"At my word, the maelstrom shall come and Vraks shall drown in blood. Even the dead shall find no peace. I shall be the herald of the oncoming apocalypse and the true gods shall know my name."

– Lord Xaphan, Apostate Cardinal, Arch-Heretic and the Despot of Vraks

IMPERIAL ARMOUR

THE SIEGE OF VRAKS

Forge World®

WARHAMMER 40,000®

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Imperial Armour – The Siege of Vraks*.

This book contains the complete history of the war for the Imperial world of Vraks; a conflict between the armies of the Imperium and the forces of Chaos that ground on for almost two decades and cost the lives of millions of Imperial Guardsmen. Once a bastion of Mankind's power and host to a vast stockpile of weapons and ammunition that made it strategically vital to the entire Segmentum, the armoury world was laid low not by invasion, but by treachery. The war to retake Vraks would turn into one of the largest sieges of the Imperium's recent history, and see the deployment of countless specialised siege regiments of the Death Korps of Krieg, several Space Marine Chapters and Titan Orders and even, at the very height of the battle, the dreaded Inquisition and the mighty Grey Knights.

Imperial Armour – The Siege of Vraks gathers together and presents afresh the story of this monumental conflict, previously published in *Imperial Armour Volumes Five, Six* and *Seven*. It contains numerous colour illustrations detailing the many and varied camouflage schemes utilised by the Death Korps of Krieg siege regiments, as well as details of unit markings and other heraldry. Furthermore, it presents examples of the iconography and heraldry of the Space Marine Chapters which fought on Vraks, including the Dark Angels, Red Hunters and Grey Knights. The book also includes extensive examples of the colours of the forces of Chaos, from the tanks of the Vraks militia to the heraldry borne by the Chaos Space Marine allies of the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan.

In addition, this book contains a fully updated army list for the Death Korps of Krieg, designed in line with the seventh edition of the Warhammer 40,000 rules. It also contains an army list for the Renegades of Vraks, presented in the same manner as the Renegades and Heretics army list found in *Imperial Armour – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*, expanding on those elements most representative of the armies which stood against the Imperium on Vraks. Also included are several special characters unique to the setting, from heroes such as Inquisitor-Lord Hector Rex to the vile Daemon Mamon, allowing players to re-fight the key battles of this iconic and bloody siege.

The Forge World Team

CATALOGUS IMPERIALIS RECORD 5593.4: VRAKS PRIME



Segmentum: Obscurus

Sector: Scarus

Sub-sector: Kerak

Vraks System: Four planets: Prime, Secundus, Tertius and Uryx [reclassified]. One inhabited – Vraks Prime.

Planetary Survey History – Initial report submitted by the Noble and Most Worshipful Household of Van Meer. Partial data fragment in existence (<3.7%) – Departmento Munitorum Archive file 148736-int-dm/Van-Meer/RT.

322 planetary surveys above Grade Munitorum 728/TR level processed since initial survey. Most recent initiated in 172.M41 – [Status – Ongoing]. Data compiled from current survey as follows…

Inner Planet: Vraks Prime – Post volcanic; temperate.

Outer Planets: Vraks Secundus – Rock; no atmosphere.

Vraks Tertius – Rock; no atmosphere.

[Additional – reclassified]: Uryx – Ice ball; no atmosphere. Classification Three-Omega planet-sized asteroid trapped in Vraks star's gravitational field.

Satellites: Vraks Prime – 0

Vraks Secundus – 1

Vraks Tertius – 1

Uryx – 0

Asteroids: Multiple outlying asteroid fields – uncharted.

Comets: None in-system or en route for <800 years. System protected from astronomical anomalies and unidentified void craft by Kerak sub-sector vigilance stations – installed following Bane of Antius Incursion c.748.M38.

VRAKS PRIME

Summary: Vraks is a Departmento Munitorum armoury world – a vast storage facility for supplies and equipment for Astra Militarum regiments and emergency war reserves for the Kerak sub-sector.

Size: Equatorial distance – approx 10,139 km.

Gravity: 1.05 G.

Rotation Speed: Approx 1,770 kph.

Mean Orbital Distance: 172,000,000 km from Vraks system's star.

Climate classification: Temperate – standard.

Mean Surface Temperature: 11°C

Tropospheric Composition: Nitrogen 78.8%, oxygen 19%, argon 1%, ozone 1%, carbon dioxide 0.1%, sulphur 0.1%.

Tithe Grade: Adeptus Non.

Climatic Regions: Polar region – Small northern and southern polar caps, permafrost. Unexplored.

Seas: Approximately 55% of the planet is covered by shallow, sulphur-rich seas.

Mountains/highlands: Rugged, highly eroded. Some exposed deposits of harder igneous rocks quarried for construction of worker hab-blocks.

Plains/lowlands: Exposed to storm erosion and criss-crossed by canyons and trenches. Population concentrated within lowland region around the Citadel and Vraks Star Port in the Van Meersland Wastes.

Climatic phenomena: Violent electrical storms occur almost every day in some regions, initiated by effects of high sulphur content on upper troposphere. Generally accompanied by short periods of intense precipitation, resulting in significant risk of localised flash floods.

Water Resources: Deep hydro-sinks driven into the soft crust of the planet extract subterranean-stored water – this is filtered to remove high sulphur content before being rationed to the general worker populace. Additional water shipments transported to Vraks from ocean worlds of Paeleos VIII and Gjar Alpha.

Flora: Some algae and single cell organisms recorded in early surveys – now considered extinct.

Fauna: None recorded.

Economy: Regulated by the Departmento Munitorum.

Population (General): Estimated 8,000,000 (predominantly human and abhuman indentured workers, guarded by Departmento Munitorum garrison troops. Vraks also maintains a planetary defence force militia, recruited from amongst the general populace.

Population (Administratum): Standard Administratum personnel structure for planet's classification.

Increases on a +435,000 pro rata distribution rate during large-scale Astra Militarum resupply operations.

Astra Militarum command barracks located at Vraks Star Port. Maximum occupancy 15,072.65, recorded during Cadian 88th resupply operations in 751.M41 [File: Ares 748Ω - remaining data expunged under Inquisitorial Order].

Population (Transient): Vraks Prime is also classified as a shrine world, and a required stop for those on the Devotion to the Ten Thousand Martyrs of Scarus pilgrimage route. Pilgrim numbers regularly reach the upper extremes of Adeptus Ministorum Grade 72/Π – Departmento Munitorum sources suggest somewhere in the range of 1,000,000 - 5,000,000, but these are considered to be grossly under-estimated.

Principal Exports: None.

Principal Imports: Munitions – arms and weapons of all types, fuel and other manufactured goods. All food is supplied from off-world. Vast reserves of rations are stockpiled on Vraks for Astra Militarum resupply – a proportion of these are diverted to the native work force during periods of intense activity.

Administrative Zones: The primary administrative zone on Vraks Prime is Vraks Star Port – this is surrounded by a densely populated city of some 5,000,000+ workers.

The second most densely populated zone encompasses the labour corps hab camps scattered across the Van Meersland Wastes district. These house the labourers who construct and maintain Vraks' vast network of underground storage bunkers, service roads and defences.

Geological Composition: Vraks is considered an old planet in geological terms for the Scarus Sector, with a stable surface – little tectonic movement has been recorded in recent millennia. This, combined with vast areas of the planet's bedrock being relatively easy to access and mine, makes Vraks a good prospect for the subterranean storage of volatile materials.

Known History: Located in the Segmentum Obscurus, to the galactic north-west of the Eye of the Terror, Vraks' importance lies in its strategic position as part of the Imperium's defences against incursions by Chaos-aligned forces. The planet forms part of a network of armoury worlds across the Segmentum Obscurus. Its location and facilities enable it to quickly resupply Astra Militarum regiments committed to defend worlds close to the Eye of Terror, particularly in the Scarus Sector.

The Vraks system itself was first logged by Great Crusade fleets expanding the newly founded Imperium after the Age of Strife. Later, it was explored by an expedition led by Rogue Trader Van Meer of the Van Meer Household, and in the intervening centuries, a supply base was established on Vraks Prime to stockpile supplies needed for future expeditions around the rim of the Eye of Terror.

As the supply base was expanded to meet requirements, security was increased in the region, Vraks Prime was reclassified as an armoury world and significant defensive measures were installed to protect it from raiding pirates and xenos forces. Massive underground bunkers and hangars were constructed for the storage of arms, ammunition, fuel, uniforms, etc – all of which are run by Administratum adepts and overseers in command complexes either within or located near the Fortress of Vraks.

This massive and heavily defended fortress, more commonly referred to as the 'Citadel', includes the Basilica of St Leonis, built by Vraks' Cardinal-Astral in M38 to attend to the faith of the millions of indentured workers interred on Vraks. It is consecrated with the bones of St Leonis, a missionary of the 38th Millennium who was blinded and martyred by heretics whilst preaching in the Scarus Sector.

Pilgrims and penitents visiting the Shrine of St Leonis arrive by the hundreds of thousands each standard year, and are attended to by the many priests who serve at the Basilica of St Leonis and the attached Cardinal's Palace.

The Fortress of Vraks (herein referred to as the 'Citadel'): Situated in the centre of the Van Meersland Wastes and built on the remains of an extinct volcano, the Citadel is the control centre of Departmento Munitorum operations on Vraks. It contains the headquarters of the planetary defence forces, the Master of the Administratum's offices, extensive archives, the Basilica of St Leonis, the Cardinal's Palace and the Citadel's own garrison barracks. High security cells carved into the rock beneath the Citadel itself are, on occasion, used to hold Inquisitorial prisoners captured in the sector. Astropathic communications for the planet, the Adeptus Arbites precinct, as well as the control centre for the network of defence laser batteries are also situated in the vicinity of the Citadel.

As the nerve centre of the Armoury, the Citadel's defences have been constantly upgraded and certain factions within the Departmento Munitorum now consider Vraks to be an impregnable fortress. Its walls are protected from orbital bombardment by void shield generators and it has an extensive curtain wall protecting it from direct assault. It is surrounded by a large network of defence laser batteries, making an assault from orbit suicidal for most inter-system capable vessels. These lasers can also be used against ground targets, and all approaches to the Citadel are covered by interlocking fields of fire. Three defence rings run for kilometres out into the wastes. These protect the storage bunkers from raiders and include trenches, defence lines, bunkers and strong points, as well as pre-prepared artillery positions. The defence lines are further protected by lines of razor wire, tank traps and thousands of minefields, making an assault on Vraks an exceedingly costly and difficult proposition for an enemy force.

In the event of a major assault, the Citadel's large garrison protects the Citadel itself, whilst its militia, raised from the labour corps and given only basic training, is expected to man the static defence lines.

In the past Vraks endured many raids, mainly from renegades and pirates seeking to loot equipment, and several uprisings within the labour force (see 4655082.M39 Vraks Uprising - Suppression of), but in 10,000 years Vraks has never fallen…

CHAPTER ONE – THE FALL OF VRAKS

"The Scarus Sector is a tinderbox – one spark may soon become a great conflagration. I shall light the fires."

His Holiness Lord Xaphan, Cardinal-Astral Scarus

A world of the galaxy-spanning Imperium of Mankind had fallen silent.

The astropathic communications spire on the armoury world of Vraks, through which thousands of psychically-transmitted messages were received from across the Scarus Sector and then re-routed by its choir of astropaths through the Warp to other sectors of the Imperium every day, had ceased transmitting. At first little attention was paid to Vraks' absence by those within the Departmento Munitorum under whose jurisdiction it fell. The vagaries of the Warp meant that communications blackouts were not uncommon, and with no Astra Militarum regiments scheduled to resupply there for months, other matters in the region took precedence.

And so Vraks' silence might have continued, but there were others within the Imperium who had paid a far keener eye to events occurring on that far distant planet. Even then it took weeks for the Master of the Departmento Munitorum to receive news that one of his worlds was no longer responding to ever more urgent attempts to communicate with it. Not until then would suspicions be aroused in the corridors of power of the Segmentum Obscurus, and not until further investigations were undertaken and the final Warp-garbled message that had been received from Vraks deciphered would the whole truth be known.

The seemingly impregnable armoury world and its vast reserves of weapons, vehicles and equipment was now out of reach of the Imperium, and in the hands of an as yet unknown enemy.

The Rise of Cardinal Xaphan

In 366804.M41, Cardinal-Astral Borja died. Old beyond the comprehension of the billions whose unquestioning faith in the Emperor he had overseen from the cardinal world of San Artorus, his body had been kept alive for over four hundred years by the arcane arts of the Adeptus Mechanicus Biologis. Although frail, he had endured to do the Emperor's work, and with due reverence his diocese mourned his passing, tens of thousands of bells tolling across the sub-sectors under Borja's rule to mark their grief.

Once the Ministorum-sanctioned period of mourning had been respectfully observed, many months of intense debate and politicking passed before his successor was chosen. The man who would become the new Cardinal-Astral was named as Xaphan, a protégé of Borja's whose rapid rise through the ranks of the Adeptus Ministorum had been aided by his influential patron. With due reverence, Xaphan was enthroned on the cardinal world, but before taking his place on its council, the new Cardinal-Astral decreed that he would complete a pilgrimage of his new domains, to see for himself that all was being done to protect the souls of the billions now in his charge.

So vast was Xaphan's diocese, his grand tour was expected to take over five years to complete, and with the new Cardinal-Astral would also travel his full entourage of more than a thousand preachers, deacons, chatelaines, servants and menials, along with his personal Adepta Sororitas bodyguard, the protection of these devout warriors a gift from the Abbess of the Artorus Priory of the Order of the Argent Shroud, in honour of Xaphan's enthronement.

Over the following months, the Cardinal-Astral's pilgrimage took him to many worlds, where his presence whipped the faithful into a frenzy of devotion. Soon, many fanatical cults had attached themselves to his entourage; Xaphan's pilgrimage was a holy crusade, they claimed, to rid the sector of heresy and to purge it of the impure. Here was a man who could lead them during these ever-darkening times.

On Thracian Primaris in particular, the Cardinal-Astral's sermons attracted hundreds of thousands of the faithful. Rioting broke out just to catch a glimpse of him, and scores died or were injured as his Sisters of Battle bodyguard and local Adeptus Arbites forces fought to restore order and keep back the crowds. Despite this, hundreds pledged themselves personally to the Cardinal's service and from one world to the next, his entourage grew to the size of a small army.

Amongst this fanatical devotion, Xaphan saw, perhaps for the first time, the true power that came with his new position. On San Artorus there was much work to be done, important work without doubt, but out here, amongst the lay people, he was an inspiring force. Surely this was where he could achieve great things in the name of the Emperor rather than spending long hours debating in the council chamber, signing declarations, or attending countless meetings with Administratum officials dealing with some petty problem or other. Now that he was out amongst his flock, Xaphan saw how he could take real action against the doubters and heretics who threatened the Emperor's divine rule.

The Cardinal-Astral cautiously voiced his opinions to his advisors, in particular to Deacon Mamon, a young man who had joined his entourage on Thracian Primaris and rapidly risen through its ranks. Favoured by the Cardinal already as a practical man of action and for his local knowledge, the deacon encouraged the seeds of ambition that were now taking root within Xaphan. Mamon agreed with his new master. That so many were willing to join him was a sign. The people of the Imperium no longer wanted a faceless bureaucrat to rule over them from some distant world, they were looking for a leader, someone with whom they could take a stand against the dangers that threatened their everyday existence. They had chosen Xaphan as that leader, and with the masses at his command, he could raise up a War of Faith that would cleanse the sector.

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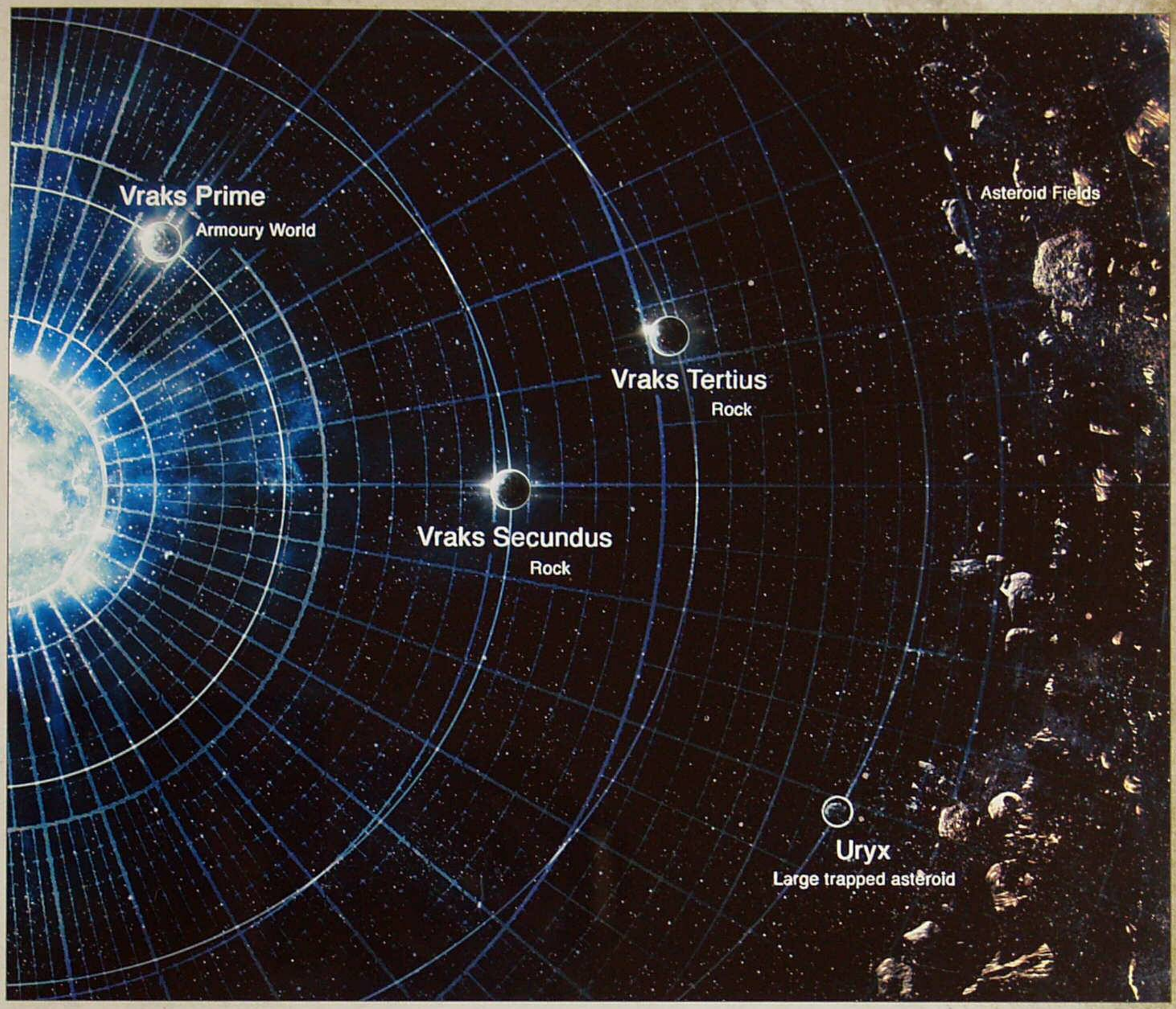
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But Mamon advised that he must proceed cautiously. Xaphan's intentions, no matter how virtuous, would be seized upon by rival factions as the act of an ambitious man seeking to further his own power. Their jealousy would twist their minds, some going so far as to accuse him of violating the terms of the Decree Passive, the order that forbade members of the Adeptus Ministorum from controlling 'men under arms'. One false move and these immensely powerful men would see Xaphan arrested by the Ordo Hereticus, to live out the rest of his days in an Inquisitorial cell, or worse. Having spent his whole career embroiled in the politics associated with high office within the Ministorum, Mamon's words rung true with Xaphan. He had witnessed his predecessor, Borja, on many occasions signing warrants that would condemn men and women to the judgement of the Inquisition for far less. If his dreams were to come to fruition, he would need somewhere safe from which to plan and prepare.

Mamon, naturally, knew of such a world – Vraks Prime in the Kerak sub-sector. It was the perfect base from which Xaphan could begin his holy crusade, an armoury world that held weapons and equipment in abundance to arm those who would fight for his cause, and it was also the site of the Shrine of Saint Leonis the Blind, one of the most holiest in the region. Under the guise of visiting the shrine as part of his pilgrimage, Xaphan could take up residence in the attached Ecclesiarchical palace and begin his true work.

Vraks

The declaration that someone as holy as the Cardinal-Astral of the Scarus Sector was to visit their world sent the workers and pilgrims on Vraks into a frenzy of religious devotion. From dawn to dusk and long into the night in the weeks prior to his arrival, the bells of Vraks Prime rung out, summoning the faithful to prayer, and millions heeded their call. Many thousands also made the long, arduous trek across the Van Meersland Wastes to the planet's star port as Xaphan's fleet arrived in-system, the crowds growing by the hour in the hope of witnessing the Emperor's envoy. And when the Cardinal-Astral's vessel finally touched down, a vast sea of the faithful were there to greet him.

First to step out of Xaphan's ornately decorated landing craft were the imposing warriors of the Battle Sisters of the Order of the Argent Shroud. Boltguns held aloft, they stood to attention on each side of the vessel's ramp as Xaphan's

SANCTUM ASTRO-TELEPATHICA

OFFICIO DEPARTMENTO MUNITORUM : TERRA

FOR THE ATTENTION OF : PREFECT-PRIME SECRETARIAT TO THE MASTER OF THE DEPARTMENTO MUNITORUM.

+++++++++ PRIORITY : EXPERDITUS

++++ TRANSMITTED : MUNITORUM MISSION UTIL/972-CADIA

+++++++++RECEIVED : ASTROPATH MILIUS

+++++DESTINATION : TERRA[ADMIN-CONDUIT EPSILON-MU 37 DECLINING]

+TELEPATHIC DUCT : VRAKS PRIMARY TRANS-EMPYREAL RELAY DELTA-22

+++++++++++++++REF : ORDO HERETICUS SEAL [EXEMPT]

++++++++++AUTHOR : UNKNOWN

++++++++++++++++RE : VRAKS. FINAL TRANSMISSION

BELOW IS THE REQUESTED TRANSCRIPT OF THE FINAL TRANSMISSION RECEIVED FROM VRAKS, DATED 674810.M41

WARNING; DECRYPTED MESSAGE
DEPARTMENTO MUNITORUM EYES ONLY.
GRADE PRIMUS-III CLEARANCE ONLY,
BY ORDER OF THE EMPEROR'S INQUISITION

..(ILLEGIBLE)..ATTACK.... ,VRAKS FORTRESS..(ILLEGIBLE)...CARDINAL-ASTRAL XA...(ILLEGIBLE)...(ILLEGIBLE)...MASTER PREFECT...GENERAL UPRISING IN PROGRESS. SENSORIUM TOWER NOW UNDE (ILLEGIBLE) REQUEST ASSIST...(ILLEGIBLE)...URGENT...(ILL ...COMMEND OUR SOULS TO THE EM...(ILLEGIBLE)

CLASSIFIED

674810.M41

ATT: VRAKS. SUSPECTED UPRISING
+++ ACTION REQUIRED

honour guard and protectors. Next to walk down the ramp were the Cardinal-Astral's closest advisors led, of course, by Deacon Mamon. Dressed in the finest ceremonial robes, to the lowly citizens of Vraks each must have seemed to be wearing the wealth of an entire planet, adorned as they were in densely embroidered silks and jewel-encrusted rosaries and holy relics. Then, from behind them, out stepped Xaphan and all who saw him knew that the Emperor had truly blessed their humble world.

Xaphan's appearance had been carefully orchestrated by Mamon to have the greatest impact it could. Stepping from the darkness of the craft's interior, he literally shone with the Emperor's Light, dazzling all as a golden energy field flickered serenely about his exquisite white robes. To the men and women of Vraks, who all their lives had known little but the drab browns and greys of their bleak world, it was the most wondrous thing they had ever seen, and as one, the thousands surrounding the landing field knelt in prayer in adoration of their new messiah.

Pausing only briefly to bless those most senior of the dignitaries assembled before his void craft, the Cardinal-Astral set off on foot for the holy shrine of Saint Leonis. Those worshippers who had secured a place on the road leading up to the shrine wept with joy and praised his name to the heavens; the many days of hunger and exposure to Vraks' grim elements they'd endured whilst waiting for that brief glimpse forgotten in a moment as they watched him enter the cool darkness of the shrine. Nearly two hours passed before Xaphan reappeared and made his way to a pulpit that had been set up on a promontory overlooking the masses. As he approached it, cyber-cherubs were released from rare-wood caskets carried by each of his entourage. With a beat of angelic wings, scores of the ornate vox-casters flew out across the wastes to broadcast Xaphan's message directly to those gathered below.

For three hours he stood before the masses and preached. He preached to them of the good work they had done, listing scores of worlds that had been saved through their devotion to the hard task that the Emperor had set them. It was they, he claimed, not the massed regiments of the Astra Militarum or the Chapters of the noble Adeptus Astartes who were the True Warriors of the Emperor. Without Vraks and its people, they would not have had the weapons, munitions and equipment to prosecute His holy wars, and the great empire of Mankind would have been swept into darkness long ago. Only then did Xaphan finally pause and into the brief silence that followed, the voices of every man, woman and child on the armoury world called out in praise for the Emperor and the Cardinal-Astral.

Seizing the moment, Xaphan changed his manner to fit the true message he intended to deliver, one which Deacon Mamon had promised him would lay the foundations of the War of Faith the Cardinal-Astral would soon lead. Gone was the praise and the platitudes, and the golden light that had made him seem almost angelic now took on an altogether darker hue. An enemy was approaching, he warned them. One who would bring war to Vraks on a scale never before imagined. Already many worlds had been lost and soon Vraks might be amongst them. One day soon, it would be they who would have to bear arms to protect their homes and families, for if the enemy came to Vraks then they could be certain that all the Emperor's mighty armies had already fallen into darkness.

Leaving them with those dire words of warning, Xaphan retired swiftly to his new palace, his Adepta Sororitas honour guard taking up residence in the small priory attached to the Basilica of Leonis. Making no further appearances in public, he sealed himself away within its walls, with only a select few granted a rare audience with him. Then, aided by Deacon Mamon, the Cardinal began to plan his War of Faith.

For weeks they worked in secret, pouring over Adeptus Ministorum reports that recorded population numbers in the sector, levels of devotion and incidents of blasphemy. Worlds and systems in particular that showed signs of turning from the Emperor's Light were noted, a border drawn around the heretical regions singling them out for further scrutiny. Eventually, the plan was drawn up and Xaphan's War of Faith began to take shape. But as each new world and system was added, doubts began to surface within Xaphan with increasing intensity. Even here, far from the prying eyes of his rivals, they would still have spies. Any declaration of his intent would no doubt draw their attention and the plans Xaphan and Mamon had drawn up would require a vast amount of manpower to prosecute. Even if they could find a way around the Decree Passive, it would take many months to amass the forces he needed. It was Deacon Mamon, as always, who provided the solution.

Mamon had not only suggested Vraks because of its distance from Xaphan's rivals, but also because of its large population and the vast numbers who attended the Shrine World. In times of peril, the Basilica of St Leonis the Blind could raise a Frateris Militia to protect the holy relics kept there. After Xaphan's rousing speech, it would not take much for him to convince the population of Vraks that the threat to their world he had spoken of was approaching, and its millions would provide all the troops he would need. At no point would the Frateris be considered directly under his control, but as the most senior member of the Adeptus Ministorum on the armoury world, it was Cardinal-Astral Xaphan's to influence as he saw fit.

His doubts assuaged, the Cardinal-Astral gave his blessing and Mamon's men moved swiftly amongst the pilgrims and labour gangs, preaching that the darkness Xaphan had warned them of had now set its sights upon Vraks, that legions of heretics and traitors were already attacking neighbouring systems and had cut off the armoury world from the Emperor's aid. Within hours, panic had set in across the planet and the ranks of Vraks' Frateris Militia swelled in response, hundreds joining by the hour, exactly as Deacon Mamon had predicted.

Whilst they had been planning the war, Deacon Mamon had also set about establishing an inner circle around the Cardinal-Astral, knowing that the moment their plans

became clear, there would be reprisals. These *'Disciples of Xaphan'* would be his closest allies, men whom he could trust and who would fight to the death for him. Also into this inner circle, Mamon had already secretly enticed the commanders of Vraks' garrison, the Steward of the Citadel and the high-ranking commanders of Vraks' militia, and where allegiances could not be bought by appealing to their faith, the Cardinal-Astral's vast wealth soon acquired them.

Not all on Vraks, however, were as easy to convince. No matter how hard he tried, Mamon had not managed to persuade the commander of his Adepta Sororitas bodyguard that Xaphan's cause was just and true. She had already made her suspicions clear regarding the Cardinal-Astra's actions with her superiors, accusing Xaphan of *'seditious actions bordering on blasphemy'*, and rescinded her Battle Sisters' role as his honour guard – one which had been swiftly picked up by Xaphan's new protectors. Subtle approaches to the loyal men of the Adeptus Arbites precincts had also been rebuffed and they too remained outside of Mamon's and the Cardinal-Astral's reach.

Xaphan's confidence wavered once more. These were the Emperor's chosen. If they would not provide their blessing and support his plans, did that mean that his crusade was not truly the righteous cause they thought it to be? For days the Cardinal-Astral and Deacon Mamon debated the matter, the deacon barring all others from entering the chambers where their heated words could be heard day and night as he tried to convince Xaphan that his cause was just.

Finally, on the fifth day, the exhausted Cardinal-Astral conceded and agreed to a plan which would not only rid him of the unbelievers that stood in his way, but would convince all on the armoury world that now was the time to rise up and defend themselves.

And it would be those who opposed him the most who would set it all in motion. All Xaphan had to do, Mamon patiently explained to his master, was to wait for them to make the first move.

The Assassination of Cardinal-Astral Xaphan

As Xaphan had rightly feared, his actions had already been brought to the attention of the Ordo Hereticus via missives sent by the Sister Superior to her priory on San Artorus. Her words had generated immense concern there and agents posing as pilgrims visiting the Shrine World had been immediately dispatched to Vraks, their reports in turn doing little to allay those fears. Upon consultation with representatives of the Inquisition, the order was given to end the Cardinal-Astral's life, a dangerous move given his growing popularity, but it was sanctioned nonetheless.

With haste an Inquisitorial agent was deployed to Vraks, infiltrating the Citadel disguised as one of the masses visiting the relics of St Leonis. There, on a narrow ledge on the Citadel's tallest tower, he had lain for three days, camouflaged by a stealth suit, patiently waiting for any sign of his target. On the dawn of the fourth day, the sniper's patience was rewarded. With a gentle squeeze on the



trigger of his rifle, a single shot swiftly traversed the distance between the sniper and the far side of the palace's courtyard. The heavy penetrator round punched clean through a decorative marble pillar before hitting the Cardinal-Astral. Xaphan did not die though, a sharp flash of golden energy indicating that his relic-mounted refractor field had halted the bullet's velocity, saving his life.

Immediately, Xaphan's Disciples leapt to surround him, two dying quickly as following shots took each clean through the head, their blood splashing wide across the palace's mosaic floor, but the sniper's one clear shot had failed. Abandoning his equipment and rifle on the ledge, he dived for the thin vent that had provided access to his vantage point and made for the narrow spiral staircase, the assassin's escape route already meticulously planned.

In the few short moments it took him to reach the doorway at the bottom of the stairs, the courtyard was in a frenzy as Disciples poured into its bounds; anyone who got in their way being pushed roughly aside as they charged towards the tower. As the assassin emerged through the narrow arched doorway, a young acolyte froze in place before him, startled by his sudden appearance. It was the last thing the acolyte knew as the bullet from one of the sniper's pistols punched through his chest. It was but a momentary distraction, but one that had allowed the guards to strengthen their numbers at the gates to the courtyard before he could reach them, the



uniformed men rushing to take up position as sirens started to wail across the Cardinal's Palace.

Cursing the delay the acolyte had caused him, the sniper took the only option remaining to him and made for the nearest door. There was no longer any need for stealth, just a headlong rush to escape – and death for anybody who got in his way. With pistols in both hands, the sniper ran down the dim high-vaulted corridor, palace guards and Disciples clattering in behind him. Firing blind over his shoulder, two guards fell bleeding. The sniper dodged into a side alcove and rapidly fired more shots down the corridor to keep his pursuers pinned. Then, from the far end of the corridor, more guards and Disciples appeared, blocking his way. Desperately, the sniper looked for an alternative escape route.

