deployment fortis >2 Companies Adeptus Astartes

THE DAEMONIC HORDES

[redacted]

[redacted]

AN ALLIANCE OF IRON AND FLESH

It would be a grievous oversimplification to claim that just because they all fought to defend the same region of Imperial space, the armies defending the Charadon heartlands were truly unified. Divided along dogmatic and societal lines, steered by divergent command structures, the Imperial forces were mighty, but ill-coordinated.

Vast forces fought in defence of the Obolis and – to a lesser extent – the Lirac Sub-sectors during the early phases of the Metalican war. Foremost amongst these, were the legions of forge world Metalica itself. They offered unquestioning fealty to Fabricator General Khleng and did his bidding as surely as though they were augmetic extensions of his will. Yet even here there was division.

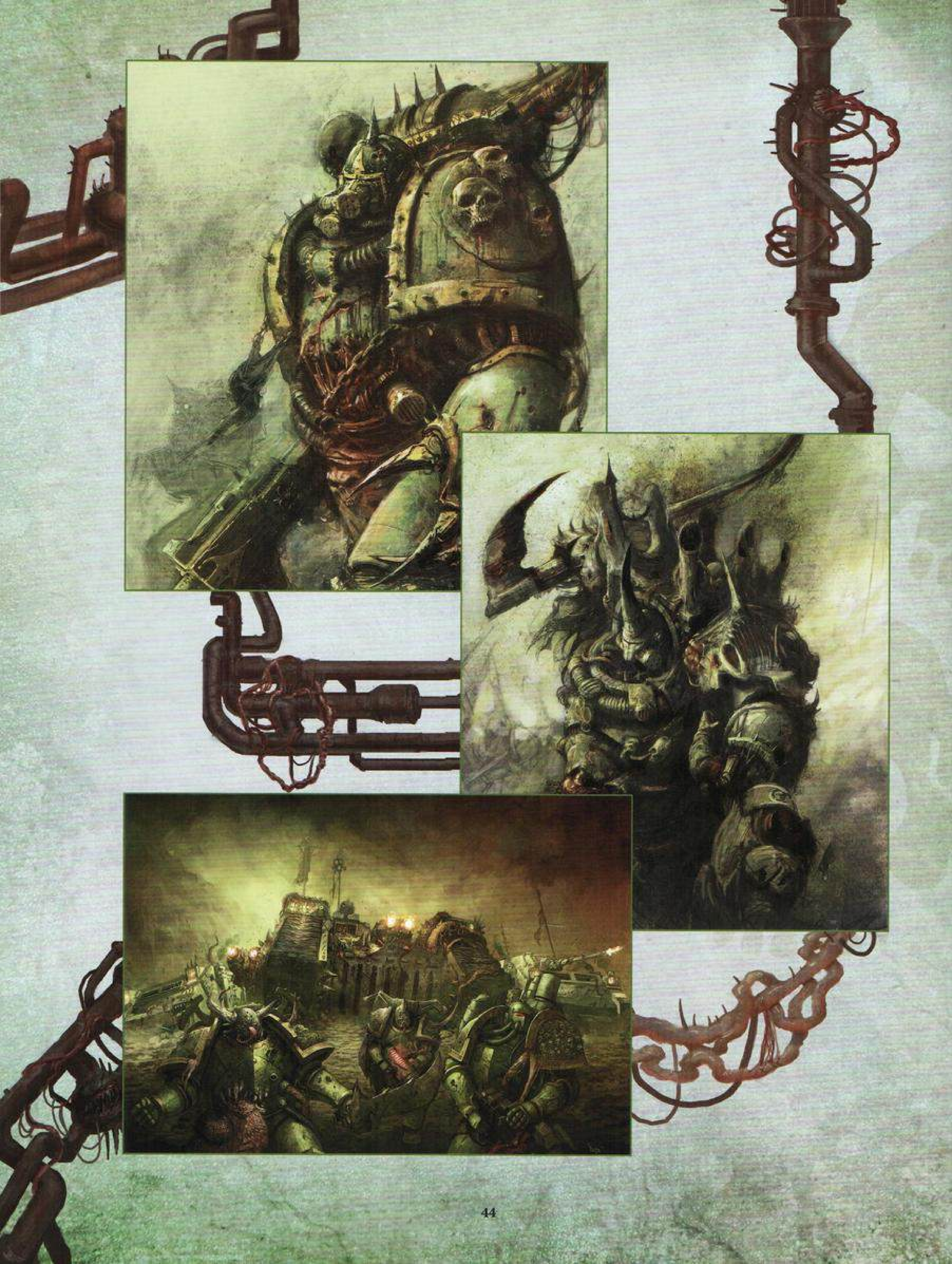
The Skitarii cohorts enacted Khleng's directives in the most efficient manner. His data-imperatives were transmitted from the tech-clergy aboard their command ships to send cybernetic foot soldiers, canine cavalry and legions of cyborg-crewed war engines surging into the fray. These forces were spread through the Obolis Sub-sector from the beginning of the conflict, for they made efficient and easily directed front line soldiery, who possessed sufficient autonomy to react to the shifting strategic picture. By comparison, the zealous tides of Cult Mechanicus who served Metalica were more difficult to direct. Their religious fervour lent them great fortitude and courage, but was a poor substitute for proper strategic rigour. Thus, Khleng's subordinate tech-magi concentrated such forces into vast defensive reserves. These could garrison sanctified defensive positions to the last warrior without needing to coordinate directly with other cohorts or – worse – the barely-tolerated unbelievers of the conventional Imperial armies. Then there were the Iron Skulls Titans. With his Legion still understrength due to losses incurred on Armageddon, High Princeps VanKassen was loath to commit engines to the fight without the near-certitude of victory. This husbanding of his forces ensured the Legion remained hale into the latter stages of the war, but cost more than one localised conflict due to inexplicable vox failures or reactor fluctuations just when Iron Skulls Titans should have been ordered forward.

Most wayward of all were the extremist magi who captained Metalica's squadron of eradication arks. Worshippers of the blessed rad-count, hardliners who scorned biological life as little better than a plague, these fanatics repeatedly interpreted their data-imperatives in whatever manner would permit them to unleash their apocalyptic weaponry and follow-up waves of radiation-saturated Skitarii upon enemies and supposed allies alike.

These, of course, were merely the divisions within the byzantine command structures of forge world Metalica itself. Looking at the wider Imperial force as a whole, the issue was substantially magnified. Lieutenant Heraldus Sheradane and her Imperial Navy flotilla were based upon Solari Anchorage in the Metalican System, placing their potent warships within the beating heart of the Imperial defence. Yet as many of Heptus Khleng's tech-clergy considered these supposed allies with paranoid distrust as saw them as valued military assets; thus was Sheradane left out of key strategic screeds during the opening stages of the war, forcing her to gather her own intelligence and operate accordingly. The commanders of the various Astra Militarum garrison regiments spread through Obolis Sub had similar experiences. More than one Imperial Guard army was left exposed and out of position when Metalican forces advanced or retreated without prior strategic coordination. Worse, a number of senior officers were forced to file complaints with the Munitorum – many of which are still pending investigation – after their soldiery were actively manoeuvred into the firing line by the Metalican leadership in order to preserve Skitarii forces, Iron Skulls Titans or even those machine-shrines and manufactora deemed sacred.

Factor in the stilted customs of the Knight Houses, the naturally assumed autonomy of the Space Marine Chapters and the divinely inspired strategies of the Battle Sisters, and it is plain to see how the Imperial armies acted more like a loosely bound coalition than a cohesive united force, at least on the wider strategic stage. All this was compounded by the turbulent warp and vast interstellar gulfs that combined to strain communication and coordination to breaking point. So it was that, on a planetary level, the sprawling campaign to defend War Zone Charadon actually consisted of many thousands of individual battlefronts, each contested by whatever Imperial forces were available, following whatever directives – if any – they had last been given. For the vast majority of Imperial foot soldiers, the entire campaign was spent fighting to hold a particular world, continent, city-sprawl or fortification, with the wider interstellar conflict registering upon them only as fragmentary rumours.

For all this, the Imperial armies fought with courage and selfless determination to throw back heretic and xenos invaders alike. For every conflict in which mistrust or miscommunication heralded disaster, there were many more in which Imperial and Adeptus Mechanicus commanders forged their forces into an alloy stronger than its component parts. Astra Militarum firepower married to Space Marine orbital onslaughts; the unbending faith of the Adepta Sororitas and Cult Mechanicus coupled with the towering might of Imperial Knights; relentless Skitarii battling alongside the elites of the Inquisition; all of these alliances and many more saw the Imperium seize victory on countless fronts.



INVADERS FROM THE EMPYREAN

The hosts that Typhus and Akhorath Zeid led against War Zone Charadon comprised a sprawling coalition of piratical alliances, rival warbands and deranged cults, swirling chaotically about a hard core of Heretic Astartes and their warships. Nothing about their anarchic nature made the invading hordes any less deadly, however.

The worship of the Dark Gods is, by its very nature, a selfish quest for personal favour and reward. It takes a dominant warlord indeed to cement even a temporary alliance on a scale large enough to threaten entire Imperial sub-sectors with conquest. Typhus was one such warlord. Even taken by itself, the Traveller's was a reputation that demanded respect and compliance, however short-lived. Backed by the presence of Zeid and the implicit authority of Warmaster Abaddon, it was no surprise that Typhus was able to forge an invasion fleet of terrifying size and power.

In truth, Typhus and Zeid actually brought three separate alliances together and coordinated their efforts in a ritual tri-lobe of invading forces. Not all amongst the Death Guard look upon Typhus with favour; after all, his reputation with their beloved Daemon Primarch has long been troubled. Those plague champions who will answer Typhus' call, however, are both mighty and surprisingly loyal to him. Two such allies he called upon now; Plague Captain Oghlosmus Bilge and Lord of Virulence Ghulgh Thraxoplasmox. The former hailed from the 6th Plague Company, and he brought with him a terrifying fleet of plague ships even larger than that which congealed about Typhus' own *Terminus Est*. Bilge also maintained strong ties with Balequeen Lathfyr, the degenerate Princeps of the dreaded Legio Morbidus. Bilge provided warships to transport the Balequeen's Titans from one war zone to the next, and Lathfyr – a nightmarish drowned apparition haunting a polluted amniotic command cocoon – offered Bilge unparalleled ground-assault forces in return. Lord Thraxoplasmox, meanwhile, was a methodical and relentless living scourge who specialised in spreading misery and despair. He brought a great many vectoriums to the invasion as well as a horde of armoured war engines, and swore a filthpact with Typhus to lock down Barlech's Channel and bleed the enemy's strength on a third front.

Lord Zeid, meanwhile, led a somewhat more streamlined host of Black Legionnaires. His warband – and in particular his vast and dreaded stable of Daemon Engines – still possessed the combined might to conquer entire worlds. However, he saw his role in the invasion as more of a facilitator, there to compel what he viewed as dull and sluggardly allies into action in Abaddon's name. Let those same allies bear the brunt of the wider war and it's butcher's bill, he reasoned. Zeid would sow carnage and mayhem for his own enjoyment while observing the wider war from the rear lines, and would report back to his master once victory was assured. Of course, the sudden arrival of House Raven's combined might altered Zeid's schemes somewhat…

Other Heretic Astartes also rallied to Typhus' foetid banner, bringing elite warriors, debased war machines and potent void ships with them. Foremost amongst these were the mysterious alliance of Word Bearers and Alpha Legionnaires who called themselves the Disciples. Then there were the countless smaller Chaos Space Marine warbands who flocked to the invasion like carrion-feeders to a corpse. Chaos Knights, too, answered Typhus' call to war. Some followed the banners of Legio Morbidus while others sought to outdo one another upon the field of conquest, and in so doing earn the gifts of their dark patrons. With each new addition, the invasion force gained greater martial might, albeit at the risk of yet another rivalry or schism waiting to happen.

THE LOST AND THE DAMNED

While the Heretic Astartes, Chaos Titans, fallen Knights and their attendant void ships represented the most powerful elements within the invasion force, they were far from the most numerous. For every horn-helmed, power-armour-clad killer who stalked the burning worlds of War Zone Charadon, countless cultists, deviants and petty heretics clamoured to do their bidding. The holds of almost every traitor warship seethed with chanting masses of the lost, the desperate and the insane. With the poisoned light of the Cicatrix Maledictum lighting the night skies, it was a rare world within the Charadon Sector that did not also play host to further hidden cult cells and insurrectionist groups, or else massed hordes of luckless mutants who knew that their only hope of salvation was to abandon the dubious mercies of the Imperium in favour of the Dark Gods.

More unnatural beings also joined the fight on the invaders' side. Thanks to the unholy contagions spread by Typhus and his followers, heaving oceans of Poxwalkers, plague zombies and deformed neverdead shambled in tides across the battlefields of War Zone Charadon. Dark rituals drew vast daemonic hordes through the tattered veil, the infamous Rotigus Rainfather lumbering at their head as they brought bloodshed, pestilence, unbound change and unfettered perversion to the beleaguered Imperial worlds. Even the warp itself seemed an ally to the invaders; it's furious tides did not distort their communications or ravage their warships as it did those of the Imperial defenders. Between the invaders' grasp of sorcerous lore, and their greater number of heavy void-going warships, they were always destined to be the more mobile and strategically devious faction.

CAMPAIGN RULES

'This is a war of multitudinous horrors. Those worlds it does not scour to irradiated ashes, it transforms into corpse-choked barrens or heaving nexuses of unholy corruption so abhorrent that the Emperor turns his gaze from them in despair. Even should we prevail here, I fear that we will find ourselves the masters of a worthless wasteland.'

- Brigadier Laszlo Verrimor, 457th Altorian Dragoons

OBOLIS INVASION CAMPAIGN

When the invasion of Obolis and Lirac began, many factions answered the call and marched to war. Over the following pages, you will find a campaign system that allows you and a group of players to retell the events of the War Zone Charadon story for yourselves in an invasion of the Obolis Sub-sector.

Where one-off games against favoured opponents and new foes alike offer plenty of fun and enjoyment, campaigns are something special, adding even more excitement, consequence and narrative to every tabletop clash. By entering a campaign you get to play not just one game, but a series of interlinked battles. You're not just playing to see who wins, but to seize hard-fought territory or resources, avenge an earlier defeat or earn fresh rewards for your army. Before each battle, you determine context; where the conflict is taking place, why, and what stakes and consequences it will have. At each game's end you discover what cost the battle has levied on your forces, and what experience or potent relics they have gained. If participating as part of a team, you play knowing your fellow campaign commanders are battling at the same time on nearby tabletops, all of you fighting for the same goal. It is an exciting and immersive experience.

At its heart, playing in a campaign is a narrative experience that forges war stories you and your fellow commanders will share for years to come. It can be the highlight of an entire gaming year and can spawn future events where you revisit old grudges or beloved settings. Whether you're completely new to campaign gaming, or a veteran looking for a new thrill, all you need to do is gather your armies and read on to discover how to get the most out of War Zone Charadon.

INTRODUCTION

An Obolis Invasion campaign allows a group of players to get together, form alliances and play a series of games. It is split into campaign phases, each of which consists of multiple battles fought with unique rules inspired by the key stages in War Zone Charadon. At the end of each campaign phase, the alliance with the most war zone points achieves victory in that phase, then each alliance starts again for the following campaign phase, meaning the outcome of the campaign is at stake in each and every game from start to finish.

CAMPAIGN MASTER

A Obolis Invasion campaign is best run with a Campaign Master. This is a heroic individual who takes on the mobilisation and organisation of the campaign so that the other players can focus on playing games. A Campaign Master is in a privileged position that offers a degree of leadership to the individual who takes on the role; however, its primary purpose is to facilitate a smooth and enjoyable experience for all players involved. A Campaign Master can indeed play in the campaign, but in larger campaigns that includes a multitude of players, it may be best if they solely oversee the campaign rather than play in it.

Over the following pages we will refer to the Campaign Master and how they can go about organising an Obolis Invasion campaign. On pages 54-55, you will also find Campaign Master Edicts, which are useful tools and rules ideas that the Campaign Master can use to add further excitement to the campaign. These are by no means essential, however. If this is the first campaign for many of the players, or they would otherwise prefer to keep things as simple as possible, then these are not necessary for an Obolis Invasion campaign.

PLAYERS AND ALLIANCES

Once a Campaign Master has stepped forward, their first task in organising an Obolis Invasion campaign is to gather the players and sort them into alliances. The system is flexible enough to support various numbers of people; an experienced Campaign Master could run the campaign for dozens of gamers, and equally just two players could use the system to tie the results of their regular games together into a greater whole. The campaign is at its best, however, with a small group of like-minded and enthusiastic players who can meet on a regular basis, and who can be evenly distributed across alliances.

Alliances should be organised evenly and, where possible, based on the Faction being played, so have a chat with the group to determine this. Once players are assigned to an alliance, their army is committed to the cause and will do their all to achieve victory. For this reason, players should play the same Faction throughout the campaign. If they wish to change their Faction, they can do so at the Campaign Master's discretion. The alliances are as follows:

Defenders. The Obolis Sub-sector is currently held by the Imperium, with the Adeptus Mechanicus leading the defence against any and all aggressors. Any army with the **IMPERIUM** keyword is best suited to this alliance.

Invaders. The Death Guard are leading the forces of Chaos in an organised attack on the sub-sector. Any army with the **CHAOS** keyword is best suited to this alliance.

Raiders. With the Imperium and Chaos focusing their efforts on each other, opportunistic raiders have moved in to pick on the fringes of the sub-sector and ambush anyone vulnerable. Any army that does not have the **CHAOS** or **IMPERIUM** keyword is best suited to this alliance.

Three alliances allows for a well-rounded campaign with each side battling back and forth for dominance. However, if the players would be more evenly distributed using two alliances, that is a perfectly valid option to take.

ALLIES OF CONVENIENCE

Note that the above are guidelines on how to organise players into an alliance, rather than a requirement. If it suits the group better to organise the alliances differently, then the Campaign Master should feel free to do so. For example, if many of the players in the group play armies associated with a single alliance, then to make the alliances more evenly numbered some of them may have to fight for a different alliance than what we have recommended. This is fine. You could always create some interesting narrative to explain why one side fights for another. Here are a few examples:

- The Alpha Legion have decided to pursue their own agenda, and have fittingly joined the Raiders to use the cover of war in order to achieve their goals.
- A Tech-Priest has been tempted by the Dark Mechanicum and joined the forces of Chaos, taking their cohort with them to fight alongside the Invaders.
- Beset from all angles by their enemies, the Defenders are forced to seek aid from an Asuryani force. The mysterious Aeldari agree to help, but the reasons why remain unknown.

Equally, if it is just not possible to arrange alliances evenly, then the system will still work with a little extra organisation from the Campaign Master, as described later.

WAYS TO PLAY

Once players have been organised into alliances, the Campaign Master should determine the type of play for the campaign: open, matched or narrative play. It is important for the Campaign Master to specify the type of play from the outset so that each player's army can be organised accordingly, and so that players know which mission packs can be used. Whether the players are looking for a deep narrative experience using Crusade battles, or a test of minds in the crucible of war that is matched play, an Obolis Invasion campaign will support them, and the campaign system will work with any mission pack.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

An Obolis Invasion campaign is split into three phases, each of which involves battling in a different stage of the war. Before the campaign begins, the Campaign Master should determine the length of time allocated to each campaign phase and the total number of games that can be played in that phase. Once either of those conditions have been met, that campaign phase ends and the victorious alliance in that phase is determined. Once the third campaign phase ends, the campaign ends and the overall winning alliance is determined.

A campaign can be a long and expansive experience where each campaign phase takes place over a month, with many battles fought and mighty heroes lost to the fires of war. Equally, it can be a short and focused campaign played over a weekend, with each campaign phase consisting of just one battle representing the key moments of the conflict. Ultimately, the Campaign Master should determine a campaign length that best suits the gaming group taking part, thinking about how regularly they can meet and how many games they are likely to play.

As a guide, if each member of your campaign group will play one game a week, we recommended each phase of the campaign lasts as follows:

- Length of time: 2 weeks
- Total number of games: equal to the number of players.

Once you have gathered the players into alliances, established the way to play and determined the length of the campaign, it's time for the invasion of the Obolis Sub-sector to begin!

CAMPAIGN PHASES

Each phase of an Obolis Invasion campaign is set during a different stage of the invasion, and every stage is vital in winning the greater war. Each campaign phase has its own set of characteristics that impact the games taking place, bringing Obolis to life on the battlefield. This is known as a Theatre of War. During the campaign phases, each phase's Theatre of War as specified on pages 51-53 is in effect.

To play a game, a player must arrange one with a player from an opposing alliance. When they meet on the battlefield, they follow the battle sequence as specified in their mission pack. Once they have determined the victor, they earn war zone points for their alliance, the impact of which is specified later.