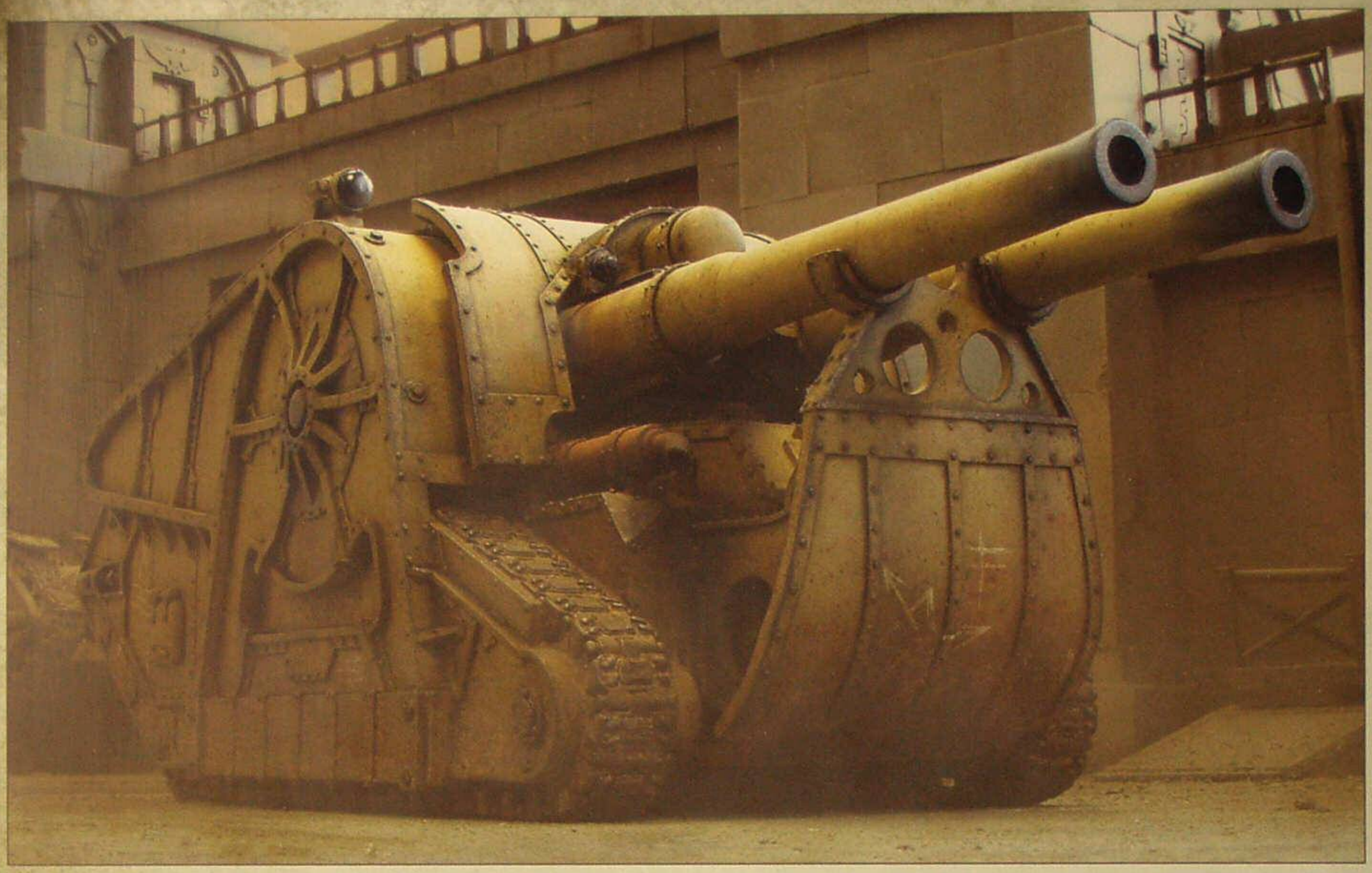
Dodging a volley of weapons fire, he ran a short way down the corridor towards a closed door, blasting away at its hinges as he closed the distance. Beyond was an old stairway down into the basilica's ancient vaults, and he leapt down into a musty darkness filled with the grim sarcophaguses of the hundreds of pilgrims who had died over the centuries whilst visiting Vraks, their devotion ultimately rewarded with internment upon the Shine World. The first guard through the stairs' archway died to another well-aimed pistol shot, but they now had the assassin cornered. With nowhere left for him to run to, grenades were hurled in and the mortuary chamber began to fill with choking dust and smoke.

Moments later, in rushed the guards, weapons blazing. The cornered sniper's final two pistol shots killed two more before he died, riddled with weapons fire.

This was the opportunity Mamon had promised Xaphan would come and the Inquisition had handed it to them on a silver platter. Throughout the Van Meersland Wastes, the Citadel and Vraks Star Port, Mamon's preachers declared that the great enemy was now amongst them and their world stood alone. As proof, the sniper's corpse was paraded through the Citadel's streets, and images of it were vid-linked around the planet. Here was the man who had tried to kill the messiah of the Scarus Sector, but he had failed; his treacherous act denied by no less than the will of the Emperor Himself. But, preached Xaphan's disciples, he was merely a puppet. It was those who had sent him that the loyal people of Vraks should be most on guard against, traitors and heretics who had infiltrated the highest levels of the Imperium, and who would now be sending the full measure of their treacherous forces against them.

Uprising

News of the assassination attempt sparked rioting in Vraks Star Port as Xaphan's followers panicked, terrified beyond rational belief that the Emperor's enemies could reach so far and so easily onto such sacred ground. Meanwhile, the swollen ranks of the Frateris Militia raced to arm themselves in expectation of the invasion they believed would soon be



underway. As the thousands marched on Vraks' armouries, there was little the Departmento Munitorum garrison could do but stand aside and let the angry mobs in, the looters taking weapons and ammunition in massive quantities.

As Xaphan and Mamon had anticipated, the Adeptus Arbites squads swiftly attempted to re-impose order. Their patrols moved to secure vital areas, but against the masses they faced, there was little they could do except exacerbate an already volatile situation. Soon, pitched battles were being fought through the streets and the Arbites squads were ordered to retreat back to their precinct whilst they were still able. Aid was immediately requested from the Citadel's garrison, but under Deacon Mamon's instructions, their requests were denied. Instead, it was the Battle Sisters of the Order of the Argent Shroud who would heed their call.

Unknown to Mamon, the sudden death of the sniper had triggered a comms-device hidden amongst the equipment he had left at the top of the tower. The moment it registered his death, it transmitted a simple but very clear instruction directly to the Canoness – '*Kill the heretic*'. The order was accompanied by authorisation codes from both the Abbess of the Artorus Priory and senior members of the Ordo Hereticus.

Immediately, the Canoness moved into action. Knowing Xaphan would already be under heavy protection within the palace after the assassination attempt, she sought to link up with the only forces she knew she could still trust, and who had the training and equipment to support an attack on its formidable defences – the Adeptus Arbites. Expecting stiff resistance when they left their sanctuary, the Battle Sisters instead were surprised to find their way down to the precinct square clear, the roaming mobs letting them march past uncontested. In the confusion, Mamon's Disciples did not yet have complete control of the roaming masses and many of the workers and pilgrims still believed that the Battle Sisters – who had stood with Xaphan as his honour guard upon his arrival – were on their side; some even begging them for salvation from the advancing hordes they believed would soon encroach upon their world.

It wasn't until they entered the precinct square and were just one hundred metres from its gates that trouble began. Here the fighting had been at its most intense, hundreds focussing their fear on the Arbites compound, and corpses already littered a no-man's-land that had been scoured clear by weapons fired from the ramparts of the compound to hold back the mobs.

As the Battle Sisters stepped out onto the open ground, the Disciples of Xaphan moved to strike. Infiltrating their way through the crowds, they rushed to the front lines, firing upon the squad the moment the Battle Sisters were half-way across. Many found their mark but did little damage, hitting armour and ricocheting back into the crowds. Only one lucky shot grazed the side of a Battle Sister's head, blood spattering her pristine armour.

As one the battle-hardened warriors turned and fired into the crowds, the Disciples bellowing out that the Battle Sisters were traitors in disguise even as they were shot down. In that moment all changed. The hundreds who had witnessed the attack no longer saw the Battle Sisters as their saviours, and with hatred and loathing in their eyes, the mob charged. The Battle Sisters opened fire again and again, cutting down

dozens as they attempted to back their way into the safety of the precinct. Behind them, the Adeptus Arbites tried to provide covering fire, and frag and gas grenades and bolter rounds were unleashed into the masses as they surged forwards. From the walls, the heavy weapons opened up again, whilst from the courtyard of the precinct any vehicle-mounted weapons that could be angled upwards were fired, their shots hitting indiscriminately amongst those they were meant to protect.

Only half of the Battle Sisters made it into the sanctuary of the precinct, the rest trampled or beaten to death as the crowds quickly overwhelmed them, but not before they had taken lives by the score with chainswords and ceremonial eviscerators. For those who did make it into the precinct, there would be no salvation. Even as the gates closed and the mobs started to scale the walls, a round of thunderous booms echoed from the Citadel above.

No one knew who had first spread the rumour that the mobs below them were traitor forces that had infiltrated the Citadel, but the gunners watching the raging battle from the defence towers followed the order to fire into the square without question. Volley upon volley rained down from their elevated positions and for three relentless minutes the men fired and reloaded, fired and reloaded. Only then did the order come to stop.

When the smoke cleared, little was left of the mob in the square or the Adeptus Arbites precinct. Those men and women lucky enough to have been on the periphery of the square had scattered, fleeing for the sanctuary of the streets beyond; many others were not so fortunate. All of the Adeptus Arbites were dead, their precinct a smouldering grave. Of the Battle Sisters who had reached its courtyard six had survived, their power armour taking the worst of the impacts of the falling masonry and explosions. Concussed and wounded, none were in any fit state to put up more than a token resistance when more of Xaphan's Disciples swiftly arrived on the scene, dragging them off in chains to who knew what fate.

With the biggest threat to their plans neutralised in one broad stroke, Xaphan and Mamon seized the moment. On the pretence of making an appearance to prove he had survived the assassination attempt, Xaphan gave a rousing speech to the faithful massed outside the Basilica, urging them to seek out and rise up against those who claimed to follow the Emperor but who were not at that moment fighting by their side.

Swept up by his words, the mobs surged through the Citadel and star port, turning on all who attempted to resist or flee from them. The first to face their bloody wrath were those stationed at Vraks' Administratum buildings, the Master-Prefect and his terrified staff being hauled out of their offices and thrown into the baying mobs in the streets below. The sensorium tower was also stormed and the astropaths within slaughtered; the choir's attempt to send out a distress call into the Warp cut off part-way through its transmission.

Soon Xaphan's words had reached beyond the Citadel and made their way across the Van Meersland Wastes, battles raging planet-wide as the old order was cut from the heart of the once-loyal world, so that when the fighting finally subsided, Cardinal-Astral Xaphan was left as its sole ruler.

88th IMPERIAL GUARD (KRIEG) SIEGE ARMY
ORDER OF BATTLE

1st Line Korps
3rd Krieg Siege Regiment
5th Krieg Siege Regiment
15th Krieg Siege Regiment
19th Krieg Siege Regiment

12th Line Korps
143rd Krieg Siege Regiment
149th Krieg Siege Regiment
150th Krieg Siege Regiment
158th Krieg Siege Regiment

30th Line Korps
261st Krieg Siege Regiment
262nd Krieg Siege Regiment
263rd Krieg Siege Regiment
269th Krieg Siege Regiment

34th Line Korps
291st Krieg Siege Regiment
308th Krieg Siege Regiment
309th Krieg Siege Regiment
310th Krieg Siege Regiment

8th Assault Korps
7th Krieg Tank Regiment
11th Krieg Tank Regiment
14th Krieg Tank Regiment
179th Krieg Siege Regiment
231st Siege Artillery Regiment

11th Assault Korps
61st Krieg Tank Regiment
66th Krieg Tank Regiment
101st Krieg Siege Regiment
497th Siege Artillery Regiment

19th Bombardment Korps
3rd Siege Artillery Regiment
4th Siege Artillery Regiment
8th Siege Artillery Regiment

21st Bombardment Korps
19th Siege Artillery Regiment
22nd Siege Artillery Regiment
23rd Siege Artillery Regiment

Independent Artillery Companies
4th Artillery Company
6th Artillery Company
8th Artillery Company
27th Artillery Company
31st Artillery Company
33rd Artillery Company
224th Artillery Company
226th Artillery Company
227th Artillery Company
230th Artillery Company
61st Heavy Mortar Company
67th Heavy Mortar Company
70th Heavy Mortar Company
71st Heavy Mortar Company

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VRAKSIAN RENEGADE MILITIAMAN



1. UNIFORM AND ARMOUR
This militiaman is wearing all that remains of his original uniform – the standard two-piece fatigues, tunic and combat trousers indicating that this man was once a member of Vraks' garrison auxilia. Note that the tunic has been defiled with a hand-painted heretical symbol – although it is unlikely that the bearer actually realises what this symbol means and is merely following instructions to wear it from his superiors.

Not all militiamen wear the same uniform, many, being former members of the labour corps, wear work overalls, whilst others wear civilian clothing. This militiaman's boots are standard issue combat boots, with moulded rubber soles and steel toecaps.

The boots' greave-plate is a standard attachment issued to Imperial Guardsmen, no doubt plundered from Vraks' plentiful supplies.

Not being front-line combat troops, the garrison auxilia were not generally issued with any form of body armour, and this trooper has corrected this with the addition of hand-forged plasteel armour plates. These will provide rudimentary protection in battle, especially in hand-to-hand combat, but also against lasgun impacts.

2. BREATHING EQUIPMENT
The militiaman's most distinctive piece of equipment is his rebreather. This large piece of equipment has been constructed from air tanks, again scavenged from Vraks' stores, and a hand-sewn gas hood. It is known that all the defenders were instructed to construct such items, most likely because their leaders were planning to utilise proscribed chemical weapons as part of their defensive strategy (chemical weapons were found in large numbers in secure deep storage on Vraks). The rebreather is both a filtration system and an airtight breathing system.

3. AUTOGUN
The militiaman's main weapon is his autogun. This will also have been looted from the vast stockpiles of small arms that were stored in Vraks' armouries.

As a weapon, the autogun is comparable in effectiveness to a lasgun but lacks some of the lasgun's versatility and reliability. Autoguns are prone to jamming, especially in dusty and muddy conditions, where intricate moving parts can quickly become fouled.

The autogun includes a flash suppressor, but one of the weapon's drawbacks is its excessive muzzle flash, along with the undue recoil of the weapon whilst in fully automatic mode. This is due to the size of round being fired – making fully automatic firing wildly inaccurate at near ranges.

This autogun has been slightly modified by its user. The weapon's sling is a scavenged length of chain and the weapon's stock has been replaced by a hand made wooden version, probably to correct previous damage.

4. CLOSE COMBAT WEAPONS
In addition to his autogun, this militiaman has also armed himself with two close combat weapons. The first is a large fighting blade, worn on the back of his left arm. It is a crude home-made weapon, a simple spike cut from a piece of scrap pipe and sharpened down both edges. It is attached via straps to the arm and hand, and used for hacking and stabbing with. Such weapons proved popular with militiamen during counter-attacks, where they would be expecting to storm enemy trenches.

The renegade's second weapon is actually a handpick, a tool commonly used by work gangs for breaking up the volcanic rocks of the armoury world. The only modification is that it has been sharpened to a point for better armour penetration. In the close confines of trench fighting, hand-to-hand combat is common and the autogun will be dropped or slung across the traitor's back to allow for more freedom of movement. Although not visible here, it is likely that he also carries a fighting knife or bayonet.





The Imperium's Response

When it was confirmed that Vraks had fallen, a sense of dark foreboding descended upon those who understood what its loss truly meant. Whilst a small world of just eight million souls was of little consequence compared to the many billions already under threat from ever-increasing Chaos warband attacks originating from the Eye of Terror, it was Vraks' crucial position in the Departmento's logistical chain that made its absence so potentially devastating. Who knew what carnage would occur if Astra Militarum regiments supplied by Vraks found themselves running short on the munitions and equipment it would have provided them with.

The fall of the armoury world was a significant loss to the Imperium's defences around the Eye of Terror. If it was not returned back into the fold soon, readings from the Imperial Tarot indicated that forces allied to the Dark Powers might strike out further from the Eye of Terror at other worlds in the vicinity of the Scarus Sector. And if they should succeed, and more worlds fell, then other Chaos warbands and marauders would gather, like moths to a flame, to join in the bloodshed and slaughter. Ten years from now, perhaps, the loss of Vraks might be the spark that ignited a new Black Crusade. Those under whose jurisdiction that sector of the Imperium fell could not take that chance and decreed that Vraks would be retaken at any cost.

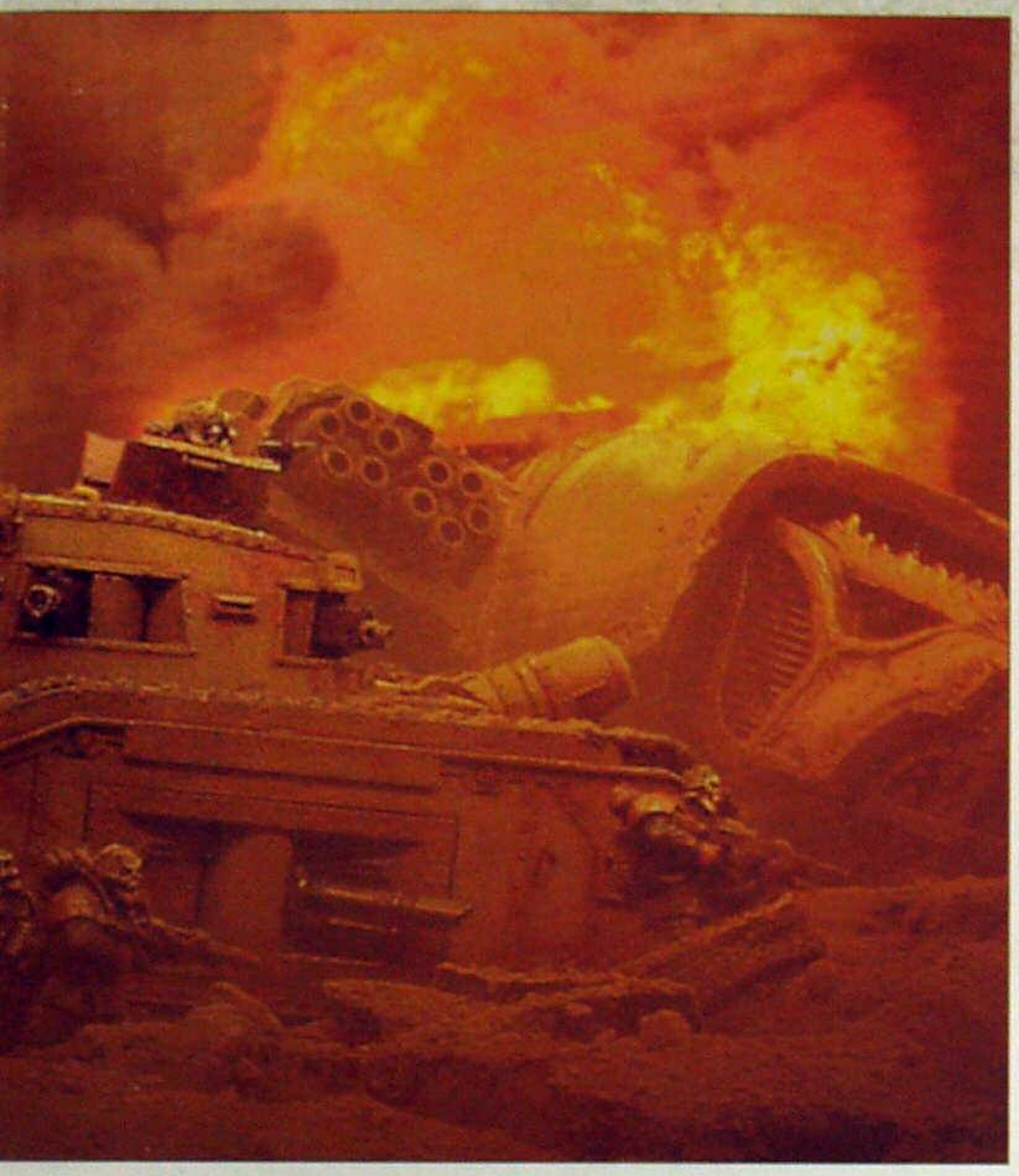
The order to retake Vraks was issued to the High Command of the Segmentum Obscurus, located on Cypra Mundi, and so serious was the matter considered, that both the Lord Castellan of Cadia and Lord Commander Obscurus sat upon the war council as plans to recover Vraks were discussed.

Any attempt would be a huge undertaking. It was a bastion world, its defences rebuilt and reinforced over thousands of years. This would not be a simple battle to fight.

Many options were considered and discarded; some even argued that the entire scheme was folly, and the sheer wastage in terms of men and materials would mean other systems would suffer and perhaps fall too. Vraks was gone and the Munitorum should turn its attention to preventing such a disaster in the future, not planning a hopeless campaign to recover a dire situation brought about by their own lack of foresight and judgement.

The sceptical voices on the war council held little sway over the High Commander and his staff. The order to retake Vraks had come directly from Terra itself, under the seal of the Prefect of the Master of the Adeptus Terra's Office. Failure to act in this matter was likely to be met with swift retribution from the Inquisition. It might be facing near impossible odds, but there would definitely be a war to retake Vraks, that much was certain.

The first option considered was the most obvious one; a swift and direct assault. This would involve an attack from orbit by a formidable Imperial Navy fleet, spearheaded by Adeptus Astartes forces. The plan was weighed up carefully, High Command ordering their tactician-logis savants to began their calculations to estimate what resources would need committing for a direct assault. Based on what information was available regarding Vraks' most recent planetary defences status, the dossier compiled was incredibly large and made for daunting reading.



Since their construction, it had always been assumed that the Citadel and Vraks Star Port would be the first targets for an enemy orbital assault, and their defences had been designed to repulse just such an onslaught. Batteries of lasers capable of reaching into Vraks' upper atmosphere and beyond ringed them, maybe as many as a hundred operational guns; there was enough firepower on the surface of the armoury world to fight an entire enemy fleet in low orbit. The Imperial Navy's battleships and cruisers were incredibly powerful void craft, but no ship could take on such defences. With the defence batteries buried deep to withstand orbital bombardment, the vessels would be at a massive disadvantage in a straight fight. Any landing craft deployed would itself be targeted, and a single hit from a defence laser would likely tear one apart. For any that did make it through, there was an equally lethal network of high and low altitude anti-aircraft defences to contend with.

The conclusion drawn from the logis' calculations was that such a planetary assault would be repulsed with great loss. Troops that did reach the surface would not do so in sufficient numbers to fight a sizable enemy force and recapture the Citadel. Even the much-vaunted Space Marines were unlikely to attempt such an attack. No Chapter Master was foolhardy enough to risk the destruction of his fleet and the battle-brothers under his command for such a slim chance of victory. If they pursued this plan, they would undoubtedly have to do it without the aid of the Space Marines and would be walking into a disaster. The fastest and most obvious solution was discarded. However Vraks would be retaken, it would not be done swiftly.

Some suggested a blockade of the system by ships of the Imperial Navy; they could isolate it from reinforcements then repeated raids could be launched against the planet. If small, well-equipped forces were landed, they could strike hard against the foe, in particular targeting the planetary defence batteries. Wear the defenders down, battery by battery. Again the numbers of war were tallied up and were equally discouraging. Such a plan might work, but only if executed over a period of five hundred years. The Departmento Munitorum rejected the plan as too timid and requiring too much time and resources. They would not wait half a millennium to regain their precious armoury world.

The third option considered in detail was the execution of a siege on a massive scale. Land an army large enough to sustain the siege over the years required to pulverise Vraks' defences, and then remorselessly and mercilessly grind the defenders down. If the Departmento Munitorum was willing to match the defenders' casualties at a rate of two to one, then how long and how many men would it take to recapture Vraks?

The tactician savants began their calculations. Taking everything into consideration: replacement rates, supply requirements, the vagaries of Warp transit times, the known stockpiles of arms on Vraks, and the manpower available to the defenders, they estimated it would take twelve standard Terran years until Vraks was back under the Emperor's rule.

At last, here was a workable solution, but could the necessary manpower and vast supporting logistical needs be met? After many weeks, the Departmento Munitorum eventually responded. The men and supplies would be allocated, and a new army would be founded for the recapture of Vraks. It was designated the 88th Astra Militarum Siege Army.

All the men for the new force would be supplied from Krieg – a world already in the highest tithe band for supplying manpower to the Imperial Guard. Known as the Death Korps, the men of Krieg were grim warriors who had developed their particular doctrines of warfare during their planet's bloody five hundred year civil war. The expected siege that would need to be undertaken on Vraks fitted their combat doctrines perfectly. When it came to these bloody, slow-fought battles, the Death Korps of Krieg excelled. Forged by a generations-long civil war, they could withstand the horrific psychological damage caused by prolonged wars of attrition. The Death Korps would never break; they would fight on, regardless of their losses. They knew no other way.

Overall command of the 88th Siege Army was given to Lord Commander Zuehlke, the scion of a noble family whose influence stretched across the higher echelons of the Imperial Navy and Astra Militarum, and whose great-grandfather had once served as an attaché to the Lord Commander Solar on Terra. Zuehlke's qualifications for leading the campaign, apart from his social rank, were few, beyond his martial upbringing and detailed study of the Tactica Imperialis, but political pressure and a good family name yielded its rewards. Lord Zuehlke was assigned a large staff to begin the long process of mustering his army and planning the war for Vraks.

The lengthy preparations for the Siege of Vraks were, in essence, brutally simple. How many men to dig a trench and how many shovels? How many men to capture a hundred metres of ground or storm a strongpoint? How many guns to pulverise an enemy trench line? How many men must die to retake the planet? List upon list was compiled. Before a single Imperial Guardsman had been assigned to a regiment or a single weapon manufactured, the 88th Siege Army existed on thousands of data-slabs across the sector.

The Defenders of Vraks

Whilst efforts to raise the 88th Siege Army were underway, the sudden uprising on Vraks had escalated into world-wide mob violence. For several months the renegades fought amongst themselves to establish a new power structure around the Cardinal-Astral. New leaders emerged from the garrison and the labour corps, and those who proved their loyalty to the new regime were rewarded with positions of power in it. The very best of these turncoats were inducted into the Disciples of Xaphan or given roles as enforcers – the Cardinal-Astral's cadre of brutal strongmen who oversaw the rank and file, enforcing obedience and discipline with electro-whips and guns.

Once the new order had established itself, its commanders, under Deacon Mamon's oversight, set about their first task – to prepare for the Imperium's inevitable response. They had an army to train. It would be well-equipped and occupying very strong defences, but still it must be prepared for whatever the forces of its former masters would throw at it. Issuing orders on behalf of the Cardinal-Astral, who had once again retired to his palace, Mamon made it clear that no defender could expect any mercy from the enemy; they must fight or face their own destruction. Only by defeating their foe could they reach out from Vraks and cleanse the Imperium of the nest of vipers that had infested it. For those who fought well, there would be great rewards and for those who failed in their duty, there would be summary execution at the hands of his enforcers.

After the uprising, the renegades' newly won freedom was short-lived. The labourers were soon put back to work improving the defence lines, moving minefields or laying new ones and rolling out kilometres of razor wire. Artillery crews practised ranging shots and pre-sighted their guns. The renegade militiamen, whether willing recruits or co-opted by force, trained near-constantly with their newly looted weapons. Vraks' army was well prepared and when it came, the battle against those who stood in the way of Xaphan's War of Faith would be hard-fought and bloody. As the Cardinal-Astral of the Scarus Sector, Xaphan had been charged with bringing the sanctioned words of the Emperor to billions. Now, as the Apostate Cardinal of Vraks, he would preach his own interpretation of those words, and would bring down death and destruction on all those who dared to contradict him.

The army that the Imperium was about to engage on Vraks was a formidable force, mainly due to its sheer size rather than any training or combat experience. Although no exact figures were available, it was estimated that Vraks' population had been eight million souls at the time of its rebellion, and all of these now had to be considered traitors and probable manpower for the heretic Xaphan's plans.

Vraks' best troops would be the Disciples of Xaphan. Some of the last information received from loyal sources on the planet before the rebellion had begun had detailed their creation. This cadre of elite troops were the Cardinal-Astral's own men. All had been handpicked and many had been chosen because of their previous military experience. All had sworn oaths of service to Xaphan himself, and in return they had received the pick of Vraks' considerable arsenal.

To keep the Cardinal-Astral's own forces in check, the Disciples would undoubtedly be tasked with moving through the ranks reciting his sermons and reinforcing loyalty to his unholy cause. Individuals from the garrison force, often former sergeants, had also been in the process of being promoted to enforcers before contact was lost with Vraks. In a similar manner to the Imperium's commissars, in battle the enforcers would most likely stay behind the front lines and shoot any man or woman who deserted their post.

Next in line, after the Disciples of Xaphan and the enforcers, would be the garrison auxilia. Broadly equivalent to a planetary defence force, the auxilia did not have the training or equipment of a regular Astra Militarum regiment, but access to Vraks' stores would have rectified any equipment shortages and given the garrison vast amounts of heavy equipment, Leman Russes, Chimeras and Basilisks. How well they could operate these was unknown, but the garrison's fighting strength had been built around a core of veteran Astra Militarum troops and officers drawn from disbanded regiments. Whilst being well equipped, it was thought unlikely by Imperial tacticians that the garrison's forces would be able to mount well-planned and co-ordinated operations themselves, but that they would be easily capable of manning a bunker or defence line in a more static defensive role.

The traitors' next source of manpower were the labour corps. The Departmento Munitorum labour force on Vraks was huge and included a substantial number of Ogryns. Many of the labourers had already received some basic military training in the run-up to the planet's rebellion, and would represent a massive threat to contend with. Lacking any sort of heavy weapons, artillery or vehicles they were a third-line force at best, but again, their lack of equipment could quickly be rectified and once armed from the stores, and with additional training, they might prove capable troops whilst holding static defensive positions.

The fourth source of manpower for the turncoat's army were the itinerant pilgrims and the Departmento Munitorum's own workforce of administrators and bureaucrats. These were effectively men with no military experience, but like the labourers, once armed they could be used to defend and hold a position.

The final major source of troops were those not of that world. Whilst many of the pilgrims saw Xaphan as their messiah, most had no idea why they were fighting. Caught

up in the religious fervour of Xaphan's arrival on Vraks, many would have volunteered for the Frateris Militia in the belief they were defending the Shrine of St Leonis against heretical forces. Again, weapons could be found from the colossal stores on-world – although it seemed these troops would be given the lowest priority when arms were issued.

Fewer in number, but still worthy of consideration, were the prisoners locked up in the holding cells on Vraks. Added to the renegades' ranks would be the dangerously insane or psychopathic, as well as those who it was suspected had shown signs of developing psychic powers. Dangerously unregulated psykers were easy prey to warp entities, and there had been several hundred such individuals in Vraks' deepest vaults awaiting transportation to Terra on the next Black Ship to pass near the system.

Whilst the defenders of Vraks might be of wildly varying quality, especially in terms of morale and ability, each would be well-equipped, with their main advantage being that they already occupied a formidable defensive system.

The Emperor's Chosen

The 88th Siege Army's morale and ability, on the other hand could not be doubted. They would be supplied from Krieg's own armouries, and for this campaign most of the regiments would be siege regiments, equipped for a long static war with a particular reliance on artillery.

Each regiment would comprise its own artillery companies, with weaponry ranging from small mortars used on the frontlines, to the medium artillery of heavy mortars and quad launchers. There would also be heavy artillery in the form of Medusa siege guns and Earthshaker cannon – the workhorses of the 88th Siege Army – to the heaviest guns of all, the mighty Bombards. These huge siege guns would be needed to destroy the enemies' deepest defences. To augment each regiment's artillery, the 88th Siege Army's commanders could also turn to a variety of independent artillery companies and regiments, including heavy siege artillery regiments, which would be positioned to strengthen the artillery available for attacks.

Others would be equipped as more mobile armoured regiments, but for a siege campaign these would be used as breakthrough and exploitation forces, and would not be expected to spend long periods manning the lines. Tanks in turn would be used to support infantry attacks. Although large tank battles were not expected to take place, Leman Russes, Baneblades and Gorgons would still have their part to play in assaulting the foe.

The Battlefield

Vraks was a barren and drab planet, even before its occupation by the Imperium. Covered in a sulphurous layer of ancient volcanic dust, it was bare and rocky. The climate was warmer than Krieg, but violent electrical storms were a daily occurrence, the sudden downpours drenching everything before ending as suddenly as they had started. This meant that the ground the 88th was going to fight over was regularly turned into a sticky grey quagmire before the water had a chance to drain away through Vraks' porous surface, bogging down any large movement of troops and vehicles that attempted to cross it.

The battlefield itself would encompass almost the whole of the Van Meersland Wastes, five thousand square kilometres of barren emptiness, with long gentle folds in the landscape and the occasional outcropping of harder volcanic rocks not yet worn away by the torrential rain. It was almost featureless, but it was terrain the enemy already knew well. They understood where the high ground was and where to position their guns with the best fields of fire. All of this intuitive understanding of the battlefield would have to be learned by the attackers as the campaign progressed.



CHAPTER TWO – THE KILLING FIELDS OF VRAKS

"Our creed is this. We are ready, at any moment, to sacrifice all for victory."

Colonel Cseke, 15th Krieg Siege Regiment

The Vraks Landings

At 790812.M41, some 200,000 men of the Krieg 143rd Siege Regiment marched, grey greatcoated rank after grey greatcoated rank, up the boarding ramps and into the holds of their transport vessels. They were the first men of the 88th Siege Army to begin the long voyage to Vraks, and were just one part of the vast armada in orbit above Krieg loading men and equipment for the battle to retake the armoury world.

When the lead ships of the fleet arrived at their destination, via the Segmentum Obscurus' immense naval fortress at Cypra Mundi, Lord Commander Zuehlke established his headquarters on Thracian Primaris, principal planet of the Scarus Sector. His unstoppable war machine was now in motion, and his personal presence on Vraks itself was not required. Zuehlke would oversee the campaign from a comfortable distance. Victory was already assured; all he needed to do was ensure that the replacement men and supplies kept rolling in as planned.

The first convoy of twenty-one Imperial Navy transport vessels of various sizes started to arrive in the Vraks system at 199812.M41. The convoy had been shadowed for the final leg of its voyage by an immense fleet of Imperial Navy escort ships, that had attached itself to the convoy at Cypra Mundi. This included a large number of Falchion and Sword class frigates to ensure the vulnerable convoy's safe passage as it sailed through an area of the void dominated by the baleful Eye of Terror and prowled by the followers of the dark gods.

Upon deployment in the Vraks system, command of the fleet was transferred to Admiral Rasiak on his flagship, the cruiser *Lord Bellerophon*, and to maximise the Krieg regiments' safe arrival, he ordered the ships carrying them to approach Vraks Prime from the safety of its far side, well out of reach of the planet's defence lasers. As Xaphan's forces had no ships with which to challenge the inbound armada, the operation to land the regiments and their vast supply of weapons, vehicles and equipment proceeded as planned.

The landing zones had been chosen to provide the 88th Siege Army with a secure bridgehead on the surface. First priority was to protect the landing sites against enemy attack, so those first to land, the 143rd Regiment, set about digging in immediately. Atlas Excavators, an engineering variant of the Atlas recovery tank, carrying trench-digging equipment, ploughed up the trench lines for kilometres around the primary landing site, then minefields and razor wire were added to its defences. Meanwhile, the 143rd Regiment's Death Rider companies patrolled the surrounding region for any sign of an approaching enemy force, but all reported a barren and empty wilderness. Xaphan's forces had made no move to prevent the landings or the build-up of the Imperium's troops. Instead they occupied their own defences and merely dug themselves in deeper.

For months the landing zone was a hive of activity as the vast ships roared overhead, ferrying more troops and more guns down from the transports in orbit above. Shuttles went to and fro constantly, and the supplies they delivered were stockpiled in vast reserves of food, ammunition, water and every other item the army would require for its meticulously planned twelve-year war. It took almost a year for the army to be fully in place and considered ready to fight.

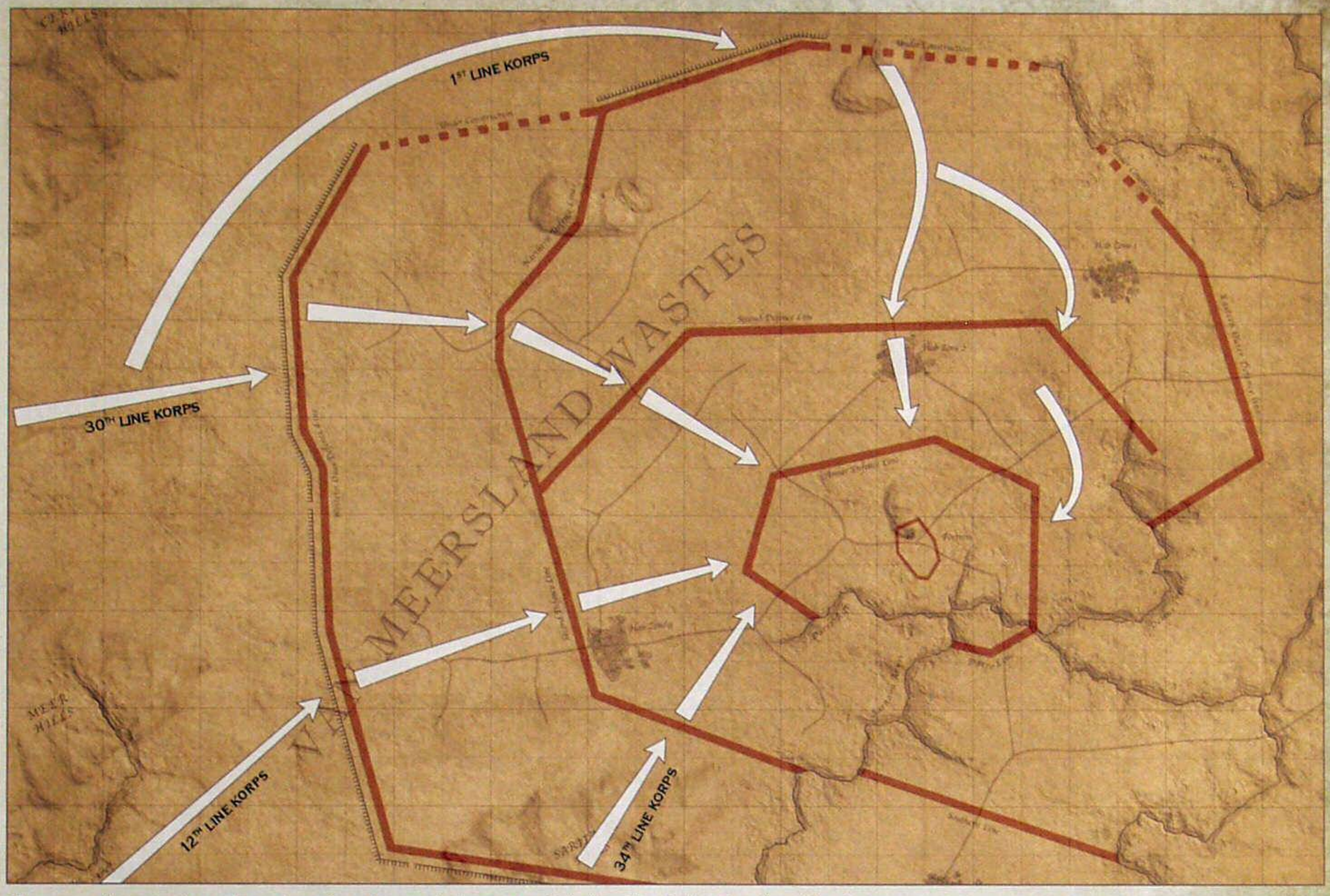
In the meantime, the Departmento Munitorum had also landed a sizable labour force, over half a million men from the penal colonies of Arphista, to build a transportation system to take the Krieg regiments and their vehicles across the thousand kilometres of barren wasteland that lay between them and the enemy. Those labour corps were set to work digging and laying a vast railway system, track being laid night and day as the lines rapidly extended northwards. When the time came, the Krieg regiments would travel across Vraks on carriages pulled by the huge engines that had arrived on one of the largest transport vessels. Onboard was a delegation of Adeptus Mechanicus enginseers, and with them they had brought a fleet of locomotives – great bellowing machines of steel and wheels, capable of pulling the hundreds of heavy carriages needed.

At 965812.M41 the first locomotive set off, carrying the men and guns of the 3rd Krieg Siege Regiment across the Saritama Plains. On arrival the regiment established the forward depot; they were now fewer than a hundred kilometres from enemy lines and would have to march the rest of the way. The locomotives rolled non-stop carrying men forwards, whilst the labour corps worked to maintain the track and extend the main line, with branch lines to secondary depots for storing ammunition, fuel and other vital supplies. The massive logistical support for fighting the war was now in place.

The Campaign Plan

The 88th Siege Army's plan for the reduction of Vraks' defences, and the recapture of its main bastion, the Citadel, involved repeated offensives on two fronts. Rather than massing for one attack at a single point, and allowing the enemy to assemble his forces to block it, the line korps would attempt to encircle the fortress and apply pressure all along the line, an approach dictated by the surrounding terrain. To the south and east was an area criss-crossed by Vraks' distinctive gorges and canyons, unsuitable for any attack and creating an impassable barrier to an army advancing on foot. The attack would have to come from the west and north, where the vast majority of the defence lines were sited.

The 1st and 30th Line Korps would form the northern part of the attack, whilst the 12th and 34th Line Korps formed the remainder, occupying an area from the Saritama Abyss to Sector 45-45. These two korps were tasked with breaking the



The overall campaign plan, showing the encirclement of Vrak's Citadel by the four line korps.

western outer defence line. The 1st Line Korps' orders were to attack the northern defence line, having circumnavigated the western defence lines. It might even be possible for them to push further eastwards and avoid the northern defence line altogether, which intelligence sources believed had never been completed, and attack directly south from Sector 57-53 into the second defence line. Of course, their attacks would need constant co-ordination to avoid regiments overreaching and becoming vulnerable to strong enemy counter-attacks. Each gain would be taken carefully and steadily. It was not in the Krieg regiments' doctrine to drive deep into enemy territory without the support of flanking regiments.

With the outer defence lines overrun, the encirclement could then begin in earnest. As the regiments approached the second defence line, the army's overall frontage would shrink and make all its regiments less vulnerable to enemy counter-offensives. It was important therefore that the first defence lines be overwhelmed quickly and at any cost. At the second defence lines, regimental commanders could be more cautious and take their time to probe for weaknesses before committing to any major assaults. Once the second line was cracked, the ring around Vraks' Citadel could close in again to the inner defence line, entirely encircling the Citadel and for the first time bringing it within long-range artillery fire.

Once it was in position, the 88th Siege Army could then afford to sit and wait; with the enemy penned in, there would be no respite or hiding from the big guns of Krieg, which would pound the heretics and traitors to destruction.

The Siege Begins

At 166813.M41 – the Siege of Vraks officially began.

As the first light of dawn appeared on the horizon, casting its thin glow across the Van Meersland Wastes, gun crews stood to attention, their heavy Earthshaker barrels raised to the sky in an ominous salute to the new day. Behind them, shells were laid out ready for a sustained bombardment by the thousand; the shells' fuses checked, all the men could do was wait for the appropriate code words to be issued and the firing to begin. Suddenly the command vox crackled into life, static hissed and instructions came through. The vox operator quickly flicked switches and unscrambled the flash message. Turning to the awaiting officer, he confirmed its contents: *"Signal is authentic, sir. Message reads 'Proceed'."* Swiftly down the lines, the Krieg gunnery crews launched into action as the officer relayed the order to all stations, *"OPEN FIRE!"*

Nearly fifteen kilometres away the shells impacted with a deafening boom, throwing pulverised stone and grey dust high into the sky as flames engulfed their targets. Shards of shrapnel shot out in all directions, and the air became thick with choking dust and jagged red-hot metal. The crescendo of explosions quickly intensified, its tempo rising as the Krieg gunners warmed to their work. Over the din of Earthshaker rounds there soon came the terrible howling of the heavier bombard shells, falling steeply to add to the firestorm now erupting. The shells tore great craters in the soft earth, and rocks the size of tanks were tossed into the air before smashing to the ground again, only to be picked

up and flung about once more as the next shell impacted. All morning the bombardment continued on, hammering the outer defence lines until the gun barrels of the 88th Siege Army began to glow red-hot with the intense heat of constant firing.

Meanwhile, behind the outer defence line's forward positions, the Apostate Cardinal's own gunners were racing to respond with counter-battery fire. Basilisk artillery pieces were rolled forwards into pre-prepared firing pits, well protected from enemy fire. Their hydraulic pistons complained as their barrels climbed skywards. Breeches flew open and shells clanged into place before the breech door slammed shut and the locking bolts were screwed into position. A final check of range to target, elevation, traverse... and the Basilisks fired, the recoil driving the forty-tonne armoured vehicles violently backwards as dampers strained to counteract the energies released by each shot. The artillery duel had begun.

Far off in the Krieg gun lines, the scream of the incoming shells was cancelled out by the crash of their own guns firing. The first enemy shells landed far short, then wide, then edged ominously closer. At the 413th Battery, an enemy shell scored a direct hit, smashing an Earthshaker cannon to pieces, detonating the ammunition stockpiled close by and killing all eight of its crew in the ensuing inferno. It was a lucky hit at the extreme range of the enemy's guns, but it signalled that the artillery duel would not be a one-sided affair.

As the gun battle was getting under way, the men of 158th Regiment advanced at an even pace, each man five metres apart, long dark ranks of greatcoated, gas-masked figures moving steadily forwards. Orders were that the infantry action would be limited to a steady advance towards the enemy, then a halt would be issued in order to start the work of digging the first trenches. The men were not to attack any enemy positions yet; the artillery would need far longer to soften up the foe than a single morning, but the heavy shelling was acting as a covering bombardment, preventing Xaphan's forces from engaging the advancing infantry at long range and harassing its own artillery positions.

By nightfall the first foxholes would be dug, two men to a hole, scratched six feet deep in the earth. The next day each hole would be extended via a narrow trench to connect with the next foxhole. This way each squad would establish a single basic trench. This could then be connected into a platoon trench, and then they too would be linked into a company trench, which could in turn be linked into other company trenches. Over the course of days, the trench lines would start to spread.

From the relative safety of the trenches, the earthworks could then be widened, and sandbags would be filled and stacked. Under the cover of darkness, teams would stretch coils of wire in front of the trench to prevent enemy patrols or raiding parties from gaining easy access. Heavy weapons positions would be sited, then dug. It was the way the Death Korps regiments had trained to wage war back on Krieg. With entrenching tools, shovels and picks, the Krieg Guardsmen hewed out their new home. Platoons and companies competed with each other to see who could complete their work the fastest, just as the cadet platoons did during training on their home world.

On Vraks, the pumice-like rock broke down easily and the trench lines grew at a pace. It was filthy work, turning the men into dusty grey ghosts, and with each passing storm shower, the trenches became a swamp of cloying slime, but within a week, the forward positions were in place. During



that time, the enemy did not attack. Instead, pinned under the daily bombardment, it clung to its solid bunkers and defence lines, offering little fight except sniper shots and harassing mortar fire.

Whilst the Death Korps were digging in and reinforcing their trenches, the Apostate Cardinal's renegade army was occupying the prepared positions opposite. Each was more of a defensive zone than a single solid line, into which had been placed trenches and defence lines – low reinforced ferrocrete and plasteel walls – usually connecting pillboxes. There were armoured bunkers with multiple firing slits for heavy weapons, weapons pits reinforced by sandbags and, where necessary, ad-hoc barricades built of rubble-filled fuel drums, corrugated steel and flak boards. Burrowed underground were also personnel shelters to protect the defenders from enemy artillery. All these positions were enclosed within the security of kilometres of tank traps and razor wire, as well as anti-tank ditches and minefields.

Since the uprising, the Apostate Cardinal's forces had re-laid millions of mines, using the months it had taken to deploy the Krieg regiments to the battlefront well. It also meant that any Imperial intelligence on the original location of Vraks' minefields was now invalidated. In places the defensive positions were combined into strong points, resistance nests that were strong enough to withstand the heaviest shells, providing the defenders with interlocking fields of fire for mutual support. In all, each defence line might be as much as five kilometres deep, giving the defenders excellent cover. Breaking each defence line would be a major undertaking and bought at a high cost in casualties. To make matters worse, the three main defence lines surrounding the Citadel would become gradually denser and harder to crack the closer the Imperium's forces came.

First Assault on the Outer Defences

Each line had to be broken in turn and the bloody business could not be delayed any further. The first Krieg offensive would have to be soon if the planned timetable of success within twelve years was to be kept to.

The 149th Regiment was chosen to make the first assault in Sector 46-39. Based on intelligence reports gathered before the planet's dissention, it was determined that the defence line might be cracked there. Work had not been completed at this point and it provided a chance at making the desired rapid breakthrough. On the 149th Regiment's immediate left and right flanks, the 143rd and 150th Regiments would provide strong supporting attacks to pin down enemy units and draw enemy reserves into their sectors and away from the main effort. Behind the 149th Regiment, units of the 11th Assault Korps were brought up and made ready. Should the first attack deliver the required breakthrough, then the assault korps' Leman Russ squadrons and Gorgons could drive on and thrust deep into the defence zone.

At 212813.M41, the first infantry attack was set to begin. Half a million men would attack in waves over the course of two days. The first wave was not expected to make much progress, but was to attack with strong infantry probes to find weak spots in the enemy's lines. The second wave, led by grenadier units, would hit these weak spots hard, gain a foothold in the defence lines and hold them until day two, when a third wave would move through them and expand the advantage. Once this was complete, the 61st Krieg Tank Regiment would be released from reserve to smash through the gap. All this would follow days of heavy bombardment in Sector 46-39 and its adjoining areas.

Preparations for the first offensive were well in hand. Large numbers of guns from the bombardment korps and more men for the infantry companies were being brought forward into position – all the time under harassing enemy mortar and artillery fire. The guns of the 21st Bombardment Korps opened fire first, supporting the siege regiment's own artillery companies. It began five days of shelling that would soften up the enemy for the coming attack. The remorseless guns pounded at their targets, turning no-man's land and the forward enemy positions into a cratered moonscape. From the trenches, it seemed like nothing could survive such a sustained barrage. It was a devastating display of firepower and it kept up its drumbeat tempo day after day.

On command, the first attacking companies moved into position, filling the front line trenches as the squads packed into them shoulder to shoulder. In front of them was just a trench wall and a scaling ladder for the short climb into no-man's land. The previous night, protected by darkness, infiltration teams had ventured up and made gaps in their razor wire for the men of the Death Korps to pass through. Overhead the barrage intensified, a rolling wave of thunder as the explosions followed each other so quickly, they became a single wall of noise. Then it was over and there was a sudden horrible silence as the guns lifted their barrage as one, right on time. The order to advance was relayed throughout the vox-net and the first squads surged up the scaling ladders. One by one men appeared above the parapet and moved forwards, dodging through their own razor wire to form lines of dark, hunched figures advancing through the craters of no-man's land.

When the guns stopped, enemy squads rushed to man their defences. Their positions had been churned into ruin by the bombardment, defensive walls lay demolished, trenches were buried in earth and bunkers had been destroyed by direct hits, killing whole squads in a single explosion. But despite the ferocity of the loyalist bombardment many of the renegades had survived, hidden deep within their shelters. Now, as enforcers and officers roared orders, the traitors ran to their positions. The Death Korps were coming and now they had to fight.

First ten yards, then twenty yards, the infantry advanced unhindered. Then heavy bolter rounds flashed brightly across no-man's land, eating up the ground as the shells exploded amongst the ranks of advancing Guardsmen. Onward came the Death Korps, resolute and steadfast, the front ranks in parade ground order. And so they died, scythed down by enemy fire, man after man as they walked headlong into a pitiless hurricane of weapons fire.

Next, enemy artillery fire began to land. The guns had been pre-sighted and their firing was accurate and lethal. Suddenly, no-man's land was alive with explosions, plumes of flames and earth fountaining amongst the attackers' lines. Officers urged their platoons onwards, only to be cut down in turn. Back in the trenches, the next squads were assembling. As shells and bullets whined overhead, they fixed bayonets and waited their turn to advance into the deadly maelstrom. They did not have long to wait and with the enemy already manning their positions, they climbed up their ladders to be immediately hit, many falling backwards into the trenches and onto their comrades below. Few would get even ten metres from the parapet before being forced to the ground.

It was pitiless and gruesome. Massacred in turn, whole platoons were annihilated by the intense enemy fire. Soon no-man's land was littered with corpses and the writhing wounded whilst survivors scrambled in the mud, some trying to fall back, others still trying to push forwards. A few squads made it to the enemy's lines, charging at the defensive walls, bayonets level, hurling grenades ahead of them. But even here they were met by an enemy who fought hard, holding their positions to the last man.

Despite the slaughter ahead of them, in the second line and communication trenches the next wave was preparing for its turn to attack. Right on cue, over the top they went. The maelstrom of fire and explosions crashed over the second wave and they added their bodies to the first. At the gaps in the wire, the dead and wounded lay on top of each other in a grotesque, groaning bloody pile of ruined flesh. All day long the slaughter continued, until nightfall saw a halting of the attack. Throughout the night, the wounded crawled back over the parapet as the occasional illum shell exploded overhead to reveal a hellish scene.

The cost had been horrific. The gains had been negligible, and come dawn it would start again. The third wave would also go in, and it too would pay a heavy toll for no gains. The desired breakthrough never came. The defence lines' construction work had been completed contrary to reports and, if anything, improved upon, and so the line held.

At 218813.M41, with the surviving Krieg units now back in their trenches holding the line, the enemy launched a counter-attack. It was the traitors' turn to surge out across no-man's land. With no preliminary bombardment so as to avoid forewarning the defenders, the enemy's forces, many riding in squadrons of Chimera armoured carriers, attacked. The battered men of Krieg manned their heavy weapons; most of these were still in place having never been committed to the ill-fated assault across no-man's land. All along the line determined fire halted the attack, and the quad launchers and heavy mortars of the second line quickly adjusted their fire, pinning the enemy down.

At trench line R462-3892 Lieutenant Marot and his ad-hoc survivors, men collected from three devastated platoons of 15th Company, 143rd Regiment, saw a mass of enemy infantry appear in no-man's land, plainly visible from Marot's command post. A vox-message was relayed back for defensive artillery fire, but produced no response. Despite his squad's lasgun and heavy stubber fire, their attackers closed in. Vicious close combat was his last resort, during which an unseen chainsword took the lieutenant's left arm off and as he lay mortally wounded, the trench was overrun. The traitors then attempted to rush the next section of the line, but found resistance still stubborn. Later, with the Apostate Cardinal's forces halted, a new request for artillery support eventually produced a deluge of Earthshaker shells which obliterated their own frontline trenches and smashed the enemy's foothold in the Krieg lines.

By nightfall the enemy attack had spent itself, their dead piled on top of the men of Krieg. The opposing sides were again at stalemate as the artillery duel continued, but the fury of three days of battle had subsided.

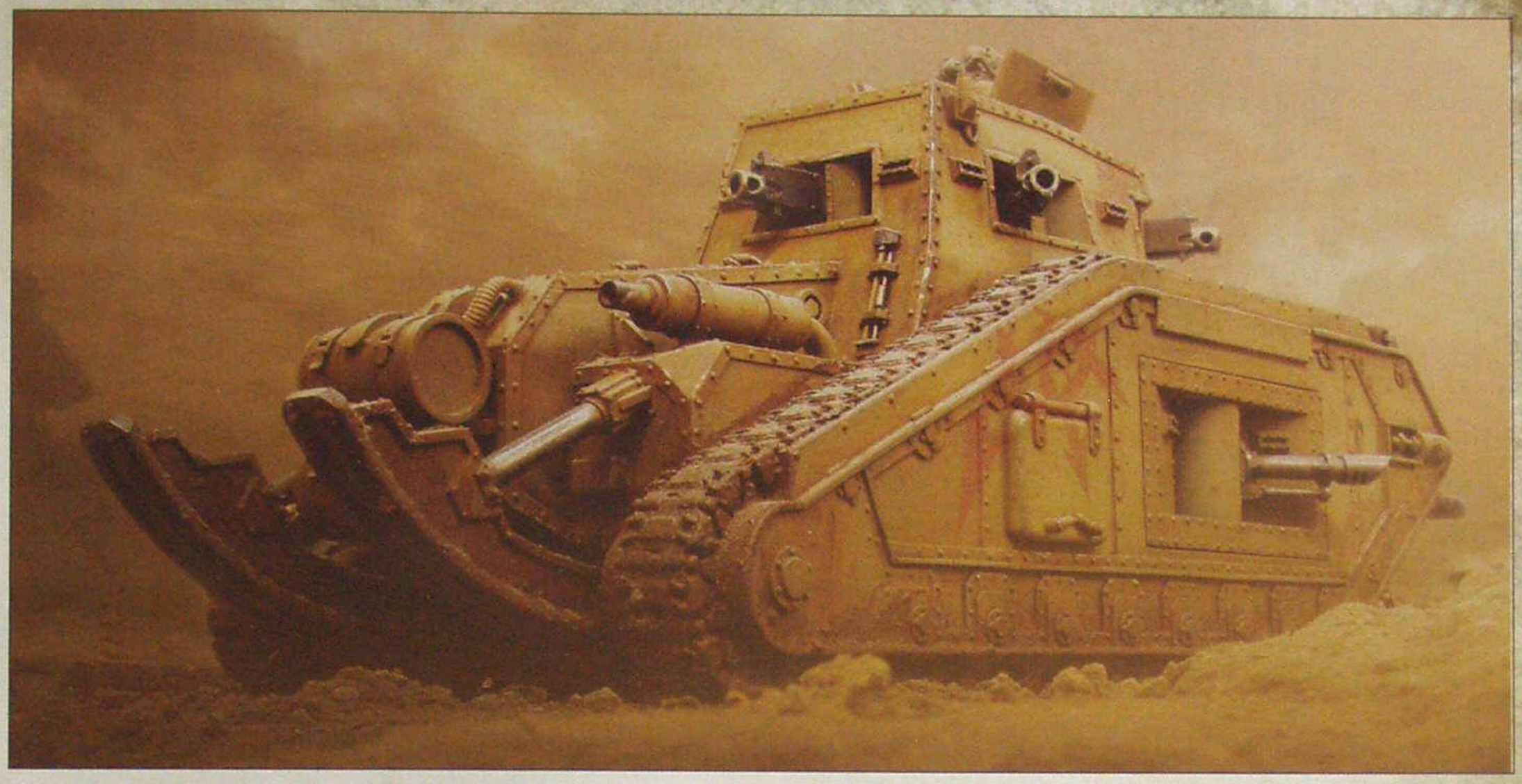
Life in the Trenches

For weeks on end the stalemate held, sentries staring out across the desolation of no-man's land towards each other's positions. Despite the impasse, every squad would still have to take its turn at patrolling and raiding enemy lines. Night operations in no-man's land saw men on both sides finding or laying minefields, or identifying gaps in the wire for a subsequent raid to exploit. Trench raids to take prisoners were common, who would then be interrogated for information about troop numbers and positions.

Meanwhile the artillery continued its endless battle to and fro, and all day long both sides fired harassing shots into their enemy's rear battle lines. Death could come suddenly anywhere within range. Even during the rare few quiet periods when neither side was attacking, the casualty lists continued to grow rapidly. The 88th Siege Army was losing an average of two thousand men a day, without any regiment actually launching an attack. Of course the losses had all been planned for, and for the Krieg regiments, the replacements kept arriving to re-fill the ranks.

Vraks was now a wasteland of monochromatic gloom; grey and black, and overcast with a pall of smoke that blocked out its star's light. The air itself was filled with a thickening stench of putrefaction. Where attacks had failed, the unburied dead lay everywhere, because under the non-stop shelling any attempt to recover bodies often just resulted in more dead. Day after day the heavy guns pounded the corpse-strewn battlefield, until bodies were quartered and quartered again. Shell holes exposed the remains of decomposing troops and soon both sides were mounting skulls and bones on their positions as macabre shrines to their comrades' sacrifices. Death surrounded them and as the months of stalemate passed, the air and the very ground itself became poisonous with infection.

So the first year of the siege slipped by. The outer defence lines had held against the first assaults, and both sides would have to content themselves with wearing down the other. One day something, somewhere, must give, but until then the two armies were locked in a grinding stalemate of slow mutual destruction.



The Battle of Fort A-453

At 897814.M41, the 261st Regiment was ordered to conduct a probing attack in Sector 45-49. 30th Line Korps had been probing along its entire front in anticipation of a renewed offensive after six months of relative inactivity. The korps had been given time to build up its strength after early losses and the guns of 19th Bombard Korps were repositioned to support the new offensive. From amongst the regiment's roster, 9th Company had been chosen for the difficult task of attacking a strong point in the enemy's line designated Fort A-453.

This was a strong position of interlinked bunkers and pillboxes, but its main weaponry, an Earthshaker cannon, had already been destroyed by a direct hit from a bombard siege shell. Still, the battered pillboxes bristled with heavy bolters, each with interlocking fields of fire out across no-man's land. It was surrounded by an anti-tank ditch, mines and thick bands of razor wire, and underneath the bunkers lay reinforced personnel shelters and stores for the garrisoning troops, all approachable in safety via an underground tunnel that ran back for half a kilometre. One attack on Fort A-453 had previously been easily and bloodily repulsed.

In darkness the commander of 9th Company, Captain Tyborc, saw to the final preparations of his men. At first light he would lead the attack, whilst higher-ranking officers observed from a safe distance to gauge the fort's strength. A battery of thudd guns had been dragged forwards to engage the fort over open sights as his men crossed no-man's land, a new trench having recently been excavated to facilitate the advance, meaning they only had a few hundred metres to cover to reach the relative safety of the fort's anti-tank ditch.

It was still dark as the attack's preliminary bombardment started. Heavy shells screamed just overhead, pounding the heavily defended fortress. Amidst the staccato flash of explosions, Tyborc's leading platoon crowded into the forward trench ready to attack. Light was just showing over the horizon when the barrage lifted, and Tyborc ordered the attack to commence. He was the first to climb the ladder.

The bombardment had left no-man's land shrouded in smoke, and at first the attack covered the open ground quickly. After the first dozen or so metres, the enemy had not responded. Tyborc ordered 9th Company on, gathering pace as the enemy's razor wire approached. Then a heavy bolter barked, and 9th Company were under direct attack. Ducking through the weapons fire that whipped around them, Tyborc's squads pressed on and reached the wire. Frantically, they worked with cutters as explosive bolter shells flashed above them. Further back, other squads were taking casualties and becoming pinned down in the same fashion. But at the front, the captain and his command squad rolled under the wire and plunged down into the anti-tank ditch.

Despite the mounting casualties, 9th Company was swarming forwards in their captain's wake. More men were at the wire, cutting gaps and diving down into the ditch. Climbing its steep glacis, men started to tread on mines. Tyborc's troops were trapped; they could fall back across no-man's land through enemy fire or risk the mines. Tyborc waved them on and to set the example ran up the slope. Mines were exploding left and right, but Tyborc reached the top and others followed. Ahead of him a pillbox continued to fire, and as the men emerged they were raked with bolter shells. The captain was wounded in the leg by a shard of bone as the Krieg Guardsman next to him vanished in a welter of blood, a bolter's warhead tearing him apart from within. Staggering painfully onwards, Captain Tyborc ordered his men to assault the pillbox.

By now, Xaphan's forces were responding to the surprise attack. Emerging from their overnight shelters to find the Death Korps already inside the wire, some of the renegades raced forwards, charging their attackers, and hand-to-hand fighting broke out throughout the fort. Others fled, believing their position to be already lost.

VRAKSIAN RENEGADE ENFORCER



1. UNIFORM
As a former member of the Vraks militia, the enforcer's uniform comprises the remains of his standard issue fatigues. The basic tunic, work trousers and boots are made of hardwearing materials and remain largely unmodified (except for the removal of the tunic's sleeves).

2. ARMOUR
The enforcer's armour is similar to that worn by all Vraksian renegades, being a combination of crudely manufactured plates and scavenged pieces from other armour. Here the breastplate is a piece of carapace armour, heavily embellished. The shoulder pad, vambrace, groin guard and knee pads have all been created on Vraks from scrap metal.

Attached to his armour is a small parchment. This scroll carries Chaos runes, inscribed in Hakon's own blood, which shows that the enforcer has entered into a pact with the Chaos gods. The runes have been repeated as tattoos on the heretic's arms, with a preacher carving his upper arm with the eight-pointed star of Chaos Undivided. Dedicating his soul to the dark gods, this traitor has called upon their aid directly and as a result is now completely in their power.

The cast skull mask has been carefully manufactured, and it is not uncommon for those who have sworn oaths of loyalty to the Chaos gods to find that (as well as the irreversible psychopathic traits 'gifted' to the heretic) armour, weapons and flesh begin to fuse. Here this process has just begun, all part of the heretic's path towards becoming a full champion of Chaos and a sure sign that he has won the favour of his chosen deity.

The armour has been decorated with the skulls of former victims. Head taking is a common practice on many feral worlds across the Imperium (and amongst the followers of the Blood God), believing that the head is the centre of a victim's power, and that by possessing the head, the victor retains part of that power. It may be that this enforcer has reverted to his feral world origins, but it is more likely that he has started dedicating each of his victims to Khorne.

3. WEAPONS
This heretic is well armed for combat at close quarters. His main weapon is his chainsword, which has been personalised with the addition of extra spikes on the rear of the blade (for backswings) and in the pommel. It has also had its power supply modified. Rather than having an internal powercell, it has been linked to an external unit (worn on the belt but not visible) attached via a cable to the pommel. This modification may be to correct some previous malfunction or an attempt to over-power the weapon, although such a modification is likely to cause additional problems with the motor burning out. The weapon can be used one- or two-handed, although this enforcer's chemically-enhanced strength means he can easily wield it single-handed.

His back-up close combat weapons are a large hand-made knife or cleaver and his whip. The whip is more a tool of his trade and not generally used in battle, instead being used to drive undisciplined rabble into battle and to administer punishment beatings.