The Campaign Master has a few options concerning how players are matched up for games. They can leave the players to arrange games themselves, with challenges thrown down and honour at stake. This is perhaps the simplest way of arranging the games, and lets the campaign progress naturally with plenty of friendly rivalries to go with it!

Alternatively, it may be appropriate to introduce more structure to the matchups. For example, a matchup schedule will ensure that everyone gets an equal amount of games. Or, in campaigns with a large amount of players, breaking each alliance into smaller subgroups that are then matched against their enemies can make arranging games even simpler. This can also add to the narrative, as you can imagine each group battling in a different system of the Obolis Sub-sector.

WAR ZONE POINTS

Each game you play in a campaign phase is about more than just personal glory. Rather, your presence contributes to the success of your alliance in the greater war. This is achieved with war zone points. Each time you play a game, your alliance earns war zone points as follows:

WAR ZONE POINTS

	COMBAT PATROL	INCURSION	STRIKE FORCE	ONSLAUGHT
Play a game	1	1	1	1
Draw a game	1	2	3	4
Win a game	2	3	4	5

For example, if you play a Combat Patrol game and win your alliance earns a total of 3 war zone points. It is the players' responsibility to determine how many war zone points are earned. They then report their results to the Campaign Master, who keeps a record of each alliance's total war zone points. Once the campaign phase comes to an end, the victor of that phase is the alliance with the most war zone points. If any alliances are tied for the most war zone points, then the alliance that won the most battles against their rival tied alliance(s) during that campaign phase is the victor of that phase. If there is still a tie, there is no victor of that phase.

Once the next campaign phase begins, each alliance's war zone points are reset to zero, putting alliances on an equal footing for the next phase of the campaign.

UNEVEN ALLIANCES

If an alliance has an uneven number of players, the Campaign Master is at liberty to reward extra war zone points to make up the inherent deficit. Perhaps they could set a challenge for one player in each campaign phase, with extra war zone points awarded to their alliance for playing that game, and a greater points return if they achieve victory.

WINNING THE CAMPAIGN

Once the third campaign phase ends, the campaign has reached its conclusion. Alliances have had victories in the various campaign phases, and these victories determine the overall winner of the Obolis Invasion campaign. Each campaign phase provides a strategic value to the alliance that was victorious during it, and the winner of the campaign is the alliance that has the highest total strategic value.

CAMPAIGN VICTORY

WAR ZONE	STRATEGIC VALUE
Phase 1	1
Phase 2	2
Phase 3	3

IRRADIATED WASTELAND

Either through years of atomic bombardment, or thorough some catastrophic industrial event, this battlefield is now an irradiated wasteland. Rad-storms and ash winds are the only things to pass through this place with any regularity, for it is now inimical to all natural forms of life. To spend any prolonged period in this hot zone will shorten an unprotected warrior's lifespan considerably – perhaps even immediately.

During battles in phase one of an Obolis Invasion campaign, the Irradiated Wasteland rules apply. This is a Theatre of War that consists of rules for Battlefield Twists and Mysterious Objective Markers, as specified below:

BATTLEFIELD TWISTS

After determining Attacker and Defender, the Attacker rolls one D3 to determine which Battlefield Twist from those listed below is in effect for the durations of the battle:

1. RAD-ZONE

The site of a recent rad-bombardment. Only by taking shelter within the ruins and buildings is one able to avoid the highest levels of radiation.

Each time an attack targets an enemy unit, unless all models in that unit are wholly within an area terrain feature, subtract 1 from the Toughness characteristic of models in that unit for that attack.

2. ASH WINDS

The sterile extermination of all living things in the area has created an ash wasteland. The flat, featureless surroundings are now hounded by winds of ash – all that is left of the planet's flora and fauna forever gusting across its surface.

At the start of each battle round, the player who took the first turn rolls one D6, adding 1 to the result for each consecutively preceding battle round that there were no gusts of ash winds. On a 4+, until the end of the current battle round, there is a gust of ash winds; randomly determine one battlefield edge to be the direction the winds are gusting towards.

While there is a gust of ash winds:

- Models cannot target units that are more than 24" away with ranged attacks.
- Each time a unit Advances or makes a charge move, so long as every model in that unit would finish that move closer the battlefield edge the winds are gusting towards, add 2" to the distance that unit can move for that Advance or charge move.

3. LONG MARCH

With many a waypoint evacuated, shelter brought low and stockpile ruined, armies are forced on the long march to reach their destination. Such conditions push these warriors to the brink.

- Units cannot Advance.
- Each time a charge roll is made for a unit, if you roll a double, that charge automatically fails.
- Models cannot use any rules that ignore wounds.

MYSTERIOUS OBJECTIVE MARKERS

At the start of the first battle round, if the battle includes any objective markers, starting with the player taking the first turn, each player selects a different objective marker to be a mysterious objective marker. If possible, a player must select an objective marker that is not in either player's deployment zone.

Each time a unit from your army performs the following action, roll one D3 to determine the effect below for that mysterious objective marker:

Investigate Objective (Action): One INFANTRY unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is within range of a mysterious objective marker that has not been investigated and there are no enemy units (excluding AIRCRAFT) within range of the same mysterious objective marker. The Action is completed at the end of your turn and that mysterious objective marker is considered to have been investigated.

1. SHIELD SYSTEM

Your warriors discover a device which they unwittingly activate. In a millisecond, an invisible energy field thrums to life, sheltering those nearby from incoming kinetic impacts.

Until the end of the battle, each time a ranged attack is allocated to a model within range of this mysterious objective marker, add 1 to the armour saving throw made against that attack.

2. ABANDONED SUPPLIES

A half buried, lead-lined crate is unearthed from the lifeless soil, clearly a cache from a war long forgotten. Inside are vital stores of ammunition, energy cells and medical supplies.

When this effect is determined, that player gains D3 Command Points.

3. LOST TECH

Whilst investigating the area, ancient spider-like devices attach themselves to the power cells of the first weapons they find. Instead of draining the cells, they infuse them with deadly entropic energy.

When this effect is determined, select one unit from your army within range of the mysterious objective marker (excluding AIRCRAFT), then select one weapon profile models in that unit are equipped with. Until the end of the battle, each time a model in that unit makes an attack with that weapon profile, add 1 to that attack's wound roll.

METALICAN REDOUBT

This is no ordinary battlefield, but a site that the Metalicans have held for countless centuries. In that time it has been enhanced in the same manner that the Adeptus Mechanicus augmented their own bodies, the landscape now riddled with ancient technologies and gleaming machinery. These all serve the needs of Metalica, preserving and protecting the forge world's precious assets.

During battles in phase two of an Obolis Invasion campaign, the Metalican Redoubt rules apply. This is a Theatre of War that consists of rules for Battle Assets as specified below:

BATTLE ASSETS

After choosing deployment zones, the Defender selects one Battle Asset from those below. Alternatively, they can randomly select a Battle Asset by rolling one D6. The Attacker then selects a Battle Asset (they cannot select the same Battle Asset as the Defender). Alternatively, the Attacker can randomly select a Battle Asset by rolling one D6 (roll again if the result is the same as the Defender's Battle Asset).

1. REPULSION-SHIELD DOME

A large energy dome covers the defender's battle lines, a shield that attenuates the impetus of any projectile that passes through it.

Each time a ranged attack is made against a unit from your army, if that unit is wholly within your deployment zone, subtract 1 from the Strength characteristic of that attack.

2. GRAV-WAVE SHOCK MINES

The battle lines and no-man's-land alike have been bombarded by shock mines that send out pulses of grav waves to stall the enemy's advance.

Enemy units treat all Obstacle and Area Terrain features that are not wholly within their own deployment zone as having the Difficult Ground trait (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).

3. NOOSPHERIC DATA UPLINK

The air here sings with the rich noospheric data streams that can be tapped and employed for strategic gain.

- Add 3" to the range of aura abilities of models in your army (to a maximum of 12").
- If your army is Battle-forged, roll one D6 each time you spend a Command Point. On a 6, that Command Point is refunded.

4. RAPID ENGAGEMENT

This battlefield sits in the centre of a massive Adeptus Mechanicus transit hub, with dedicated speedways and access routes leading to it. These enable swift assaults on enemy lines, and sweeping counter-attacks from relief forces.

- You can re-roll charge rolls for units in your army.
- Add 1 to charge rolls made for units in your army.

5. AGGRESSION ENHANCERS

The air is thick with servo-skulls, each equipped with binharic speakers that constantly blurt out the Omnissiah's benedictions to smite the unworthy, and beta-wave generators that stimulate the aggression centres of biological and cybernetic minds alike.

- Each time a model in your army makes a melee attack, if its unit made a charge move this turn, you can re-roll the hit roll.
- Each time a unit from your army piles in or consolidates, models in that unit can move an additional 1".

6. TRANSONIC EMITTERS

The battlefield houses arrays of transonic emitters that enhance the lethality of projectiles at short range.

Each time a model in your army targets a unit that is within 9" with a ranged attack, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

ASCENDANCY OF ENTROPY

The malign, corrupting influence of the warp has begun to manifest on the battlefield, the inevitable millennia-long slide into entropy accelerated beyond all mortal comprehension. Blight visibly creeps across the landscape to sap the vitality from soldiers, while the air hangs heavy with the stench of rot and the despair that comes from the encroachment of death inescapable.

During battles in phase three of an Obolis Invasion campaign, the Ascendancy of Entropy rules apply. This is a Theatre of War that consists of rules for Battlefield Twists as specified below:

BATTLEFIELD TWISTS

At the start of each battle round, the player who is taking the first turn rolls three D6s.

- If the result is a 7, the player taking the second turn this battle round then rolls one D6. The result determines which Battlefield Twist will apply for the remainder of the battle.
- If the result includes any doubles, the Battlefield Twist that corresponds to that double applies for the remainder of the battle. For example, if the three D6 rolled resulted in a 1, a 1 and a 4, the Despair result would apply for the remainder of the battle.
- If the result is a triple 1, triple 3 or triple 5, then all the odd-numbered Battlefield Twists apply for the remainder of the battle. For example, if the three D6 rolled resulted in a 3, a 3 and a 3, the Despair, Rot and Atrophy results would apply for the remainder of the battle.
- If the result is a triple 2, triple 4 or triple 6, then all the even-numbered Battlefield Twists shown below apply for the remainder of the battle. For example, if the three D6 rolled resulted in a 2, a 2 and a 2, the Rust, Decay and Blight results would apply for the remainder of the battle.

Duplicated Battlefield Twists have no additional effect.

The Ascendancy of Entropy Battlefield Twists are as follows:

1. DESPAIR

The wind howls with the sound of the sick and the dying, a sound that gnaws on the soul and drives soldiers into despair.

Units always count as being below Half-strength. If a unit is already below Half-strength, each time a Morale test is failed for that unit, one additional model flees.

2. RUST

The air itself is heavy with the passage of time, metal visibly corroding and iron rusting with every passing heartbeat.

The Save characteristic of all models is reduced by 1.

3. ROT

The stench of the battlefield is beyond description, for every organic thing within it grows sick and rots.

Subtract 1 from the Toughness characteristic of all models.

4. DECAY

The ground saps the vitality from those who walk upon it, every step drawing yet more strength away.

Subtract 1 from the Strength characteristic of all models.

5. ATROPHY

A warp wind blows through this battlefield, wracking the bodies of those in its path with a dozen painful maladies, making even the simplest of tasks a mighty effort.

- Units cannot make use of the Objective Secured ability (or similar abilities).
- Units cannot perform actions in a turn in which they made a Normal Move.

6. BLIGHT

A dreadful curse hangs over the battlefield, an infection that blights both mortals and machines, poisoning their spirits and dulling their martial efficacy.

Each time a model makes an attack, the hit roll, wound roll, damage roll and rolls to determine the number of attacks cannot be re-rolled.

CAMPAIGN MASTER'S EDICTS

Campaign Master's Edicts are tools the Campaign Master has at their disposal to add further depth to an Obolis Invasion campaign. The Campaign Master should use these at their discretion if it is appropriate for their gaming group and the circumstances the campaign is built upon.

LEGENDARY MISSIONS

Along with Theatres of War, the right mission selection can further reinforce the narrative and feel of an Obolis Invasion campaign. Therefore the Campaign Master may decide to specify missions for certain stages of the campaign, or determine the pool of missions available to players.

Pages 56-61 contain Legendary Missions. Each of these is a mission based on a key conflict during a different phase of the War Zone Charadon campaign. They are different to missions you will find in mission packs in that they have a variety of unique mission rules that add additional narrative to the battle. Note that these missions can be played by following the sequence from any mission pack. That means in a matched play campaign, the players should select secondary objectives as normal, and in a narrative play campaign using Crusade forces, the players should select Agendas as normal. These Legendary Missions have been designed for use with Strike Force or Onslaught size battles, but the Campaign Master should feel free to adjust these missions for Combat Patrol or Incursion size battles if they so choose.

A Campaign Master should feel free to introduce these missions as appropriate. One method is to simply let the players use them if they feel like it. Another method is to introduce Legendary Missions during certain stages as a finale to each campaign phase. Either way, it is recommended that each player only plays the relevant campaign phase's Legendary Mission once, and earns one additional war zone point if they do so.

In addition to this, the Campaign Master should feel free to introduce narrative play missions from other publications that they feel suit the campaign, applying them in the same method as Legendary Missions above.

CRUSADE REWARDS

In a narrative play campaign, the Campaign Master can further support Crusade forces by having a selection of bonuses and rewards available for the players. Here are a few ways in which these can be rewarded:

REQUISITION POINTS

At the end of each campaign phase, each player can be awarded additional Requisition points based on how their alliance did during the phase. The alliance that earned the fewest war zone points is awarded the most Requisition points, representing that alliance calling for aid and doubling their efforts to achieve victory in the following campaign phase. Remember that each player can never have more than 5 Requisition points; any excess points are lost.

REQUISITION POINTS

POSITION BASED ON WAR ZONE POINTS	REQUISITION POINTS AWARDED TO EACH PLAYER
1st	0
2nd	1
3rd	2

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The Campaign Master can award experience points based on how each Crusade force performs on the battlefield. This should be done at the Campaign Master's discretion in an impartial and consistent manner. Here are some criteria by which the Campaign Master can determine experience rewards (note that these could be communicated as a challenge for the players to achieve):

- At the end of each campaign phase, each player from the winning alliance gains 5 experience points to distribute freely across units in their Crusade force.
- If a player defeats an enemy player who defeated them in their previous meeting in the campaign, after that game, the winning player can select one additional unit from their army to be Marked for Greatness.
- At the end of a campaign phase, if a player lost all the games they played during that phase, they can roll one D6. They gain that many experience points to distribute freely across the units in their Crusade force.

SECRET ORDERS

If the players are using missions that use secondary objectives or Agendas, the Campaign Master can introduce Secret Orders. These are hidden campaign objectives that players can attempt to achieve to gain more war zone points for their alliance. The Campaign Master can assign these to players at their discretion, or they can decide that at the start of each campaign phase, each player should roll one D6 and consult the table below to determine which Secret Order they have for that campaign phase. Either way, the Campaign Master should also have a record of each player's Secret Order for the campaign phase.

D6	SECRET ORDER
1	**Battlefield Supremacy:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from a Battlefield Supremacy Agenda or victory points from a Battlefield Supremacy Secondary Objective.
2	**Purge the Enemy:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from a Purge the Enemy Agenda or victory points from a Purge the Enemy Secondary Objective.
3	**No Mercy, No Respite:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from a No Mercy, No Respite Agenda or victory points from a No Mercy, No Respite Secondary Objective.
4	**Shadow Operations:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from a Shadow Operations Agenda or victory points from a Shadow Operations Secondary Objective.
5	**Warpcraft:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from a Warpcraft Agenda or victory points from a Warpcraft Secondary Objective. If you have no **PSYKER** units to use in the campaign, you can determine a different Secret Order.
6	**Personal Agenda:** Win one or more battles in the current campaign phase in which you earned experience points from an Agenda or victory points from a Secondary Objective that is specific to your faction, e.g. one that is presented in a Codex.

Each player should make a note of what their current Secret Order is. Once they have achieved their Secret Order, they earn 2 war zone points for their alliance.

PHASE 1 – LEGENDARY MISSION

ROUT ON OKHARIUM

MISSION BRIEFING

This mission is inspired by the massacre of Imperial forces on Okharium (pg 12-13). If the players wish to re-enact the historical accuracy of this battle, then a player from the Defenders alliance is most suited to be the Defender in this mission. However, players should feel free to assign Attacker and Defender as they feel is appropriate. This mission has been designed to reflect a fighting retreat by a force with limited mobility as they come under fire from a determined attacker. Therefore, when mustering armies, it is thematically appropriate for the Defender to select few, if any, units that have a Move characteristic of more than 12".

MISSION RULES

A Force In Retreat

- The Defender cannot put any units into Strategic Reserves.
- **AIRCRAFT** and any units that start the battle in a location other than the battlefield (excluding **GENESTEALER CULTS** units that start the battle in ambush) cannot score victory points for the Defender (see Mission Objectives).

Fall Back

The Defender's models cannot be set up or finish a move within 6" of the Attacker's battlefield edge.

Automated Fire Zones

After declaring reserves and transports, but before setting up any remaining units, starting with the Attacker, the players alternate placing automated fire zone markers until there are three on the battlefield. When placing these markers, they must be placed within 1" of the Defender's battlefield edge and more than 6" from any other automated fire zone markers.

At the start of each battle round after the first, the players roll off. The winner selects one automated fire zone marker that has not already been selected this battle round, then selects one of the following options:

- **Engage:** the closest visible unit within 24" of the marker suffers D3 mortal wounds.
- **Stand Down:** no effect.

The players then roll off again, repeating the process until each automated fire zone marker has been selected.

Escape

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

Escape (Action): One or more units from your army can start to perform this action at the start of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that performs this action must be wholly within 3" of the Defender's battlefield edge. A unit cannot perform this action while there are any enemy units within 6" of them. The action is completed at the end of your Movement phase. If this action is completed, that unit is removed from the battlefield, but that unit does not count as having been destroyed for any rules purposes.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

ROUT

Progressive Objective

It is not enough to simply defeat the foe here; they must be utterly annihilated if their army is to be routed.

The Attacker scores 2 victory points each time a unit from the Defender's army is destroyed.

CUT OFF

End Game Objective

Do not let the foe escape – surround them and cut off their lines of retreat to ensure victory.

At the end of the battle, the Attacker scores 2 victory points for each unit from the Defender's army that is on the battlefield but not within 6" of the Defender's battlefield edge.

ESCAPE

Progressive Objective

You must fall back in order to preserve of much of your fighting force as possible. Escape this battlefield so that you can regroup and mount a counter-attack later.

The Defender scores 4 victory points each time a unit from their army performs the Escape action.