As a favoured enforcer, Hakon would have a free choice of plundered weapons. He has chosen an Accatran pattern, Mk XI combat shotgun – highly effective at close quarters and within the confines of trench fighting. Similar shotguns are commonly issued to security units, and are used by Imperial Navy personnel for boarding actions. This particular version has an eight-round internal magazine and is operated using a pump-action. He has discarded the weapon's shoulder stock.

4. OTHER EQUIPMENT
The enforcer carries an oxygen tank, much like that carried by all Vraksian renegades. He also has a bandolier of extra shotgun ammunition and during an operation would also carry at least two fragmentation grenades.



This enforcer is reputed to be Hakon the Butcher, seen here assisting in the defence of Sector 59-47, where it is claimed he killed twenty-nine enemies in three days of fighting. His current location is unknown.

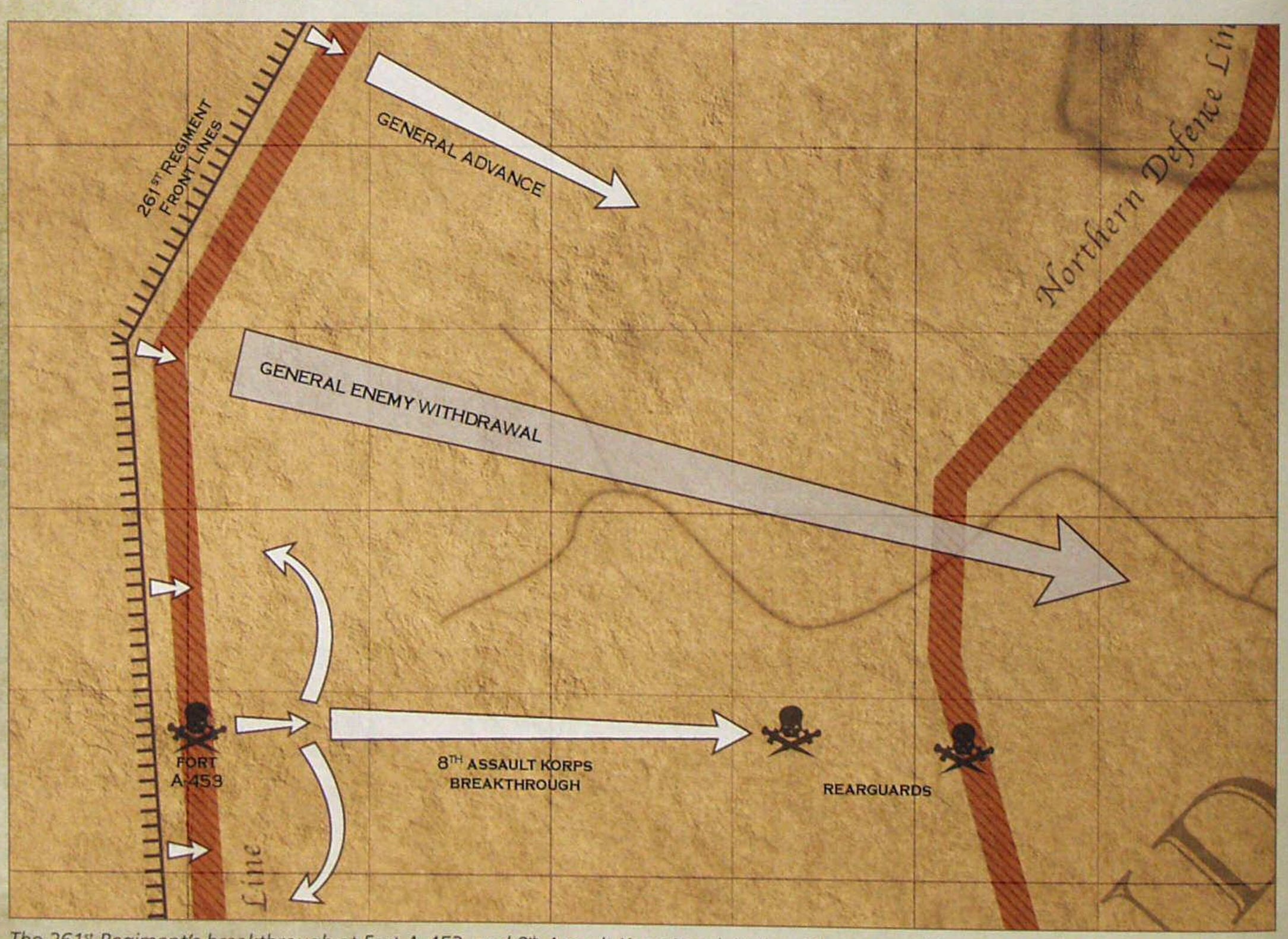
Suddenly the fort was in chaos and confusion. Quad launcher rounds began to land, killing indiscriminately. Tyborc was wounded again by shrapnel as his men swarmed over the first pillbox, posting grenades through the firing slits to kill the gunners inside. He had a slim foothold inside the strongpoint and needed to consolidate it. Bleeding heavily, the captain took cover behind an overturned barricade of rock-filled chem drums and sandbags. All around him, his men were firing at the emerging defenders. Somewhere in the confusion of the charge he had lost his vox-operator; no doubt the man was dead. 9th Company needed reinforcements to hold the ground they had captured so Tyborc summoned a runner to take a message back to his commanders. It read, *"9th Company within wire. Enemy numbers growing in strength. Will hold if reinforced."* The runner scurried away.

For an agonising hour, Tyborc's men fought their isolated battle. A second pillbox had been turned into a smoking ruin by a flamer and his men were now occupying some of the enemy's trenches and working their way towards the central bunker. In a brave assault, they captured an entrance to a shelter, and after a meltagun blasted the steel door into liquid metal, Tyborc led them down the ferrocrete steps into the bunker below. There he was faced by a long gallery across which hastily erected barricades had been built. Quickly, las shots flashed in the dim light and bullets ricocheted off the walls. Tyborc, still limping, ordered those with him to charge. They rushed the few defenders, bayonets levelled, and cleared the gallery. Tyborc was then wounded for a third time, taking a head wound from an enemy bullet, but his now-shattered helmet had mercifully saved his life.

Tyborc's men cleared the gallery just in time. Outside, the all too familiar rising shriek of incoming heavy shells could be heard – the enemy had called for artillery fire inside its own position. On the surface, the ground erupted as the pre-sighted salvo scored a direct hit and those caught in the maelstrom were obliterated. Underground, Tyborc and some forty men were safe.

The massive artillery bombardment ended the battle above ground, the continuing barrage sending everybody to seek shelter. Tyborc's stragglers held the gallery, but as night fell no reinforcements came. The 9th Company's survivors would just have to hang on to their hard-won gains and hope that the runner had made it through.

Unknown to the gallant captain and his men, his runner had reached the Imperium's rear lines. It had taken him several hours to get back across no-man's land, crawling from shell hole to shell hole under intense enemy fire. On his journey he had been wounded, but blood-splattered and covered in mud from helmet to boots, the runner stood to attention and presented Tyborc's message to General Durjan.



The 261st Regiment's breakthrough at Fort A-453, and 8th Assault Korps' exploitation. The enemy did not attempt to hold the next defence lines, except with rearguard actions.

Here was news of a foothold, a possible crack in enemy lines. The general quickly dictated new orders to his vox operators for transmission to various officers along the battlefront. Grenadier units would follow 9th Company as soon as they were ready. Tyborc needed a curtain of artillery fire to cut off the fort from enemy reinforcements. Immediate diversionary attacks should be launched all along the regiment's line to tie down the enemy. Most importantly, he needed a breakthrough force to strike quickly.

Early the next day, grenadier units worked their way towards the fort, still under heavy artillery fire, whilst Tyborc's men fought a ferocious close-quarters struggle in the galleries and corridors underneath Fort A-453. In pitch darkness, illuminated only by the flash of exploding grenades, they held on. The enemy had been reinforced via the access tunnel, but they could not break into Tyborc's position. The air was thick with dust and the fumes of explosives, and without their respirators, the Krieg Guardsmen could not have survived. Tyborc's men looted the enemy's dead for weapons as their own ammunition and grenades ran out. They barricaded the doorways and held them until those men were either too badly injured to remain or had been killed, others immediately replacing them. Tyborc was now down to just sixteen men, but throughout the day, as artillery rounds drummed on the earth above, sending more dust cascading down onto them, they valiantly fought on. By nightfall the grenadiers had cleared the remaining surface structures and were fighting to gain access to the underground shelters.

The third day of the battle was to be the turning point. With Fort A-453 almost in Krieg hands, they had a crack in the enemy's lines. The traitors would counter-attack furiously to recover it, but General Durjan had secured the release of three companies of the 61st Tank Regiment from reserve, along with a Baneblade, and now he threw them into the battle around the fort.

The Leman Russ squadrons and Baneblade rumbled forwards through the continuous barrage of enemy shells. The tank column was accompanied by Atlas Excavators, each equipped with a dozer blade to fill in the anti-tank ditch and allow the war engines to cross. It took most of the morning and the loss of four Atlases for the ditch to be filled. The Baneblade and its brethren ploughed forwards, smashing aside the razor wire cordon to join the infantry and grenadiers holding the ruins. The dam was breaking. General Durjan threw more men into the breach and all along 30th Korps' front, the Death Korps were now furiously attacking.

The third day underground for Captain Tyborc's small force was the longest and most difficult. The enemy attacked with flamers, trying to burn him out, and he had no such weapons to respond with. Asphyxiating black smoke filled the corridors. Tyborc was down to his last respirator filter and when it failed, the atmosphere down there would kill him. His water supply was out, his laspistol was empty, and he had new wounds to his legs and torso – pinned into one gallery, the end would come soon. Following the flamer attack, the enemy rushed the gallery again. They were cut down at the doorway by lasgun fire and grenades. Quickly, the Krieg Guardsmen dashed forwards and looted the enemy bodies. One of the dead was still carrying his flamer, the fuel canister half full. They ran back to their barricades before the enemy attacked once more. The flamer would seal the entrance in a sheet of burning promethium and prevent any further enemy break-in until it too ran out of fuel.

That night the battle above ground was still raging. Unknown to Tyborc, the Death Korps Grenadiers had forced a way into the underground complex and, after heavy losses, now held the main access tunnel. They had quickly set demolition charges should the enemy threaten to retake it, but corridor by corridor, the remaining Grenadiers cleared the complex. Just before dawn a Grenadier watchmaster signalled he had found survivors holed up in a gallery. The Grenadier squad had narrowly avoided being attacked themselves before establishing they were friendly forces.

Captain Tyborc staggered from his bolthole with wounds in both legs, his right arm, abdomen and head, and with just eight injured men still under his command. He was carrying a flamer with an empty fuel canister, his uniform was ragged and scorched, his helmet beyond use. But he was alive and the fort had been captured.

The First Breakthrough

The 30th Line Korps pressed hard. More men and tanks were funnelled into the breakthrough at Fort A-453, widening the gap. The commanders of the Apostate Cardinal's renegade forces had to direct troops from other sectors in an attempt to stem the tide, leaving them dangerously low on men. Suddenly, where there had once been a bitter stalemate, the Death Korps was advancing.

Over the next ten days, the battle raged above ground. Briefly, this was no longer a grinding trench war, but a fight across open ground. The Death Korps tank squadrons pushed eastwards, and the enemy threw repeated attacks at them. The wastelands were littered with the detritus of war, burned-out wrecks, abandoned artillery guns and weapons as the breakthrough gradually forced its way eastwards. The 8th Assault Korps was through the breach and turned north and south to roll up the outer defence lines. These defensive positions were designed to face outwards and suddenly, out-flanked or attacked from behind, those positions were no longer tenable.

Traitor units started to abandon their defences and move back, seeking the shelter of their second defence line. Where the 30th Line Korps had led, the neighbouring 12th Line Korps soon followed. Its men surged forward and swarmed over no-man's land, once a lethal wasteland, now only defended by a few ill-fated rearguard units. Soon after, the 34th Line Korps also broke through in the Saritama Hills, Death Rider companies pursuing the enemy hard as they fell back en masse. Behind the cavalry, infantry companies were advancing in unopposed columns. After two years of bitter fighting, the first defence line on the vast battlefield had fallen, collapsing like a house of cards. The cost in men was as yet uncounted, but the initial objective of the Siege of Vraks had been achieved.

CERYTIA HILLS

Restricted Pit File
Access Granted

SORIN DEPRESSION

Under Construction

Under Construction

Northern Defence Line

MORA RIDGE

SOUTHERN WASTES

Second Defence Line

Hab Zone 2

Western Outer Defence Line

Inner Defence Line

Citadel

VAN MEER

Second Defence Line

Hab Zone 3

Darro Rift

Bridge

Darro Line

Sarnaga Abyss

Southern Line

SARITAMA HILLS

Hab Zone 4
Abandoned

THE SIEGE OF VRAKS

GENERAL ISSUE: 88th SIEGE ARMY
165813.M41

KEY:

Service Road

Storage Facility

Defence Line

0 4 8 16 24 32 40 48 Kilometres

OFFICIO CARTOGRAPHI
LORD COMMANDER OBSCURUS

PLAINS OF SARITAMA

39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57

Vraks Departmento Munitorum

CHAYLIA PLATEAU

VRAKS STAR PORT

MARE CHAYLIA

SRNA HEIGHTS

SRNA FLATS

ABAROS HILLS

Abaros Canyon

Mora Gorge

Eastern Outer Defence line

Bridge

Bridge

Bridge

Bridge

Balan Trench

Zone 1

60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79

CHAPTER THREE – WAR OF ATTRITION

"The Krieg method of war is a measure of their discipline and their sacrifice.
It demands respect from all – friend and foe alike."

Lord Commander Militant, Segmentum Obscurus

The Crisis of 1st Korps

With the Krieg breakthrough, the enemy had abandoned not only its outer defence lines, but also its northern front, itself a spur of the second defence line. It was outflanked to the south and faced by the Krieg 1st and 30th Line Korps which, after a period of recuperation, were both now ready to attack again. Pinned by enemy attacks to the front, the Apostate Cardinal's defenders could quickly be cut off by the advance of 12th Line Korps. If the defenders stood firm then it would only be a matter of time until they were surrounded and lost. Instead of risking a catastrophic defeat by holding on to untenable ground, the traitors withdrew.

The 1st and 30th Line Korps found the northern defence lines abandoned, and were soon pushing forwards against only light resistance from rearguards, snipers and the inevitable harassing artillery fire. 1st Korps swung eastwards, in the direction of Hab-zone One, which lay astride one of the main routes between the Citadel and Vraks Star Port. As 1st Line Korps moved south and eastwards, it was also encircling the second defence line.

So far, in over two years of the war, the 88th Siege Army had been constantly on the attack – with the Apostate Cardinal's renegade forces willing to hold their positions and fight a defensive war, except when required to launch counter-attacks to retake lost ground or spoiling raids into enemy lines. In 255815.M41 this strategic situation changed. As 1st Line Korps closed in from the north towards the second defence line, it was to be subjected to the enemy's first concerted offensive.

The northern defence line might have been abandoned without a fight, but the ground between the two positions had been identified as the site of a strong counter-attack. The defenders had mustered a substantial armoured reserve at Hab-zone One. Leman Russ, Chimera, Basilisk and Griffon squadrons had all been husbanded there in order to conduct the counter-attack – catching the Krieg regiments of 1st Korps whilst they were out of their well-defended trenches and marching over open ground.

Whilst the 19th Siege Regiment was occupying overnight positions in Sector 60-53, its forward sentries reported hearing the movement of enemy vehicles throughout the night and, in response, harassing artillery fire was increased in an attempt to impede whatever the enemy were planning. Expecting a local counter-attack, the forward companies were reinforced and a general stand-to was issued at dawn. The newly dug trenches, in most places no more than a shallow ditch, were lined with Krieg Guardsmen, lasguns at the ready in anticipation of the attack.

First came the enemy shells, a ranging shot here or there, before the main bulk was launched down upon them. A mass of concentrated artillery fire thundered over 19th Regiment's positions, rolling and booming like a sea during a storm. Amongst the heavy shelling came smoke shells, spouting thick white clouds that obscured the battlefield. Then, behind the smoke, came the first wave of enemy attackers.

The fighting continued all day and by mid afternoon, murderous artillery fire had been unleashed again by both sides. The loyalists and traitors had become intermingled. One smashed trench was held by one side, whilst the next was held by the other. In the confusion Xaphan's forces held fast, with their tanks in close support. As night approached the fighting subsided, although throughout the darkness both sides would probe forwards, only to be repulsed. The situation was confused; there was no longer a clear front line, just a chaotic mess of units.

At dawn the enemy attack was renewed and again the artillery shots began to fall. The 19th Regiment's own artillery replied in kind and the big shells streaked overhead as the traitors moved forwards, blood-soaked wraiths in the angry dawn light, fighting from trench to trench.

At his command post, Colonel Adal watched their approach and readied his men. Already enemy artillery fire was landing about him; one shell tore through the roof of his command dug-out, but the colonel had already left it to be out amongst his troops, observing their progress. Soon the enemy was closing in and the air was thick with bullets and lasgun fire. Tank rounds crashed into the traitors' ad-hoc barricades. The first attack was driven off, the colonel himself, lasgun in hand, firing from behind sandbags. A second attack was also held, but the shallow trenches to the left and right were now in enemy hands and the colonel and his defenders were isolated. Their only escape route lay over ground swept by enemy fire. Adal's command dug-out was then hit again by tank fire and his second-in-command, Colonel Dyneh, killed.

Adal was down to just eighty men, his communications with the rear severed. The colonel issued orders that the wounded were to be evacuated as best as they could be, and divided his survivors into two groups. The first unit would break out and take news of the enemy breakthrough back. He would command a rearguard and hold for as long as possible, until either relief arrived or he was overrun and killed. Adal knew there was little hope of a rescue, but he would fight on for as long as possible.

The escape group climbed the parapet and headed back, scrambling away as best they could, dodging from crater to crater under enemy fire. Those who escaped passed on the



colonel's report. Meanwhile, the colonel's battered survivors fought on bravely, until the colonel himself was killed when the enemy brought forwards a Hellhound flamer tank to blast them out. With the loss of the command post, the second line had also been breached. It was now up to 1st Line Korps to salvage what they could from the sudden fury of the enemy assault.

After two days of gruelling fighting, the enemy had their breakthrough, and 1st Line Korps was faced with a crisis. Its entire position was in danger of being compromised by the collapse of the 19th Regiment on its left flank. The enemy would soon be all around them and rolling up their shallow trench lines. Just as the enemy had earlier fallen back, now it would be the Death Korps' turn to withdraw. Ground that had proved so costly to win was going to have to be given up without a fight in favour of a rapid withdrawal to the defendable position of the first defence line. From there the enemy attack could be contained, but it meant moving quickly. First and foremost the enemy attack must be stalled, delayed as long as possible to buy time for the other regiments to re-position themselves. 1st Korps command gathered elements of 7th Tank Regiment and the surviving Death Rider companies of 19th Regiment. These it would throw into the enemy's path in the hope of delaying the advance. It wasn't enough to stop it altogether but any time it bought 1st Korps was now crucial. Orders were issued to the other regiments to withdraw, whilst 261st Regiment would need to turn its flank and dig in as best it could. The ground lost was a tremendous setback to Lord Zuehlke's campaign timetable.

The effect of the bold counter-attack and breakthrough were felt throughout the 88th Siege Army. Attacks all along the front were suddenly cancelled as supplies were requisitioned for 1st Korps. 8th Assault Korps was gathered and moved to reinforce 1st Korps, to act as a final block against another breakthrough that might see not just valuable ground but the entire war lost. The enemy had now seized the initiative.

On day three, as the enemy tanks continued to roll forwards, 1st Korps had at last repositioned forces to meet the enemy with. It wasn't enough to hold the advance, but these forces would buy time for the avalanche of men, equipment, guns and salvaged stores that were now in a headlong retreat northwards. In all, fifty-two tanks of the 7th Tank Regiment, Leman Russes and Macharius heavy tanks, had been repositioned against an enemy attack that was still estimated to have over a hundred vehicles of its own, although their numbers were growing all the time if intelligence reports were to be believed.

15th Tank Company, comprising a dozen Leman Russes commanded by Captain Gerszon from his own Vanquisher, clattered into position as stragglers from 19th Regiment streamed back through his firing line. It wasn't long before he spotted enemy tanks to the south. Opening fire at long range, he scored a hit and a cloud of black smoke rose from his target. Watching through his surveyor, the Vanquisher commander saw the turret of the enemy tank explode before flames came boiling up from inside it.

The enemy pressed forwards and armour piercing tank shells were soon streaking back and forth. One shell glanced off Gerszon's turret, while another disabled the front lascannon, leaving the gunner mortally wounded. Gerszon hit two more enemy tanks before being struck for a third time, and this time the force of the impact ruptured a fuel tank. The volatile liquid began leaking throughout the vehicle's interior and he ordered his men out. The three remaining crew flung open hatches and jumped clear as the fuel ignited, a bright orange fireball roaring into the sky as the tank was engulfed in flames. Of twelve tanks under his command, only four were still in action, but Captain Gerszon could count at least sixteen enemy tanks that were now burning. As he ordered the remaining vehicles of his unit back, he watched as a squadron of Death Riders, lances lowered, charged forward in a hopeless display of reckless courage. After a day of fighting, withdrawing and fighting again, only nine Krieg Leman



Rogue psyker, identity unknown, encountered during the renegade counter-offensive against the 261st Regiment. This psyker accounted for numerous casualties during the heavy fighting, including the death of 9th Company's entire command section, before being finally brought down by concentrated hellgun fire.

ROGUE PSYKER



Before Xaphan's apostasy, the secure dungeon facilities on Vraks were used to provide temporary housing for Inquisitorial prisoners and tithed psykers from nearby worlds awaiting transfer aboard the League of Black Ships. Not long after Vraks' rebellion, these rogue psykers were found to be at the forefront of the heretical forces, often twisted and augmented in an attempt to increase their baleful powers.

1. EQUIPMENT AND AUGMETICS

This rogue psyker has been subjected to cybernetic implantation and equipped to increase and control its powers and allow its masters to control them. Clearly visible are the drug reservoirs for an auto-injector rig designed to carry a cocktail of powerful stimulants and chem-crafted psi-boosters directly into the Psyker's bloodstream. Analysis of recovered samples has noted Slaught, Ghostfire Tincture, human blood plasma and other as yet unidentified substances in the mixture. Also shown are spinal-fused ætheric wave-spars designed to channel and bleed away excess psychic energies, along with crude warp-conduction bracers and a totemic psi-focus crafted from a severed human head (probably of another psyker). These devices enable the rogue psyker to more easily focus its powers into a destructive form.

Many similar devices have been tested for use on Schola Psykana sanctioned psykers in the Emperor's service, but were found to be too unpredictable or to boost powers to dangerously uncontrollable levels (use of most such devices is now proscribed by Inquisitorial order).

2. BLASPHEMOUS SYMBOLS

As with many of the heretical psykers, shown clearly here, inked into the rogue psyker's flesh (and in some reports alternatively stitched or carved) are a number of unknown glyphs and occult formulae, as well as blasphemous symbols of the eight-pointed star. It is likely that as well as being used as an expression of vile belief, these symbols served some definite purpose, most likely to further increase the psyker's power and also to invoke and possibly contain daemonic energies drawn from the Warp. Just who brought such forbidden knowledge and dark arcane lore to Vraks remains unclear, but its use became increasingly widespread as the conflict wore on, appearing increasingly not just inscribed on the skin of these malign creatures, but used as votive markings by the renegade rank and file, who were in all likelihood totally ignorant of these symbols' true portent. Further investigation has been recommended, with the capture of a heretic rogue psyker a priority for any Inquisitorial forces operating on Vraks.

3. PSYCHIC MANIFESTATIONS

Often little more than the playthings of Chaos, the rogue psykers in the Vraksian renegade forces displayed a bewildering variety of tainted powers, and their mere presence was often accompanied by psychokinetic and electromagnetic disturbances, freak temperature anomalies and other strange phenomena.

The manifest abilities and witchcraft of these heretics was equally diverse; some were seen to levitate above the battlefield, burning their foes with tainted lightning or boiling blood, others were able to invigorate their allies with unholy fury, while some transformed into seething monsters themselves, or were even able to cloud the minds and crush the wills of the loyalist troops, turning soldiers against their comrades with their malign influence.

In all cases, the designation of rogue psykers as a priority target quickly became a standing order in the Vraksian conflict and with incredibly good reason, as the atrocities perpetrated by these renegades far outweighed their limited numbers.

4. TOTEMIC HEAD

This psyker is carrying a severed head as a totem, in the belief that the power of a former psyker can be harnessed and used to contribute its potent energy to the current bearer. Such beliefs are not uncommon amongst the primitive societies of the galaxy and many remain in wide use despite the preachings of Missionarus Galaxia missionaries against it.

Many psykers also find their powers are enhanced by the use of a psi-focus, a single device (often a staff) that aids concentration whilst the psychic energies are being channelled through their mind. Much Schola Psykana training involves mastering the psi-focus. This totemic head may also be acting as just such a focus.

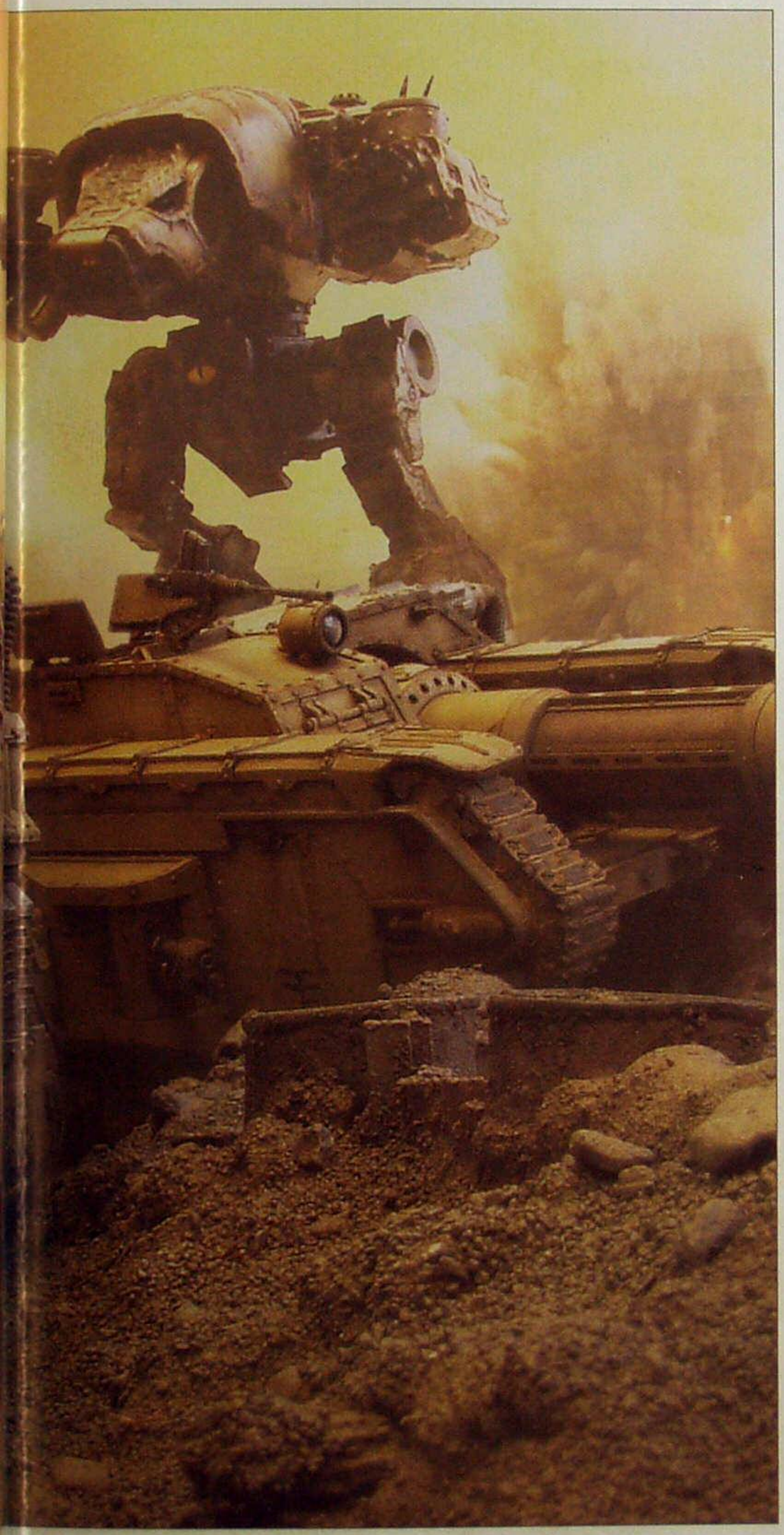
Russes and two Macharius tanks survived, but the enemy had suffered at least as many losses. The armoured thrust had been seriously blunted.

Days of such delaying actions followed, and with each that passed, the enemy captured less ground. After three more days, the counter-attack had been stalled, but it had cut a swathe through 1st Korps and forced it to give up much of its captured ground. The 19th Siege Regiment had been shredded in the first two days, and over 80,000 men of the regiment had been captured or become casualties, including its commanding officer. Enemy losses had also been heavy, especially in terms of armoured vehicles. The cost of the desperate ordeal which 1st Korps had endured would go much further than losses in men, materiel and ground though. The narrowly averted disaster meant that all along the battle's frontline, attacks that should have been weakening the enemy had not taken place. The enemy should have been bled, but instead he had grown stronger. He'd had time to organise his defences, get guns and reserves into position, and the second defence line would now be a far harder nut to crack.



Battles of the Second Defence Line

After the sudden rush of the breakthrough and the crisis of 1st Korps, the advancing regiments of the remaining three korps were ordered to halt. There could be no headlong charge into the second defence line, only a steady, cautious advance. The leading infantry companies turned again to their entrenching tools and the Atlas Excavators were once more called forwards. The trenches, so recently escaped, had to be redug all over again. The traitors' lines would be approached slowly, under the cover of artillery fire.



At 120816.M41, the 88th Siege Army again committed itself to the offensive and no fewer than six entire regiments launched an all-out attack. Day after day the assault continued at a hideous cost, attacking across a battlefield of shattered bunkers, collapsed trench lines, rusted tangles of razor wire and the exposed bones of the dead, the corpses still rotting where they had fallen. A monotonous, deadly pattern was soon established that would continue across the entire front for months.

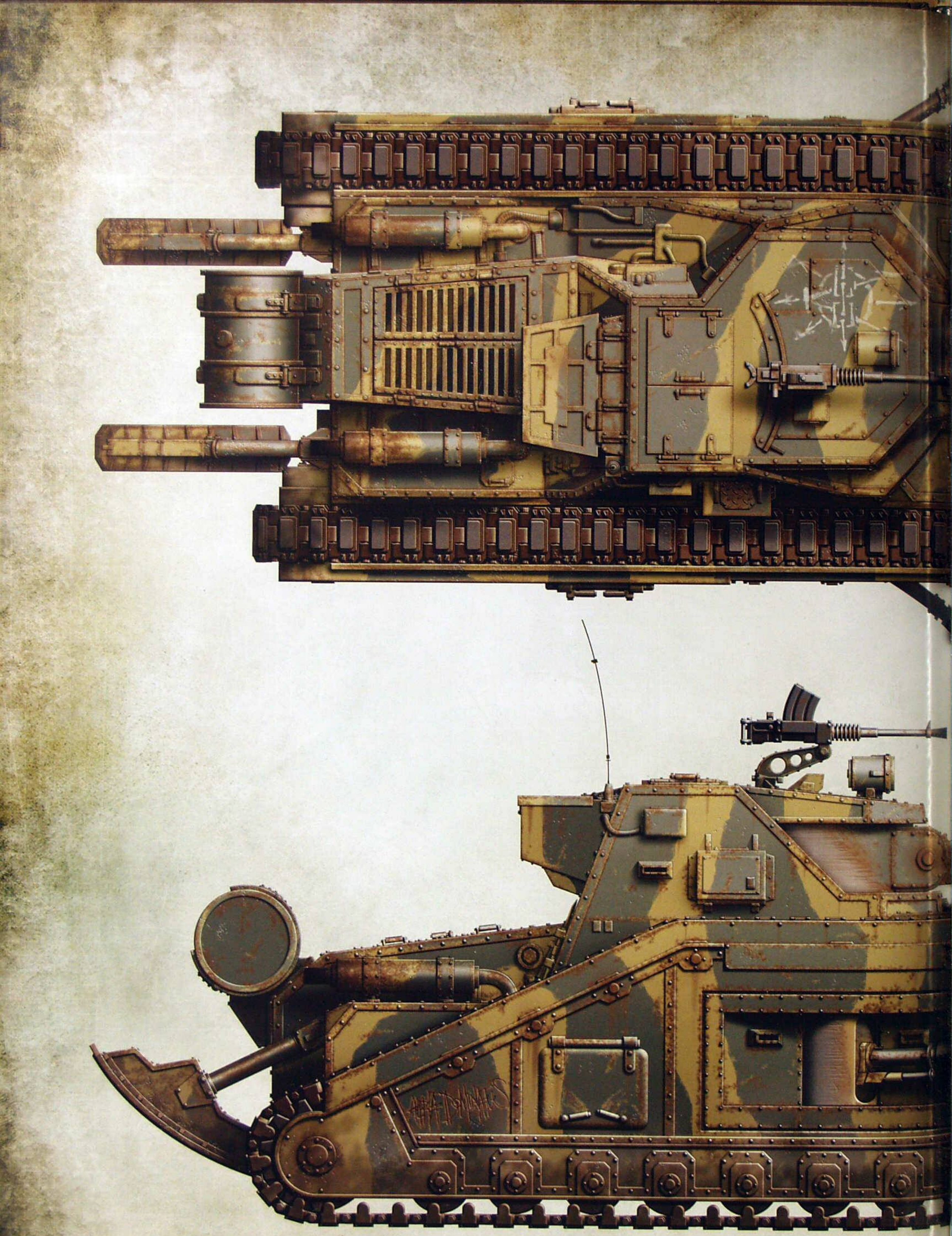
The remorseless cycle of abortive offensives went on. Each time the attack would be stalled, and the next day the attack would have to be widened to take in a neighbouring sector and eliminate its flanking fire. A vital sector could not be taken until its neighbouring sector had been silenced. The key to each sector was always on its flanks and so on down the line, until entire regiments found themselves ordered to attack because a single company had failed to achieve its objective. Always the gains were negligible, and always there was a new flank that needed engaging. Over the months, hundreds of such attacks were made, but there was no breakthrough. Another year passed in stalemate.

In the north 1st Korps, now reinforced by an influx of new troops arriving from Krieg, was pushing through again. Here the trenches were making headway across ground littered with the rusting hulks of destroyed tanks and carriers, ground that had earlier been captured then lost. As the Death Korps advanced, the enemy continued to skirmish and harass, but without the protection of their deep bunkers and the reinforced ferrocrete of the defence lines the Krieg artillery could pulverise them. Slowly the ground lost to the counter-attack was reclaimed – it took almost six months to recover what had been lost in just a week. By the end of the year, Hab-zone One had systematically been flattened by artillery fire, and then captured with barely a fight. After the attack, the hab-zone's prefabricated dwellings had been wiped off the map. Eventually, 1st Korps was in position against the second defence line and the Citadel was surrounded from Sector 62-47 all the way anti-clockwise to Sector 54-38, a front of some two hundred and fifty kilometres.

The endless artillery duel again turned the frontline into a field of craters where shell holes, some tens of metres deep, overlapped. No-man's land once more was a killing field, littered with decomposing corpses so that a grim toxic smog, a dense mixture of dust, cordite, smoke and infectious vapours hung in the air. Another year passed, then another. Wherever the Krieg regiments made gains, they were soon recaptured by enemy counter-attacks. The result was that for long periods of time, sometimes months or even years, the front was essentially static. What the 88th's commanders needed was a significant breakthrough.

A New Threat

Seven years had passed since the first artillery salvo had been fired, marking the official start of the siege. Seven years of bitter and gruelling fighting that had seen millions slaughtered for the few kilometres gained. Each side had seen its victories and its defeats, both had suffered grievous losses, but neither side was, as yet, ready to concede.



MALCADOR HEAVY TANK

Renegade Heavy Armour Company, Battle of Saint Leonis Gate

Such vehicles were the primary super-heavy tanks operated by the renegade legions of the Tyrant Xaphan. During the Vraks rebellion, in 812.M41, the renegade forces entrenched on Vraks deployed entire companies of such vehicles in an attempt to stem the tide of the Imperium's assault. The robust structure and heavy armament of these tanks proved formidable when deployed against Krieg's Leman Russ squadrons, but were found lacking when pitted against their larger Baneblades.



At 820.M41, new reports reaching Lord Commander Zuehlke's HQ on Thracian Primaris made for disturbing reading. Not only was his campaign plan still well behind schedule but, if reports were to be believed, the defenders had also been reinforced. During an attack in Sector 52-49 by the 261st Regiment, in which several Gorgon assault transports had overrun enemy lines and were threatening to force a gap in the second defence line, the enemy had counter-attacked, as he always did, but this time the traitors were described as being Space Marines. Witnesses had reported seeing Adeptus Astartes in dark blue armour launching a swift attack that had seen the breach quickly sealed, all the Gorgons being destroyed and dozens of men killed in the attack.

How could it be that Space Marines were now fighting on the side of the Vraksian renegades? Whoever they were, this represented a grave development. The siege was locked in a stalemate, but even a few Space Marines could tip the balance of the war in favour of the traitors.

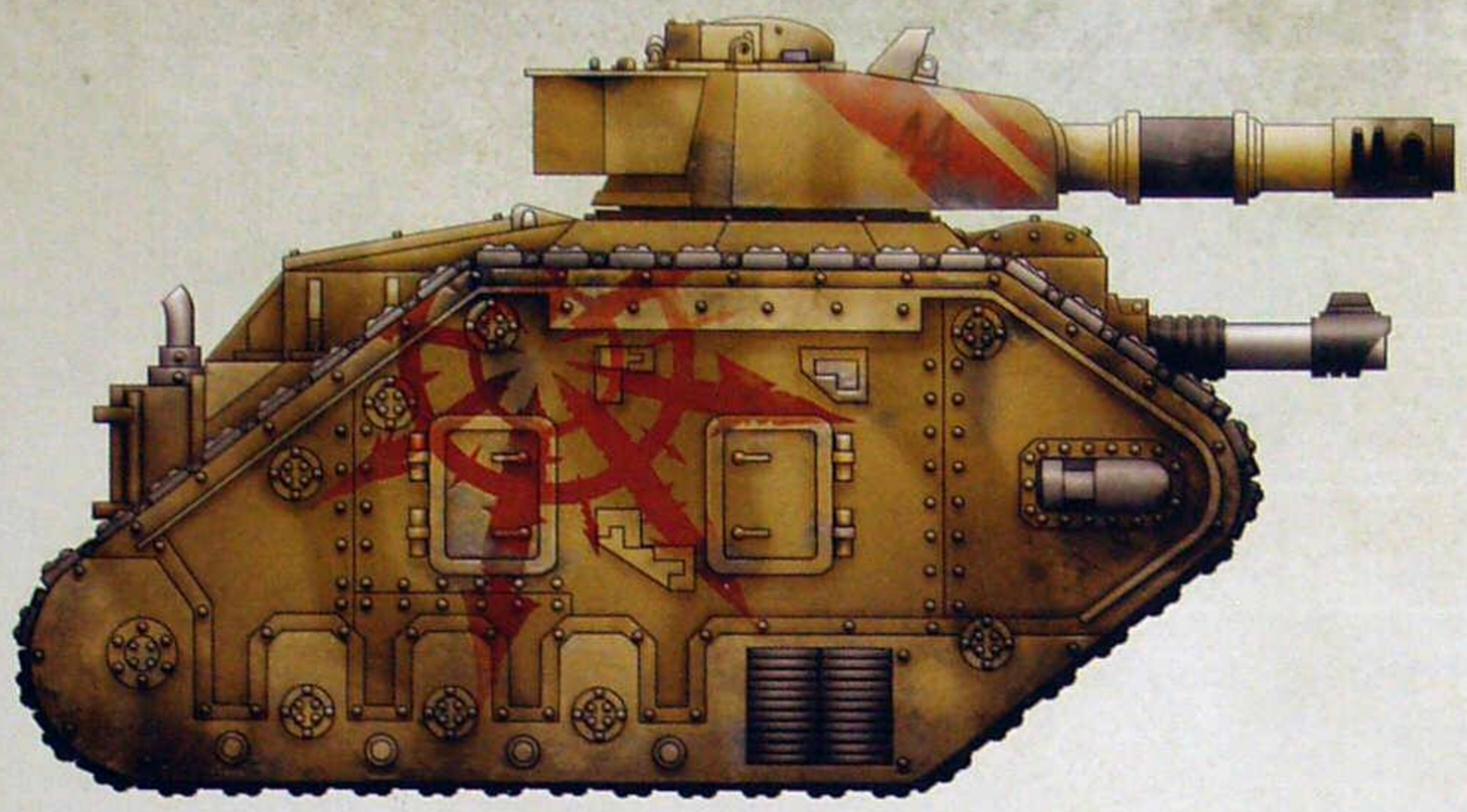
Lord Commander Zuehlke sent his emissaries to the Offices of the Lord Commander Militant of the Segmentum Obscurus to request aid. Could he help identify this Chapter? Attached with the request, Zuehlke also asked for a new line korps to join the fighting on Vraks. He believed that these extra men would bring the campaign back on schedule, and help break the stalemate at the second defence line.

The order for more men was put through Departmento Munitorum channels, and the bureaucrats set to work reassigning the extra men from Krieg. As for the mysterious Adeptus Astartes, they remained an enigma. Those Chapters in the segmentum whose livery included dark blue could all account for their warriors. The conclusion was that they were Traitor Legionaries drawn to Vraks by the intensity of the fighting, wishing to win favour with their masters by adding to the slaughter. Zuehlke's headquarters was assured that steps would be put into place to counter this new threat.

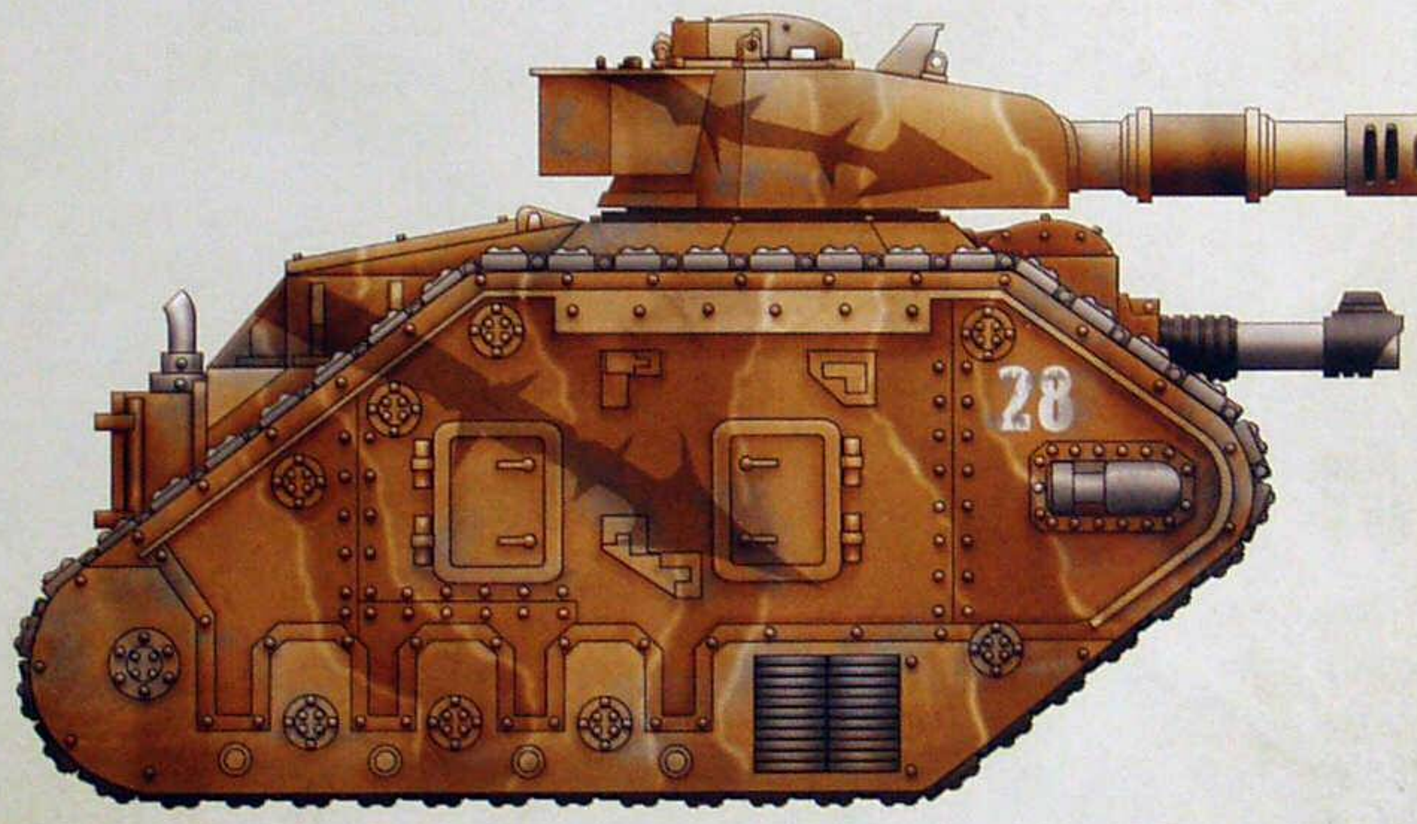
Unknown to the commanders of 88th Siege Army, Vraks had indeed become of interest to the Traitor Legions. One Legionary in particular, Lord Arkos, a former captain of the Alpha Legion, had heard of the uprising and the subsequent battles, and had now joined the war. His battle barge, *Anarchy's Heart*, had crept into the Vraks system undetected and landed his battle-brothers close to Krieg lines in order to gather intelligence. Infiltrating their way through the Death Korps' lines, they had then crossed no-man's land and presented themselves at the Citadel.

Arkos could not only provide the defenders with superb veteran troops, adept at raiding and disruption behind enemy lines, but also much needed training for the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's militia. The captain himself could add his own tactical experience to the defensive campaign, and his brothers-in-arms, all unflinchingly loyal to their commander, would relish the chance to join the war. Success on the former Imperial world, Arkos advised, was the first step on a road which would see all opposition in the Scarus Sector to the Apostate Cardinal's righteous cause smashed. The imposing warrior also promised that more allies would follow as the War of Faith marched out into the wider Imperium. Lord Arkos' aid was graciously accepted.

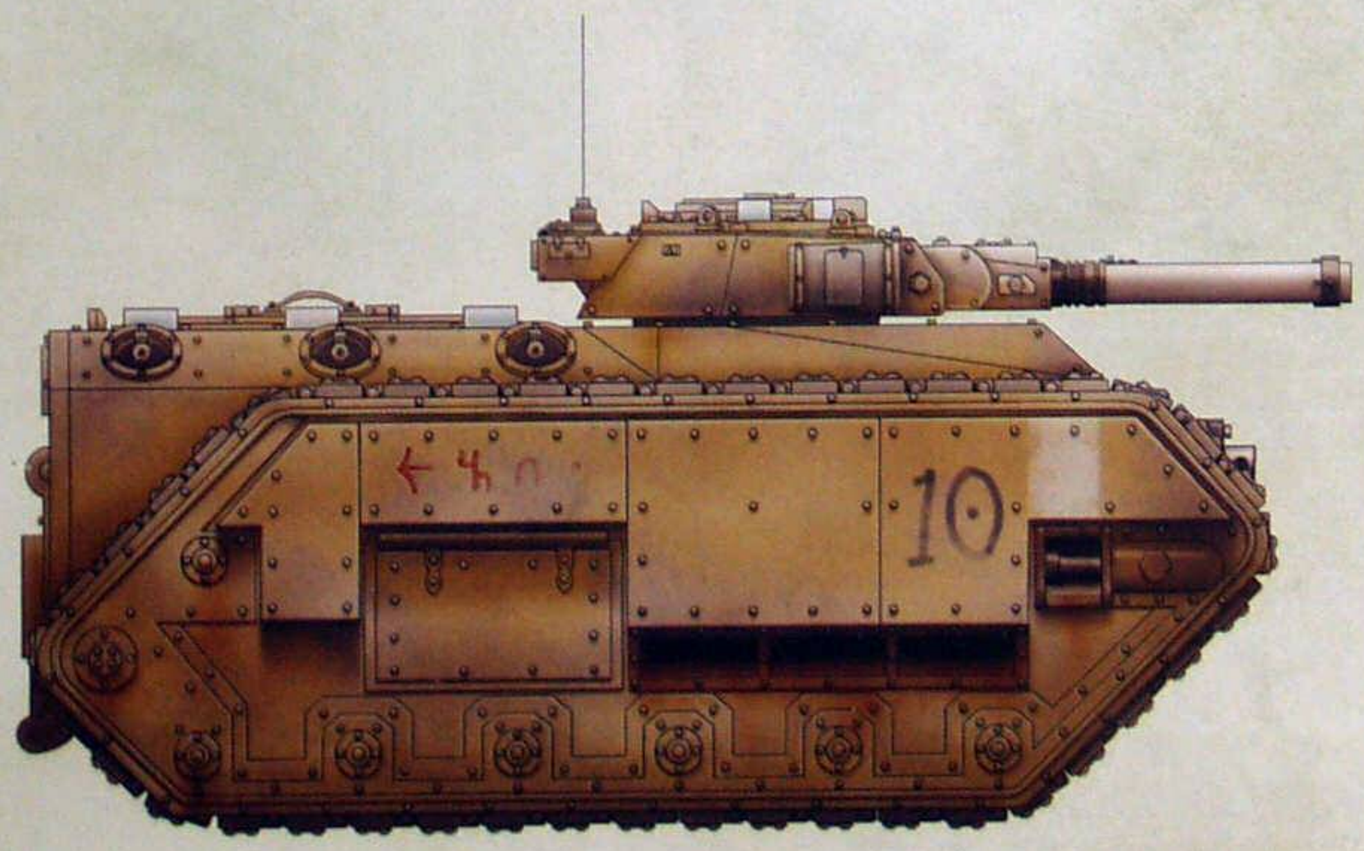




Captured Leman Russ in enemy service. The '44' has been crudely applied along with the heretical symbol.



A renegade Leman Russ. The only addition to this vehicle are the arrows. It retains its original camouflage scheme and number.



Chimera armed with an autocannon. This vehicle was destroyed during a counter-attack in Sector 46-38.

ALPHA LEGION CHAOS SPACE MARINE

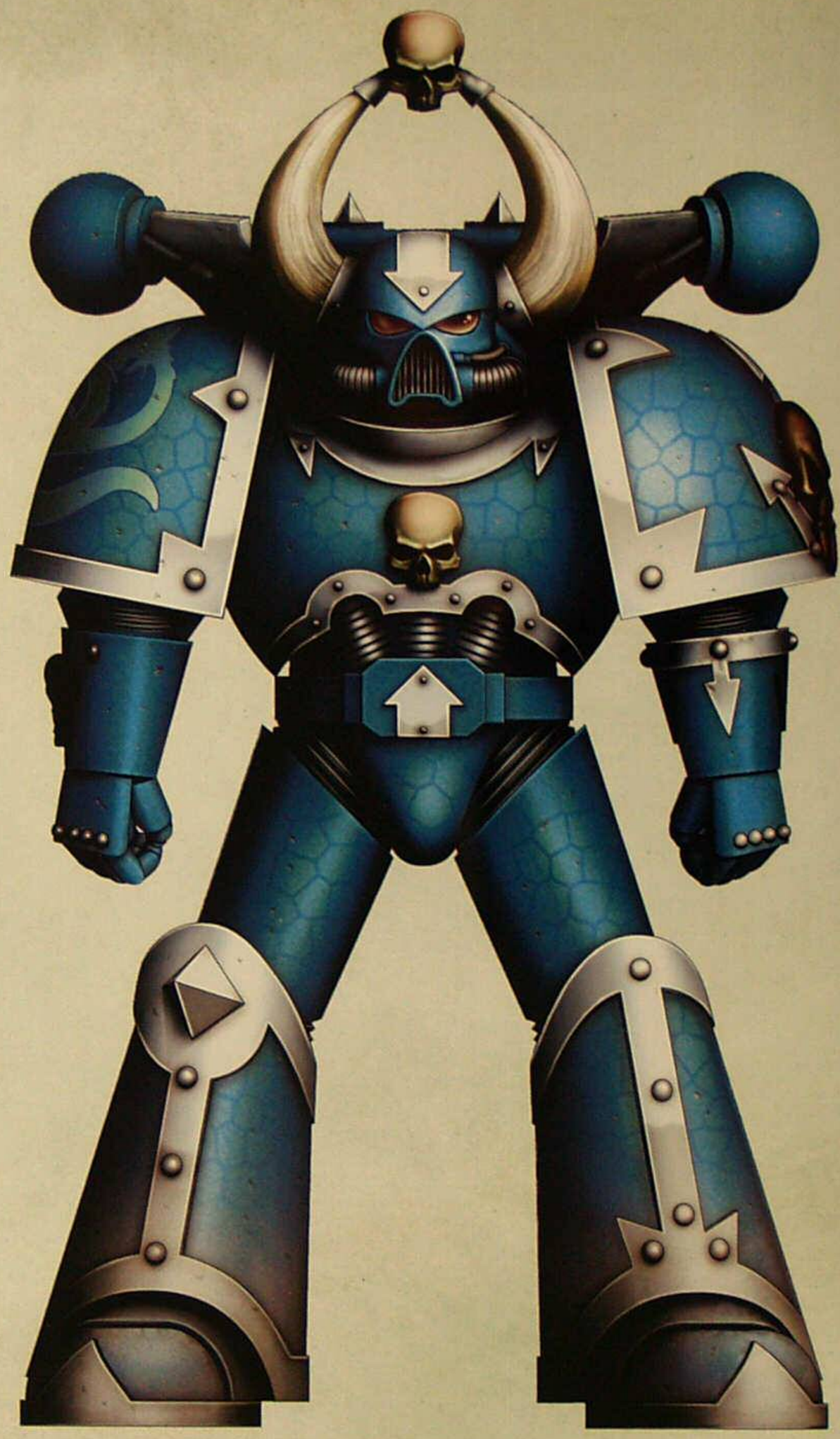
'The Faithless'
Alpha Legion Sub-faction

The Traitor warband codified as 'the Faithless' appear in numerous archives sealed to all but the most highly-ranked masters of the Adeptus Terra. The group's origins lie in the dim and distant past, and its warriors were once members of the XXth Legiones Astartes – the Alpha Legion. It is from their leader that the faction derives its title, for Arkos 'the Faithless' has led the group since the anarchic wars of the Scouring and is thought to have been a senior strike-leader in the Alpha Legion before then.

The Faithless fight their long war against the Imperium with the cunning and guile for which the Alpha Legion was so well known. Driven by an abiding hatred of all of the Imperium after the defeat of the Warmaster Horus, the Faithless have fomented countless rebellions, insurgencies and secessions on Imperial worlds across the galaxy, all with the ultimate goal of destabilising the rule of Terra and triggering the inevitable collapse of the entire Imperium.

The Faithless are especially active in the sectors surrounding the Eye of Terror and operate from their ancient battleship, the *Anarchy's Heart*. Their very nature makes it nigh-impossible to extrapolate the warband's attacks as part of a coherent strategy. They are known to employ all manner of stratagems derived from the battle doctrines of the Alpha Legion, including bearing false colours (even disguising themselves as loyal Space Marines on occasion), transmitting false signals, undermining enemy command and control networks, and seeding rumours of imminent invasion among planetary populations.

In coming to Vraks, it is thought that Arkos the Faithless intends to trigger a major strategic destabilisation across the Scarus Sector, and perhaps throughout the crucial fortress worlds that stand sentinel against incursions passing through the Cadian Gate.



Unidentified warrior of the Faithless, clad in corrupted/hybridised Astartes power armour. Note elements of Mk VI (Corvus) pattern grieves, Mk VIII (Sarum) pattern helm and Great Crusade-era Anvillus pattern back pack.

Panoply of War

1. **Shoulder pauldron bearing Alpha Legion heraldry.**

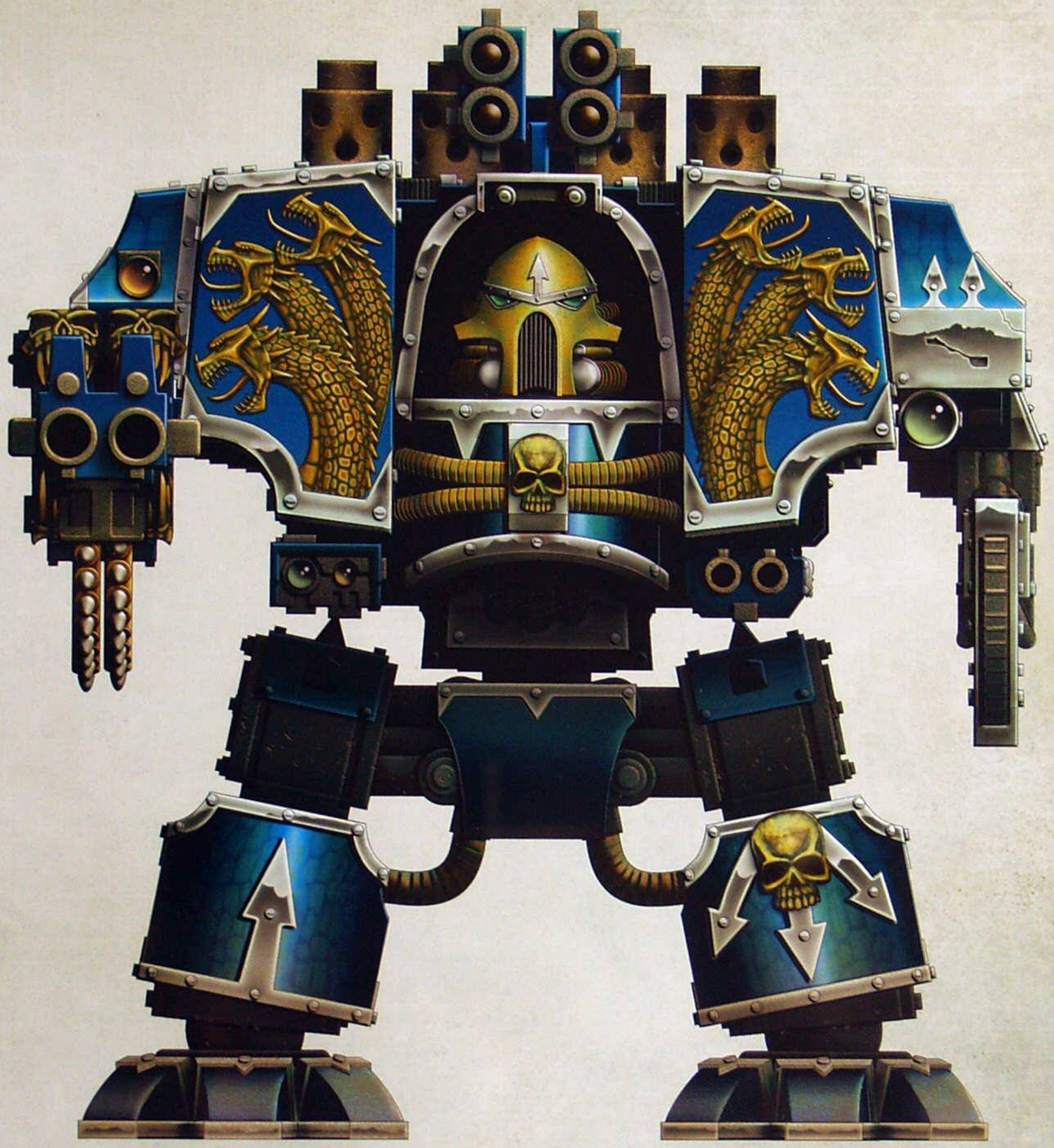
2. **Corrupted Godwyn-Ultima Pattern Bolter.**

1.



2.





ALPHA LEGION CHAOS DREADNOUGHT

'Ferrum Infernus' Class Corrupted Mk IV Dreadnought of the Alpha Legion Sub-faction 'The Faithless'

Conflicting archival extracts suggest that this Dreadnought and its unidentified internee have fought in numerous wars against the Imperium and borne false colours on at least three occasions.

As depicted here, the Dreadnought armour bears the colours and iconography most commonly associated with the Alpha Legion. The blue-green heraldry is frequently rendered in a pattern reminiscent of reptile skin, a motif derived from the three-headed 'Lernaean Hydra' Legion symbol, itself born from the ancient cultures of pre-Imperial Terra.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE ANGELS OF CALIBAN

"Our Will for Vengeance carries all before it."

Supreme Grand Master Azrael, Dark Angels Chapter

Reinforcements

At 821.M41, Lord Commander Zuehlke's requests were finally met. A convoy of transport vessels entered the system carrying the 46th Line Korps, with three more regiments to assist in breaking the deadlock around the second defence lines. These were troops that had been designated for other war zones, but now Zuehlke's political connections had proved useful in getting the extra troops he wanted.

The Lord Commander Militant's office had also provided additional assistance. The arrival of off-planet reinforcements for the Apostate Cardinal allied to the dark gods of Chaos was a worrying development, and potentially a disastrous one if other forces followed these traitors and also came seeking battle, plunder and glory for their masters. The chance that the war on Vraks would be subsumed into a greater Chaos incursion close to the Eye of Terror could not be taken. Instead, the Lord Commander Militant had acted independently of his subordinate commander and sent his own delegation in search of aid from the Adeptus Astartes.

The first to answer were the Dark Angels. Led by Supreme Grand Master Azrael, the Chapter had responded with a huge commitment of forces – almost half of its battle-brothers had been embarked for Vraks, with Azrael himself taking command. Upon its arrival in-system, the battle barge *Angel of Retribution* powered its way swiftly towards the planet, along with the strike cruisers *Sword of Caliban* and *Salvation*, and a small fleet of escort vessels.

Azrael sent no communications to the 88th Siege Army's commanders. He simply set about his self-assigned mission – the destruction of Vraks Star Port, with the intention of severing easy access to the planet by further enemy reinforcements. He needed no assistance, and saw no reason to involve the Krieg regiments. Whilst Lord Zuehlke's staff were adjusting their plans for the inclusion of his new line korps into the frontlines, Grand Master Azrael and his company masters were manoeuvring into low orbit and deploying their powerful strike force onto the surface of the armoury world via drop pods and Thunderhawks.

The Attack is Planned

Whereas an Astra Militarum regiment usually took days to unload from orbit, it took the Dark Angels a matter of minutes, and the fleet's launch decks echoed to the blast of Thunderhawk engines as the Space Marine companies blasted off, one after another. The site Azrael had chosen for his landing was the Srna Flats, at the foot of the Abaros Hills, directly south of Vraks Star Port.

Azrael had chosen his target for several reasons. The first was obvious. The star port was the easiest way for off-world support from any potential Chaos-aligned allies to reach the traitors' lines. Secondly, the Dark Angels' attack would force the defenders to commit considerable manpower and resources to combat them. Currently, only a small garrison was required to defend the facility because it was not directly threatened by the Death Korps, and this in turn freed troops for the front line. The Dark Angels could draw enemy troops into a new battle and thus thin the lines, aiding the 88th and potentially bringing about the long-awaited breakthrough.

Thirdly, and this was a fact known only to the Dark Angels themselves and the most compelling reason for their quick response – there were Traitor Legionaries now on Vraks, heretics who might have knowledge regarding the location of the Fallen. Azrael had no hard proof that any Fallen were amongst the Apostate Cardinal's new allies, but the inner circle of the Dark Angels knew the name of Lord Arkos well. He was a reviled dark-hearted traitor from the time of the Horus Heresy. If Lord Commander Zuehlke could not identify the Traitor Space Marine forces now facing him, the Dark Angels' inner circle knew exactly who these men were, and accompanying Azrael was Interrogator-Chaplain Belphegor, his mission to extract information from any Traitor Space Marines Azrael's forces could capture.

Once he had chosen to commit his Chapter to Vraks, Azrael's plan of attack had to be carefully considered. He was not going to enter into the war of attrition. Instead he would launch a fast-moving armoured column across the Srna Flats, envelope the facility, and then strike wherever he felt the enemy was most vulnerable. Timing for the attack was crucial. He needed to wait long enough to allow enemy reinforcements to arrive, but not so long that there became so many that his mission would be jeopardised. Azrael would be committing his battle-brothers to intense street fighting without the aid of his largest guns – the orbital bombardment of his battle barge and strike cruisers. His ships would not risk being struck by Vraks' defence lasers and would remain at a safe distance out of range.

Once the attack at Vraks Star Port was underway, he would attempt to seal off the battle zone from further reinforcements by capturing and destroying the main roads across the Srna fault line and Balan Trench. These were criss-crossed by a set of grand causeways that carried the service roads over the huge chasms. With these gone, no reinforcements could move from the Citadel or the defence lines to assist in the battle at the star port. This task was given to the 3rd Battle Company under Master Orias. It would attack each causeway in turn, landing via Thunderhawk gunships then overwhelming any resistance to set demolition charges to destroy one of the causeways, before moving on to the next target. Once that task was complete, Orias and his battle-brothers could move to assist the rest of the strike force already engaged at the facility.



For Vraks' traitorous defenders, the arrival of the highly mobile Adeptus Astartes strike force created a massive strategic problem. The Space Marines could strike anywhere and at any time. Unlike the lumbering infantry regiments of Krieg, they could simply fly over the defence lines to strike directly at the Citadel itself. Now Arkos' wisdom proved invaluable. The Dark Angels would not risk attacking the Citadel with its overwhelming defences and garrison still fully intact. No, they would seek to influence the campaign in other ways. The Apostate Cardinal needed to be able to counter the Dark Angels' attack wherever it fell, so troops had to be withdrawn from the second defence line and sent to garrison other locations, including the star port. The presence of just five hundred Space Marines was already having a massive effect on the entire war on Vraks, even before they had attacked.