FIGHTING RETREAT

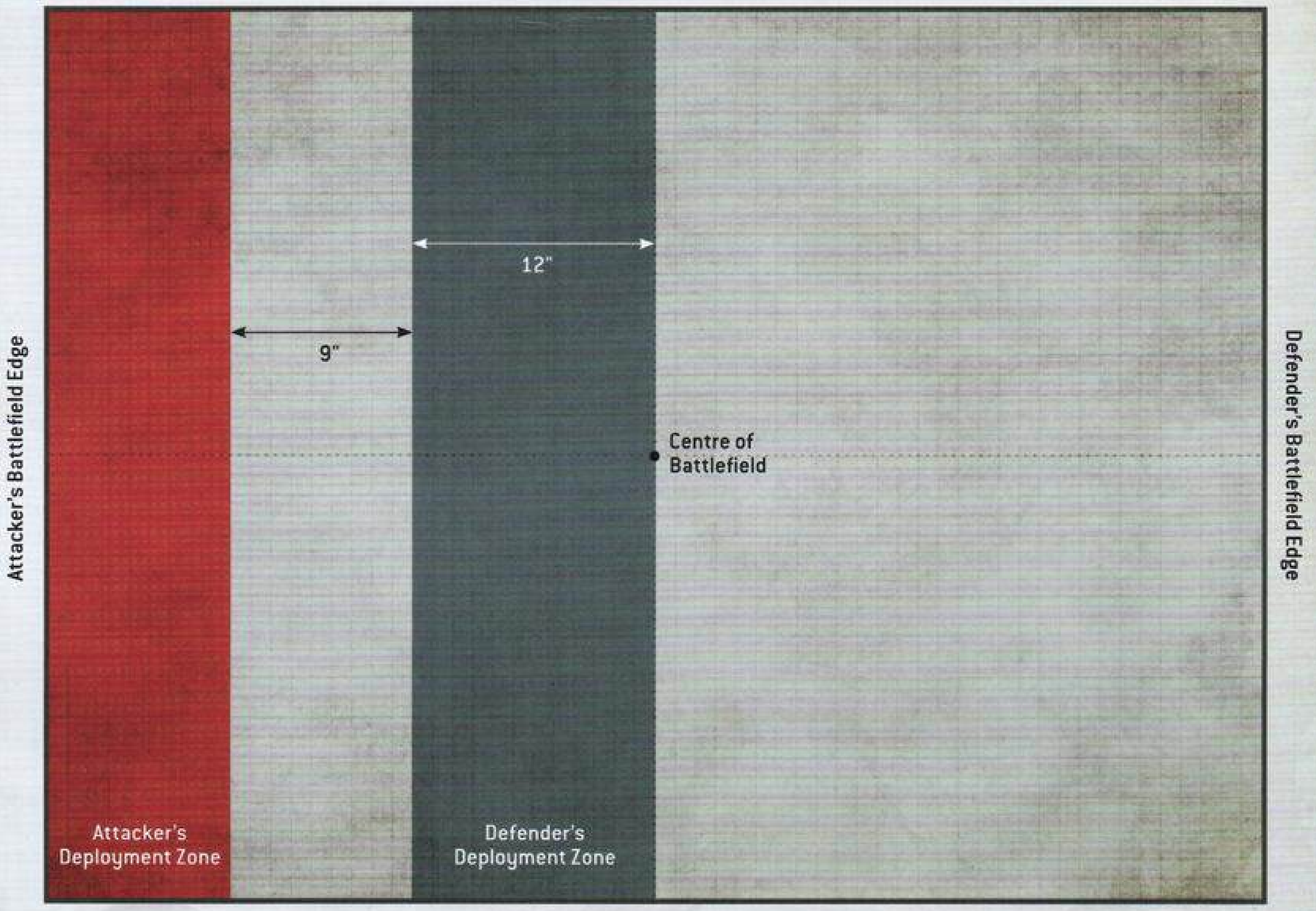
End Game Objective

Provide covering fire for your forces as they fall back, lest the foe overrun them. But be sure that your forces don't stray far from the point of egress.

At the end of the battle, the Defender scores 4 victory point for each unit from their army that is within 6" of their battlefield edge.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select one unit from their army. If that unit can gain a Battle Honour, it gains a Battle Trait of your choice (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). Make a note of that battle Trait on that unit's Crusade card and adjust its Crusade points accordingly.


Attacker's Battlefield Edge
Defender's Battlefield Edge
9"
12"
Centre of Battlefield
Attacker's Deployment Zone
Defender's Deployment Zone

PHASE 2 – LEGENDARY MISSION

FLOOD TIDE ON FATHOM

MISSION BRIEFING

This mission is inspired by Rotigus Rainfather's attacks on the aqua-harvesting rigs on the ocean world of Fathom (pg 22). If the players wish to re-enact the historical accuracy of this battle, then a player from the Invaders alliance is most suited to be the Attacker in this mission. However, players should feel free to assign the Attacker and Defender as they feel is appropriate.

MISSION RULES

Aqua-extraction Pump

Units from both players' armies can perform the following action:

Aqua-extraction Pump (Action): One or more units from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that starts to performs this action must be in range of a different objective marker. A unit cannot start this action while there are any enemy units (excluding **AIRCRAFT**) in range of the same objective marker. The action is completed at the start of the next battle round so long as the unit performing it is still within range of the same objective marker.

Flooded

Do not use a Theatre of War in this mission. The flooding of the aqua-harvesting rig is represented by levels, with level 1 being the lowest. At the start of the first battle round, level 1 is active. At the start of each battle round thereafter, after any Aqua-extraction Pump actions have been resolved, the flood levels can change as follows:

- If the Attacker completed more Aqua-extraction Pump actions than the Defender at the start of the battle round, the flood level progresses up to the next level.
- If the Defender completed more Aqua-extraction Pump actions than the Attacker at the start of the battle round, the flood level digresses to the previous level (level 1 is the minimum).
- If neither player completed more Aqua-extraction Pump actions than the other player at the start of the battle round, the flood level does not change.

Each flood level is cumulative, and the effects of each flood level last until the flood level decreases below that level. These effects are as follows:

- **Level 1:** Subtract 1" from the Move characteristic of all models. Subtract 1 from all Advance and charge rolls.
- **Level 2:** Subtract 1 from the Strength characteristic of all models
- **Level 3:** Each time a ranged attack is made against a unit, add 1 to that attack's wound roll.
- **Level 4:** When the flood level progresses to this level, and at the start of each battle round thereafter, each **CHARACTER** unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. Each other unit suffers D6 mortal wounds.
- **Level 5:** The Range characteristic of all ranged weapons that models are equipped with is halved.

None of these affects apply to **AIRCRAFT**.

Shelter from the Floods

While a unit is wholly within an Area Terrain feature and/or on a Hill or Obstacle, it treats the flood level as being one level lower. If the flood level is currently at level 1, that unit is not affected by the Flooded rule.

Sabotage the Water Rig

The Attacker has the first turn.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

AQUA-EXTRACTION PUMPS

Progressive Objective

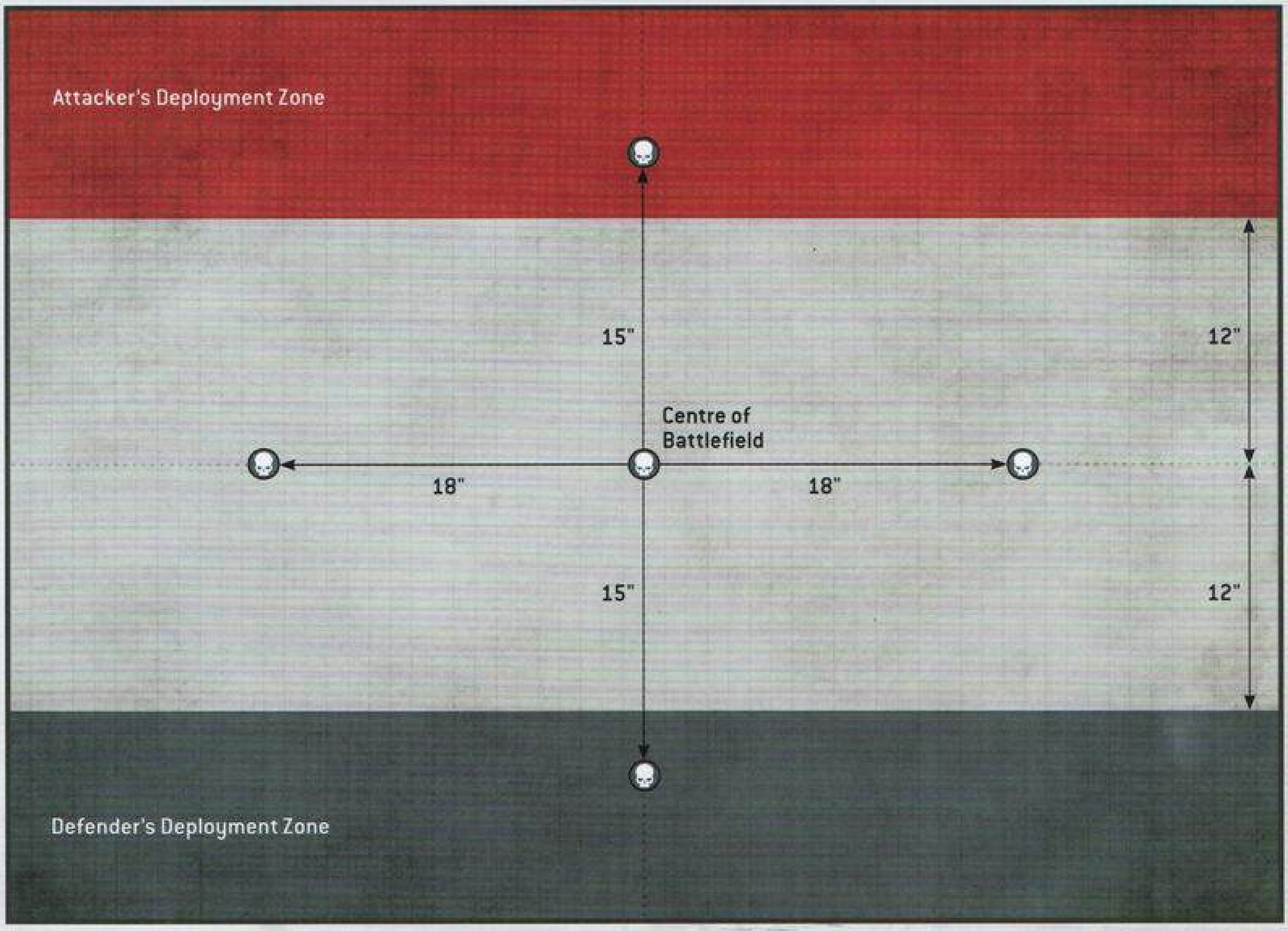
Whoever commands the aqua-extraction pumps will control whether the rig stays afloat or is plunged into the polluted depths.

Score 4 victory points each time a unit from your army successfully completes the Aqua-extraction Pump action.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor of this mission gains 2 Requisition points after this battle, instead of just 1.

Attacker's Battlefield Edge



Defender's Battlefield Edge

PHASE 3 – LEGENDARY MISSION:

DESPERATION AND DESPAIR

MISSION BRIEFING

This mission is inspired by the anarchy that ensued following the Invaders' completing their feculent ritual on St Bartolph's Throne (pg 33). This not only tore a grotesque fistula through the fabric of realspace, but also raised Miasmic Malignifiers and hordes of plague zombies on countless worlds. It was the culmination of Typhus' plan – to plunge the entire war zone into a state of hopeless degradation.

MISSION RULES

Objective markers

At the Place Objective Markers step of this mission, the players alternate placing a total of six objective markers on the battlefield, one at a time, starting with the Defender (if your mission does not have this step, set up these objective markers after you have created the battlefield, but before either side deploys). Objective markers can be placed anywhere on the battlefield that more than 6" away from any battlefield edge and more than 12" away from any other objective marker (they cannot be set up on top of terrain features that have the unstable terrain trait).

Scattered Forces

The following rules are in effect:

- During deployment, units cannot be set up within Engagement Range of any enemy models.
- During deployment, units that are set up on the battlefield cannot be set up in a location other than their deployment zone, even if they have a rule that allows them to do so (e.g. Concealed Positions).
- Units cannot move before the first turn begins, even if they have a rule that allows them to do so.

Desperation

Unless a unit is within 6" of another friendly unit, each time a Morale test is taken for that unit, halve its Leadership characteristic for that test.

Wild Abandon

- Each time a unit makes a pile-in or consolidate move, it can move an additional 1" for that move.
- All units are eligible to perform Heroic Interventions as if they were **CHARACTERS**. If a unit is already able to perform Heroic Interventions, it can move an additional 1" when performing a Heroic Intervention.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

SECURE AND CONTROL

Progressive Objective

Seek out whatever sites of tactical importance remain and secure them from falling into enemy hands, no matter the cost.

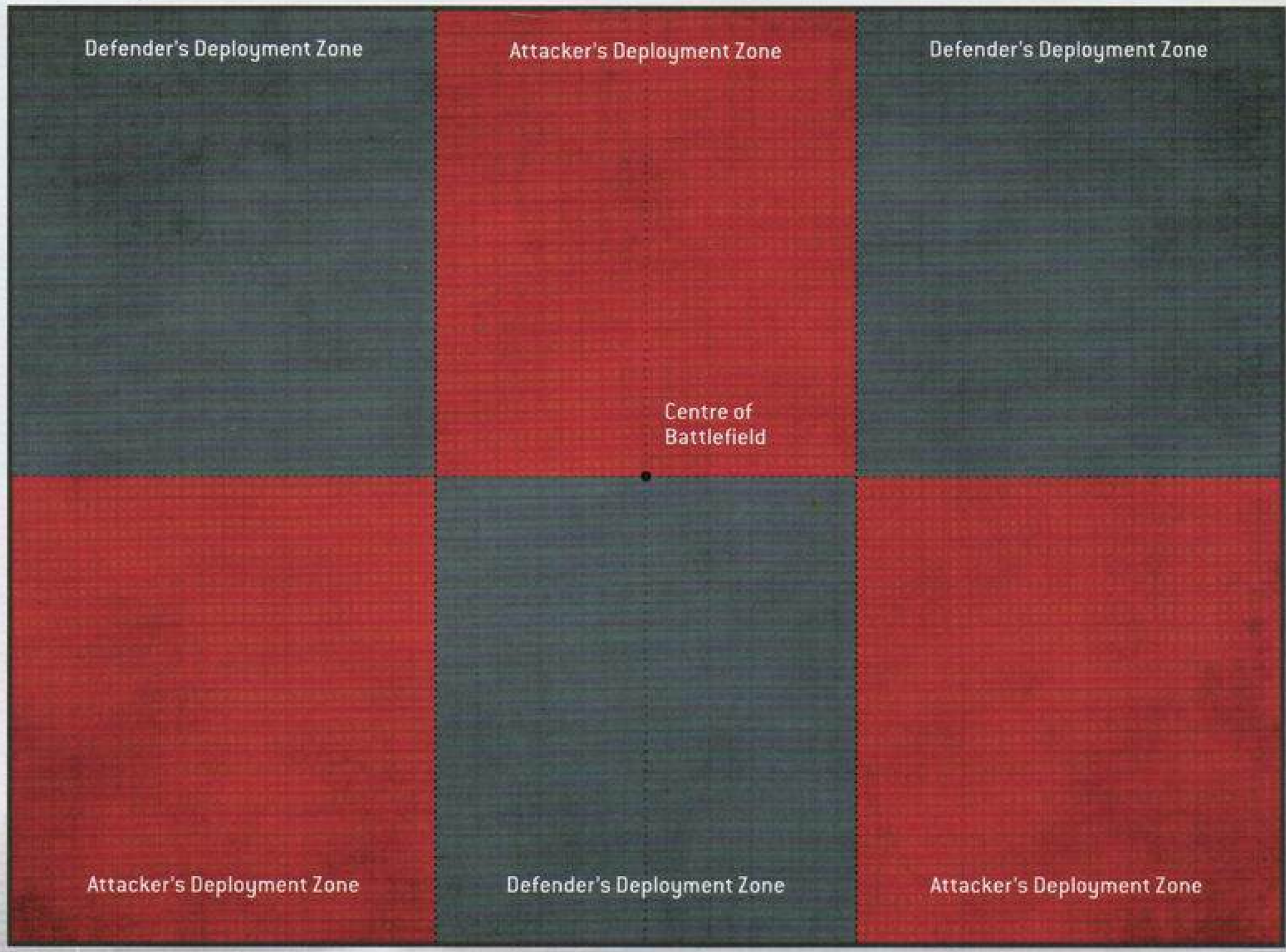
At the end of each player's Command phase, the player whose turn it is scores 4 victory points for each objective marker they control (to a maximum of 18 victory points per turn).

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

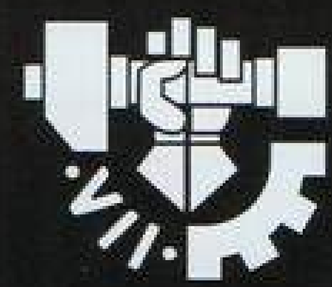
VICTOR BONUS

The unit from the victor's army that destroyed the most enemy units gains 3 experience points.

Defender's Battlefield Edge



Attacker's Battlefield Edge



ARMY RULES

'The Omnissiah affords us the tools required to perform our sacred ministrations upon the material galaxy in his name. Equally, his doctrines and dogmas provide us with the wisdom required to understand which tool is blessed and good for the completion of each new task. So it is with martial cohorts, just as it is with the selection of the proper servo-manipulator or mechadendrite for the appropriate data-port. Your armies are but tools, each uniquely suited to its particular purpose. The Omnissiah trusts you to select the proper military appendage to resolve each given situation to His satisfaction.'

- *The Dogamatus Scriptorus Metalicum* 0001-11-010111

INTRODUCTION

Over the following pages you will find a host of new rules for armies from the Adeptus Mechanicus, Imperial Knights, Death Guard and Drukhari, including rules for creating Armies of Renown.

ARMY OF RENOWN: MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT (PG 66-67)

A Mechanicus Defence Cohort is an Adeptus Mechanicus Army of Renown (see opposite) that contains only Cult Mechanicus forces who are sworn to defend the Omnissiah's realm. On these pages, you will find a list of restrictions required to forge such an army and a list of additional rules and benefits that such an army gains.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: METALICA (PG 68-70)

Metalica is one of the most ruthless forge worlds, its rad-infused warriors pursuing the eradication of their foes without respite or mercy. The rules in the Metalica section supplement those found in *Codex: Adeptus Mechanicus* with a collection of army and Battle-forged rules, such as Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems, for Adeptus Mechanicus warriors that are drawn from Forge World Metalica.

ARMY OF RENOWN: FREEBLADE LANCE (PG 72-73)

A Freeblade Lance is an Imperial Knights Army of Renown (see opposite) that contains only Freeblade units, a group of once exiled and lone heroes who have since banded together as knights-in-arms to crush the enemies of Mankind. On these pages, you will find a list of restrictions required to forge such an army and a list of additional rules and benefits that such an army gains.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: HOUSE RAVEN (PG 74-75)

Of all the Knight Houses that have sworn allegiance to the Adeptus Mechanicus, few are as famed or as noble as House Raven. The rules in this section supplement those found in *Codex: Imperial Knights* with a collection of army and Battle-forged rules, such as Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems, for Knights that are from House Raven.

ARMY OF RENOWN: TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE (PG 78-81)

A Terminus Est Assault Force is a Death Guard Army of Renown (see opposite) that eschews vehicles in favour of plague-ridden infantry forces that can deploy into the heart of battle directly from Typhus' orbiting flagship. On these pages, you will find a list of restrictions required to forge such an army and a list of additional rules and benefits that such an army gains.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: CULT OF STRIFE (PG 84-86)

The Cult of Strife is perhaps the most powerful Wych Cult in Commorragh, its warriors famed for their skill and bloodlust. The rules found here supplement those found in *Codex: Drukhari* with a collection of army and Battle-forged rules, such as Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems, for Drukhari warriors that are from the Cult of Strife.

ARMY OF RENOWN

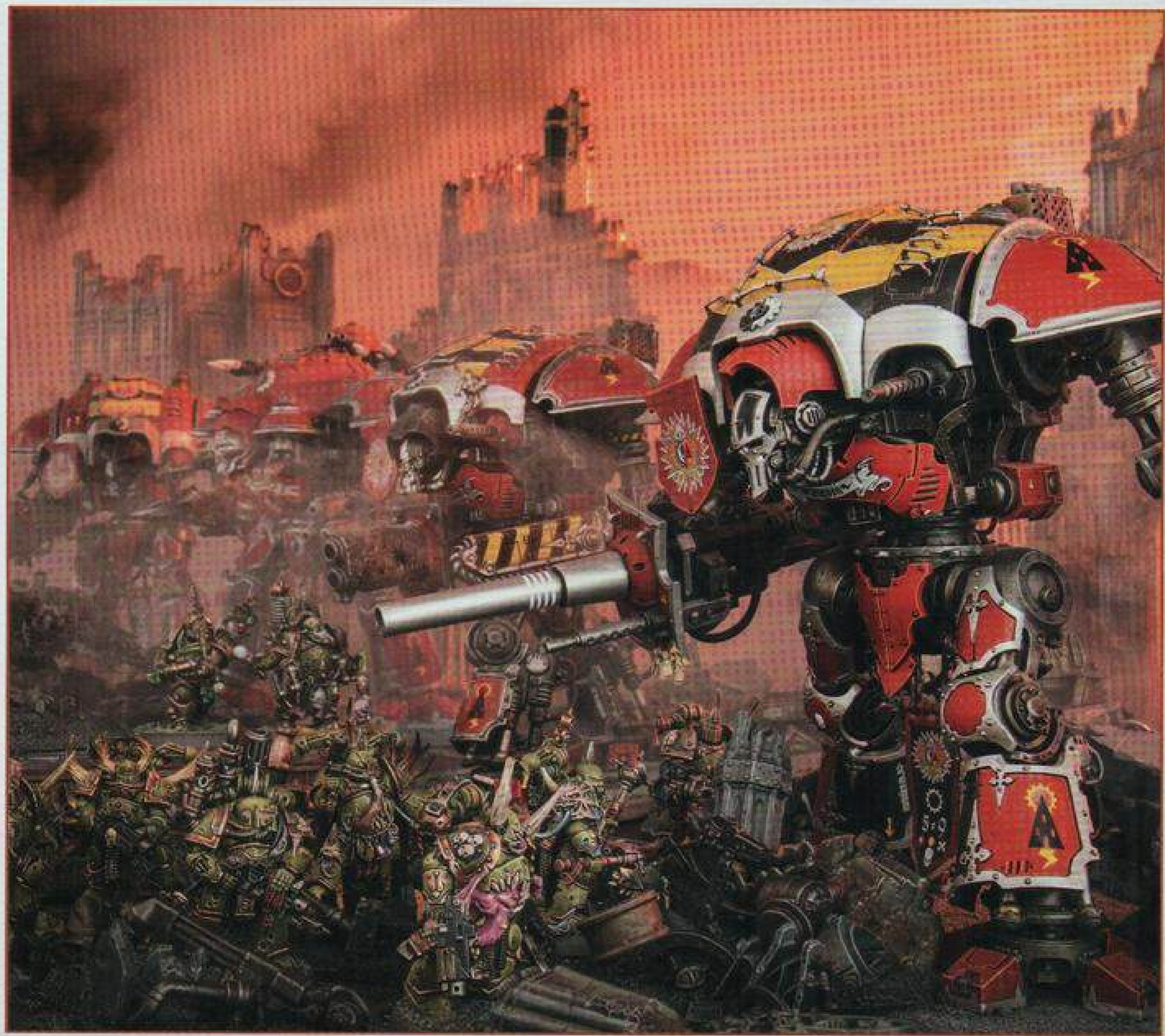
An Army of Renown is a specialised force that has earned fame or infamy across the 41st Millennium, the experience of which has given its warriors unique skills to use on the battlefield.

An Army of Renown is a variant army list for a particular Faction in Warhammer 40,000 that is themed around a particular disposition of forces. Each imposes certain restrictions on what units can be included, but it also grants access to a wider range of rules such as Stratagems, Relics etc. to reflect that Army of Renown's unique methods of waging war in the 41st Millennium.

If you wish for your army to become an Army of Renown, it must first adhere to all the restrictions laid out for that Army of Renown, it must be Battle-forged and it must not include any Specialist Detachments. You can then make a note in the Army Faction section of your Army Roster of which Army of Renown your army is. Some, or all the units in an Army of Renown then gain the benefits listed, such as new keyword, abilities, Stratagems etc. Note that your army does not automatically become an Army of Renown just because it happens to abide by the restrictions – you must choose for it to be an Army of Renown.

Crusade Army of Renown

You can use any of the rules listed in an Army of Renown to make a Crusade Army of Renown when you start a Crusade force. In this case, the Restrictions and Benefits apply to your entire Crusade force – replace all instances of 'army' listed in the Restrictions and Benefits sections to instead say 'Crusade force', and make a note in the Crusade Faction section of your Order of Battle of which Army of Renown your Crusade force is. Note that means that certain units can never be added to your Order of Battle; but it will result in a particularly focussed and themed collection. Whenever you select a Crusade army from such an Order of Battle, it must be Battle-forged and cannot include any Specialist Detachments.



ARMY OF RENOWN

MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT

Possessed by the unrelenting spirit of the Omnissiah in his most obdurate aspect, the zealous warriors of the defence cohort will fight to the last rather than give ground.

It is a holy tenet of Metalican doctrine, and that of many similar forge worlds, that each of its macroclades should be thought of as an exceptionally complex machine. Within this greater engine of war, each cohort is to be viewed as a functional component intended for a specific purpose. The defence cohorts deployed during the Metalican wars were perfect examples of this principle at work.

Comprising forces already prized for their tenacity and zealotry more than their tactical and strategic flexibility, the defence cohorts were intended to act as a solid bulwark against which enemy forces would be dashed. Fanatical courage kept these cohorts anchored to solid defensive positions even when faced with overwhelming odds. Indeed, more than one such cohort was wiped out to the last priest and servitor during the attacks against the Metalican Gates, yet in each case the butcher's bill paid by the foe was heinous enough to satisfy the forge world's dispassionate calculus of war.

In extremis, these redoubtable formations could be enhanced through the use of Extremis Sentinel Protocols that transformed their soldiery into near-mindless automata whose only thought was indomitable defence. Their masters could also call upon saturation bombardment and horrific rad-cleansing should their positions risk being overrun. To the masters of the Metalican military, the absolute annihilation of all life upon a battlefield was eminently preferable to permitting the foe a victory.

A Mechanicus Defence Cohort is an Army of Renown (pg 65).

RESTRICTIONS

- All units in your army must be **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** and be drawn from the same **<FORGE WORLD>**.
- Your army cannot include **SKITARII** units.

BENEFITS

- All units in your army gain the **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT** keyword.
- You have access to the Mechanicus Defence Cohort Warlord Trait, Relic and Stratagems.
- **KATAPHRON BREACHERS**, **KATAPHRON DESTROYERS**, **SERVITORS** and **KASTELAN ROBOTS** units in your army gain the Extremis Sentinel Protocols ability described below.

Extremis Sentinel Protocols

In dire circumstances, the cybernetic and robotic minds of a forge world's defenders can be overwritten with a belligerent code that will drastically increase the subject's protective engrams and willingness to defend the Omnissiah's domain. Such an action borders on the heretical, as the new code banishes all vestiges of the original machine spirit residing within; but when faced with a deadly assault, there are few actions the Adeptus Mechanicus will not consider.

- This unit never gains a forge world dogma (see *Codex: Adeptus Mechanicus*), but its inclusion in a Detachment does not prevent other units in that Detachment (excluding other units with this ability) from gaining a dogma.
- This unit gains the **EXTREMIS SENTINEL** keyword.
- Each time a ranged attack is allocated to a model in this unit, if this unit is either wholly within its controller's deployment zone, or if every model in this unit is within range of an objective marker, subtract 1 from the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a minimum of 1).
- Each time an enemy unit declares a charge against this unit, if this unit is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can either Hold Steady or Set to Defend.
- If it Holds Steady, then until the end of the phase, any Overwatch attacks made by models in this unit score hits on unmodified rolls of 5+, instead of 6+.
- If it Sets to Defend, then until the end of the phase, it cannot fire Overwatch, but until the end of the next Fight phase, each time a model in this unit makes a melee attack, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

WARLORD TRAIT

If a **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, it can have the Warlord Trait below instead of one from another source.

CACOPHONOUS LEADERSHIP (AURA)

This Warlord leads their subjects in a raucous vox-prayer that venerates the Omnissiah as they repel their foes. Those that hear such ministrations refuse to yield the Omnissiah's blessed domain to the enemy.

While a friendly **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT** unit is within 6" of this **WARLORD**, that unit has the Objective Secured ability (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). **EXTREMIS SENTINEL** models in such units count as one additional model when determining control of an objective marker.

RELIC

If your army is led by a **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give the following Arcana Mechanicum to a **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT CHARACTER** model from your army, instead of one from another source. Named characters and **VEHICLE** models cannot be given the following Relic. Note that this Arcana Mechanicum replaces one of the model's existing items of wargear. You must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Arcana Mechanicum your models have on your army roster.

FORGEFIRE

This master-work weapon is rumoured to have been defending the Omnissiah's realms since the siege of Mars in aeons past.

Model equipped with a volkite blaster only. This Relic replaces a volkite blaster and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Forgefire	36"	Heavy 3	6	-2	2

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon, an unmodified wound roll of 6 inflicts 1 mortal wound on the target in addition to any normal damage.

STRATAGEMS

If your army is a Mechanicus Defence Cohort, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

CITATION OF RUIN — 2CP/3CP

Mechanicus Defence Cohort – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Even when defences are breached and the front lines are overrun, a defence cohort can still unleash ruination.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when an **EXTREMIS SENTINEL** unit from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, models in that unit have the Big Guns Never Tire rule in the same manner as if they were **VEHICLE** models (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core book). In addition, they do not suffer the -1 penalty to their hit rolls incurred when making attacks with heavy weapons against units they are in Engagement Range with, as described in the Big Guns Never Tire rule (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core book). If that unit has 4 or more models, this Stratagem costs 3CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

PRE-CALIBRATED PURGE SOLUTION — 1CP

Mechanicus Defence Cohort – Battle Tactic Stratagem

A swarm of servo-skulls has collated data on the enemy's deployment zone so that our cohort warriors can better engage them from our own fortified battle lines.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase when an **EXTREMIS SENTINEL** unit from your army that is wholly within your deployment zone is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack against an enemy unit that is wholly within the enemy deployment zone, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

BOLSTER DEFENCES — 2CP

Mechanicus Defence Cohort – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

There is nothing that cannot be improved by the blessed ministrations of the Omnissiah's faithful.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, after determining deployment zones. Select one Area Terrain or Obstacles feature within your deployment zone. That terrain feature gains the Light Cover terrain trait. If it already had the Light Cover terrain trait, add 2 to the saving throw instead of 1 (invulnerable saving throws are still not affected). You can only use this stratagem once.

RAD-BOMBARDMENT — 3CP

Mechanicus Defence Cohort – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

It is better to sterilise the battlefield than let it fall to the enemy.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase, if a **MECHANICUS DEFENCE COHORT WARLORD** from your army is on the battlefield. Select one point on the battlefield and place a marker on that point. At the start of your next Command phase, roll one D6 for each unit within 6" of the centre of that marker, subtracting 1 if the unit being rolled for is a **CHARACTER**. On a 4-5, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds, and on a 6+ that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds and until the end of the turn, subtract 1 from the Toughness characteristic of each model in that unit (this is not cumulative with any other rule that reduces the Toughness characteristic of an enemy model). The marker is then removed. You can only use this Stratagem once.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: METALICA

Over the following pages you will find Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems for Adeptus Mechanicus units that are drawn from the forge world of Metalica.

Codex: Adeptus Mechanicus describes how most of the Adeptus Mechanicus units belong to a forge world, and how you can use the **<FORGE WORLD>** keyword to specify where such a unit is drawn from. The rules in the following section are for units that are drawn from the forge world of **METALICA**.

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

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **METALICA CHARACTER** model gains a Warlord Trait, you can use the Metalica Warlord Traits table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have instead of one from another source. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. MASTER ANNIHILATOR

This Warlord is a peerless annihilator, commanding ruthless technology to eliminate all life before them.

In your Command phase, select one friendly **METALICA** unit that is within 6" of this **WARLORD**. Until the start of your next Command phase, add 6" to the Range characteristic and 1 to the Strength characteristic of all radium weapons models in that unit are equipped with. For the purposes of this rule, a Radium weapon is any weapon whose profile includes the word 'Radium' (radium pistol, radium carbine etc.) and any relic that replaces such a weapon. This is not cumulative with any other rule that increases a weapon's range.

2. ASHRUNNER

This Warlord earned their reputation on ash wastes of Armageddon. The mark of that war zone is apparent in the extensive modifications that make them suitable for such environments.

Add 3" to the Move characteristic and 1 to the Strength and Attacks characteristics of this **WARLORD**.

3. RADIOACTIVE EMANATION (AURA)

This Warlord is wreathed in a dense, radioactive fog that saps the stamina of those who are not inured to its ionising embrace.

While a unit is within 6" of this **WARLORD**, unless it is a **METALICA** unit, subtract 1 from its Toughness characteristic. This is not cumulative with any other rule that reduces the Toughness characteristic of an enemy model (e.g. the Rad-saturation ability or the Rad-Bombardment Stratagem).

RELICS

If your army is led by a **METALICA WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Arcana Mechanicum Relics to a **METALICA CHARACTER** model from your army. Named characters cannot be given any of the following Relics.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Arcana Mechanicum Relics your models have on your army roster.

OMNI-STERILISER

This weapon exemplifies Metalica's disdain for organic life. All flesh, blood and bone caught in its searing beams are reduced to inert atoms in an instant.

Model equipped with an eradication ray only. This Relic replaces an eradication ray and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Omni-steriliser	24"	Assault D3	6	-4	3

Abilities: Blast

BIONICS OF VENERATION

These exquisite bionics emit a blaring auditory screech in praise of the Omnissiah, and in denouncement of those who seek to damage his faithful servant.

- The bearer has a 4+ invulnerable save.
- The bearer has the following ability: '**Bionics of Veneration (Aura):** While an enemy unit is within 3" of the bearer, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.'

DELTA PISTOL

This pistol houses a rare piece of archeotech recovered by Technoarcheologists from Metalica during the Dhask World cleansing. When its machine spirit is suitably angered, it generates ultra rare and deadly delta rays that destroy anything born of metal and circuitry.

Model equipped with a gamma pistol only. This Relic replaces a gamma pistol and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Delta Pistol	18"	Pistol 1	10	-4	4

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon against a **VEHICLE** unit, you can re-roll the wound roll.

METALICAN LUNG

The warrior is saturated with radiation, every exhalation they make adding to the isotopic fog. They walk a procession across the battlefield, their passing marking the flora and fauna for extermination so that sterile perfection can take its place.

The bearer has the following ability: '**Metalican Lung (Aura):** While an enemy unit is within 3" of the bearer, each time an attack made by a model in a friendly **METALICA** unit targets that enemy unit, you can re-roll the wound roll.'

STRATAGEMS

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

RAD-OVERSATURATION 2CP

Metalica – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Metalicans are particularly associated with radium technology, having cleansed their forge world of all natural biological life. The haze of radiation hangs around their rad-troopers in a deadly fog.

Use this Stratagem at the start of any phase. Select one **METALICA SKITARII VANGUARD** unit in your army. Until the end of the phase, increase the range of that unit's Rad-saturation ability to 6".

MARCH TO WAR 1CP

Metalica – Battle Tactic Stratagem

When war calls, the soldiery of Metalica answer, marching in relentless lockstep to meet the foe and lay them to waste.

Use this Stratagem in your Movement phase, when a **METALICA** unit from your army Advances. Do not make an Advance roll. Instead, until the end of the phase, add 6" to the Move characteristic of that unit.

PURITY OF THE MACHINE 1CP/2CP

Metalica – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The sterile perfection of Metalica sees them processing the battlefield with the dispassionate will of pure machines, lacking mercy, remorse or respite.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **METALICA** unit from your army is selected to shoot, or in the Fight phase, when a **METALICA** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, you can ignore any or all modifiers to the hit roll and wound roll. If that unit is a **VEHICLE**, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP.

ORDER IN ANARCHY 1CP

Metalica – Battle Tactic Stratagem

With relentless fervour, the armies of Metalica strive to bring their own strict brand of order to the anarchy growing across the galaxy.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase. Select one **METALICA** unit from your army. Until the end of the turn, each time an attack made by a model in that unit targets an enemy unit within 12", you can add 1 to the hit roll.

EXTINCTION ORDER 3CP

Metalica – Epic Deed Stratagem

The Warlord orders the complete purge of an area of the battlefield, the first step in turning the area into a wasteland. All caught within it suffer the wrath of the Omnissiah.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase. Select one Area Terrain feature visible to your **METALICA WARLORD**. Until the end of the phase, each time an attack made by a model in a friendly **METALICA** unit that is within 6" of your **METALICA WARLORD** targets an enemy unit wholly within that area terrain feature, add 1 to that attack's wound roll.

KNIGHT OF THE IRON COG 1CP

Metalica – Requisition Stratagem

The legions of Metalica have a long-standing alliance with the Knights of House Raven, and the two have fought beside each other on countless occasions.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **HOUSE RAVEN** unit from your army. That unit gains the Canticles of the Omnissiah ability (see *Codex: Adeptus Mechanicus*) and is considered to have the **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** keyword for the purposes of this ability (the inclusion of this unit in your army does not prevent **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** units in your army from using any rules that require every model in your army to have the **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** keyword).

OMNISSIAH'S EXALTATION 1CP

Metalica – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The deafening noises that Metalican weapons make as they unleash their fury can plunge the enemy into panic and disarray.

Use this Stratagem in the Morale phase, when an enemy unit that is within 6" of a **METALICA** unit from your army is selected to take a Morale test. Until the end of the phase, subtract 1 from combat attrition tests taken for that enemy unit.

BLARING GLORY 1CP

Metalica – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The cacophonous auditory output of Metalica's chosen soldiery can be a weapon into itself, stunning the enemy as eardrums burst and aural sensors overload, leaving them disoriented and unable to regain focus.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase or in your opponent's Shooting phase. Select one enemy unit that is within 6" of a **METALICA** unit from your army. Until the end of the phase, your opponent cannot re-roll any dice rolls made for attacks made by models in that enemy unit.

Raven

ARMY OF RENOWN

FREEBLADE LANCE

Outcasts fighting together for glory, redemption or revenge, the nobles of a Freeblade Lance help one another bear the burden of their exile as they pilot their Knights into furious battle.

Freeblades are exiles, Nobles either cast out from their houses and undertaking some self-imposed quest of penance, or striding to war as the last avenging scions of their sundered lines. They live solitary and often tragic lives, bearing terrible burdens even as they fight on in the Emperor's name. Yet they need not always fight alone. For every Freeblade who becomes an almost supernatural figure that comes and goes from Imperial battle lines without a word, there are others not so lost. Such wandering Nobles seek comradeship with other exiles like themselves, and sometimes form entire lances.

Fighting with a Freeblade Lance has many advantages. It simulates the structure of a Noble household – often the hardest thing for long-indoctrinated and hidebound Nobles to lose. It also allows its members to form a sort of martial alloy, each covering for one another's quirks or aiding with their struggles even as they fight side-by-side as a force that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Some Freeblade Lances such as the Forgotten Company, the Voidstriders and the Unfettered have fought together so long and so successfully that they have gained notoriety to equal a Noble house in their own right. New exiles travel far to soldier beneath the banner of such a famed company, for in joining their ranks there is the chance to earn again the redemption and glory that all such Freeblades crave.

A Freeblade Lance is an Army of Renown (pg 65).

RESTRICTIONS

- All units in your army must be **FREEBLADES**.
- When determining which Qualities and Burdens each **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army has, they cannot have a Quality or Burden that another **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army has until all other Qualities or Burdens have been selected (unless randomly generated).

BENEFITS

- All units in your army gain the **FREEBLADE LANCE** keyword.
- You have access to the Freeblade Lance Warlord Trait, Relic and Stratagems.
- Every **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army can have Qualities and Burdens (see *Codex: Imperial Knights*), rather than just one **FREEBLADE** per Detachment.
- **FREEBLADE LANCE CHARACTER** models in your army gain the Legendary Knight ability (see below).

Legendary Knight

Freeblade Lances are made up of Imperial Knights who, despite their lives of exile, have won mighty victories across the galaxy, forging their own paths of valour and dread.

- Add 1 to the Leadership characteristic of this model.
- When giving Qualities and Burdens to this model, you can use the following method instead of the method presented in *Codex: Imperial Knights*:

  - Select two from the Quality table.
  - Select one from the Burden table.

Remember that when determining Qualities and Burdens each **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army has, they cannot have a Quality or Burden that another **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army has until all other Qualities or Burdens have been selected.

WARLORD TRAIT

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

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

Though this Noble is in exile, they still cling to the vestiges of honour from their former household, upholding martial traditions they had honed through countless years of conflict.

This **WARLORD** gains and benefits from one Household Tradition, selected from those described in *Codex: Imperial Knights*, even though they are a **FREEBLADE**. Write down this tradition on your army roster or Crusade card when this Warlord Trait is selected.

RELIC

If your army is led by a **FREEBLADE LANCE WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give the following Heirloom of the Noble Houses Relic to a **FREEBLADE LANCE CHARACTER** model from your army, instead of one from another source. Named characters cannot be given the following Relic.

Note that this Relic replaces one of the model's existing items of wargear. You must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Heirlooms of the Noble Houses Relics your models have on your army roster.

BRINGER OF JUSTICE

It is said that whenever this famed weapon is brought roaring to life, it shall not fall silent until it has slaked its thirst for justice with the blood of the Emperor's enemies.

Model equipped with a reaper chainsword only. This Relic replaces a reaper chainsword and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Bringer of Justice	Before selecting targets, select one of the profiles below to make attacks with.				
- Strike	Melee	Melee	x2	-4	6
- Sweep	Melee	Melee	User	-3	2

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon's Sweep profile, make 2 hit rolls instead of 1.

STRATAGEMS

If your army is a Freeblade Lance, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN BURDEN — 1CP

Freeblade Lance – Epic Deed Stratagem

Only another who also walks the path of a Freeblade can have any hope of understanding the burdens that such warriors must bear.

Use this Stratagem at the start of your turn. Select one **FREEBLADE LANCE CHARACTER** model from your army. All friendly **FREEBLADE LANCE** models within 6" of that model do not have to test for any Burdens they have this turn.

STRENGTH FROM EXILE — 1CP/2CP

Freeblade Lance – Epic Deed Stratagem

Many Freeblades have spent countless years fighting in exile, making use of their strength, skill and wit without support from any ally. Even when such warriors return to fight alongside others, such hard-won knowledge is not lost.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **FREEBLADE LANCE** model from your army is selected to shoot, or in the Fight phase, when a **FREEBLADE LANCE** model from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, while that model is more than 12" away from any friendly models, each time it makes an attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1 and re-roll a wound roll of 1. If that model is an **ACASTUS CLASS** or **DOMINUS CLASS** model, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP.