The Battle of Vraks Star Port

At 944821M.41, the Dark Angels began their assault. Swiftly advancing two hundred kilometres across the Srna Flats, the armoured columns of Land Raiders, Predators, Rhinos, Vindicators and Whirlwinds were preceded by the Ravenwing's Land Speeders as they skimmed ahead, flying close to the ground and seeking out any enemy blocking their chosen route of advance. These Land Speeder squadrons were in constant communication with the fleet of Thunderhawk gunships overhead, which would now act as aerial cover for the advancing tanks and provide a long-range, first-strike capability should the enemy move against the columns. The only battle-brothers not yet embarked were Orias' 3rd Company. They would hold back at the Dark Angels landing zone in preparation for launching their own crucial part of the mission.

Whilst the Dark Angels armoured columns raced across the flatlands, the enemy responded with its own reconnaissance forces. Sentinels and Salamanders criss-crossed the Srna Flats trying to locate the oncoming attackers. The traitors did not go undetected themselves, however, and in a flash a Sentinel would blast apart in a blazing explosion of flames and sparks as a black-liveried Land Speeder swooped in, assault cannon blazing. The traitor commanders soon confirmed that the Dark Angels were heading northwards to Vraks Star Port, and immediately reinforcements were ordered to move forward and strengthen the garrison.

Encounter at the Causeways

Moving fast, the Dark Angels vanguard, led by Supreme Grand Master Azrael riding in his personal Land Raider Prometheus *Angelis Imperator*, were soon in sight of their objective. As Azrael's attack commenced, Master Orias' Thunderhawk-borne squads were closing in on the Balan Trench causeway. The first of three Thunderhawks in the flight banked away, over-flying the eastern end of the kilometre-long structure to deploy its assault squads.

Leaping from the speeding gunship, the two assault squads made a low level jump directly onto the eastern end. The defenders were quickly overwhelmed. Most fled rather than be butchered by the vastly superior Dark Angels, whilst those who stayed were quickly cut down. The roadway was not strongly held, only a small garrison had been detailed to guard it and man a checkpoint, and they were easily outmatched. The second and third Thunderhawks opened fire with missiles and turbo lasers, blasting great hunks of masonry from the ancient massive causeway and turning the checkpoint bunkers into smoking rubble.

DARK ANGELS TACTICAL MARINE

Brother Gideon
Squad Boreas
(2nd Tactical Squad)
5th Company
Vraks Strike Force

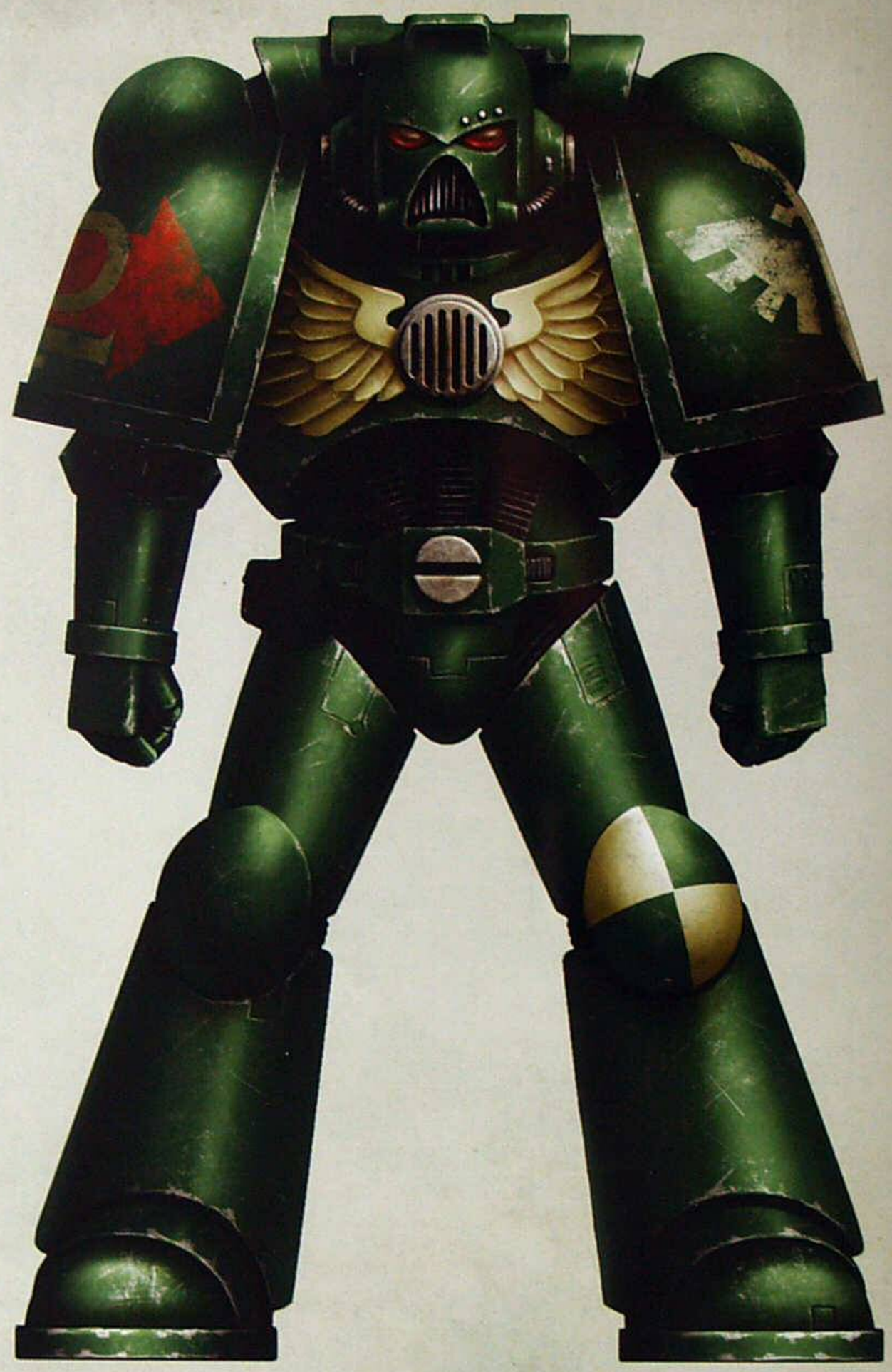
As part of 5th Company's deployment to Vraks, Squad Boreas fought for ten consecutive days at Vraks Star Port. For flexibility on the battlefield, the ten-man squad was split into two five-man combat squads for the duration of the battle. The first half was led by Veteran Sergeant Boreas, while the second half was led by veteran battle-brother Gideon. When split into combat squads in this manner, it is standard doctrine for one half to form a fire support group around the squad's heavy weapon, while the other half advances. Using this tactic, a single Space Marine Tactical squad can take even a heavily defended position.

Brother Gideon was in command of 2nd Squad's fire support element for much of the battle of Vraks Star Port, ably directing its heavy bolter against the masses of renegade militia as Sergeant Boreas led the remainder of the squad in assault after assault.

Panoply of War

1. **Mk II Godwyn-Ultra Pattern Boltgun:** The iconic standard issue weapon of the Space Marines, this weapon has been fitted with a 'Dark-Eye' pattern night scope for extended operations throughout the battle for Vraks Star Port, a useful addition to a squad fighting at longer ranges.

2. **Standard Issue Astartes Combat Blade.**



Battle-brother Gideon, wearing Mk VIII 'Eagle' pattern power armour. Note standard Dark Angels unit markings – right shoulder pauldron indicates 2nd (Tactical) squad, left knee marking indicates membership of the 5th Company.

1.



2.



DEATHWING TERMINATOR

Brother Eremiel
Squad Arbalan
1st Company (The Deathwing)
Vraks Strike Force

Squad Arbalan was one of five Deathwing Terminator squads which took part in the final battle to annihilate the defenders of Vraks Star Port. At the height of the battle, Squad Arbalan was engaged in ferocious building-to-building fighting against Alpha Legion warriors. Arbalan's squad conducted a counter-attack to rescue fellow Dark Angels trapped by an Alpha Legion ambush and surrounded. They broke through and secured an escape route, although they lost a battle-brother in the process – killed by a direct hit from a meltagun as the squad withdrew.

Brother Eremiel is depicted here as he deployed to the assault on Vraks Star Port. The battle was the first that Eremiel had fought as part of the Deathwing, having ascended from the ranks of the 3rd Company's veterans as reward for his deeds combating the Iod Schism three months earlier. This newly elevated status is evident in the fact that Eremiel bears comparatively few armorial adornments compared to his battle-brothers.

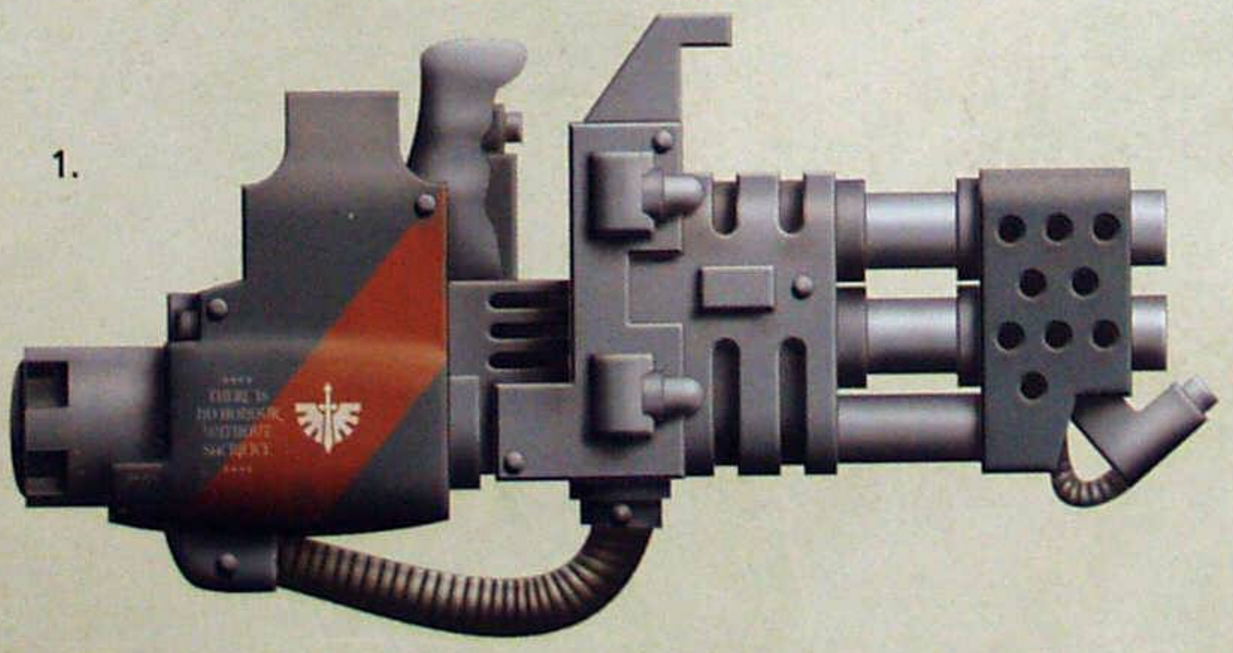
Panoply of War

1. **Ultima Pattern Heavy Flamer:** The heavy flamer is a standard support weapon for Terminator squads, used for fighting in the close confines of 'Zone Mortalis' environments. It is a savage weapon, firing a stream of super-heated promethium, generating temperatures in excess of 900°C, incinerating anything it hits.

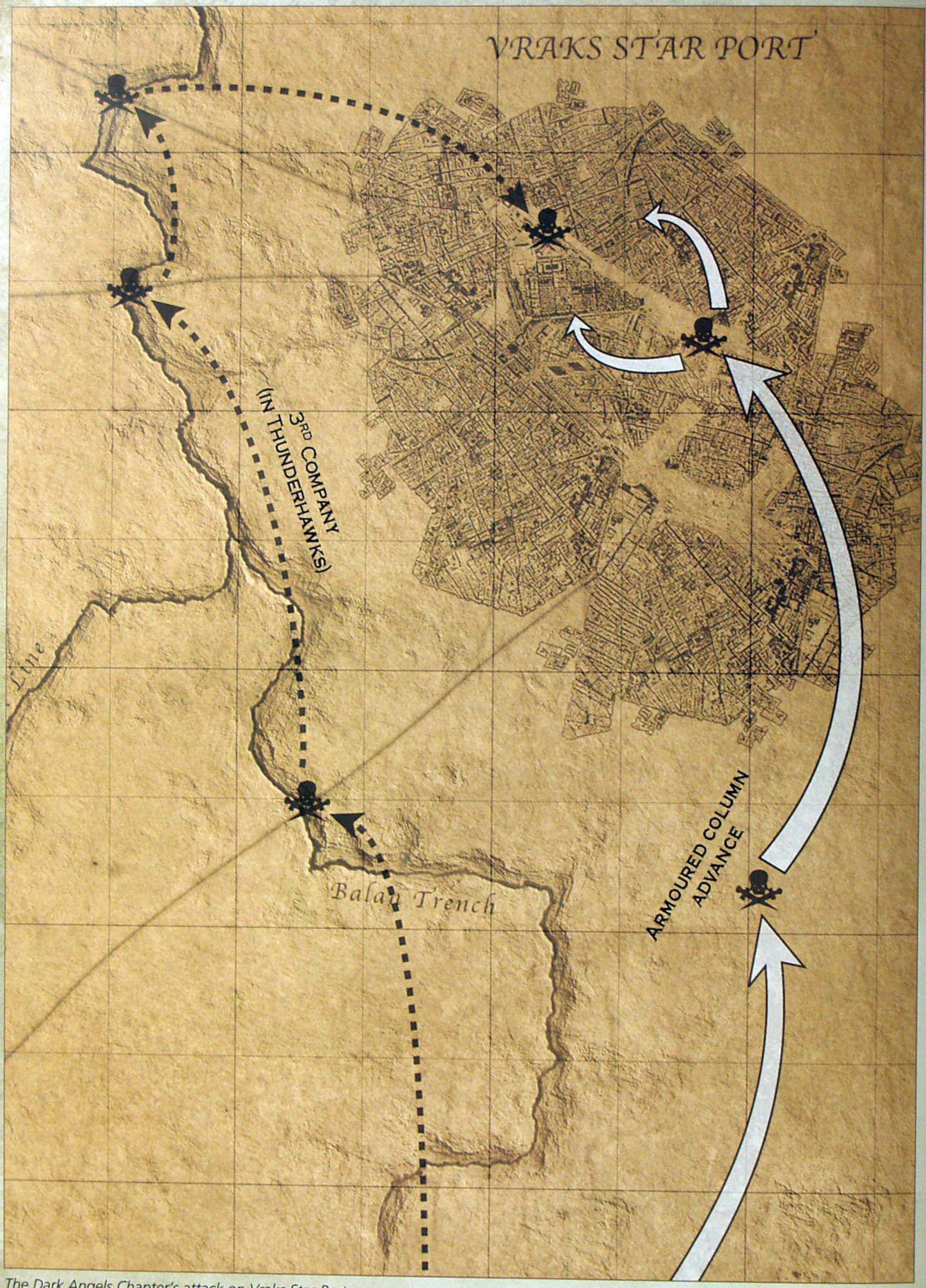
2. **Umbra Pattern Storm Bolter:** Storm bolters are a development of the standard boltgun, providing heavy fire when the bearer is engaged in close quarters combat.



Brother Eremiel in Mars pattern 'Indomitus' class Terminator armour. All members of the Dark Angels 1st Company bear the bone-white in reference to a legendary campaign fought long ago in the Chapter's past.







The Dark Angels Chapter's attack on Vraks Star Port.

On touchdown, the Dark Angels tactical squads thundered down the ramps and were soon rushing along the roadway, boltguns hammering as the defenders fell back before the attack, only to find themselves quickly cut off by the assault squads which had already captured the eastern end. Caught with nowhere to run to, the garrison was wiped out to a man. Orias' lightning airborne assault had captured its objective in just a few minutes and he set to work rigging the demolition charges whilst his devastator squad dug in at the eastern end to cover any enemy approach from the west. They did not have long to wait as soon enemy vehicles were seen approaching along the road, heading towards them in an attempt to reinforce Vraks Star Port.

The lead tank erupted into flames as a well-aimed lascannon shot tore through its front armour. The few crew still left alive stumbled out aflame, each man a human torch who quickly died. The following Chimeras swerved to avoid the blazing wreck now blocking the road, only to find themselves under withering fire from Orias' heavy weapons. Krak missiles and lascannon blasts turned each vehicle in the column into a smouldering pile of metal and blazing fuel. In just a few minutes, the area was littered with the burning hulks of Leman Russes, Chimeras, Sentinels and Basilisks.

As the devastator squads defended the bridge, the assault squads finished setting the explosive charges on each of the causeway's main supports, and Orias ordered all his men back across the causeway for immediate evacuation. The Thunderhawks swooped in again and all of Orias' battle-brothers climbed aboard. His first attack had cost him just three injured warriors; all of which, due to their enhanced physique, were soon fit to continue. As the last Thunderhawk lifted off and banked away north, Orias triggered the detonators. Each of the causeway's supports had been primed and one after another they were split apart by explosions. The ancient edifice of the causeway groaned, cracked, then crumbled under its own weight – the rubble plunging into the deep abyss of the Balan Trench, leaving only an expanding cloud of masonry dust. The enemy's main reinforcement route had been severed and, by the end of the day, both the causeways would also be captured and destroyed by Orias' force.

By the Emperor's Wrath

As Azrael stood in his Land Raider's cupola, looking across the flats towards the spires and rooftops of Vraks Star Port, which stretched away to the horizon, his comms unit received and unscrambled a coded message. Ravenwing outriders had sighted an enemy tank column in Sector 74-46 moving southwards from the star port. Their foe was incoming.

Azrael directed his covering Thunderhawks to intercept, and ordered his own column forwards to engage. From his command Land Raider, he monitored the Thunderhawks as they raced low to strafe the column. Hydra fire was snaking up to meet the Thunderhawks but the gunships' payloads of missiles, along with lascannon and turbo lasers, were inflicting heavy losses on the enemy vehicles in the open. With no air support to protect them, the defenders were at the Thunderhawks' mercy. By the time the leading Land Raiders were directed to the battle by the Land Speeder Scouts, the Srna Flats were already shrouded in the drifting smoke of burning wrecks. The Land Raiders' heavily armoured bulk smashed into the remaining enemy tanks, lascannon cutting through the Leman Russes and Chimeras as Xaphan's forces sought to withdraw to the perceived sanctuary of the star port. Azrael's thrust cut clean through them and swept eastwards, circling the facility. The Supreme Grand Master had already received Brother Orias' confirmation of the destruction of the first causeway. Now he planned to attack from the east of Vraks Star Port, draw the bulk of the enemy garrison to him, then move in 3rd Company from the west, catching the garrison between Brother Orias' anvil and his own hammer.

The first probes into the streets of Vraks Star Port were carried out by low-skimming Ravenwing Land Speeders. Using the intelligence they had gathered to determine the best route in, Azrael then sent forward his Vindicators, supported by battle-brothers riding in Rhinos and Razorbacks. Azrael's strike force moved through the thoroughfares of the star port and unleashed unrestrained destruction upon them, scattering or destroying the waiting traitor militia forces. Overhead, the Thunderhawk gunships had already re-armed and were now remorselessly bombing the enemy from above. Whirlwinds fired salvo after salvo, their shots directed by the Ravenwing as they identified enemy concentrations before speeding away to safety. Xaphan's men found themselves under constant attack as Azrael's armoured thrusts carefully advanced, clearing the way as they went. As night fell, there was no let-up in the attack. Azrael continued to push forwards into the darkness and by dawn's first light, the Dark Angels had cleared the eastern approaches to the star port's northern landing fields and the enemy had fallen back in disarray. Before dawn the 3rd Battle Company were also in position, landing to the west of the main landing fields and deploying as the back stop against enemy withdrawals.

Soon, the traitors had retreated to the large buildings surrounding the landing fields; hangars, warehouses and maintenance sheds were being turned into strongpoints as the Whirlwinds' barrage continued to fall about them. The enemy fortified their positions as best they could, utilising anything large and solid that came to hand to create barricades, including the landing fields' service vehicles – many of which were overturned to block the approach roads. The roar of oncoming Thunderhawks could be heard again as the gunships arrived to deliver their bomb payloads onto the defenders. For the second day of his attack, Azrael contented himself with softening up the foe and sending out fighting patrols to probe enemy positions. He was giving the enemy time to bring more defenders into the vicinity. His aim was not simply the quick destruction of the landing fields, but also the annihilation of the forces defending the star port. The second day passed with sporadic fighting, but the star port continued to echo to the sound of Whirlwind missile impacts and the crash of the enemy artillery as it sought to return fire.

By dawn on the third day, the landing fields were a scene of massive devastation. Rubble and masonry lay scattered around the streets from the repeated air raids, and from the

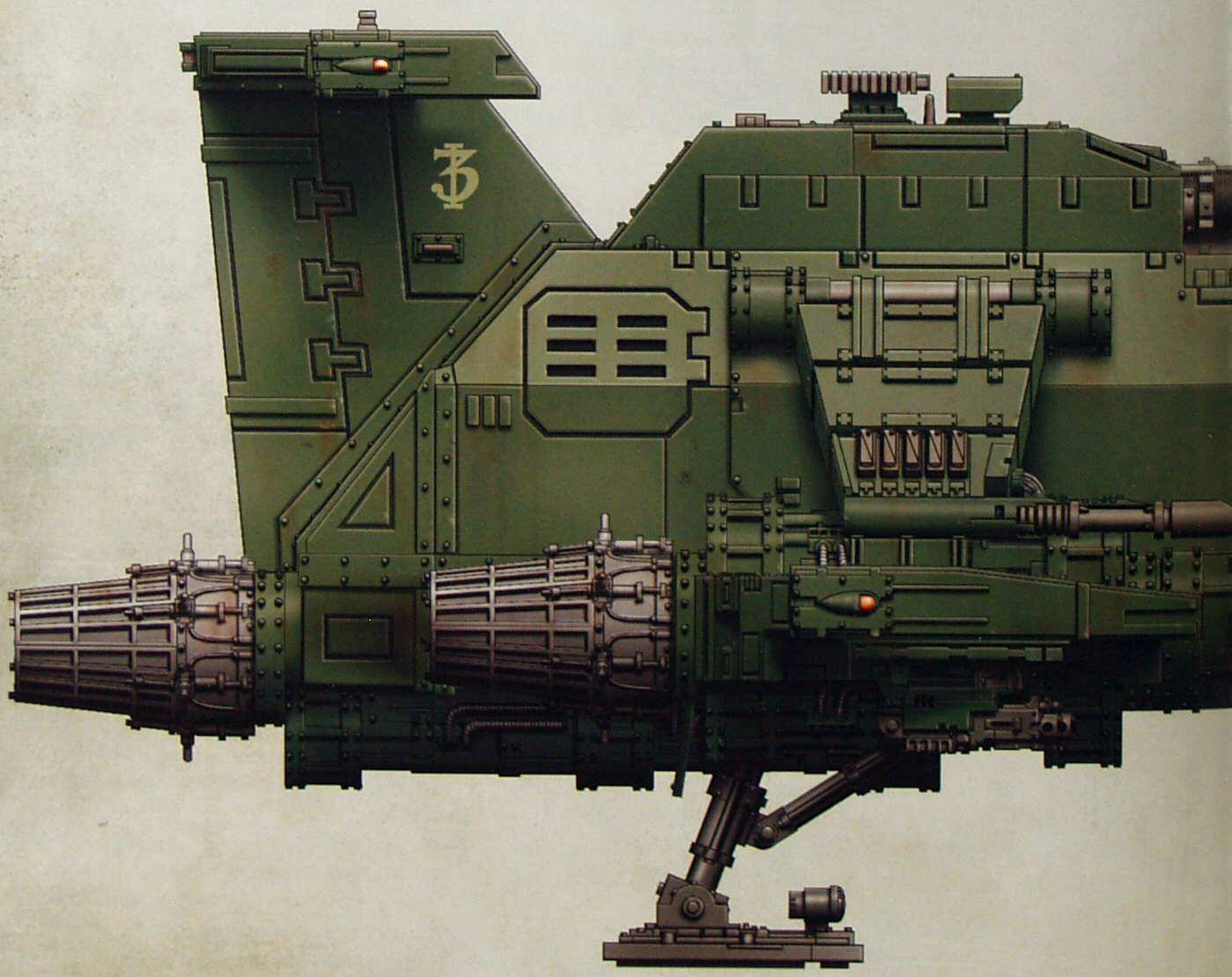
DARK ANGELS CHAPTER ARMOURY

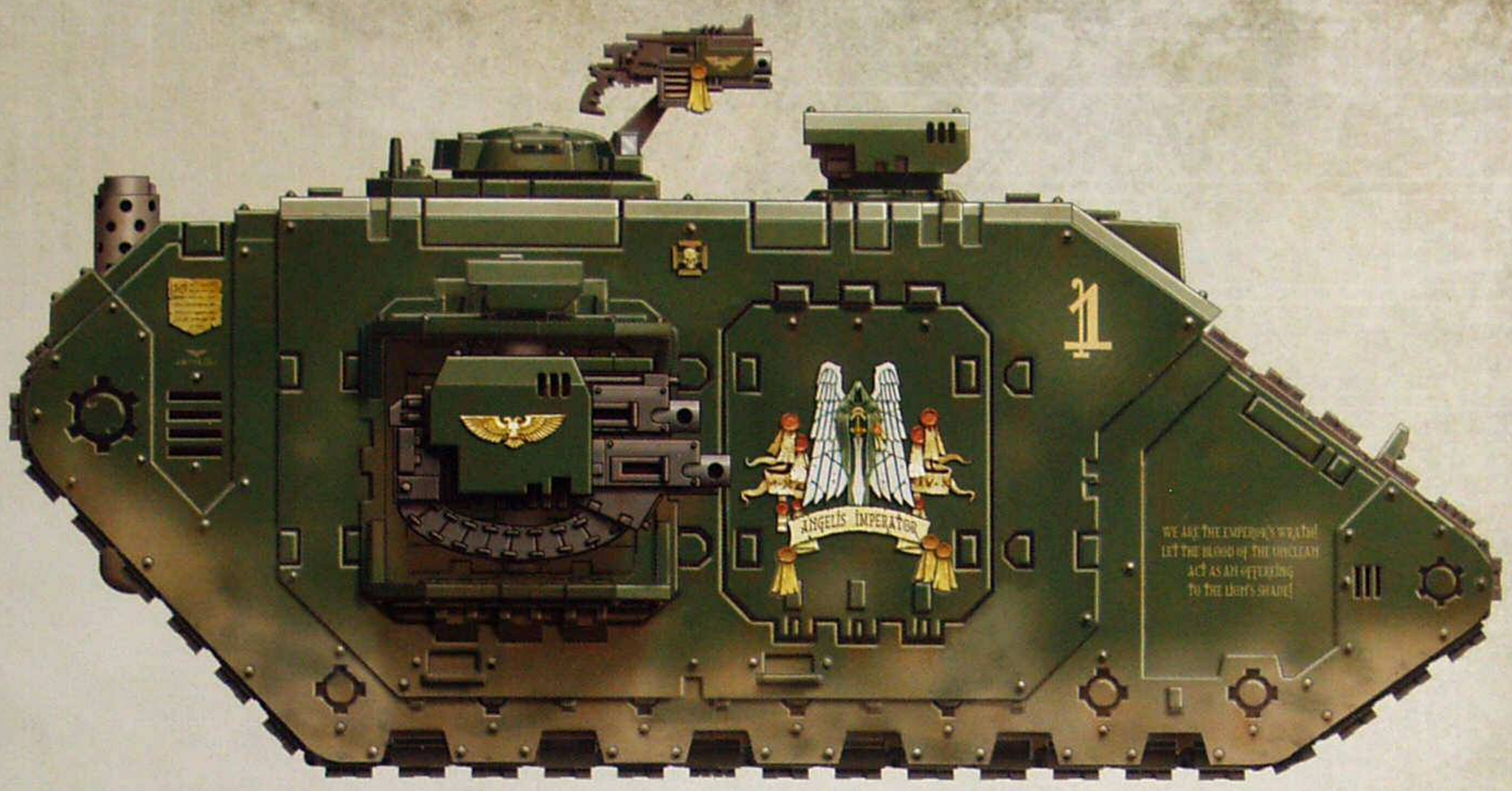
The Dark Angels Chapter is blessed by an extensive reserve of war machines of all classes, including many examples of vehicles once commonplace but almost entirely lost to the 41st Millennium. Many of these most potent war machines are held not at company level, but by the Armourium, their deployment to any given operation at the discretion of the Chapter's Master of the Forge.

The Dark Angels strike force that deployed to Vraks was made up of almost half of the Chapter's strength, a significant commitment requiring a large number of supporting assets to be released from the Armourium. In particular, the Master of the Forge authorised the deployment of sufficient Land Raiders, Razorbacks and Rhinos to provide armoured transport for most of the squads deployed, as well as reinforcements to replace crippled or destroyed vehicles. To support armoured operations, the Armourium supplied additional support vehicles to bolster those already attached to the line companies, in particular Whirlwinds and Vindicators. The former were well able to support the advance and the latter were often used as lead vehicles, especially when attacking into built-up areas.



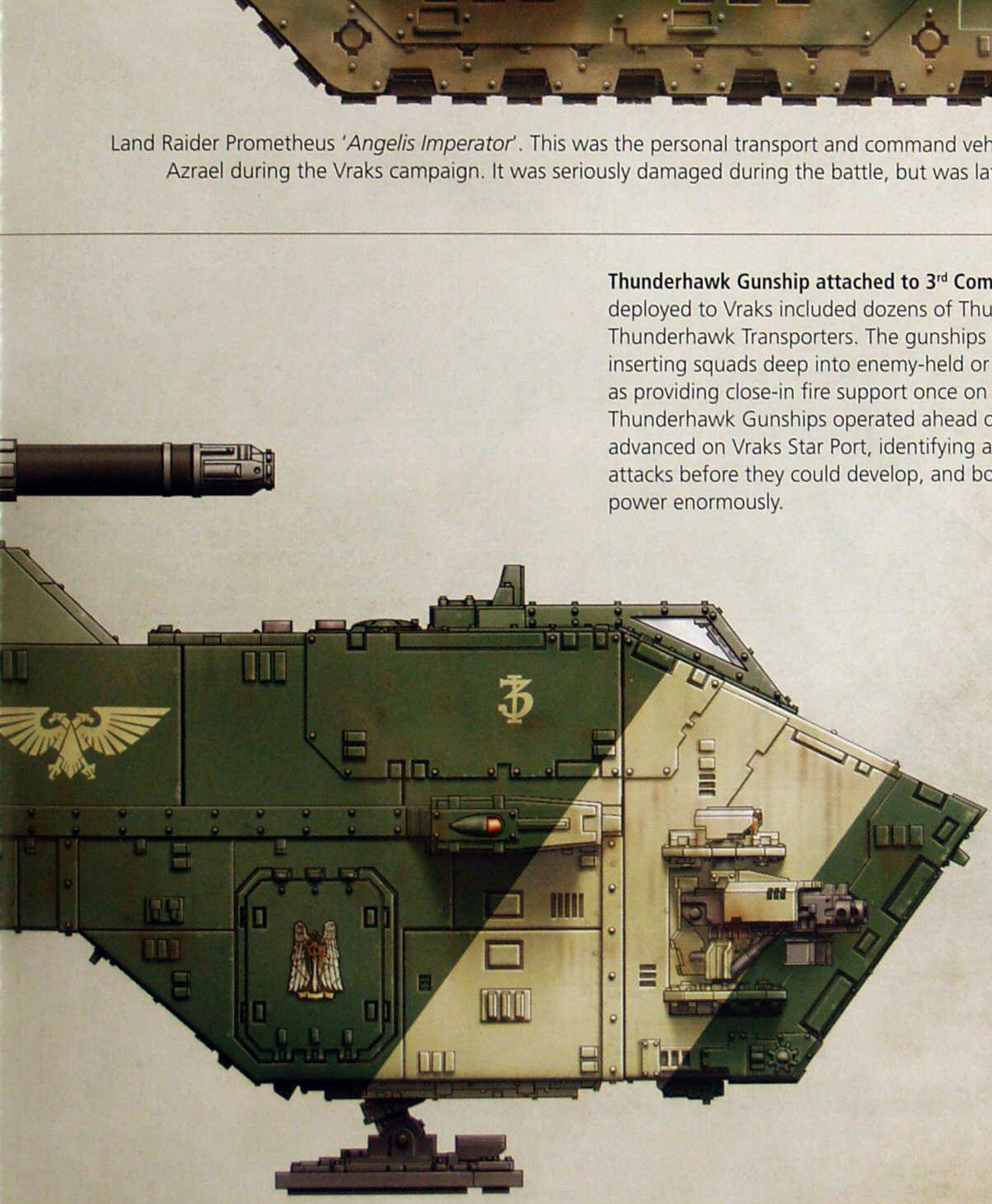
Mk IV Dreadnought, Brother 'Yaziel', of 5th Company, armed with twin-linked heavy bolters.