DEEDS OF LEGEND — 1CP

Freeblade Lance – Epic Deed Stratagem

Freeblades often seek out the mightiest of foes to vanquish in battle, regardless of the odds, in hopes of repaying the debts of honour they owe.

Use this Stratagem in any phase, when a **FREEBLADE LANCE** model from your army destroys an enemy **VEHICLE**, **MONSTER** or **CHARACTER** unit. That model gains one Quality of your choice for the rest of the battle (it does not gain any Burdens). This must be a Quality that model does not already have, and cannot be a Quality that another **FREEBLADE LANCE** model in your army has unless all other Qualities have been selected (or unless randomly generated). If you select the Indomitable Quality and that model has lost any wounds, it regains 1 lost wound. You can only use this Stratagem once.

FAVOURED KNIGHT — 2CP

Freeblade Lance – Requisition Stratagem

Some Revered and ancient Freeblades have quested far and wide across the galaxy, and wield several weapons of legend.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **FREEBLADE LANCE CHARACTER** model from your army that has one Heirloom of the Noble Houses Relic. That model can have a second Heirloom of the Noble Houses Relic (this must be a Relic they could have). Each Relic in your army must be unique. You can only use this Stratagem once.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: HOUSE RAVEN

Over the following pages you will find Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems for Imperial Knights units that are drawn from the household of House Raven.

Codex: Imperial Knights describes how most Imperial Knights units belong to a household, and how you can use the **<HOUSEHOLD>** keyword to specify where such a unit is drawn from. The rules in the following section are for units that are drawn from the household of **HOUSE RAVEN**.

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

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **HOUSE RAVEN CHARACTER** model gains a Warlord Trait, you can use the House Raven Warlord Traits table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have instead of one from another source. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. LORD OF THE TRIALS

This Warlord did not only survive the Trial of the Companions, they emerged through them with such honour as has not been witnessed in several generations.

Each time an attack is made by this **WARLORD**, an unmodified hit roll of 6 automatically wounds the target.

2. INVIOLATE

This Warlord stands firm no matter what warp craft or esoteric weaponry the enemy brings to bear against them, standing as unyielding as the Keep Inviolate itself.

Each time this **WARLORD** would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.

3. BLESSED BY METALICA

This Warlord has fought alongside their allied forge world for countless campaigns, and enjoys the highest blessings and ministrations that Metalica can provide.

- Add 2 to this **WARLORD'S** Wounds characteristic.
- This **WARLORD** can be repaired by **METALICA TECH-PRIEST** units as if it were a **METALICA VEHICLE** model.

RELICS

If your army is led by a **HOUSE RAVEN WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Heirlooms of the Noble Houses Relics to a **HOUSE RAVEN CHARACTER** model from your army.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Heirlooms of the Noble Houses Relics your models have on your army roster.

RELENTLESS WRATH

Crafted from alloys that never buckle or tarnish, this battle-cannon is possessed of a stalwart machine spirit that reloads and fires artisan shells at a relentless rate.

Model equipped with a rapid-fire battle cannon only. This Relic replaces a rapid-fire battle cannon and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Relentless Wrath	72"	Assault 2D6	8	-2	3

Abilities: Blast

THE METALICAN EYE

This unassuming spherical artefact was gifted to House Raven by Forge World Metalica. It houses an ancient auspicator array that rapidly identifies the weakness in any armour.

Each time a ranged attack made by the bearer is allocated to a **VEHICLE** or **MONSTER** model, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

FURY OF THE KEEP

This thermal cannon, long housed within the sacred armouries of the Keep Inviolate, is awarded only to those Knights whose actions have averted the destruction of House Raven – such a warrior has earned the right to wield the Fury of the Keep.

Model equipped with a thermal cannon only. This Relic replaces a thermal cannon and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Fury of the Keep	36"	Assault D6	9	-5	D6+2

Abilities: Blast

SPIRIT OF KOLOSSI

House Raven proudly boasts some of the most ancient and venerable Knights in the Imperium, the machine spirits of which have seen aeons of war.

Each time the bearer is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one hit roll, one wound roll or one damage roll made for the bearer.

STRATAGEMS

If your army includes any **HOUSE RAVEN** Detachments (excluding Fortification Network Detachments), you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

HAMMER BLOW 1CP/3CP

House Raven – Battle Tactic Stratagem

A sledgehammer blow can be delivered by simply planting the feet of your knight and bombarding the enemy to dust.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army that Remained Stationary this turn is selected to shoot. Until the end of the turn:

- That model cannot make a charge move.
- Each time that model makes a ranged attack with a weapon that has the Blast ability, re-roll a hit roll of 1 (if the target unit contained 6 or more models when this unit was selected to shoot, you can re-roll the attack's hit roll instead).

If that model is an **ACASTUS CLASS** or **DOMINUS CLASS** model, this Stratagem costs 3CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP.

HONOUR INVIOLATE 2CP/3CP

House Raven – Battle Tactic Stratagem

To question the honour of House Raven is to suffer their wrath.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, if that model did not Advance, add 1 to the Strength characteristic of ranged weapons that model is equipped with. If that model is an **ACASTUS CLASS** or **DOMINUS CLASS** model, this Stratagem costs 3CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

LOCKSTEP ADVANCE 1CP/3CP

House Raven – Epic Deed Stratagem

The master pilots of House Raven have found the perfect balance of maximising firepower without sacrificing mobility.

Use this Stratagem when you select a **HOUSE RAVEN** unit from your army to move in your Movement phase. Until the end of the turn, that unit's Move characteristic is halved, but each time this model shoots with a weapon that makes a random number of attacks (e.g. 2D6), when determining the number of attacks it makes with that weapon, roll one additional dice and discard one of the dice. If that model is an **ACASTUS CLASS** or **DOMINUS CLASS** model, this Stratagem costs 3CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP.

CRIMSON WALL 2CP

House Raven – Epic Deed Stratagem

The exemplars of the Order of Companions know precisely how to angle their Knights' armour to deflect a fatal strike.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a melee attack is allocated to a **HOUSE RAVEN CHARACTER** model from your army. The saving throw is automatically a 6 (do not roll).

SHADOW'S REACH 2CP

House Raven – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The shadows from the Knights of House Raven fall as far as those from the walls of Kolossi. Not lightly does one walk beneath their reach.

Use this Stratagem at the start of your opponent's Movement phase. Select one **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army (excluding an **ARMIGER CLASS** model). Until the end of the phase, enemy models are considered to be within Engagement Range of that model while they are within 3" horizontally and 5" vertically (instead of 1" horizontally and 5" vertically).

KOLOSSI ETERNAL 3CP

House Raven – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The Knights of House Raven stand shoulder to shoulder, blending their ion shields in perfect harmony to repel any attack.

Use this Stratagem at the start of your opponent's Shooting phase. Select one **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army (excluding an **ARMIGER CLASS** model), then select two other **HOUSE RAVEN** models within 3" of that model. Until the end of the phase, while those two other models are within 3" of the first model you selected, all three of those models gain a 4+ invulnerable save against ranged attacks. You can only use this Stratagem once.

HORRORS AT BAY 1CP

House Raven – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Since the Keep Inviolate was first raised in M24, House Raven have held back the hordes from the deep, and have perfected the art of warfare against overwhelming enemy numbers.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when an enemy unit within Engagement Range of a **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, only the models in that unit that are within Engagement Range of your **HOUSE RAVEN** model can make close combat attacks against it (e.g. models in that unit that are not in Engagement Range with this model, but are within 1/2" of a model within 1/2", will be unable to make close combat attacks against it, though they can still make close combat attacks against other eligible targets).

ROLLING THUNDER 1CP

House Raven – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The ground itself shakes and trembles under the relentless advance of the Knights of Kolossi.

Use this Stratagem in your Charge phase, after a **HOUSE RAVEN** model from your army (excluding an **ARMIGER CLASS** model) ends a charge move. Until the end of the turn, while an enemy model is within 3" of this **HOUSE RAVEN** model, each time that enemy model makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.

ARMY OF RENOWN

TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE

When the shadow of the dreaded *Terminus Est* falls across a world, those lost in its foetid gloom know despair, for surely their doom has come upon them.

Typhus, the master of the *Terminus Est* and of the many hideous beings that ride within its festering holds, has rarely been accused of subtlety. This is not to detract from his cunning, for the Traveller would not have become the infamous champion of Nurgle that he has without a powerful intellect and a masterful grasp of strategy. However, wherever possible Typhus prefers to crush his victims with a devastating hammer-blow offensive launched directly from orbit. It speaks to the efficacy of these tactics that he has rarely needed to change them in the ten thousand years he has made war upon the Imperium.

First comes a veritable avalanche of the neverdead, Poxwalkers, plague zombies and other mutated and disease-driven horrors spilling over the enemy's lines in seemingly endless waves. Mired in battle with these leering abominations, the foe is ill prepared as the noisome energies of the *Terminus Est*'s teleportaria flare again and again. From each rot-blossom of poisoned light step Typhus' elite warriors, Death Guard infantry trudging forth with their bolters thundering. Caught unprepared and out of position, the enemy are torn apart by the savage fusillades of their tormentors. They finally succumb to despair as Typhus himself manifests amidst them, manreaper held high to administer the final, killing blow…

A Terminus Est Assault Force is an Army of Renown (pg 65).

RESTRICTIONS

- Your army cannot include any units with the **VEHICLE** keyword.
- Your army cannot include **MORTARION**.
- All units in your army must be **DEATH GUARD** and, if they are from a **<PLAGUE COMPANY>**, they must be drawn from the **HARBINGERS**.
- If your army includes **TYPHUS**, that model must be your **WARLORD**. If **TYPHUS** is your **WARLORD**, he gains the Harbinger of Death Warlord trait in addition to any other Warlord Traits he knows.

BENEFITS

- All units in your army gain the **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** keyword.
- You have access to the Terminus Est Assault Force Warlord Trait, Relic and Stratagems.
- **DEATH GUARD PSYKERS** in your army can generate their Psychic Powers from the Fester Discipline (pg 80).
- **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** units in your army gain the Outbreak Assault ability, described below.

Outbreak Assault

There is no vector more grotesque than the Terminus Est, *which delivers the foetid warriors of the Death Guard straight into the heart of the enemy.*

When placing **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** units into Strategic Reserves, do not use the table in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book to determine how many Command points it costs. Instead, the Command points required to place **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** units into Strategic Reserves is shown in the table below.

STRATEGIC RESERVES

COMBINED POWER RATING OF UNITS PLACED INTO STRATEGIC RESERVES	CPs TO PLACE INTO STRATEGIC RESERVES
1-9	2
10-19	3
20-29	4
30-39	5
etc.	etc.

If a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE BUBONIC ASTARTES** unit is placed into Strategic Reserves, then in the Reinforcements step of one of your Movement phases, instead of arriving from Strategic Reserves as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book, you can set up that unit anywhere on the battlefield that is more than 9" away from any enemy models.

WARLORD TRAIT

If a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, they can have the Warlord Trait below instead of one from another source.

HARBINGER OF DEATH (AURA)

This warlord stalks the battlefield like the grim shadow of death itself, instilling paralysing fear in his enemies and feeding off their despair.

While an enemy model with a Leadership characteristic of 7 or less is within 3" of this **WARLORD**:

- That model's unit cannot make use of the Objective Secured or any similar abilities.
- That model's unit cannot perform any Actions.

In addition, while one or more enemy models are in range of this aura, add 1 to this **WARLORD**'s Attacks characteristic.

STRATAGEMS

If your army is a Terminus Est Assault Force, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

ROTTING TIDE — 2CP/3CP

Terminus Est Assault Force – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The holds of the Terminus Est *are crammed with hordes of mindless Poxwalkers to be unleashed on every world Typhus comes across.*

Use this Stratagem in the Reinforcements step of your Movement phase. Select a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE POXWALKERS** unit from your army that is below Half-strength and remove it from the battlefield, or select a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE POXWALKERS** unit from your army that has been destroyed. Set up that unit at its Starting Strength, wholly within 6" of any battlefield edge other than the enemy's battlefield edge and more than 9" away from any enemy models. You can only use this Stratagem once. If that unit has a Starting Strength of 10 or fewer models, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 3CP.

UNLEASH THE HORDE — 2CP

Terminus Est Assault Force – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

When massed in sufficient numbers Poxwalkers are a formidable foe, with scores of grasping claws that soon find their way around the throats of the enemy.

Use this Stratagem in your Movement phase, when a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE POXWALKERS** unit from your army is selected to move, or in the Fight phase, when a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE POXWALKERS** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the turn, add 3" to the Move characteristic of all **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE POXWALKER** models in your army, and each time those models Pile in, they can move an additional 3".

PESTILENTIAL DROP — 2CP

Terminus Est Assault Force – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Assault force troops arrive on the battlefield amid billowing clouds of pestilence, diseased Drop Pod exhaust fumes, the leaking effluence of landing crafts and rot blooms expelled directly from their foetid teleportation chambers.

Use this Stratagem in the Reinforcements step of your Movement phases, when you set up a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** unit from your army on the battlefield using the Outbreak Assault (pg 78) or Teleport Strike ability (see *Codex: Death Guard*). Select one Contagion of Nurgle ability that unit has; until the end of the turn, the Contagion Range of that ability is 12" for that unit. This is not cumulative with any other abilities that increase Contagion Range (see *Codex: Death Guard*).

CALLOUS DISREGARD — 2CP

Terminus Est Assault Force – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Even when the hordes at the fore of an assault force have reached the enemy lines, the second wave simply opens fire, caring little for whether their shots hit friend or foe.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase. Select one **BUBONIC ASTARTES TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** unit from your army that is eligible to shoot.

- Until the end of the turn, models in that unit can target enemy units within Engagement Range of friendly **POXWALKERS** or **PLAGUE FOLLOWERS** units from your army.
- Each time a model in that unit makes an attack against an enemy unit within Engagement Range of a friendly **POXWALKERS** or **PLAGUE FOLLOWERS** unit, subtract 1 from the hit roll, and if the hit roll is not successful, that attack scores a hit against that **POXWALKERS** or **PLAGUE FOLLOWERS** unit instead.

FESTER DISCIPLINE

Before the battle, if every unit in your army has the **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** keyword (excluding **UNALIGNED** units), you can generate the psychic powers for any **DEATH GUARD PSYKER** units from your army from the Fester discipline using the table below, instead of from the Contagion discipline from *Codex: Death Guard* (even **TYPHUS** can generate his psychic powers from the Fester discipline instead of from the Contagion discipline, if you so choose). You can either roll one D6 to generate each power randomly (re-rolling duplicate results), or you can select which powers the **PSYKER** knows. Note that a model cannot know powers from both disciplines.

1. GIFT OF INFECTION

The Insidious Blight is one of Nurgle's favoured gifts, and with a deep exhalation of warp-tainted breath this selfless psyker bestows such a boon on those who would try to deny such a blessing by keeping their distance.

Malediction: *Gift of Infection* has a warp charge value of 7. If manifested, select one enemy unit within 18" of this **PSYKER**. Until the start of your next Psychic phase, subtract 1 from the Toughness characteristic of models in that unit (this is not cumulative with any Toughness penalties incurred from any Contagion of Nurgle abilities – see *Codex: Death Guard*).

2. LUNGROT

The psykers daubs his helmet with a warp rune and immediately expels a deep, hacking cough. As he does, his foes are wracked by a paroxysm, causing them to stumble and double over while their lungs rapidly rot.

Malediction: *Lungrot* has a warp charge value of 7. If manifested, select one enemy unit within 18" of this **PSYKER**. Until the start of your next Psychic phase:

- That unit cannot Advance.
- Each time that unit is selected to charge, only eligible units within 6" can be selected as the target of its charge.
- Each time a charge roll is made for that unit, it cannot be re-rolled.

3. PERNICIOUS DOSE

Reciting the forty-nine contagions of Rottigor's opus, the psyker can infuse the plagues coating his allies weapons with greater potency and fresh new maladies.

Blessing: *Pernicious Dose* has a warp charge value of 7. If manifested, select one friendly unit within 6" of this **PSYKER**. Until the start of your next Psychic phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack with a plague weapon (see *Codex: Death Guard*), you can re-roll the hit roll.

4. NOXIOUS DISCHARGE

The psyker conjures a broiling gobbet of ectoplasmic disease in his palm before hurling it at his foes, infecting all caught in the splash and rotting their very souls.

Witchfire: *Noxious Discharge* has a warp charge value of 6. If manifested, select one enemy unit that is within 12" of and visible to this **PSYKER**:

- That unit suffers 1 mortal wound
- All units within 3" of that unit suffer 1 mortal wound (excluding **NURGLE** units).

5. ROTWIND

The psyker summons a foetid wind from the Garden of Nurgle itself – a gale of ages that blasts across the battlefield and buffets his foes, rusting their weapons, corroding ammunition casings and dulling the edges of cutting blades.

Malediction: *Rotwind* has a warp charge value of 7. If manifested, select one enemy unit within 18" of this **PSYKER**. Until the start of your next Psychic phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, reduce the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 2 (to a minimum of AP 0).

6. ACCELERATED ENTROPY

The psyker draws in a deep breath of warp power before locking eyes with his victim. As he exhales, his victim ages decades, then centuries.

Witchfire: *Accelerated Entropy* has a warp charge value of 7. If manifested, select one enemy model within 12" of and visible to this **PSYKER**. Both players then roll one D6 and add their model's Toughness characteristic. If your result is higher than your opponent's, that enemy model's unit suffers 3 mortal wounds. If your result is double your opponent's, or more than double your opponent's, that enemy model's unit suffers D3+3 mortal wounds instead.

RELICS

If your army is led by a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Relics of Decay to a **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE CHARACTER** model from your army. Named characters cannot be given any of the following Relics.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Relics of Decay your models have on your army roster.

FILTH CENSERS

A stream of psychic incense billows from these censers, a noxious cloud of rotted soul vapour that attracts swarms of bloated flies from the Garden of Nurgle. The bearer harvests the innate virulence of these flies to bolster his own warp-gifted powers.

PSYKER model only. Add 6" to the range of Psychic powers manifested by the bearer (if a psychic power specifies two ranges, e.g. Noxious Discharge, add 6" to the first range specified in that psychic power).

MARK OF THE TERMINUS EST

The Harbingers proclaim that bony and mutated growths sprouting from those who spend long periods aboard the Terminus Est *are blessings from the great ship itself. The truth of such beliefs is doubted by others in the Death Guard, yet the strength and resilience of those who bear this mark cannot be refuted.*

- Add 1 to the bearer's Strength characteristic.
- Each time an attack is made against the bearer, your opponent cannot re-roll the wound roll.
- Once per battle, when a saving throw is failed for the bearer, you can use this ability. If you do, that saving throw is passed instead.

VOMIX'S VIRULENT BLIGHT

When the Plague Surgeon Garrus Vomix was wounded during the Dharkstar World Blightings, he used the shredded remnants of his cancerous secondary heart to incubate and create a foul elixir. Whilst the elixir does not itself contain any mortal pathogens, it ensures that those touched by any other disease will be unable to escape such gifts.

Model equipped with a plague weapon only. During deployment, select one plague weapon the bearer is equipped with. That weapon gains the following ability:

'Each time the bearer shoots or fights, after making its attacks, select one enemy unit that lost any wounds as a result of an attack made with this weapon, then select one Contagion of Nurgle ability the bearer has. Until the end of the battle, that enemy unit is always considered to be within Contagion Range of that ability.'

CANKER

This ancient plasma pistol was wielded during the Great Crusade to noble effect, but as the Terminus Est and all aboard succumbed to rot and corruption, so too did this artificer weapon. Since then, its sickly glow has been shed across half the galaxy.

Model equipped with a plasma pistol only. This Relic replaces a plasma pistol and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Canker	18"	Pistol 1	9	-4	3

Abilities: Plague Weapon (see *Codex: Death Guard*).

ROTGRIP

This power fist slowly fuses with its bearer, melding into their flesh and sending proboscis-like tubes deep into rotten tissue to imbibe from the plague-laden blood within. So infused, Rotgrip strikes as easily and as deftly as the owner's own fist would, liquefying victims within its diseased energy field.

Model equipped with a power fist or plague claw only. This Relic replaces a power fist or plague claw and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Rotgrip	Melee	Melee	x3	-3	2

Abilities: Plague Weapon (see *Codex: Death Guard*).