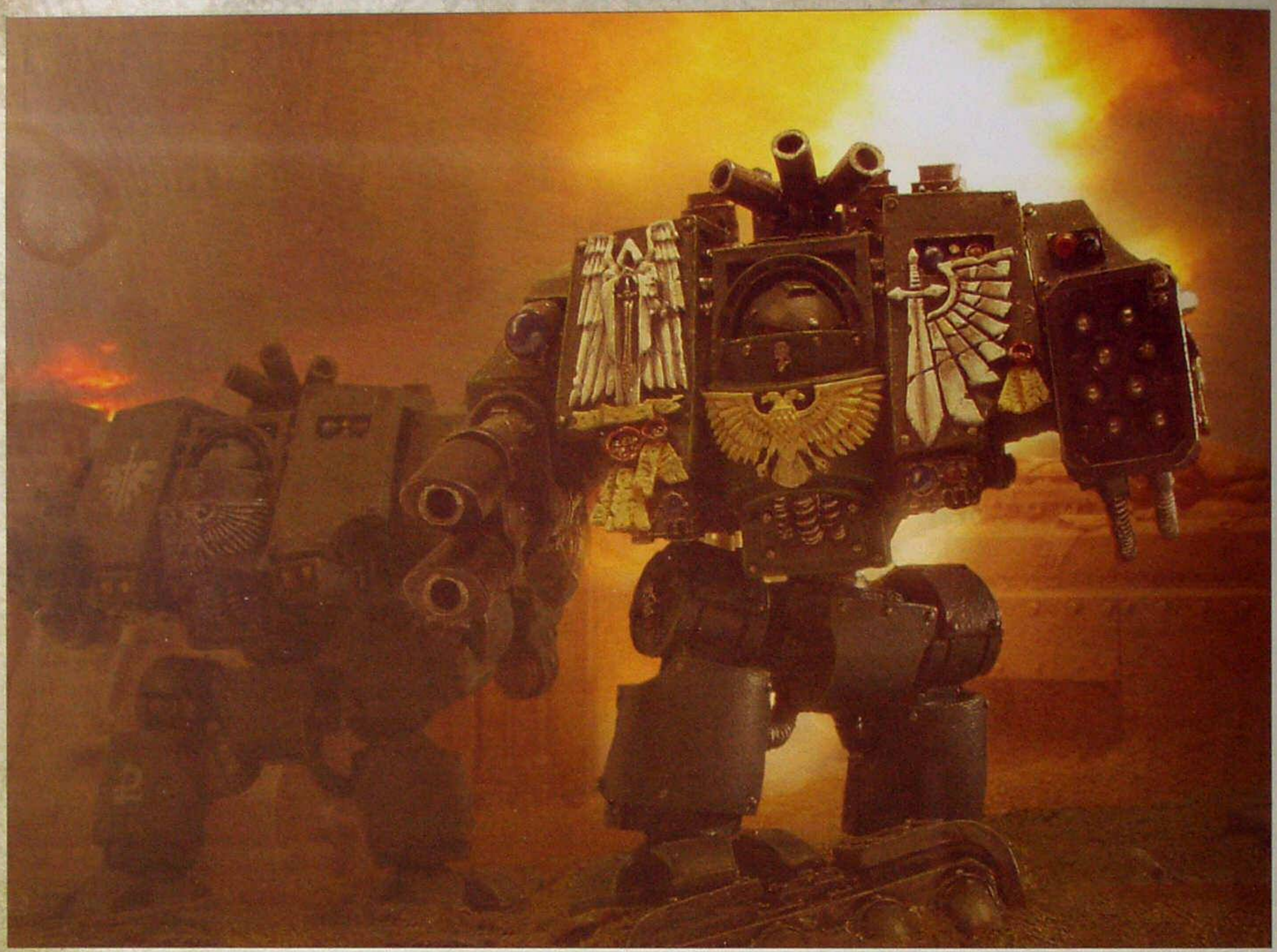




Land Raider Prometheus '*Angelis Imperator*'. This was the personal transport and command vehicle of Supreme Grand Master Azrael during the Vraks campaign. It was seriously damaged during the battle, but was later recovered for repairs.

Thunderhawk Gunship attached to 3rd Company: The strike force deployed to Vraks included dozens of Thunderhawk Gunships and Thunderhawk Transporters. The gunships proved invaluable for inserting squads deep into enemy-held or contested territory, as well as providing close-in fire support once on the ground. Squadrons of Thunderhawk Gunships operated ahead of the armoured column that advanced on Vraks Star Port, identifying and engaging enemy counter-attacks before they could develop, and bolstering the column's fire power enormously.





previous day's patrols, Azrael now had a good idea of where he would attack in force. He mustered the battle-brothers of 6th Company, mostly tactical squads, placed them under the direct command of Interrogator-Chaplain Belphegor and bestowed upon them the honour of being accompanied by the Chapter's Sacred Standard of Devastation into battle, hand picking Veteran Brother Anmael as its bearer. Given extra zeal by this great honour, 6th Company was to hook southwards and launch an attack to seal the defenders in from the south.

Accompanied by Vindicators, Whirlwinds and Predators, the company began its attack and was soon embroiled in house-to-house fighting with the defenders. The Space Marines excelled in such bitter close combat, and as the close-range fire of Vindicators tore buildings down in a single blast, the streets became choked with dust and rubble. The dark green armoured figures of the tactical squads could be seen advancing through the ruins, the bright orange tongues of flamer blasts burning defenders out of their cover. After a day of heavy fighting, the streets were littered with the dead. Belphegor reported that the souls of fifteen battle-brothers had joined their Emperor, but that the southern sectors had now been cleared of resistance.

Day four of the battle began with Azrael again improving his position by bombing the enemy into submission. Dark Angels patrols continued to crunch through the rubble and shattered glass, but there would be no major attack that day. Azrael knew that the renegade forces now occupying the star port were cut off from resupply and reinforcements. Time was on his side as Thunderhawk transporters arrived to deliver supply pods full of fresh ammunition and fuel for his vehicles. His men had been fighting for three days without cessation, but their power armour was sustaining them and would continue to do so for a long time yet. After consolidating his position, Azrael called his company masters together for a briefing. Gathered inside *Angelis Imperator*, the veteran commanders discussed the best way to destroy the pockets of enemy forces they had created. A plan of concentric attacks was decided upon; first an attack from the east by Azrael's forces, then from the south by Belphegor's company, then from the west by Orias' men. Three days would see the enemy perimeter squeezed hard into an ever-decreasing pocket of resistance. Then Azrael himself would lead the final assault to destroy the remainder, along with the Deathwing Terminator squads he had not as yet committed to battle.

So it was ordered and so it was carried out. Over three days each force took its turn in squeezing the enemy tighter and tighter. Each day saw the attacking Space Marines, reinforced with vehicles and veteran battle-brothers interred in Dreadnought suits, involved in the hard fighting needed to systematically clear buildings and, with Thunderhawks still roaming the skies unopposed, the enemy stood little chance. Every local counterattack the traitors tried was repulsed.

Then, during Orias' attack, 3rd Company reported they had overrun several landing pads and identified and engaged a force of Traitor Legionaries – the treacherous followers of Lord Arkos. The Alpha Legion had finally committed its forces to the defence of Vraks Star Port. Azrael wanted as many of the Traitor Legionaries taken as possible. Come the final battle, their capture would be one of the objectives of the Deathwing's assault.

The Dark Angels had been fighting for Vraks Star Port for eight days before Azrael ordered the final attack. Leading elements of the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 8th and 9th Companies, the Supreme Grand Master climbed aboard his Land Raider to finish off all remaining enemy resistance. As missiles and shells exploded about them, the Dark Angels attacked en mass. There was no quarter to be given, those who had turned from the Emperor's Light would die. With their righteous fury still burning strong after ten thousand years, the Dark Angels sought vengeance for the ancient treachery that had so nearly destroyed their Chapter and the Imperium of Man. The fighting was fierce and bloody, but the human renegades could not hope to stand against the massive armoured might of the Deathwing. Five Terminator squads went from building to building, storm bolters, heavy flamers and assault cannon blazing as they swept away all before them. At the height of the battle, Azrael's Land Raider was hit by a lascannon blast that tore off a weapons sponson. The resulting detonation of heavy bolter ammunition disabled the tracks and immobilised *Angelis Imperator*. Within, Azrael donned the Lion Helm and, with his silent cloaked companion and his command squad close behind, lowered the front ramp and charged out into the fire-swept streets. Bellowing, *"Vengeance!"*, he plunged into the traitors' ranks, the black blade of the *Sword of Secrets* cutting a bloody swathe as the Lion Helm protected him from harm. His white over-robes quickly turned red with the blood of the Emperor's foes as Azrael's furious assault saw many fleeing before him. Other battle-brothers arrived to assist their commander and it seemed the day had been won. It was at that moment the Alpha Legion counterattacked.

Lying in wait, they had used the renegade militiamen as bait to draw the Dark Angels on. Now they sprung their trap, launching themselves from their hiding places to surround Azrael's brothers in a storm of weapons fire. As bolter rounds detonated all around, Azrael saw Brother Anmael fall to the onslaught and the Sacred Standard he was proudly holding aloft topple. Determined not to allow it to fall into the dust of the traitorous world, he and other battle-brothers raced through enemy fire and reached the banner just as the foe did. The Dark Angels and Alpha Legionaries fought over the fallen body of Brother Anmael, neither giving ground, but the Master of the Dark Angels was a formidable opponent. Whilst the other Dark Angels fought to hold back the Alpha Legion's sudden ambush, Azrael cut down the last of his foes and plucked up the honoured symbol of his Chapter. As he did so, a massive figure strode through the smoke surrounding the battle, his ancient power armour ornately decorated with blasphemous runes and the heretical eight-pointed star of Chaos Undivided. It was Lord Arkos, Azrael's quarry on Vraks.

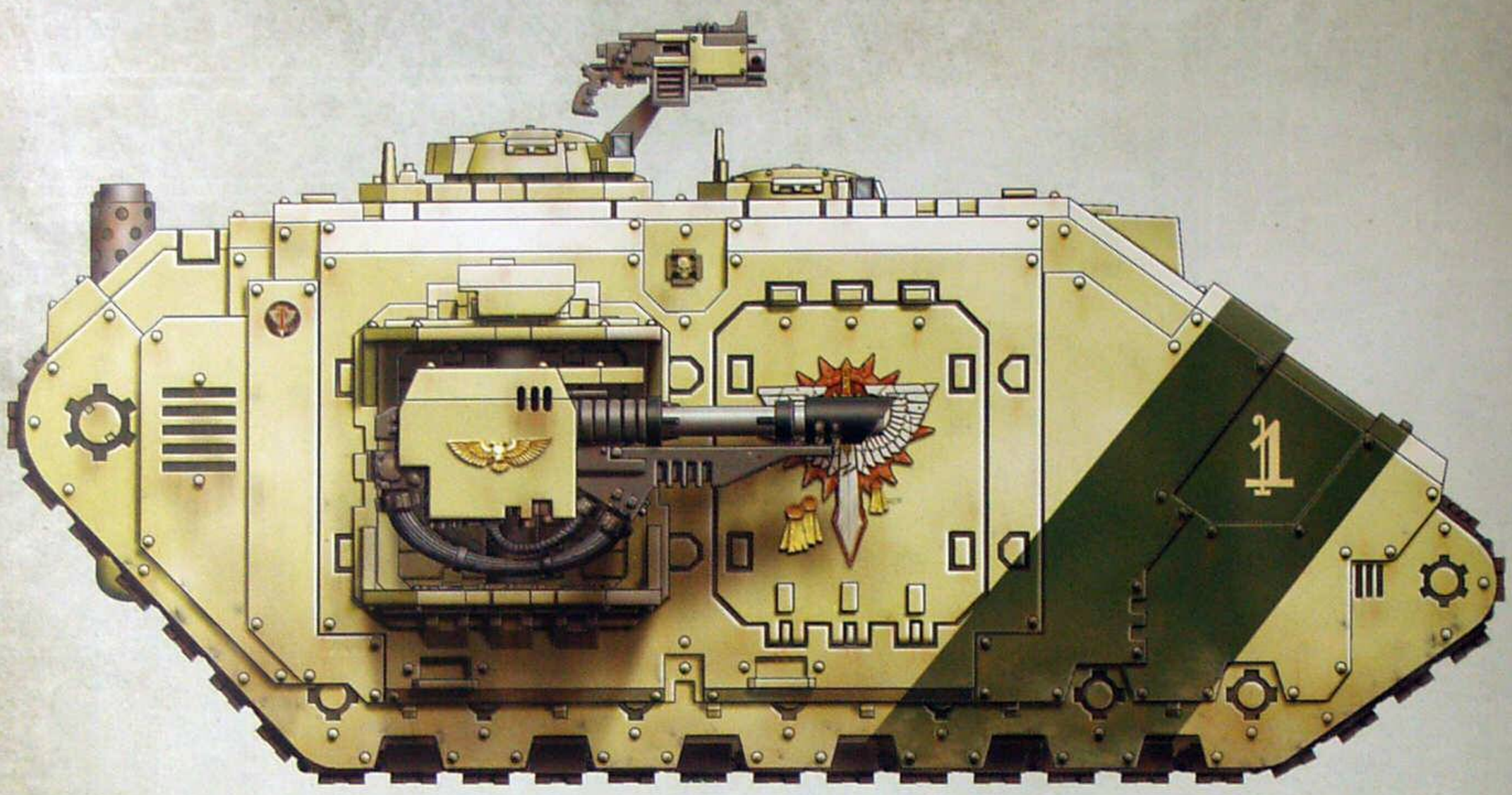
Arkos charged at Azrael. As he did so a loyal battle-brother launched himself into Arkos' path, only to be cut clean in two by the stroke of the Chaos champion's warp-tainted blade. Enraged at the merciless death, Azrael charged and the two mighty warriors clashed. In one hand Azrael held the Sacred Standard of Devastation, in the other the *Sword of Secrets*. The two warriors rained furious blows upon each other, lunging and parrying with all the skill they could muster until, gathering his full might, Arkos suddenly struck with such speed and might that his blade slipped past Grand Master Azrael's defences and blood began to seep through the joints of his artificer armour.

The weight of Arkos' mighty blow had finally wounded the Dark Angels Supreme Grand Master. Sensing they were at a pivotal moment in their duel, both summoned up every reserve of strength they could muster, but Arkos had the combined power of the four Chaos gods with him. Chanting a litany to his masters, Arkos' blows forced Azrael ever backwards, weakening his opponent until a shoulder charge and a fast, low sweeping cut sent Azrael sprawling to the ground, the *Sword of Secrets* skittering from his grasp. Prone amongst the rubble, the standard still clutched in one fist, Azrael saw death approaching as Arkos loomed over him. The Chaos champion laughed in triumph and raised *Darkblade* for the killing blow.

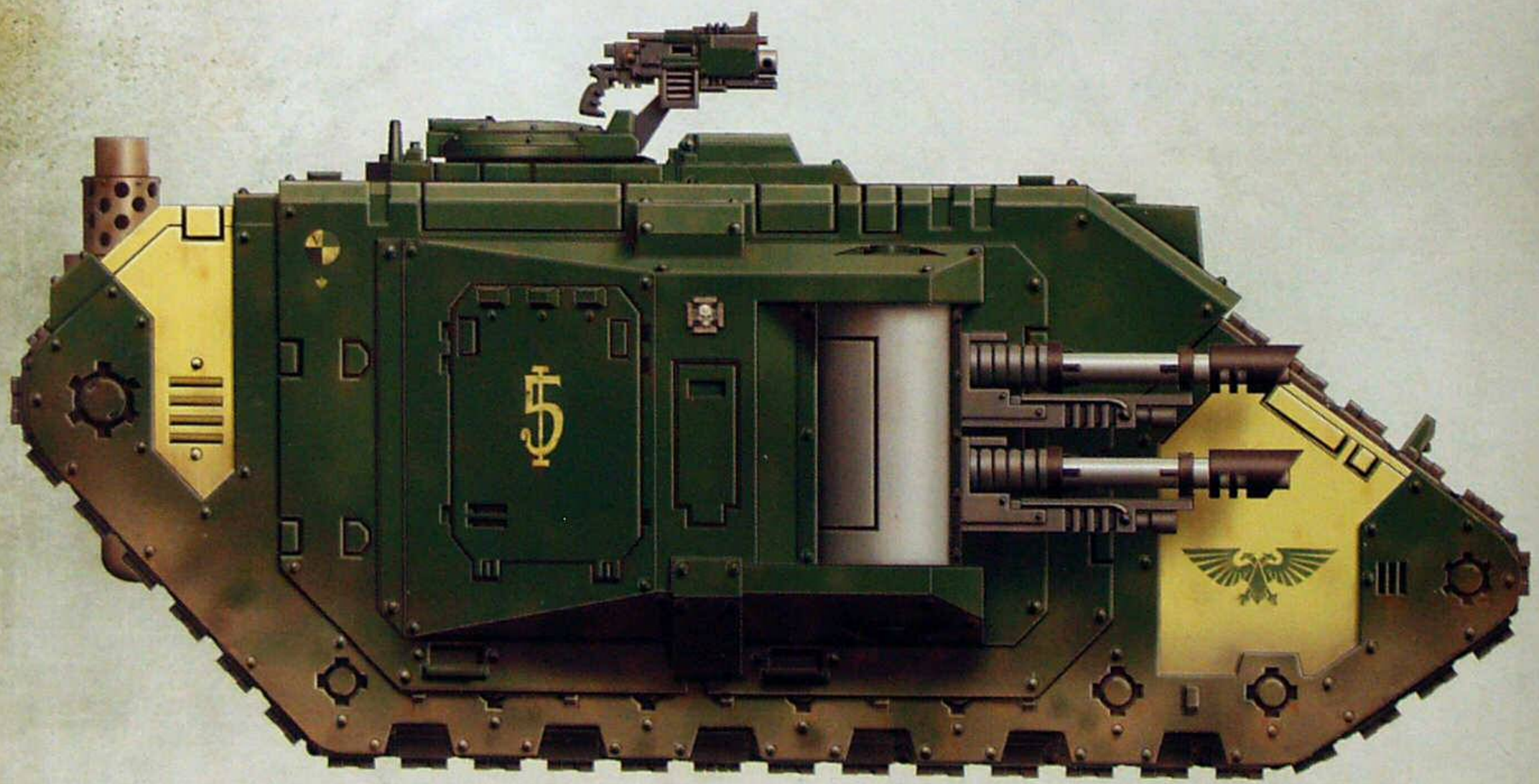
As Lord Arkos reached out to strike the deathblow that would see the Supreme Grand Master's reign ended, weapons fire from an assault cannon sent him staggering backwards. Advancing implacably up the street came Deathwing Terminators led by Interrogator-Chaplain Belphegor, his crozius arcanum held high as he charged towards their foe. Catching him off-balance, Belphegor smashed the Traitor Marine to the ground with a blow with so much force behind it that it cracked his armour. Now it was Arkos who fell dazed and bleeding. His enemy felled, Belphegor instinctively turned, concerned for his wounded commander who was still sprawled upon the floor barely conscious. When Belphegor turned back Arkos was gone, vanished into the encircling dust like smoke on the breeze.

Azrael had been badly wounded in his duel and was immediately evacuated via Thunderhawk gunship to his battle barge, the Chapter's apothecaries tending to his injuries the moment he was brought onboard. Command on the ground was transferred to Master Orias – Lord Arkos and his men were still out there and needed to be hunted down. It was soon clear though that the Alpha Legion had drifted away, recalled by their defeated commander. Their ambush had inflicted painful losses on the Dark Angels, but the Traitor Marines could not win this battle alone. The surviving militiamen sought to escape the star port, and two more days of fighting would see their scattered remnants hunted down and destroyed.

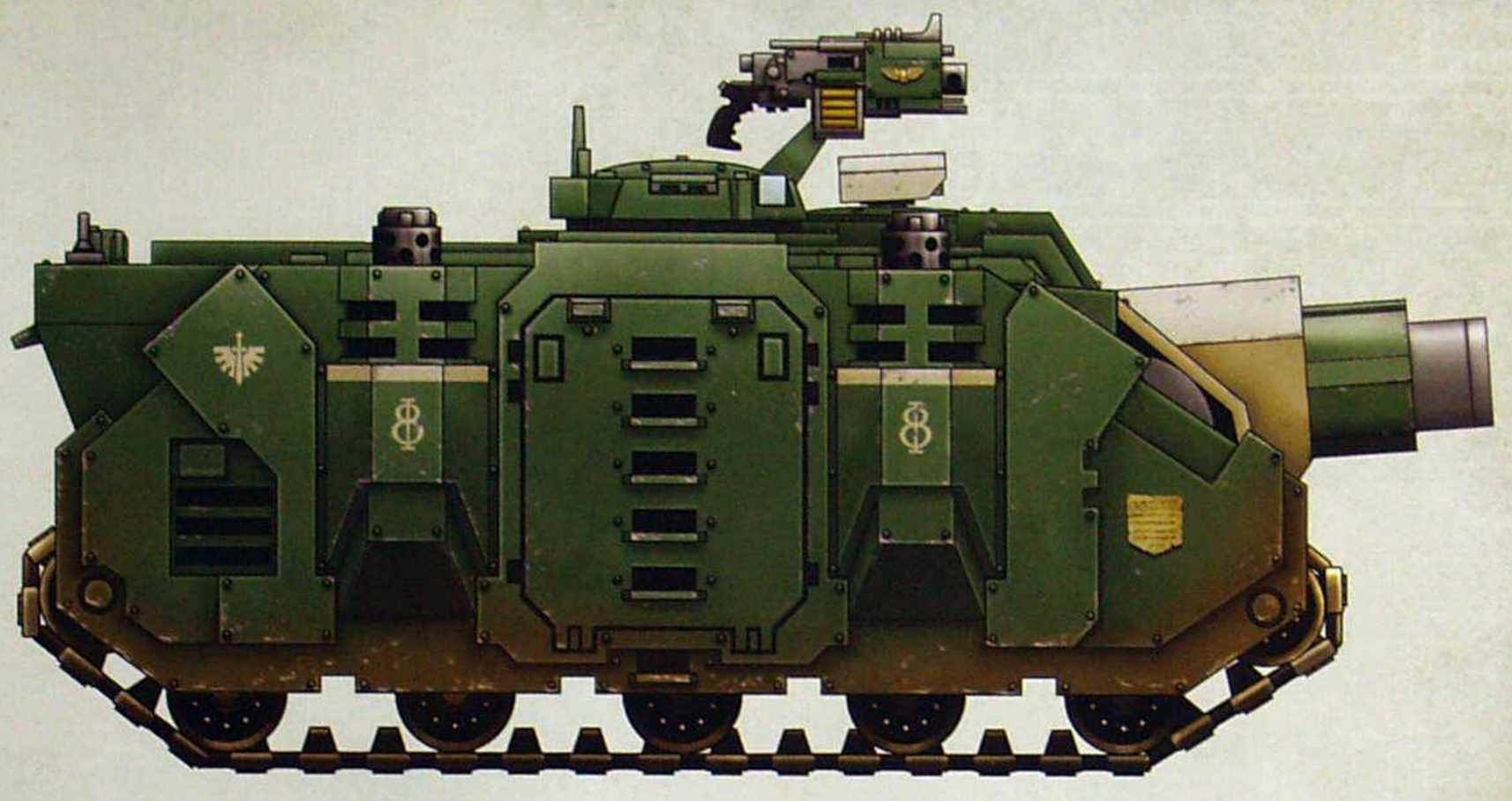
After ten days of battle, Vraks Star Port was securely in the hands of the Dark Angels Chapter and they set about destroying what was left of the facility with demolition charges, before withdrawing back to their waiting battle barge and strike cruisers.



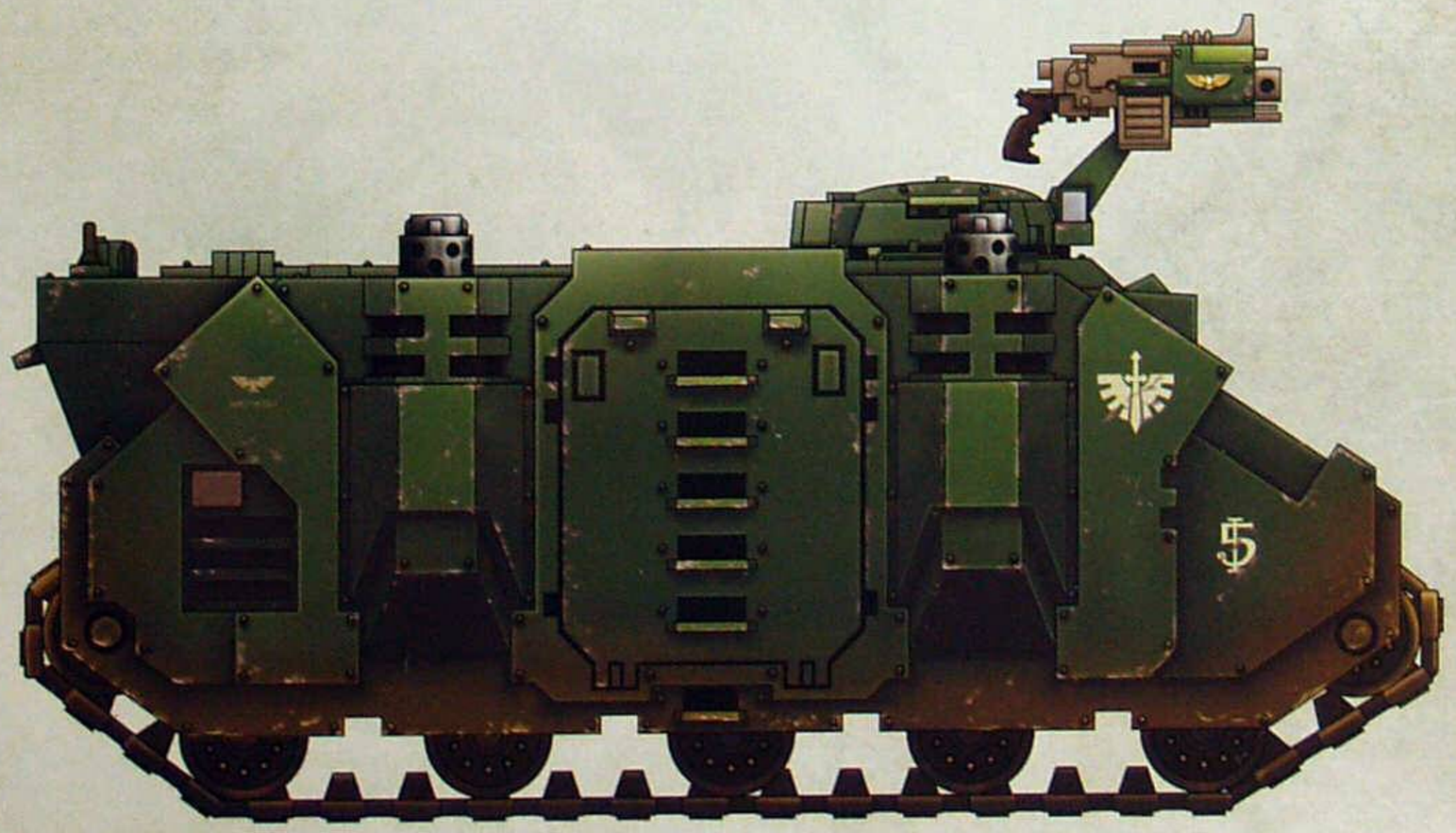
Land Raider of the Dark Angels 1st Company, Deathwing. This vehicle transported a Terminator squad during the final phase of the battle for Vraks Star Port.



Mk IIb Land Raider attached to the Dark Angels 5th Company for the duration of the Vraks campaign.



Vindicator Siege Tank, the eighth vehicle of its type attached to the strike force. This vehicle was fitted with additional armour plates before its deployment, the foresightedness of the Chapter Armourium's Techmarines credited with keeping it operational when it was engaged by enemy field artillery while leading the assault through the outer precincts of Vraks Star Port.



Rhino Armoured Carrier. This vehicle was part of the permanent strength of the Dark Angels' 5th Company. It was fitted with additional armour plating, although these were insufficient to save the vehicle from destruction when it was struck by a battle cannon shell on day five of the assault on Vraks Star Port.

The battle for the star port was considered a victory, but the Dark Angels had paid a high price in their own blood. Their Supreme Grand Master was still recovering from his wounds and Sacred Standard Bearer Anmael had been killed, as had almost many of their battle-brothers. They had failed to take a single Traitor Legionary alive, although the battle barge's cells did contain many captured renegade militiamen who would face the Interrogator-Chaplains on its return to the Rock. Azrael forwarded a characteristically laconic astropathic message to the 88th Army's headquarters on Thracian Primaris. It simply read, *"By the Emperor's Wrath, Vraks Star Port destroyed. Mission complete."*

With that, his strike force was gone.

"To retreat is defeat. Advance! Advance! In our death lies victory."

Captain Denos, 19th Company, 468th Regiment.

The Big Push

It had been nine years since the Siege of Vraks had begun. By now the 88th Siege Army should have been entrenched at the inner defence lines having cracked the first two rings, and it should have had the Citadel itself within the sights of its heavy artillery. But those nine years of relentless conflict had not gone entirely to plan. The 88th Siege Army had been forced to request more men on more than one occasion, but the success of the Dark Angels' attack had given cause for new hope, and Lord Zuehlke saw a chance to redeem earlier failures with a decisive breakthrough.

The addition of a new line korps with three fresh regiments gave his command staff on Vraks the extra forces they needed to mount a significant offensive. Due to their earlier heavy losses, the siege regiments had become too weak to effectively push back onto enemy lines, and their commanders had become content to hold, harass the foe and look to make a series of uncoordinated small gains in the hope that one of these would be the first crack in the dam, but Lord Zuehlke was running out of time. He had been given twelve years to complete his mission and the resources of Krieg had poured onto Vraks in vast quantities.

In response, he ordered the three new regiments, and those already in the line, to plan and execute a big push, an all-out offensive that applied constant and sustained pressure on the second defence lines over its entire frontage. This would draw in the enemy's reserves and then destroy them under a massed artillery bombardment or with powerful infantry attacks. By sustaining the pressure, the enemy would eventually break somewhere. When they did, an assault korps would be rushed in to the gap made and smash through to the inner defence line. If the breakthrough attack was fast enough, the Death Korps might even be able to drive into the inner defence line and establish a foothold before the enemy had a chance to dig himself in once again.

Time was needed for the big push; to organise attack plans, position and provision the artillery, bring battered companies up to strength with new men and supplies, to prepare the battlefield by clearing minefields, and most importantly, stockpile sufficient shells to make the preparatory bombardment – the heaviest of the siege war yet. It was a massive organisational task for the command staff of the 88th Siege Army, but when complete, the army would be ready for a great battle – perhaps it would even signal the turning point of the war.

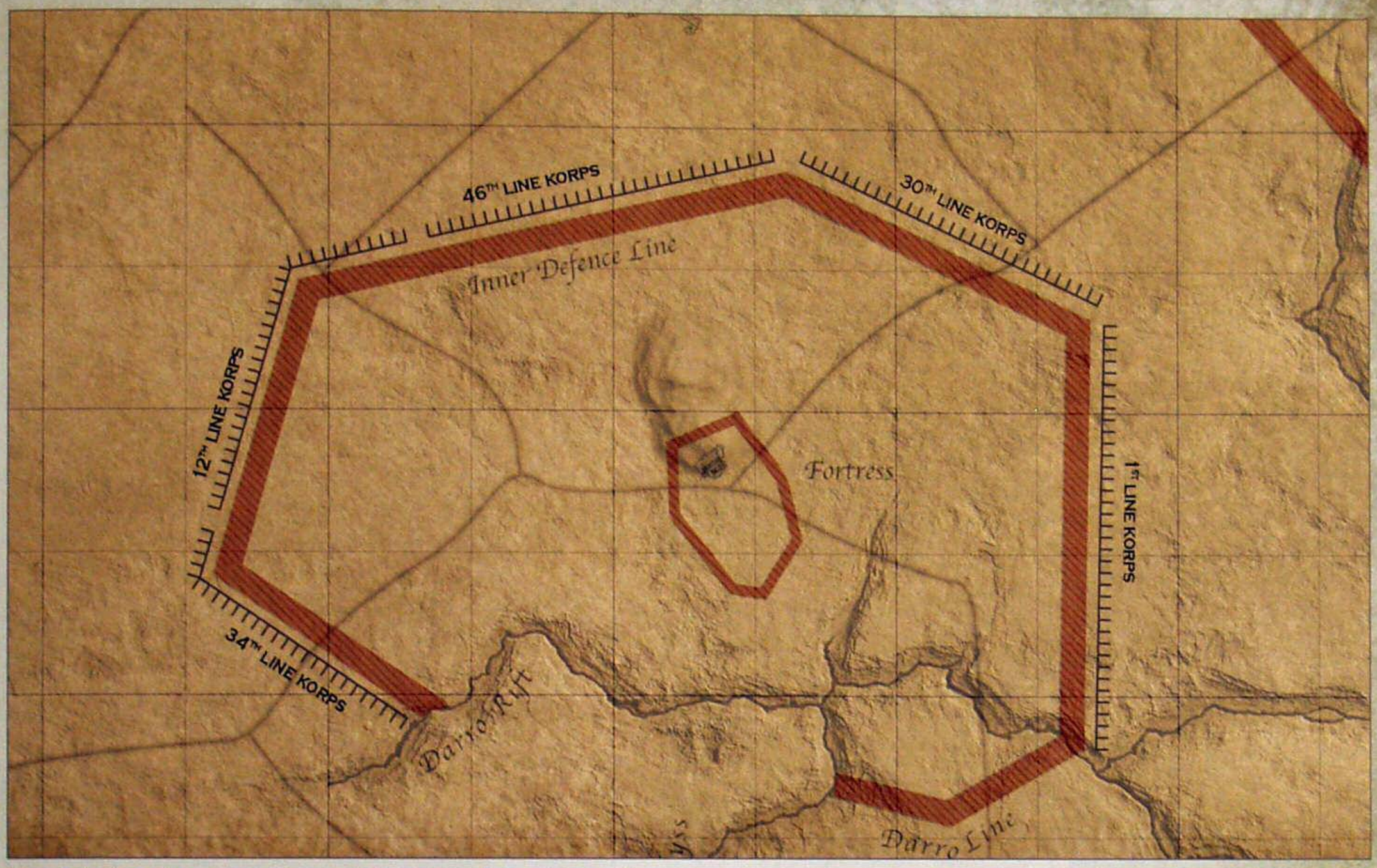
The time for the start of the new offensive was set as 101822.M41. Vraks' traitorous defenders could not fail to notice the build-up for the assault. Patrols and observation posts along the lines reported the increase in troop numbers at the front and the Imperium's stockpiling of arms and equipment. In response, shells rained down on the Krieg trench lines in an attempt to 'spoil' the preparations now underway. Krieg's artillery responded with equal fury. Every gun destroyed now was one less to shower destruction down on the enemy when it finally came time for the infantry to go over the top.