REAPER OF MISERY

Reaper of Misery is stored within the armoury of the Terminus Est, *and bestowed upon a chosen champion whenever the weak must be culled from a world with all due haste. It is not a glorious weapon, but a tool used to spread death and misery swiftly and so further Nurgle's great work.*

Model equipped with a manreaper or plaguereaper only. This Relic replaces a manreaper or plaguereaper and has the following profile:

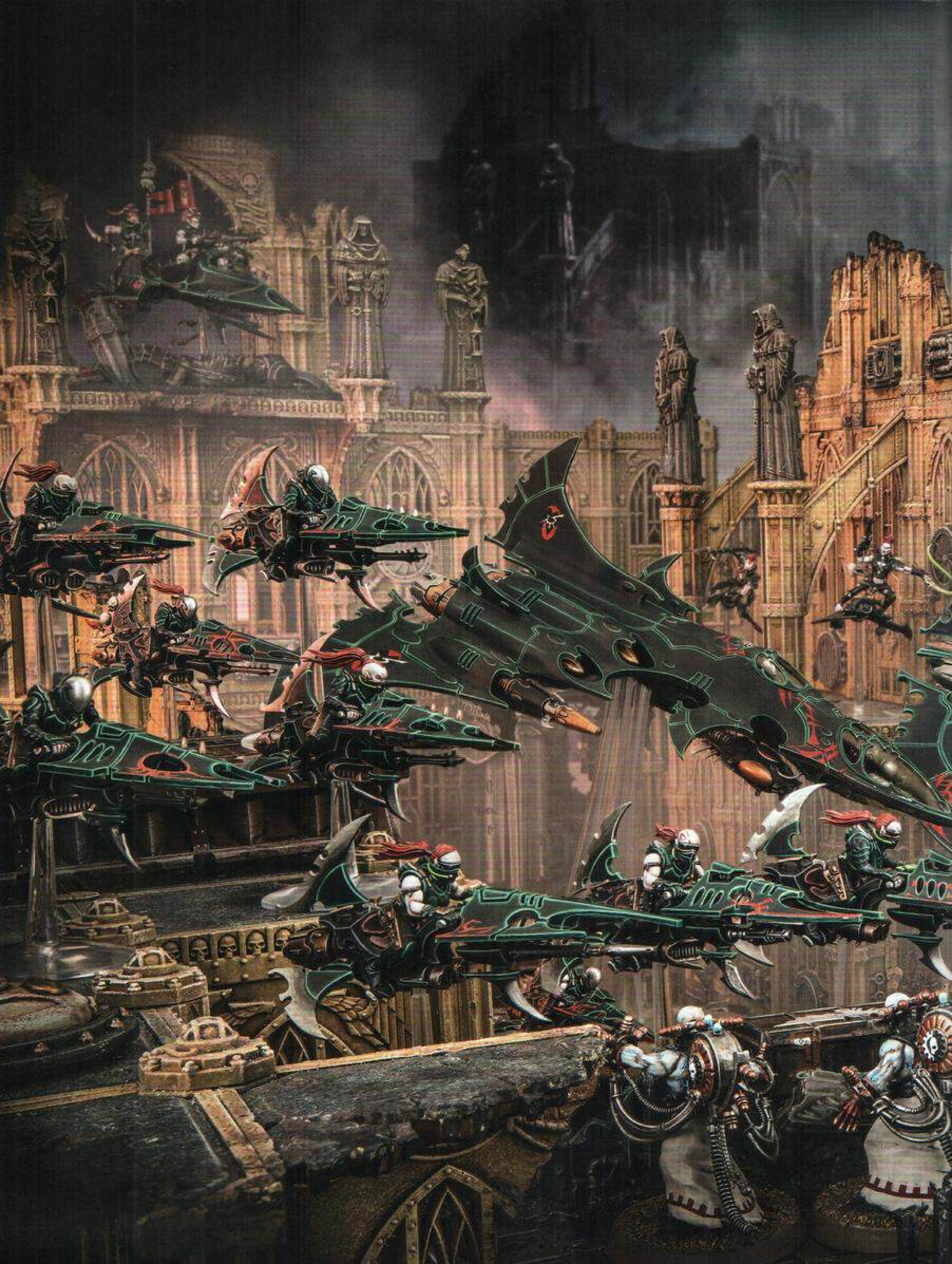
WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Reaper of Misery	Melee	Melee	+2	-3	1

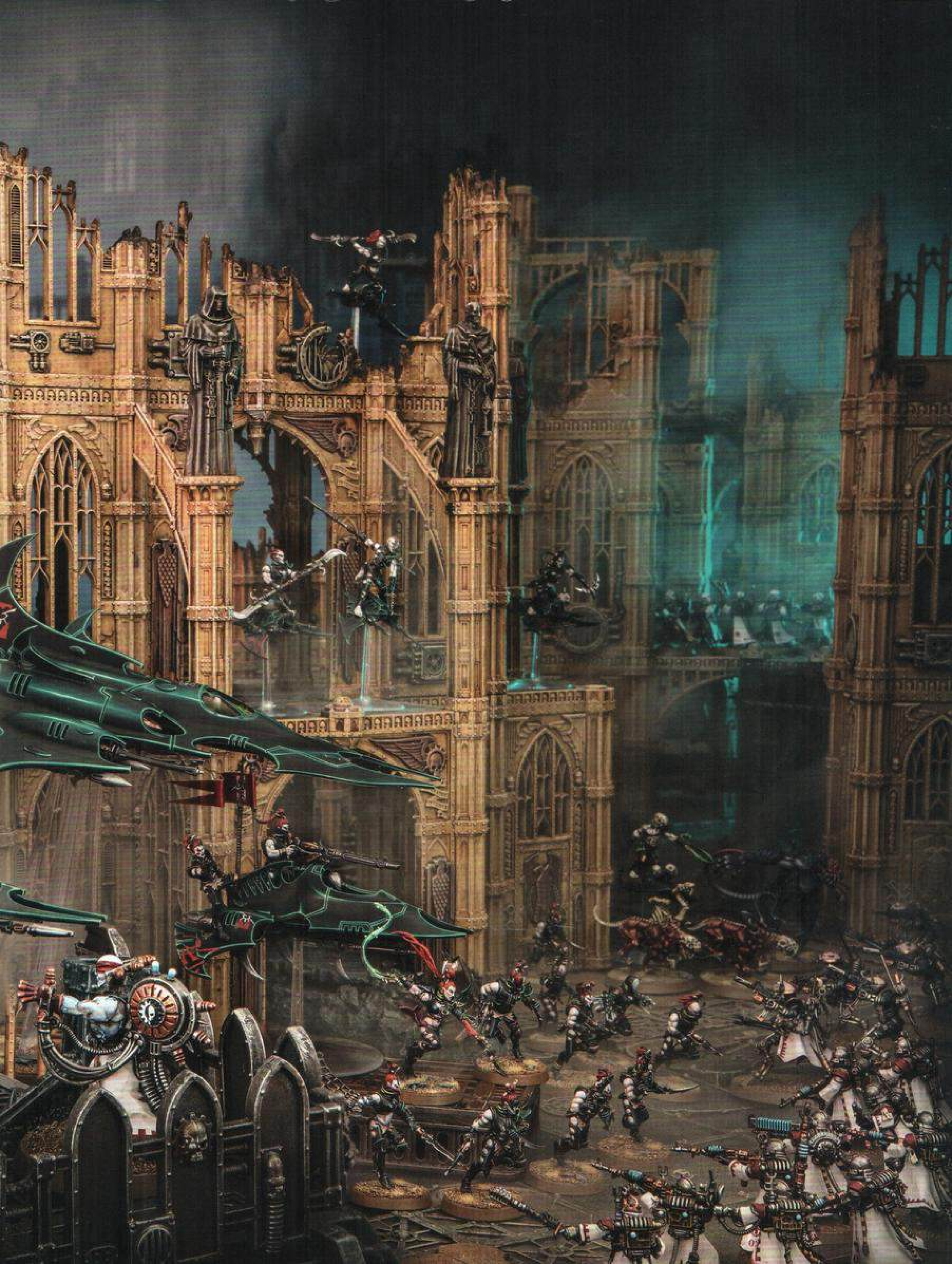
Abilities: Plague Weapon (see *Codex: Death Guard*). Each time an attack is made with this weapon, make 2 hit rolls instead of 1.

RAIMENT OF ATROPHY

This cloak, fashioned from the flayed skin of a dozen Inquisitors, has been thrice-soaked in the plague vats aboard the Terminus Est. *It is saturated with daemonic and diseases, and the bearer of it spreads contagion with every sweeping gesture.*

For the purposes of determining the Contagion Range of this model's Contagion of Nurgle abilities (see *Codex: Death Guard*), treat the current battle round number as one higher than it actually is. This is not cumulative with any other rule that allows the bearer to treat the current battle round higher than it is.





CODEX SUPPLEMENT: CULT OF STRIFE

Over the following pages you will find Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems for Drukhari units that are drawn from the Cult of Strife.

Codex: Drukhari describes how certain Drukhari units belong to a Wych Cult, and how you can use the **<WYCH CULT>** keyword to specify where such a unit is drawn from. The rules in the following section are for units that are drawn from the Wych Cult of the **CULT OF STRIFE**.

Some rules in this section refer to a **CULT OF STRIFE** Detachment. This is one that only includes units with the **CULT OF STRIFE** keyword (excluding units specified under Blades for Hire in *Codex: Drukhari* and units with the **UNALIGNED** keyword).

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **CULT OF STRIFE CHARACTER** model gains a Warlord Trait, you can use the Cult of Strife Warlord Traits table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have instead of one from another source. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. COMPETITIVE EDGE

This Succubus trains and tests herself at every opportunity, maintaining a consistent rate of murder lest she lose her razor-sharp competitiveness.

Each time this **WARLORD** fights, if all of its attacks target one enemy unit, after resolving all of those attacks, it can make a number of additional attacks against that enemy unit equal to the number of attacks that did not reach the inflict damage step of the attack sequence during that fight.

2. UNPARALLELED AGILITY

This Succubus moves with preternatural speed, even compared to the famed fighters of Commorragh's arenas. She dances and flits around her foes, evading every clumsy blow dealt by her foes.

Each time an attack is made against this **WARLORD**, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll and wound roll.

3. MASTER EXECUTIONER

Every blow this Warlord lands, every cut she makes and every darting strike are perfectly placed to inflict the maximum bodily trauma upon her foes.

Each time this **WARLORD** makes an attack, you can re-roll the wound roll.

RELICS

If your army is led by a **CULT OF STRIFE WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Artefacts of Cruelty Relics to a **CULT OF STRIFE CHARACTER** model from your army. Named characters cannot be given any of the following Relics.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Artefacts of Cruelty Relics your models have on your army roster.

MORVAINE'S AGONISER

This lash is coated in toxins that paralyse its victims, rendering those to whom its caress is bestowed a transfixed spectator to their own grisly demise.

Model equipped with an agoniser only. This Relic replaces an agoniser and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Morvaine's Agoniser	Melee	Melee	User	-3	1

Abilities: Poisoned Weapon (4+) (see *Codex: Drukhari*). Each time the bearer fights, after all its attacks have been resolved, select one enemy unit that was hit by an attack made with this weapon (you cannot select a **VEHICLE** or **MONSTER** unit). Until the start of your next turn, that enemy unit cannot Fall Back.

GARLAND OF SPITE

This ostentatious garland radiates a palpable aura of repugnance and hatred, causing those who look upon it to fall to their knees with forced humility.

- At the start of the Fight phase, select one enemy model (excluding a **MONSTER** or **VEHICLE** model) within Engagement Range of this model. Until the end of the phase, halve that model's Attacks characteristic.
- Each time a melee attack is made by the bearer, that attack automatically hits the target.

THE GLAIVE EXQUISITE

Fashioned from the living bone of a once powerful Archon, the Glaive Exquisite devours the souls of the arrogant and proud. Should it be given only blood from the weak and unworthy, it will slake its thirst on the soul of the one who wields it instead.

Model equipped with an archite glaive only. This Relic replaces an archite glaive and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
The Glaive Exquisite	Melee	Melee	+2	-5	2

Abilities: Each time an attack made with this weapon targets an enemy unit with a Leadership characteristic of 8 or more, add 1 to that attack's wound roll. At the end of any phase in which the bearer fought with this weapon, if it did not target any enemy units with a Leadership characteristic of 8 or more, it suffers 1 mortal wound.

DARK LOTUS TOXIN

A closely guarded secret among the poison artisans of the Cult of Strife, the Dark Lotus Toxin causes its victims' blood to vaporise within their own veins.

Add 1 to the Strength and Damage characteristics of all melee weapons the bearer is equipped with (excluding Relics).

STRATAGEMS

If your army includes any **CULT OF STRIFE** Detachments, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

ART OF THE KILL — 2CP/3CP

Cult of Strife – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Nothing is of greater importance to the Cult of Strife that an artful kill, and no greater spectacle than when they put their refined tastes into practice.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **CULT OF STRIFE** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, you can re-roll the wound roll. If that unit has 11 or more models, this Stratagem costs 3CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

DANCE OF DEATH — 1CP

Cult of Strife – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Borrowing from the performances of their Harlequin kindred, the Wyches of the Cult of Strife add their own unique flourishes to the dance of death, leaping and pirouetting past mesmerised enemies in preparation for the inevitable crescendo of violence.

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

INVIGORATED BY EVISCERATION — 1CP

Cult of Strife – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Cult of Strife welcome the attentions of enemy combatants, and by feeding upon the death throes of their victims they are never short of the vigour required to remain front and centre on the stage of battle.

Use this Stratagem after an enemy unit is destroyed as a result of a melee attack made by a model in a **CULT OF STRIFE INFANTRY** or **CULT OF STRIFE BIKER** unit from your army. Until the start of your next turn, models in that unit have a 4+ invulnerable save.

THE BLADE WELL PLACED — 2CP

Cult of Strife – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Cult of Strife teaches that no armour is inviolate. So it is that these fighters strike at visors, eyes and armour joins with hard-won skill.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **CULT OF STRIFE INFANTRY** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a melee attack is made by a model in that unit, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

DEADLY EXEMPLAR — 1CP

Cult of Strife – Epic Deed Stratagem

In the Cult of Strife, the respect commanded by a Succubus is commensurate to her latest act of beauteous murder.

Use this Stratagem when a **CULT OF STRIFE SUCCUBUS** from your army destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** or **MONSTER** unit with a melee attack. Until the end of the battle, all **CULT OF STRIFE** units from your army that are on the battlefield are considered to be within range of that Succubus' Brides of Death aura ability.

FLAWLESS APPROACH — 1CP

Cult of Strife – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The Cult of Strife are taught to give no respite as they close for the kill, darting forward in fleeting bounds that afford no time for an enemy to draw their weapons or gather their wits.

Use this Stratagem in your Charge phase, when a **CULT OF STRIFE INFANTRY** unit from your army is selected to charge. Until the end of the turn:

- Enemy units cannot fire Overwatch at that unit.
- Enemy units selected as the target of that unit's charge cannot Hold Steady or Set to Defend as a result of that unit's charge.

PICK THEM APART — 2CP

Cult of Strife – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

In the swirl of battle, the Cult of Strife change their partners in combat frequently, somersaulting from one violent engagement only to engage in another as they see fit.

Use this Stratagem in your Movement phase, when a **CULT OF STRIFE** unit from your army Falls Back. That unit is eligible to shoot and/or charge this turn even though it Fell Back.

HEKATRIX OF THE CRUCIBAEL — 1CP

Cult of Strife – Requisition Stratagem

After every ten thousand performances, the Crucibael plays host to a bloody competition in which Hekatrixes of the Cult of Strife may fight one another to the death. The sole survivor is bestowed an exquisite artefact to denote their status as champion.

Use this Stratagem before the battle. Select one **CULT OF STRIFE** Hekatrix model from your army. That model can have one of the following Relics (pg 85), even though they are not a **CHARACTER**: Morvaine's Agoniser; Dark Lotus Toxin; Garland of Spite. Each Relic in your army must be unique, and you cannot use this Stratagem to give a model two Relics. You can only use this Stratagem once.

CRUSADE RULES

In this section you'll find additional rules for playing Crusade battles with your army during an Obolis Invasion Campaign, such as Crusade Relics, Battle Traits, Weapon Enhancements and Requisitions that are inspired by the conflict of War Zone Charadon. You can find out more about Crusade armies in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

This section contains the following additional rules:

CAMPAIGN BADGE

At the end of every battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign, every unit that was part of your Crusade army in that battle that does not already have it gains the Obolis Invasion Campaign Badge. Such a unit gains the **OBOLIS INVASION** keyword. This will allow it to access various Crusade rules presented in this section. Note that it keeps this keyword, and therefore any associated Battle Honours, for future battles, even if those battles are not part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign.

CRUSADE RELICS

In addition to the Crusade Relics presented in other sources, whilst playing an Obolis Invasion Campaign your characters can gain Crusade Relics from page 89; these Relics are categorised based on the allegiances from the War Zone Charadon campaign, and can only be given to units that match those allegiances.

BATTLE TRAITS

Various units can be given one of the Battle Traits presented on page 90 as they gain experience during an Obolis Invasion Campaign and are promoted in your Crusade force. These help to better reflect the unique upgrades and Battle Honours that are earned by fighting in War Zone Charadon.

WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

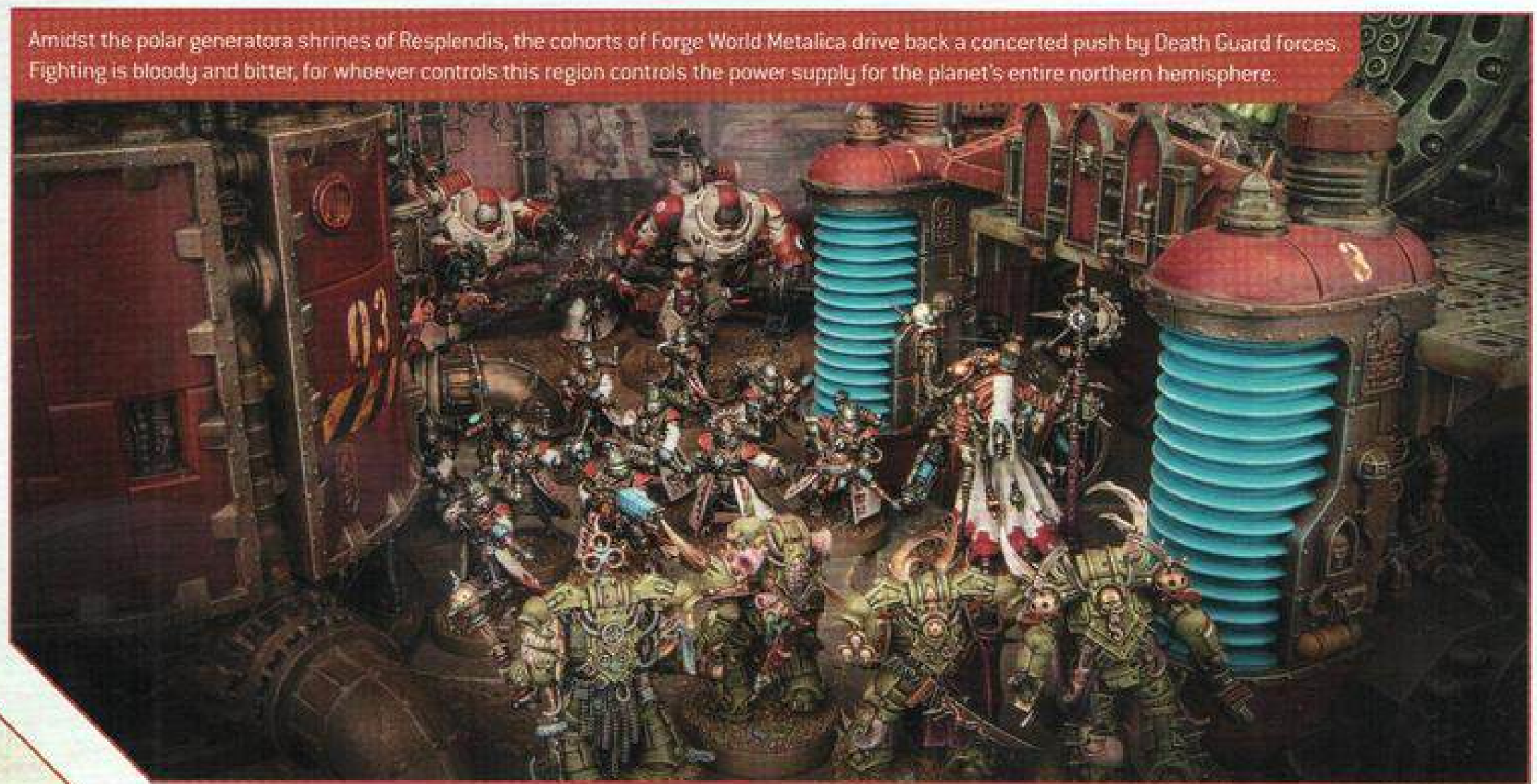
The Weapon Enhancements presented on page 92 can be used on units that gain a rank during an Obolis Invasion Campaign. These upgrades represent the proliferation of technology present in War Zone Charadon, whether it is bestowed by a forge world in defence of their lands, or seized by those invading and raiding.

REQUISITIONS

In an Obolis Invasion Campaign, Crusade forces have access to additional Requisitions inspired by the events of the War Zone Charadon campaign. You can find these on page 93.

VIRULENT GIFTS

Virulent Gifts are powerful upgrades that can be bestowed on Death Guard characters in exchange for the Virulence points your Crusade force has acquired. The rules presented here supplement the Crusade rules found in *Codex: Death Guard*, and while perfect for use in an Obolis Invasion Campaign, they are not limited to such a campaign, and can be used for any Death Guard Crusade force.



Amidst the polar generatora shrines of Resplendis, the cohorts of Forge World Metalica drive back a concerted push by Death Guard forces. Fighting is bloody and bitter, for whoever controls this region controls the power supply for the planet's entire northern hemisphere.

CRUSADE RELICS

When an **Obolis Invasion** unit gains a Crusade Relic you can instead select one of the Relics from the appropriate list below. All the usual rules for selecting Crusade Relics, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book, apply.

ARTIFICER RELICS

An **Obolis Invasion Character** model can be given one of the following Artificer Relics instead of one of the ones presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

Xanthon's Haptic Skull

Xanthon was one of Metalica's finest artificers, and after bionic enhancement rendered his skull redundant, he used this vestigial bone to house an array of augers, photo-sensors and laser sights. This servo-skull links to the owner's own nervous system, guiding their aim to ensure the target's destruction.

Imperium Infantry model only. Each time an attack is made by the bearer:

- You can ignore any or all hit roll and Ballistic Skill modifiers for that attack.
- The target does not receive the benefits of cover against that attack.

Tsorr'Kanath's Forbidden Grimoire

A fell tome taken from Tsorr'Kanath's sepulchral library, bound in Daemon hide and wrapped in silver chains, it has remained unopened for centuries, but nonetheless imbues its dark knowledge of murder to whoever possess it.

Chaos Infantry model only. Once per battle round, you can re-roll one hit roll, one wound roll or one damage roll made for the bearer.

Mimic Shroud

This esoteric device is of unknown origin and bears an unfathomable rune which, when pressed, projects a holographic field that distorts the image of the bearer, making them indistinguishable to those nearby.

Infantry model (excluding **Imperium** and **Chaos** models) with a Wounds characteristic of 9 or less only. Each time an enemy unit is selected to shoot, your opponent cannot use any abilities that would allow attacks to ignore the Look Out, Sir rule (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core book) in order to target the bearer.

PRIZED RELICS

Prized Relics are a new category of Crusade Relics. An **Obolis Invasion Character** model of Battle-Hardened rank or higher can be given one of the following Prized Relics instead of one of the Crusade Relics presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book. Prized relics can only be given to a model immediately after playing a battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign; each time such a relic is given to a model in your Crusade Force, the war zone points you contribute to your alliance for that battle is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

Metalican Augmentation

As a mark of respect for lending aid to their forge world in its hour of need, the Tech-Priests of Metalica bless one of your weapons with their finest augmentations.

Imperium Infantry model only. When a model gains this Crusade Relic, select one weapon it is equipped with that does not have a Weapon Enhancement and is not a Relic or Crusade Relic. That weapon gains two Weapon Enhancements (it cannot be the same Weapon Enhancement twice). These Weapon Enhancements do not further increase the model's Crusade points.

Abaddon's Writ

This unassuming bone pendant bears Abaddon's personal sigil, and authority and respect are afforded to those who bear it. Should a recipient fail the Despoiler though, they will live to regret it, for the bone that the pendant is carved from is taken from the previous soul who bore such a favour, and who was found wanting.

Chaos Infantry model only.

- Add 3" to the range of this model's aura abilities.
- This model has the Objective Secured ability (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book), and counts as 6 models when determining control of an objective marker.

The Pain Siphon

This small trinket, made from a dark crystal, glows bright when exposed to fear and suffering. The pallid light bestows unnatural vitality and strength upon the bearer, as well as affording them a limited degree of prescience – allowing them to glimpse the deaths of enemies in the moments before such a fate is sealed.

Infantry model (excluding **Imperium** and **Chaos** models) only. If an enemy unit fails a Morale test while within 6" of the bearer, until the end of the battle, each time the bearer makes an attack, you can re-roll the hit roll, wound roll and damage roll.

BATTLE TRAITS

When an **OBOLIS INVASION** unit gains a Battle Trait, you can use one of the tables below instead of one from another source to determine what Battle Trait the unit has gained. To do so, roll one D6 and consult the appropriate table, or choose a Battle Trait from the appropriate table that tells the best narrative for your unit. All the normal rules for Battle Traits apply (e.g. a unit cannot have the same Battle Trait more than once). As with any Battle Honour, make a note on the unit's Crusade card when it gains a Battle Trait and increase its Crusade points accordingly, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

CHARACTER UNITS

D6	TRAIT
1-2	**Cogent and Determined** *Focused on overarching strategic goals, this commander orders their soldiers towards the greater victory, rather than looking only to the most immediate threats.* In your Command phase, select one friendly unit within 6" of this unit, then select one option from the list below. • Until the start of your next Command phase, each time that unit performs an action, it can shoot without that action failing. • Until the start of your next Command phase, that unit can attempt to perform a psychic action instead of attempting to manifest one psychic power, rather than any.
3-4	**Lead from the Front** *This hero earned much glory on the bloody fields of Metalica, and not by sitting back and letting their warriors do all the fighting for them.* While this unit is within 6" of your opponent's deployment zone: • It is eligible to perform a Heroic Intervention if it is within 6" horizontally and 5" vertically of any enemy unit, instead of 3" horizontally and 5" vertically. Each time models in this unit make a Heroic Intervention move, so long as it ends that move closer to the closest enemy model, it can move up to 6". All other rules for Heroic Interventions still apply. • At the start of the Fight phase, if this unit is within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can fight first that phase.
5-6	**Master of the Counter-attack** *This cunning warrior knows precisely when to commit to the battle in order to have the most impact.* In a battle that uses Strategic Reserves, this unit is ignored for the purpose of determining the combined power rating of units placed into strategic reserves. If it is **TITANIC**, its power rating is halved (rounding down) for this purpose instead.

ANY UNIT (EXCLUDING VEHICLE AND MONSTER UNITS)

D6	TRAIT
1-2	**Unwavering Conviction** *These warriors will not be cowed or broken whilst their goal is within their grasp.* While this unit is within range of an objective marker, each time a Combat Attrition test is taken for it, you can ignore any or all modifiers to that test.
3-4	**Dig In** *This unit earned a reputation for being dependable in the face of the enemy, holding onto vital tactical sites despite every attempt to drive them away.* While this unit is within range of an objective marker, each time an enemy unit declares a charge against it, if it is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can Hold Steady or Set to Defend (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core book).
5-6	**Zealous Defence** *This unit launches itself at the foe with perfervid zeal in order to swiftly and decisively command the battle ground.* At the start of the Fight phase, if this unit is within range of an objective marker and it also within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can fight first that phase.

IMPERIUM VEHICLE UNITS

D6	TRAIT
1-2	**Defiant Machine Spirit** *This machine spirit is unperturbed by the enemies before it, refusing to yield while its foes still stand.* If this model's characteristics change as it suffers damage, once per battle, in your Command phase, you can use this ability. Until the start of your next Command phase, this model is considered to have double the number of wounds remaining for the purposes of determining its characteristics. If this battle trait was randomly generated for a **VEHICLE** unit whose characteristics do not change as it suffers damage, re-roll until a different battle trait is generated.
3-4	**Emotion is a Weakness** *This machine spirit has been expunged of rage and choler in favour of cold, ruthless logic.* • Each time a ranged attack is made by a model in this unit, if its unit Remained Stationary in your previous Movement phase, add 1 to that attack's hit roll. • Change the Weapon Skill characteristic of models in this unit to 6+. • Halve the Move characteristic of models in this unit.
5-6	**Sterile Purge** *Embracing the Metalican way of sterile purity, this vehicle purges its enemies from every crack and crater.* Each time an attack made by a model in this unit targets a unit that is wholly within an Area Terrain feature, re-roll a wound roll of 1.

CHAOS VEHICLE UNITS

D6	TRAIT
1-2	**Thirst for Violence** *The machine spirit that once dwelled within has been consumed and replaced by a malevolent, bloodthirsty daemon.* Each time an attack made by a model in this unit targets the closest enemy unit, re-roll a wound roll of 1.
3-4	**Hull Growth** *Crystalline warp growths on the hull of this vehicle absorb and refract incoming fire, greatly reducing their impact.* Each time an attack with a Strength characteristic of 7 or less is allocated to a model in this unit, subtract 1 from the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a minimum of 1). This is not cumulative with any other abilities that reduce the Damage characteristic of an attack.
5-6	**Frenzied Spirit** *This machine growls like a hunting beast, always eager to close in for the kill.* • Add 1" to the Move characteristic of models in this unit. • Add 1 to Advance and charge rolls made for this unit.

VEHICLE AND MONSTER UNITS (EXCLUDING CHAOS AND IMPERIUM UNITS)

D6	TRAIT
1-2	**Piratical Raider** *Never fight the foe on their own terms, and never depart from battle without offering a parting gift.* • This unit is eligible to shoot in a turn in which it Fell Back. • Each time a model in this unit makes a ranged attack, if its unit Fell Back this turn, reduce its Ballistic Skill characteristic by 1 for that attack.
3-4	**Fickle Raider** *Choose your battles wisely, and keep an eye open for a better choice to present itself.* This unit is eligible to charge in a turn in which it Fell Back.
5-6	**Lie in Wait** *It is not the first shots of battle that are the most decisive, but rather the first shots that find their mark.* Add 1 to armour saving throws made for models in this unit during the first battle round.

Theta-Gau-19 strode through the battle, giving voice to exultant binharic prayers. He raised his radium pistol and squeezed its trigger, blurting praise to the weapon's machine spirit in time with each shot. Diseased traitors fell with every blast. Their blackened bodies thumping to the ground sounding counterpoints to his hymnal.

Alarum runes flickered across Theta-Gau-19's field of vision. At their urging, he turned in time to see a fresh band of renegade Astra Militarum soldiery burst from the sewers. The Vanguard Alpha noted their ragged uniforms, the rad-burns and mutations that marked their flesh. Datascreeds informed him the degenerates had once belonged to the 33rd Hortigan Grenadiers. Theta-Gau-19 didn't care that they had likely turned renegade after being caught amidst this world's rad cleansing. To him, that only reinforced the fallible nature of organics. Theta-Gau-19 cared only that they were viable enemy targets, and that the Omnissiah had seen fit to provide him with warning of their approach.

A wordless imperative caught the attention of the remaining Skitarii Vanguard in Theta-Gau-19's squad. Their carbines swung to bear with machine-like synchronicity. Their vocal emitters blared deafening binharic hymns. Even as the renegades were still raising their lasguns, they were struck by a fusillade of irradiated fire. Deformed bodies ruptured. Blood sprayed across rubble and ferrocrete. Theta-Gau-19 caught the acrid tang of the soldiers' sundered innards in his olfactory filters, assessing the levels of rad-sickness and rates of cellular mutation in their bodies without conscious thought.

Weak organics, he thought, marvelling at the illogic required for such creatures to challenge Metalica's might. Sterilising such faulty organics was as much an act of mercy as it was a holy duty to the Omnissiah.

With that thought, Theta-Gau-19 cycled his pistol's autoloader and fired again, then again. His first shot hit a traitor in the face. The man's skull became a concave blood-pit. The banner he had brandished hit the floor a moment before his lifeless body. The second shot struck an exposed throat and punched the last renegade soldier from her feet in a spray of gore. The moment the last of the foe fell, Theta-Gau-19 paused. He felt something pulse through his cogitational augmetics, a sizzling surge of energy that triggered auto-rapture throughout his body.

The Omnissiah sends me revelation as reward for my offerings, he thought, marvelling at the newfound clarity in his targeting subroutines. Theta-Gau-19 gave thanks, for with this blessing surely he and his warriors would prove yet more deadly to the Omnissiah's foes.

WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

Each time an **OBOLIS INVASION** unit gains a Weapon Enhancement, you can use the list below for a Ranged Weapon instead of one of the tables in another source to determine what Weapon Enhancement the unit has gained. Unlike other Weapon Enhancements, which have a table that can be rolled on to select randomly, you must select which Weapon Enhancement is gained. Each weapon can only have a single Weapon Enhancement from the following list. All of the other rules for Weapon Enhancements, as described in the Warhammer Core Book, still apply.

As with any Battle Honour, make a note on the unit's Crusade card when it gains a Weapon Enhancement and increase its Crusade points accordingly, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

The distant rumble of battle lingered on the edge of hearing. It was, thought Lord Thraxoplasmox, rather like the mutterings of one dying from the mind-rot. The idea pleased him. He would not allow it to distract him, though. He had more immediate concerns. The Lord of Virulence reached out one gauntleted hand. He trailed his fingertips across the armacrete door of the silo. Black fungus sprouted at his touch.

Thraxoplasmox glanced at Vorgh. The Plague Champion stood a respectful seven steps distant, he and his squad keeping their eyes – and their bolters – on the processional at their backs.

'Our bounty is in here?' gurgled Thraxoplasmox.

'So say the pox-seers, exalted lord,' replied Vorgh in a rattling rasp.

'Rarely are they mistaken,' said the Lord of Virulence. He took a step back, levelled his twin plague spewer and unleashed a torrent of corrosive filth across the silo door. Armacrete bubbled, melting like starch in water, sloughing onto the ground in a spreading slick. It was still melting when Thraxoplasmox thrust his armoured bulk through the gap and into the cavernous space beyond. The silo was dark, cool, unpleasantly sterile to his thinking. His abrupt intrusion caused auto-lumen to light with harsh bangs above him. The sound rolled away down the length of the silo, pools of light blooming like mushrooms after rain. As each one flashed into life, Thraxoplasmox felt a fresh stab of pleasure at the sights they revealed.

'Oh, very good…' he crooned, the fluid in his voice distorting the words. 'Very good indeed… Thank you, Grandsire Rotte, you spoil us with your gifts.'

Vorgh ducked through the corroding hole behind him and gave a grunt of surprise.

'Tanks,' he said, demonstrating his typical talent for spectacular understatement. Before them, rank upon rank of armoured fighting vehicles marched away into the gloom. There had to be hundreds here, unstamped even with basic insignia or heraldic colouration. The bare metal hulls of the nearest vehicles were already beginning to blister and fur with rust at Thraxoplasmox's proximity.

'Summon the warband. Find those tanks with the cruellest machine spirits,' he ordered. 'They shall be reconsecrated to our service, and to that of Grandfather Nurgle. Once we have our bounty, plant blight-charges and prepare to withdraw. Our ranks shall swell this day, Vorgh, while our enemies' will shrink.'

RANGED WEAPON ENHANCEMENT

Rad-infused Ammunition

This pistol's ammunition has been upgraded to house unstable radioactive cores.

Pistol weapon only. Each time an attack made with this weapon is allocated to an enemy model:

- That model cannot use any abilities that reduce the Strength, Armour Penetration or Damage characteristics of that attack.
- Rules that ignore wounds cannot be used.

Capacitor Loader

This weapon has been fitted with enhanced magazine capacitors to increase its lethality at all ranges.

Rapid Fire weapon only.

- Each time the bearer shoots with this weapon, the target is always considered to be within half range when determining the number of attacks it makes.
- Each time an attack made with this weapon targets a unit within half range, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

Suspensor Gyros

This weapon enhancement stabilises the weapon's aim so that the wielder can fire from the hip at full pace without loss of accuracy.

Assault weapon only.

- Each time an attack is made with this weapon, the bearer does not suffer the penalty to the hit roll for Advancing.
- The bearer is eligible to shoot with this weapon in a turn in which it Fell Back.

Recoil Dampeners

This device compensates for viscous recoil, allowing the bearer to wield even the heaviest of weapons as they would a small firearm.

Heavy weapon only.

- Each time an attack is made with this weapon, if the bearer is an **INFANTRY** model, it does not suffer the penalty to the hit roll for moving.
- Each time the bearer fires Overwatch, attacks with this weapon score hits on unmodified hit roll of 5+ instead of 6.

Auto-targeting System

This haptic device guides the wielder's aim so they can track even those foes that bound skyward from the battlefield.

Each time an attack is made with this weapon against a unit that can **FLY**, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

Skyfire Interception System

Even supersonic aircraft cannot evade the wrath of a weapon equipped with this ancient piece of archeotech.

Each time an attack is made with this weapon against an **AIRCRAFT** unit, add 2 to that attack's hit roll.

REQUISITIONS

You can spend Requisition points (RPs) on the relevant Crusade Faction Requisitions listed below in addition to those found in other sources. This is determined by your Crusade force's Faction keyword (e.g. **IMPERIUM**).

These requisitions can only be purchased immediately after playing a battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign; each time such a requisition is purchased the war zone points you contribute to your alliance for that battle is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

IMPERIUM Requisitions

OATH OF FEALTY — 1RP

During the Obolis Invasion, many Freeblade Knights swore to fight side-by-side with a Noble household once more, for the duration of the campaign at least.

Purchase this Requisition after playing a battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign. Select one **OBOLIS INVASION FREEBLADE** unit in your Crusade force. That model gains one additional **<HOUSEHOLD>** keyword (this must match the **<HOUSEHOLD>** keyword of at least one other model in your army, excluding other **FREEBLADES**). You can use this Requisition on each **FREEBLADE** model in your Crusade Force once.

CHAOS Requisitions

CHOSEN OF ABADDON — 2RP

Though several Warlords bear Abaddon's sigil during the Obolis Invasion, the Despoiler has chosen one to be first among equals. Where this warrior treads, whole armies tremble.

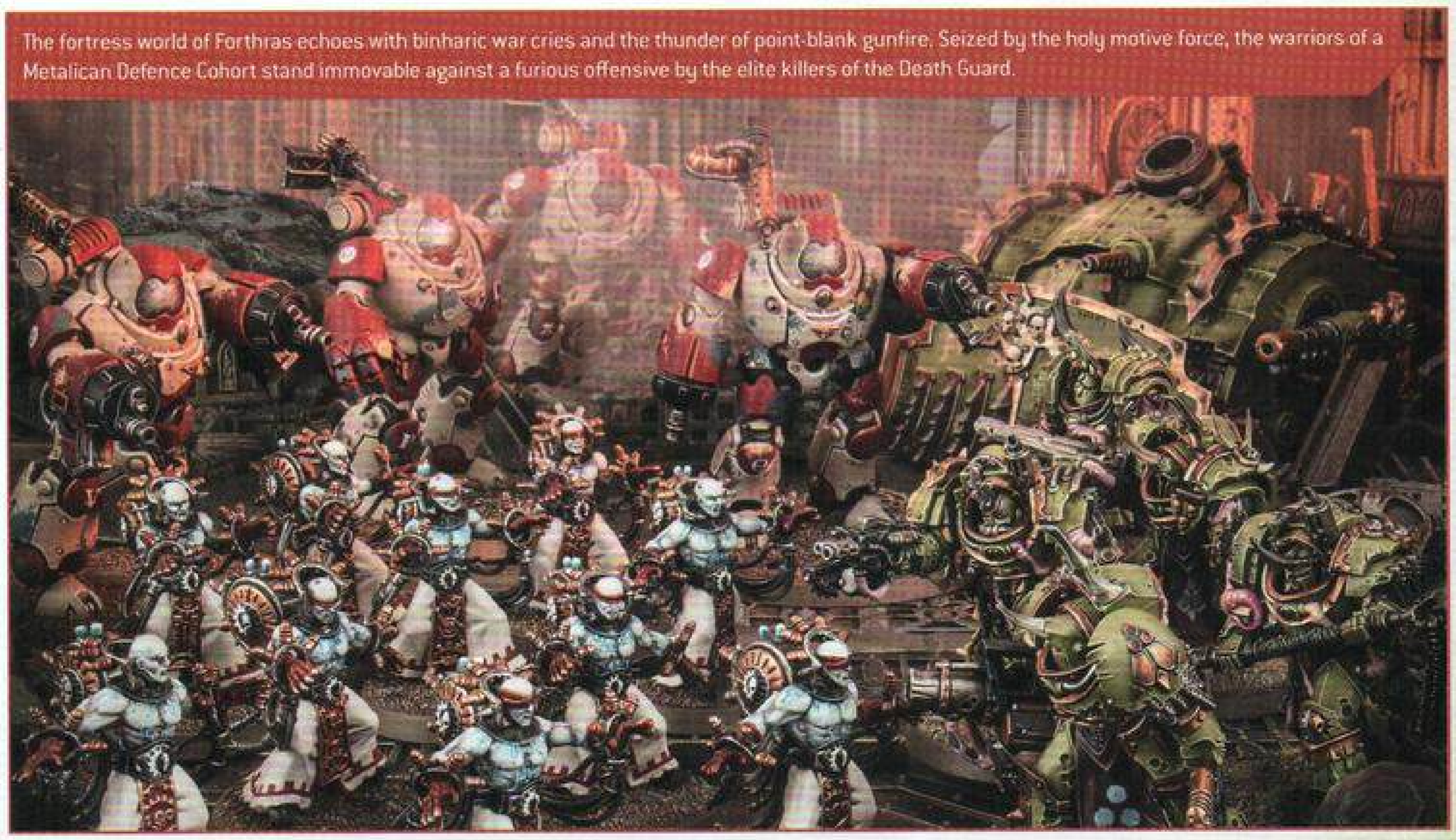
Purchase this Requisition after playing a battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign. Select one **OBOLIS INVASION HERETIC ASTARTES CHARACTER** unit of Heroic rank or higher from your Order of Battle. You can use the Warlord Trait Requisition (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core book) on that unit without spending any additional Requisition points, without needing to have gained a rank, and even if that model already has a Warlord Trait. In addition, that model gains the **CHOSEN OF ABADDON** keyword. Your Order of Battle can only include one **CHOSEN OF ABADDON** model.

AELDARI, TYRANIDS, ORKS, NECRONS and T'AU EMPIRE Requisitions

BANE OF EMPIRES — 1RP

During the Obolis Invasion, many alien Warlord's made a name for themselves by seeking out, challenging and defeating the mightiest commanders they could find.

Purchase this Requisition after playing a battle that is part of an Obolis Invasion Campaign. If your **OBOLIS INVASION WARLORD** destroyed the enemy **WARLORD** during that battle, your **WARLORD** gains 5 additional experience points.



The fortress world of Forthras echoes with binharic war cries and the thunder of point-blank gunfire. Seized by the holy motive force, the warriors of a Metalican Defence Cohort stand immovable against a furious offensive by the elite killers of the Death Guard.

VIRULENT GIFTS

In this section you will find rules for taking Virulent Gifts in your Crusade force, supplementing and building upon the noxious Crusade rules found in *Codex: Death Guard*.

Virulent Gifts are blessings that can be bestowed by Grandfather Nurgle upon Death Guard characters in your Crusade force, granting them new and powerful abilities to unleash on the battlefield of the 41st Millennium. They are acquired by using the Virulent Gift Requisition, and additionally require the spending of Virulence points – this gives you another way to spend the Virulence points your Crusade force has gained, making this resource even more valuable. You can find out more about Virulence points, such as how to gain them, in the Crusade section of *Codex: Death Guard*.

Virulent Gifts are powerful abilities that can, for example, drown entire enemy units in a torrent of toxic vomit, or regenerate a character from wounds that should have slain them outright. As such, these gifts can only be used once during a battle, after which they are lost (though they can be reacquired by using the Requisition again).

REQUISITIONS

VIRULENT GIFT — 1RP

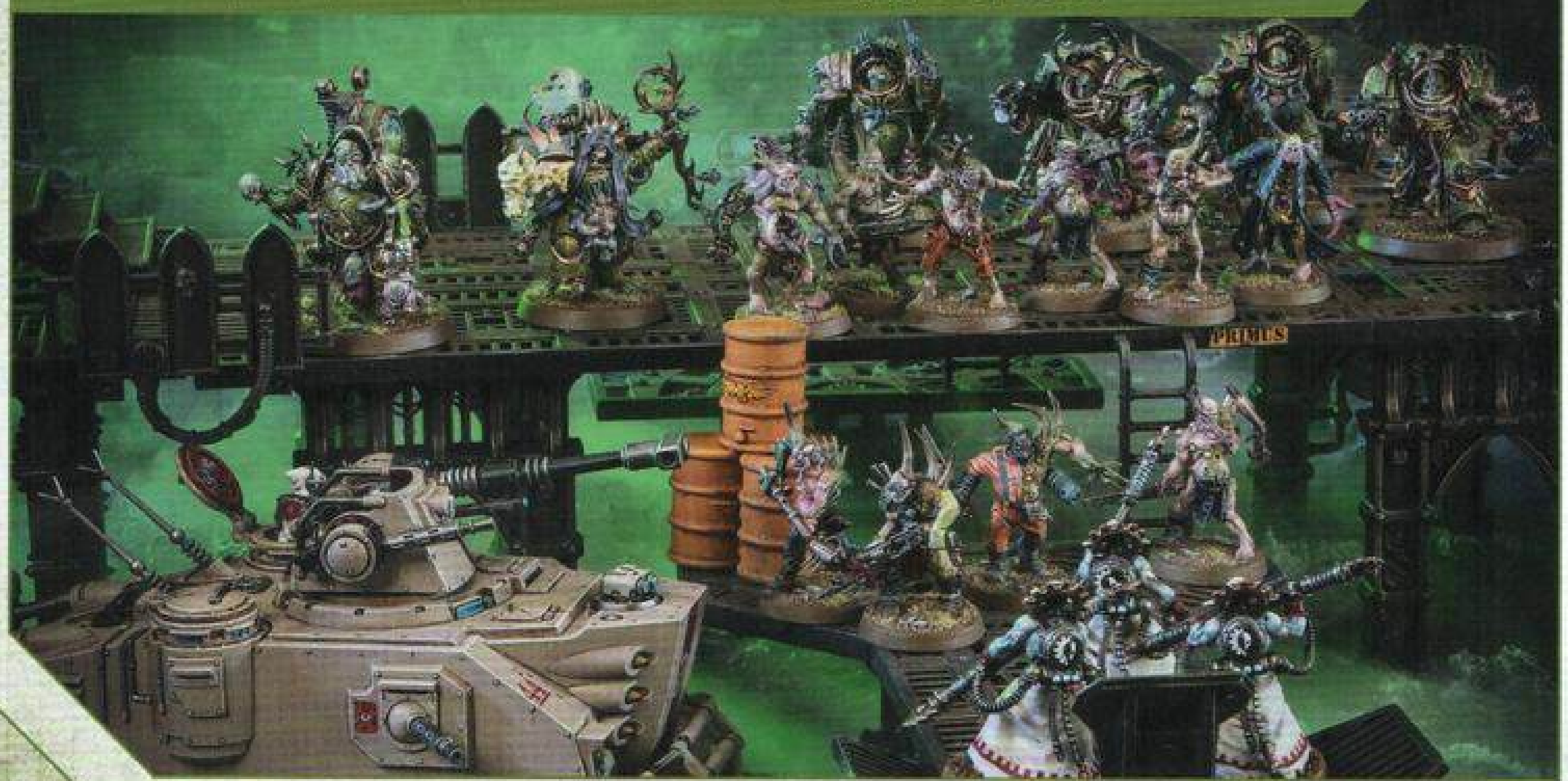
A follower of the Plague God has particularly pleased Grandfather Nurgle as they spread contagion across the galaxy, and so he bestows a noxious blessing upon them in reward, that they may continue to share his gifts with the galaxy.

Purchase this Requisition at any time if your Crusade force has 1 or more Virulence points and there are currently 2 or fewer models in your Crusade force that have a Virulent Gift. Select one **DEATH GUARD CHARACTER** unit from your Crusade force that does not already have a Virulent Gift, then subtract 1 or 2 from your number of Virulence points (you cannot subtract more than you have remaining).

- If you subtracted 1 from your Virulence points total, roll one D6; that model gains the Virulent Gift that corresponds to that result (if a result is rolled that another model in your Crusade force already has, roll again).
- If you subtracted 2 from your Virulence points total, you can instead select a Virulent Gift that no model in your Crusade force already has.

In either case, make a note on that unit's Crusade card of the result, and add 1 to that unit's total Crusade points. When the Virulent Gift is lost (after using it during a battle), subtract 1 from that unit's total Crusade points.

On the oceanic world of Fathom, a repugnant tide of Poxwalkers surges ahead of their Death Guard masters to drive the Metalican defenders back. Skorpius transports race to extract the outmatched faithful, but they may already be too late.



VIRULENT GIFTS

1. PUTRID REGROWTH

Unholy vitality bubbles in every cell of this champion's body. Should the enemy lay them low, they must destroy every last gobbet of the champion's flesh, lest this fecund gift see Nurgle's chosen regenerate in a handful of nauseating moments.

When the bearer is destroyed, you can choose to use this Virulent Gift instead of using any other rules that are triggered when a model is destroyed. If you do, roll one D6 at the end of the phase: on a 2+, set the bearer back up on the battlefield as close as possible to where it was destroyed and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models, with D3 wounds remaining. This Virulent Gift is then lost, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade card.

2. BOUNTIFUL VOMIT

When faced with foes too ignorant to appreciate Nurgle's magnificence, this champion's revulsion manifests as a torrent of corrosive bile. The curdled jet hits its victims with the force of an Adeptus Arbites riot cannon, dissolving those who are not simply drowned.

At the start of your Shooting phase, you can use this Virulent Gift. If you do, roll one D6: on a 2+, the closest enemy unit that is both visible and within 12" of the bearer suffers D3+3 mortal wounds (if that unit contains 11 or more models, it suffers D6+3 mortal wounds instead). This Virulent Gift is then lost, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade Card.

3. BLOAT-FLY SWARM

Endlessly greedy, these familiars swarm about the favoured of Nurgle and feed on their psychic dregs. Should they taste the tang of an enemy psyker's mind upon the winds, they descend in a cloud, driving their metaphysical proboscises deep into the luckless psyker's brain and drinking until they burst.

When a Psychic test is passed for an enemy **PSYKER** unit within 24" of the bearer, you can use this Virulent Gift before any other attempt to deny that psychic power (if any) is made. If you do, roll 2D6:

- On a 7+, that psychic power or psychic action is successfully denied.
- On a 10+ that psychic power or psychic action is successfully denied and the unit that was attempting to manifest that psychic power or perform that psychic action suffers Perils of the Warp.
- This Virulent Gift is then lost, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade Card.

4. PULSING BILE SACS

It is a brave foe indeed who strikes a champion bearing this gift. A veritable carpet of overripe buboes festoon their flesh, and one good, hard blow will burst them. The resultant cascade of rancid juices is catastrophically infectious and typically lethal within minutes.

When the bearer loses a wound, you can use this Virulent Gift. If you do, until the end of the turn, each time the bearer would lose a wound, roll one D6:

- On a 4-5, that wound is not lost.
- On a 6, that wound is not lost and, if the enemy unit that made that attack is within Engagement Range of the bearer, then after it has finished making its attacks, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
- This Virulent Gift is then lost at the end of the turn, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade Card.

5. BLIGHTED EMANATIONS

This champion spews clouds of choking plague-fumes from rents and orifices all across their body. Foes engulfed in this jaundice-hued smoke find themselves reeling half-blind, their flesh and armour alike peeling away in layers even as bones and servos grow weak and brittle.

In your Command phase, you can use this Virulent Gift. If you do, until the end of the turn, the bearer gains the following ability: '**Blighted Emanations (Aura):** While an enemy unit is within Engagement Range of this unit, subtract 1 from the Strength and Attacks characteristic of models in that unit (to a minimum of 1). The range of this ability cannot be increased by any rules.' This Virulent Gift is then lost at the end of the turn, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade Card.

6. PANDEMIC VITALITY

Upon invoking this gift from Nurgle, the champion's body burns with sudden fever heat. Stinking sweat squeezes from their pores and their eyes bloom red with burst blood vessels. Viral vitality surges through them, swift-burning and terrible, driving them to a surge of explosive and violent action.

At the end of the Fight phase, if the bearer is within Engagement Range of any enemy units, you can use this Virulent Gift. If you do, the bearer can fight again. This Virulent Gift is then lost, and is removed from the bearer's Crusade Card.

GLOSSARY

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

Alliances (pg 48): For an Obolis Invasion Campaign, players are organised into teams, known as alliances. The results of each of their games contribute to their alliance's overall result.

Army of Renown (pg 65): A variant army list for a Faction that can be used in your games of Warhammer 40,000 to represent a specialised force. It must be Battle-forged, cannot include any Specialist Detachments, and will have other specific restrictions that must be adhered to. Doing so, however, will provide you with unique benefits.

Battle Assets (pg 52): A certain type of additional rules for Theatres of War.

Battlefield Twists (pg 51 and 53): A certain type of additional rules for Theatres of War.

Campaign Master (pg 48): The individual who organises and runs an Obolis Invasion Campaign.

Campaign Master's Edicts (pg 54): Optional rules for a Campaign Master to use when running an Obolis Invasion Campaign.

Campaign Phase (pg 49): An Obolis Invasion Campaign is split into three phases in which players play games.

Codex Supplement: Cult of Strife (pg 84-86): Additional rules for **DRUKHARI** Detachments drawn from the Wych Cult of the **CULT OF STRIFE**.

Codex Supplement: House Raven (pg 74-75): Additional rules for **IMPERIAL KNIGHTS** Detachments drawn from the household of **HOUSE RAVEN**.

Codex Supplement: Metalica (pg 68-70): Additional rules for **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** Detachments drawn from the forge world of **METALICA**.

Extremis Sentinel Protocols (pg 66): An ability for **KATAPHRON BREACHERS**, **KATAPHRON DESTROYERS**, **SERVITORS** and **KASTELAN ROBOTS** units in a Mechanicus Defence Cohort.

Fester Discipline (pg 80): Psychic powers available to **DEATH GUARD PSYKER** units in a Terminus Est Assault Force.

Freeblade Lance (pg 72-73): An Army of Renown for **FREEBLADE** Imperial Knights.

Legendary Knight (pg 74): An ability for **FREEBLADE LANCE CHARACTER** units in a Freeblade Lance.

Legendary Missions (pg 56-61): A Campaign Master's Edict that allows players to play a unique mission inspired by a key event from War Zone Charadon Act 1.

Mechanicus Defence Cohort (pg 66-67): An Army of Renown for Adeptus Mechanicus.

Mysterious Objective Markers (pg 51): A certain type of additional rules for Theatres of War.

Obolis Invasion Campaign (pg 48): A campaign system for your games of Warhammer 40,000 inspired by the events of War Zone Charadon Act 1.

Outbreak Assault (pg 78): An ability for **TERMINUS EST ASSAULT FORCE** units in a Terminus Est Assault Force.

Prized Relics (pg 89): A new category of Crusade Relics available to an **OBOLIS INVASION CHARACTER** model of Battle-hardened rank or higher.

Secret Orders (pg 55): A Campaign Master's Edict that gives players a chance to earn more war zone points.

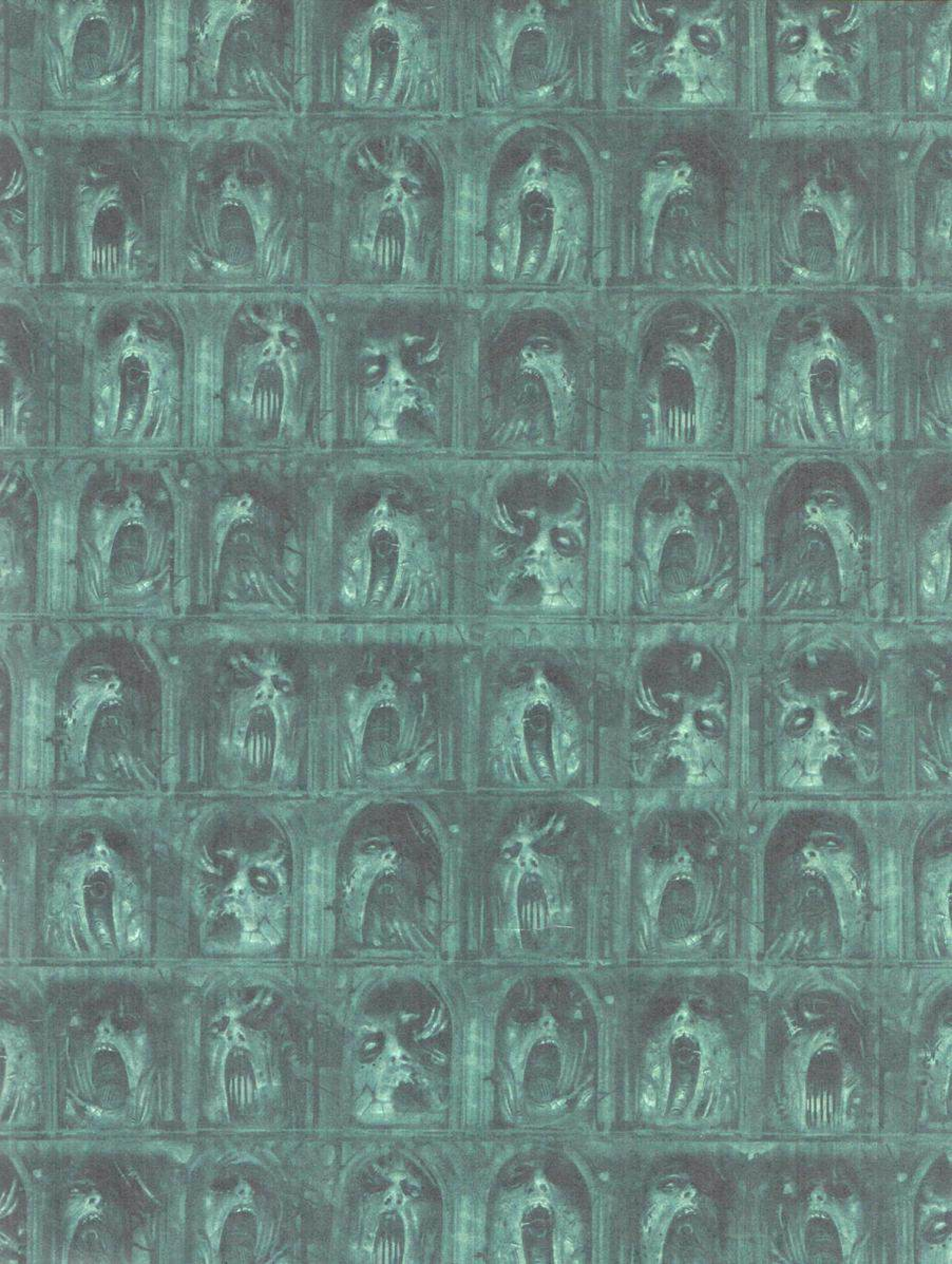
Strategic Value (pg 50): At the end of an Obolis Invasion Campaign, the alliance with the highest total strategic value, earned by winning a Campaign Phase, is the overall winner.

Terminus Est Assault Force (pg 78-81): An Army of Renown for Death Guard.

Theatres of War (pg 51-53): Each Campaign Phase has a Theatre of War, which are additional rules applied to games played during that Campaign Phase.

Virulent Gifts (pg 94-95): New Crusade rules for the Death Guard. By using a requisition and spending Virulence points, you can give unique but finite abilities to **DEATH GUARD CHARACTER** units from your Crusade force.

War Zone Points (pg 50): These are used to determine the winner of a Campaign Phase. They are most commonly achieved by playing games in an Obolis Invasion Campaign.



THE TRAVELLER BRINGS DOOM...

Forge world Metalica is the furnace heart of war production in the Charadon Sector. Upon the orders of the Despoiler, Typhus leads a vast invasion into the Charadon heartlands, seeking to besiege Metalica and to infect it with Nurgle's plagues. Beneath his foetid banner fight not only the forces of the Death Guard, but also warbands from the Black Legion, Word Bearers, Alpha Legion and countless others. Alongside them come twisted Chaos Knights, endless tides of mutants, cultists and daemons, and even the towering abominations of the Legio Morbidus. Yet against this invading horde stands an Imperial alliance between the armies of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the Adeptus Astartes, the Astra Militarum and many more. Fighting to dominate the systems of the Lirac and Obolis Sub-sectors, these two vast forces unleash their deadliest weapons in a war that threatens to annihilate the very worlds over which it is fought.

INSIDE YOU WILL FIND:

The story of the invasion of War Zone Charadon, detailing the opening gambits and developing war fronts of a conflict spanning entire sub-sectors of Imperial space.

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A supplement for

WARHAMMER 40,000

You will need a copy of the Warhammer 40,000 rules to use the contents of this book. This book contains supplementary rules for Codex: Adeptus Mechanicus, Codex: Death Guard, Codex: Drukhari and Codex: Imperial Knights.

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