At 089822.M41, every barrage gun in the 88th Siege Army roared out, lighting the sky with muzzle flashes as they rained high explosives down on the defenders. All day and all night the guns fired in an attempt to break down the resistance of the foe. Outside and above them the ground shook with the force of the explosions and the air throbbed with concussion – little would have survived such a deadly environment. Meanwhile the defenders waited, hidden underground in deep dug-outs, protected by layers of earth and ferrocrete.

In darkness the Imperium's trenches began to fill up with troops. The first wave was in position. The second wave was also ready, crowded in shoulder to shoulder, heavily laden with extra equipment, grenades, ammunition and rations for the coming days of battle. As lightning storms crackled overhead, set off by the intense barrage, and the orange jet of flames from the unceasing bombardment lit up the Van Meersland Wastes, a force of over two million Krieg troops was now ready to attack. At dawn the fury of the barrage stopped, and for a brief second there was once again an eerie silence.

Seconds later, the order to begin the attack flashed through every vox-caster in the forward trenches. In a scramble the men of the Death Korps were up the ladders and over the parapet, surging forward across no-man's land. Quickly, the traitors responded to the lifting of the bombardment. They knew what was to follow and ran to crew their weapons.

In many places the traitors' defensive positions had vanished, blown away in the devastation caused by the four-day bombardment. Forced to make use of what they had taken into their bunkers with them, they scrambled into shell holes and levelled their guns. Mere smoke could not stop bullets or lasblasts, and even though targets had not yet come into view, they opened a lethal wave of weapons fire. Inside the enshrouding clouds of smoke and dust, the advancing Krieg Guardsmen could not see their foe, but the sudden rattle of heavy stubbers, the bark of heavy bolters and the staccato bursts of autogun fire soon saw their numbers start to fall. Regardless, the attackers pressed on.



The 88th Siege Army's positions as it faced the inner defence lines.

Soon the defensive batteries that had not already been knocked out opened up with their own weapons fire. No-man's land had long been pre-sighted, so the response was rapid and accurate. Shells started to crash down into the advancing Krieg ranks as the defenders' weapons fire increased, summoning up the maelstrom of destruction again. In no-man's land whole squads were being wiped out as the salvoes created a wall of shrapnel. As the artillery fire hammered down, it caused the total collapse of the 158th Regiment's attack in Sector 50-45, a crucial march on a wrongly perceived weakness in the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's battle lines.

In other sectors there was more progress made – the Death Korps were pushing on regardless of heavy losses. In places they had reached enemy lines and overrun them. In the welter of bloody frontal assaults, bayonets clashing with knives, bullets tearing into flesh and bone, the overall picture of the battle was confused and patchy. In places, regimental commanders would report good progress, in others failure and heavy losses. Despite this, the second wave was ordered forwards, and again the Death Korps surged into no-man's land by the thousands, long lines of greatcoated battle heroes stretching towards the horizon. The offensive raged for seven bloody days and there was still no breakthrough in sight until, at 122822.M41, the 468th Regiment, a new formation in its first battle, launched an attack in Sector 57-50.

Colonel Attas, commanding officer of the 468th, had devised a plan to mount a night attack against the enemy trench line now facing him. Assembling all his artillery companies to support the operation, and securing additional ammunition from 46th Line Korps' stockpiles, the plan was that he would personally lead the vanguard of assault companies. Under the cover of a sustained night bombardment, they would creep forwards across no-man's land to get as close to the enemy as possible. His companies would then lie low all night until dawn broke, when the bombardment would concentrate on hitting the enemy's front lines. The most critical part of the plan would then follow. The barrage would lift, moving on fifty metres and allowing the assault companies to surge forwards over the shortened distance to the enemy, not allowing them time to react to the attack. With the enemy's trenches under his possession, the colonel's following companies would then pass through the first wave to carry the attack forwards.

At 124822.M41 on a pitch-black night, Attas' assault companies set off, slithering through no-man's land on their bellies in silence, their colonel taking the lead. As they crawled, every gun in the regiment, as well as those independent companies that Attas had secured for the attack, opened fire in a thunderous barrage.

At the designated time, the fire concentrated on the front line. The Krieg Guardsmen laid in wait as the earth one hundred metres ahead of them was pounded to destruction. Then the barrage lifted and rolled fifty metres forwards, and on its heels Colonel Attas rose to his feet, laspistol and sword in hand and waved his men on.

The surprise was complete and the enemy had little time to react. Before they could emerge, their dugouts were being cleared with clusters of frag grenades. Many tried to

flee, seeing that the Death Korps were already upon them. Colonel Attas vaulted across a trench, waving his men to follow and give pursuit, only to suddenly find himself face to face with a monster. Ten feet tall and built of pure muscle, the enraged Ogryn emerged from its trench to deal the surprised colonel a smashing blow with a sledge hammer. The colonel's broken body flew six metres through the air, his ribcage shattered with the force of the attack. Oblivious to its destruction of the enemy force's leader, the crazed beast charged through a hail of lasgun shots, roaring and battering a path forwards before the blast of a well-aimed krak grenade tore it apart.

Despite Colonel Attas' death, at dawn the second wave advanced, passing through the successful first wave of attackers. Suddenly they were through. No more bunkers, trenches, walls, barricades or razor wire stood between the 468th Regiment and its objective. The second defence line had been breached. News of the 468th Regiment's success reached High Command quickly, and the reinforcements needed to widen the gap were soon on their way. First to arrive was a battery of quad launchers, towed forwards by Centaurs, and these were rapidly set up, firing off rapid salvoes of shells to smash the enemy's last desperate attempts to counter-attack. More troops followed: tanks, Gorgons, heavier guns, squadrons of Death Riders galloping through then wheeling eastwards and westwards to attack the enemy further down the line from behind.

Just as with the initial breakthrough almost eight years before, the following days would see the second defence line fold like a house of cards. The dam had finally been broken and the warriors of Krieg flowed through it with the force of a tsunami. Leaving suicidal rearguards to stall the enemy advance, the defenders pulled back rapidly. One by one the Krieg regiments were advancing, in some places unopposed. The 468th Regiment went on to capture the ruins of Hab-zone Two and was soon embroiled in street fighting with their foe, but the regiments to their left and right were also pushing southwards and the hab-zone was rapidly surrounded. Any renegades who had not escaped the encirclement by that point were quickly overwhelmed and destroyed.

But just as with the first breakthrough, there could be no headlong rush into the inner defence zone. The 88th Siege Army needed time to rebuild and prepare for its next attack. It needed new men, new guns and new tanks. It had taken nine years to reach this position. Nine years of blood and slaughter equal to the worst war zones anywhere in the Imperium. Over four million Krieg Guardsmen had already been sacrificed on Vraks, but it seemed that now the ultimate victory was within their grasp. The Citadel of Vraks was within range of its Earthshaker cannon. For the first time their ultimate objective was within striking distance.

Within the Citadel, the commanders of the Traitor army felt the cold, harsh reality of possible defeat settle upon them as the Krieg regiments closed in on their stronghold, but the Apostate Cardinal no longer cared. The apocalypse was here, the slaughter of the Imperium's enemies must continue – he cared not for victory or defeat, only for the death and destruction of those who opposed him and Mankind. Long gone were his dreams to cast out into the galaxy and kill the heretic and burn the traitor. Deacon Mamon had seen to that over the years as bloody war raged outside the walls of his sanctuary, twisting Xaphan's mind until he too believed the lies they had told the men and women of Vraks. As far as Xaphan was concerned, the Imperium was rotten to the core with traitors, traitors who now sought to destroy him and the world he held guardianship over. But he would see their deaths come to pass first.

It did not take much for Lord Arkos to edge himself into the now clearly insane Apostate Cardinal's confidence, quickly usurping Deacon Mamon as his closest and most valued advisor. Working his shadowy arts upon him, skills taught to his Legion by his perfidious Primarch millennia before, the weak-minded Xaphan stood no chance. Soon he had been convinced that the ultimate threat to the Imperium was none other than the Emperor Himself. His saviour, the man Xaphan had spent his whole life devoted to, had turned His back on them all.

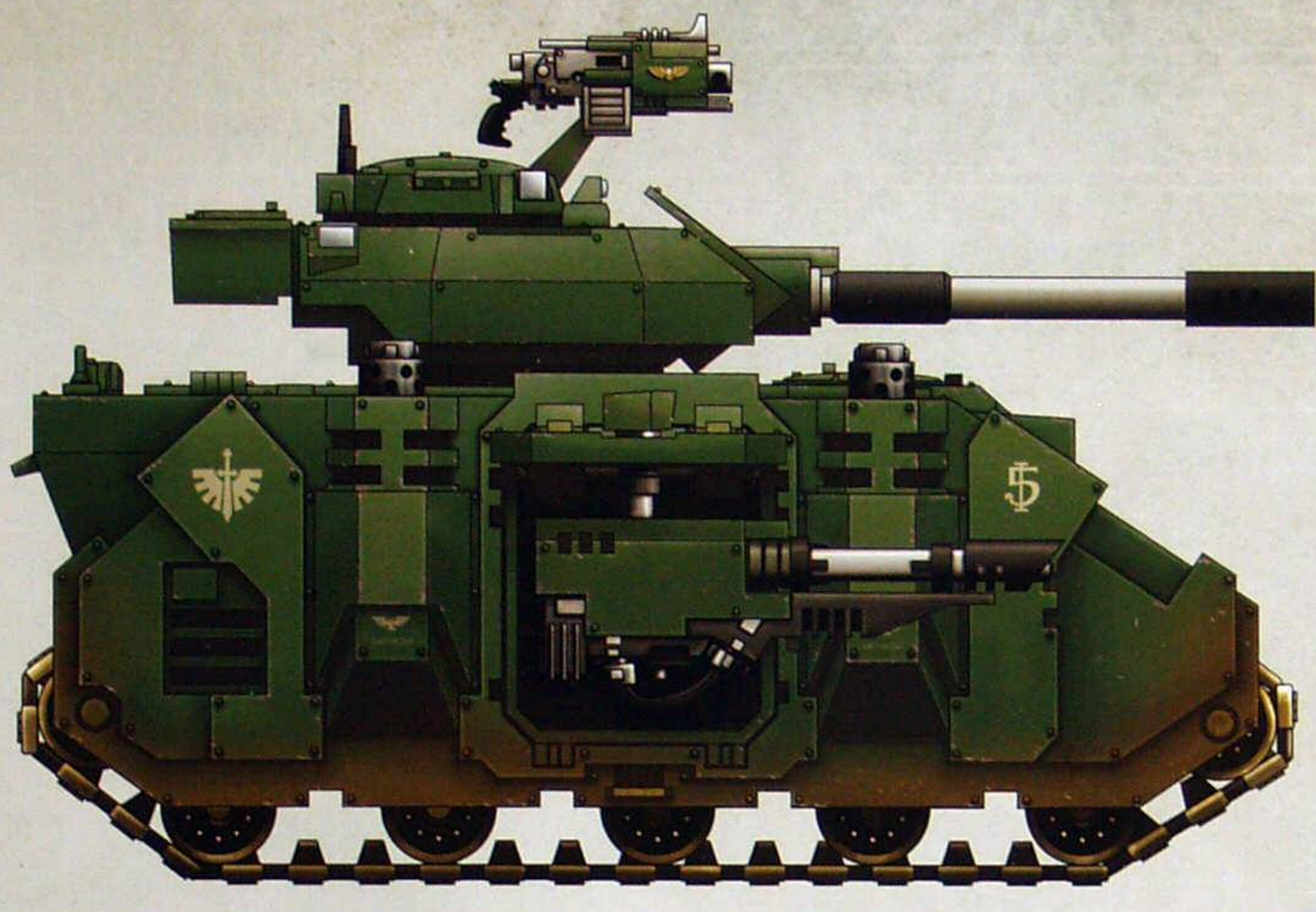
His mind utterly broken, the Apostate Cardinal of Vraks retreated into himself. For days he would sit in his chambers staring blankly off into the distance, completely oblivious to the battles raging outside. In his rare lucid moments, he would vent his frustration upon anyone who dared approach him, the endless casualty reports in particular setting off a dark fury. *"What little did it all matter now?"* he would rage. If the Emperor cared for them no more, perhaps it was better that they died than live on through the eternal darkness to come. Arkos convinced him otherwise.

As the Death Korps broke through the second defence line, he counselled that all was not yet lost. The false Emperor's armies may be tightening their noose, but there were others who would favour Xaphan if he stayed resolute and fought on. Many allies were ready and willing to aid him if he just agreed to accept the help they offered. If Xaphan put the men and women of Vraks under his care, then Arkos would see his plans through to fruition.

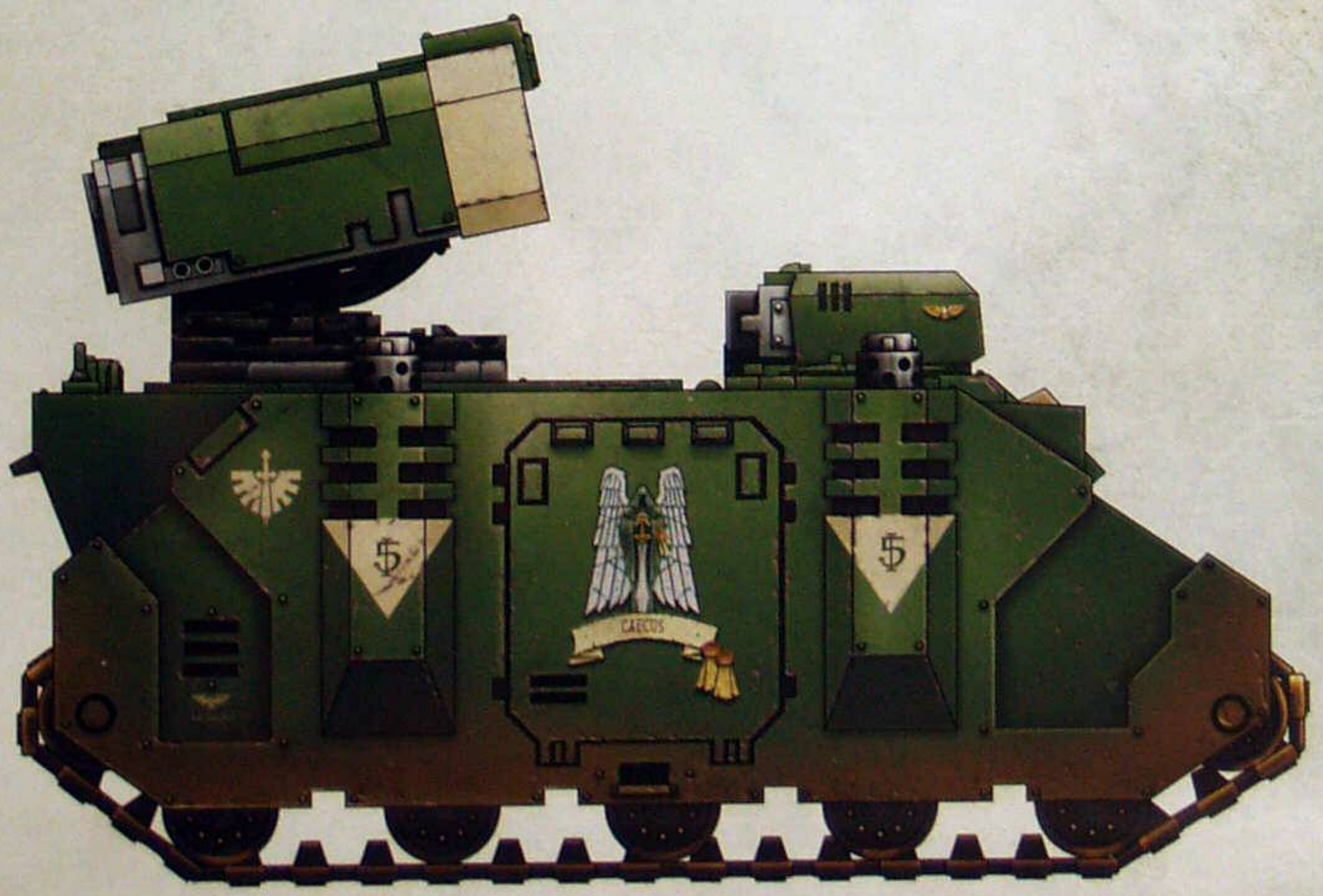
The faint glimmer of hope was all it took and Xaphan nodded his consent, unwittingly condemning the people of Vraks to an even more terrible fate than the one they were already enduring. Leaving the Apostate Cardinal to retreat back into his personal hell, Arkos summoned his sorcerous advisors to him and began the bloody sacrificial ceremony that would bring the dark gods' followers directly to Vraks.

Within hours Krieg sentries reported unusual sightings. Strange storm clouds were seen gathering and the horizon was soon lit red by flickering lights that painted the sky the colour of blood. As the days passed, the storm grew in intensity, its clouds gathering directly above the Citadel, a red and black mass that steadily grew into a whirling maelstrom in the upper atmosphere.

After nine years the men of Krieg might be winning the war on Vraks, but the warp-spawned storm presaged worse horrors still to come.



Mars pattern Predator Destructor. Fitted with additional armour plates. This vehicle was wrought and consecrated in the Dark Angels Chapter Forge in 803.M41. Its deployment with the 5th Company to Vraks was its first operation and it was later declared 'Armourium Belicosa' by the Chapter's Masters of the Forge.



Helios pattern Whirlwind Missile Tank. This vehicle was attached to the 5th Company for the advance on Vraks Star Port. It was crippled during a suicidal renegade militia counter-attack on day 3 of the operation, but was subsequently repaired by Chapter Techmarines to re-join the battle on day six.

CHAPTER FIVE – THE FIRST NAVAL BATTLE OF VRAKS

"You are expected at all times to conduct yourself in a manner appropriate to the great duties and traditions of the Emperor's Most Glorious and Honourable Navy. Our orders demand nothing else. Look only to your duties, gentlemen."

Rear-Admiral Rasiak before the First Naval Battle of Vraks.

The forces of the Imperium had succeeded in breaking the inner defence line that encircled the Citadel, but had paid a high price in doing so. The psychic energy unleashed with the deaths of tens of thousands of Krieg Guardsmen and enemy militia during the breakthrough had provided the sorcerers of the Alpha Legion with the opportunity they had been waiting for, and using the blood of countless other sacrifices, they sent a psychic signal through the Warp. It was a call to draw old allies to Vraks – a declaration that here was a world ripe for the picking; death and suffering had been unleashed for all to revel in.

Those forces lurking within the Eye of Terror who heard the call were drawn likes moths to a flame by the flickering psychic light that promised battle and slaughter on an unprecedented scale. The commanders of ancient battleships traversing the deep shoals of the Eye of Terror, heavily armed, encrusted in unholy runes and bearing the battle scars of millennia of warfare heeded the call too. Within these ageless hulls awaited the servants of Chaos and their thralls, all seeking their chance to draw the favourable eye of their gods to them and prove themselves worthy of the great rewards such dark attentions promised.

Powerful engines flared into life and bulkheads strained as warships and transports began to move, preparing themselves to be cast adrift upon the Immaterium once again. Following in their wake came raiding ships by the hundreds. Many were simply pirates or other renegades from the Imperium's justice. The worst of all were the fierce warbands of Chaos-worshipping warlords, splinter groups from the vengeful Chaos Space Marine Traitor Legions. Arkos' psychic summonings had signalled to them that Vraks was a system worthy of raiding and rich for plundering… and so they came.

The Chaos Fleets Approach

Vigilance station DM498-066 was one of countless such monitoring posts that kept a silent watch on the Eye of Terror. Vraks itself had been a hub for the collection of some of this data, with its choir of astropaths serving as an early warning system should it receive evidence of potential Chaos raids or even an emerging Black Crusade. Its choir was now long dead however. In their place, other systems were still receiving and broadcasting information from the multitude of vigilance station nodes they had once watched over, and one had discovered something very disturbing.

DM498-066's sensitive warp vanes had detected the passage of several large, unidentified vessels in its vicinity, well off the usual trade and patrol routes, as had monitoring systems at Cypra Mundi. There, Imperial Navy command went straight into action and ordered vessels in the nearest sub-sector to dispatch patrol groups to systems likely to be the intruder fleet's destination. Several cruiser groups were also alerted and brought to readiness in expectation of a raid by Chaos vessels, an Adeptus Astartes fast-response strike force being put on alert to move to intercept if needed.

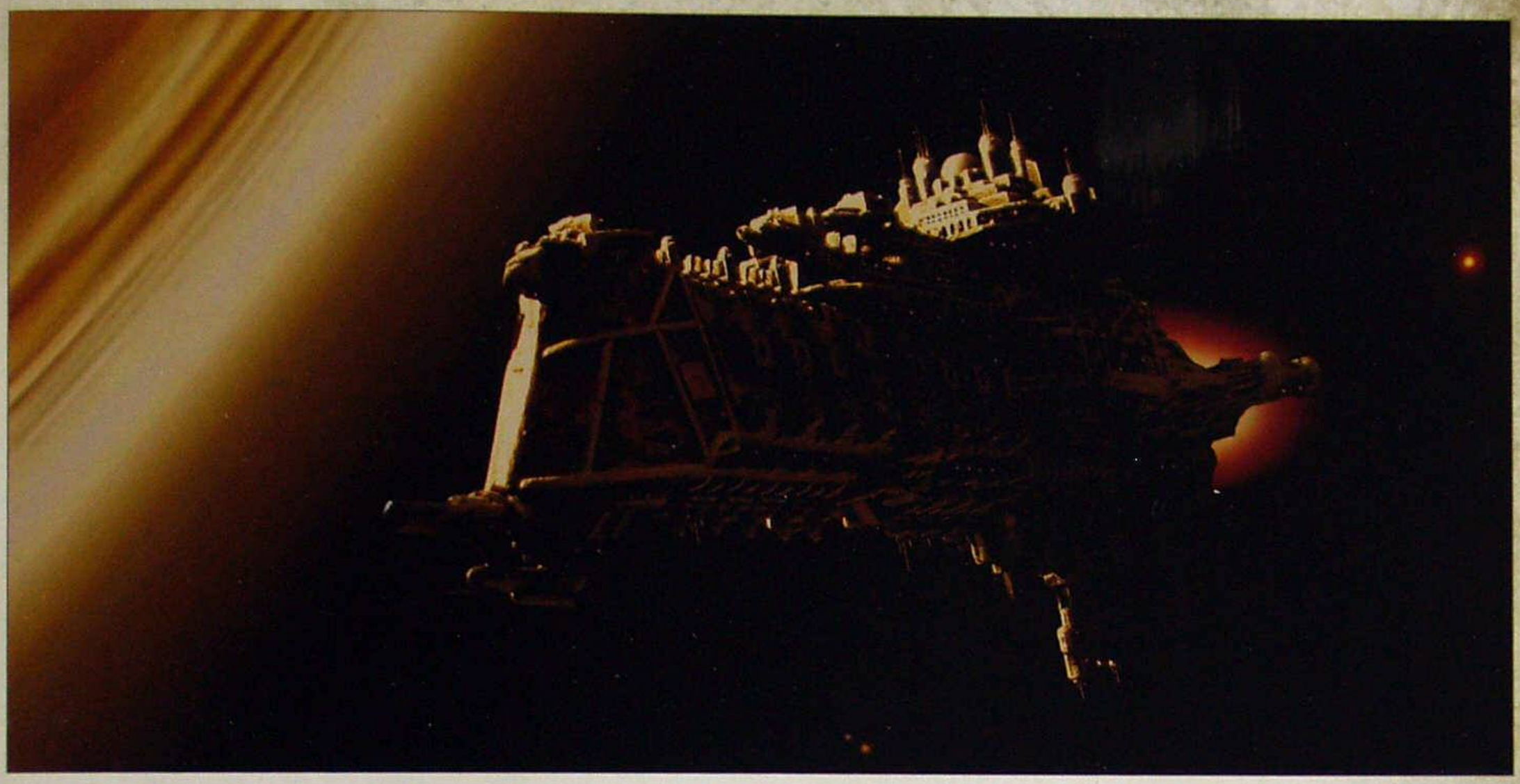
Secretly, the Ordo Malleus, ever wary of any potential threat from the Eye of Terror, initiated its own intelligence-gathering mission. A null ship on a one-way voyage into the Eye of Terror was launched. It was crewed by automated servitors and a single Pariah, untraceable through the Warp but equipped with incredibly powerful augurs and comms equipment. This hunter would seek out the vessels and transmit whatever data it could gather about this potentially deadly threat.

The Inquisition's null ship did its job well, tracking the target's passage before continuing its suicidal one-way mission deeper into the raging Warp storms, transmitting until all communication with it was lost forever. The null ship's findings were of deep concern to the Inquisition. These vessels were indeed Chaos raiders, many at least cruiser sized, and they had already rendezvoused with other vessels deep within a region of wilderness space. It seemed an armada was mustering for a major attack and so far nearly thirty individual vessels had been identified.

Astropathic messages flashed around the ports, bases and command ships of Battlefleet Scarus – few doubted that the Chaos fleet was heading for anywhere other than the Vraks system. Scout and patrol vessels were redirected to cover the enemy armada's anticipated approach route. Capital ships were also ordered out from their home ports, including the fleet's flagship, the mighty Emperor class battleship *Constantin Valdor*. The battlefleet mobilised and prepared itself for a major offensive. The enemy fleet must be hounded, cornered and destroyed.

Fire in the Void

Rear-admiral Rasiak, commander of the Imperial Navy's fleet stationed within the Vraks system, was all too aware of the frenetic activity of Battlefleet Scarus. He had also received the order to stand-to in expectation of a large Chaos raiding force appearing in the sector. It was now, under the shadow of this growing threat, that the rear-admiral reappraised his fleet's status and found it wanting. With little in the way of naval action during the Vraks conflict, the vast fleet of ships he had commanded to deliver the first Krieg regiments to the armoury world had been dispersed to other conflicts in the sub-sector. Now his small security fleet comprised little more than a squadron of defence monitors, freighters, a scattering of larger vessels and his own command ship, the venerable Lunar class cruiser the *Lord Bellerophon*.



The rear-admiral and his command staff were in no way ready to engage in a major battle. His own cruiser was operating with a skeleton crew, most of its ratings having redeployed to other war zones. The escorts were likewise under-manned and suffering increasing malfunctions due to their poor state of repair. Only his defence monitors were ready for action, but even these needed extra crew, and their main magazines were not full due to the necessity of maintaining regular firing drills with little chance of resupply. He had just seven ships under his command; it would not be enough.

Immediately, Rasiak's officers and bosuns took teams down to the planet's surface and began rounding up men from the Arphista labour corps. The Imperial Navy's needs took precedence over the Astra Militarum's, and before they knew it, many of the labourers were enrolled in the Imperial Navy as replacement ratings. The rear-admiral also conducted a thorough inspection of all freighters currently in the Vraks system. A supply convoy was unloading to Vraks' surface, a slow process given the lack of access to the star port's facilities. Here Rasiak was in luck. The massive bulk-freighter *Izra Mors* was immediately requisitioned for service. It was no fighting ship, but carried enough guns for its own protection. There were five other freighters also in the system. Of these, two were considered well enough armed for service, and Rasiak strengthened their small and inexperienced crews with some of his own officers, bosuns and gunners, placing the freighter squadron under the command of his own son, Flag-Lieutenant Maius Rasiak. The other three vessels were judged to be beyond use, offering practically nothing in terms of effective firepower.

These three Rasiak ordered stripped of crew and weapons, leaving each with only a skeleton crew of a few volunteers. Then he had them loaded with anything explosive or combustible that the fleet's Master of Ordnance could lay his hands on, turning each into a massive void-borne bomb, with their plasma reactor cores prepared to run out of control upon command. These three vessels would form a squadron of fire ships, with each crew's mission being to seek out enemy targets and ram them, detonating the explosives within and causing destruction far beyond their size.

Sparse though it was, the rag-tag fleet of thirteen mismatched ships formed up over Vraks, led by the *Lord Bellerophon*, from where Rear-admiral Rasiak would command the battle. It was all Rear-admiral Rasiak had to defend those fighting on Vraks with, and given the size of the approaching enemy armada, all knew it would not be enough. All he and his officers could do was pray to the Emperor that their own reinforcements would arrive in time.

The rear-admiral knew his prayers had gone unanswered when he received a priority message from the frigate *Exuo-Four-Three* on patrol on the edge of the Vraks system. She had made contact with a squadron of three ships inbound and their energy signatures confirmed them as Infidel class. The frigate was tracking their approach, but remained in position to watch for further vessels. More would follow, Rasiak knew it in his blood. The Infidels did little more than skirt the battle line now sheltering behind Vraks. They did not risk entering into range of the *Lord Bellerophon's* guns, even to unleash a speculative volley of torpedoes at long range. Instead they scanned and watched warily before withdrawing. Now the enemy knew Rasiak's strength – or lack of it.

Six days later at 054823.M41, Exuo squadron reported sighting fourteen different energy signatures as the traitor Chaos fleet bypassed the outer asteroid fields and made best speed sunwards for Vraks Prime. Following orders, the frigates turned tail and sped back to the battle line, their over-worked thrusters burning at flank speed to outpace their attackers. The *Lord Bellerophon* powered up her systems as well, her engines rumbling into life as the old hull creaked and groaned under the mounting strain, much to the horror

of her new deck crews. Then slowly, with glacial majesty, the cruiser began to power out of orbit and behind her the fleet followed in line astern.

His plan for the imminent fleet action was simple and brutal. Rasiak's fleet would approach in a single line, closely deployed to prevent it being easily split up. Behind a screen of torpedoes from the *Lord Bellerophon*, they would progress through the enemy fleet, taking fire from both sides, but maximizing their own firepower from both port and starboard batteries at the same time. With luck and solid discipline, he hoped he could inflict enough damage on the enemy that their fleet would feel it wiser to withdraw than advance.

As the two fleets converged, Rasiak's makeshift crews came to battle stations. Ratings stacked extra ammunition in the ready lockers at each gun port. Work teams shored up bulkheads, and blast doors were sealed to contain the inevitable fires. On the *Lord Bellerophon's* upper bridge, high above the clamour on the gun decks, the rear-admiral, alongside Flag-captain Drost and his command crew, stood in silent calm, watching their command terminals as a cadre of tactical-logisticians routed the flow of machine cant to them.

Unknown to the lower deck crews, the Traitor fleet was approaching fast, their engine signatures flaring brightly across the *Lord Bellerophon's* augur screens. There was no need for caution here they were falling on their prey like a voracious predator, hungry and eager for the kill. Rear-admiral Rasiak ordered that the augurs focus on the enemy's lead ship and the information was routed to his command pulpit above the bridge's deck. Watching the stream of tech-cant closely, he realised with alarm what he was facing.

Out there in the void, approaching at full power, was a ship of an entirely different magnitude altogether. Facing him was a true leviathan of the void. Almost certainly it was a Despoiler class battleship or at least something very closely related. The Despoilers were near-legend amongst the officers of Battlefleet Obscurus. Some of the largest vessels ever constructed, they carried enough firepower to level cities, as well as being possessed of hangar bays full of squadrons of attack craft, bombers and assault vessels. Here was a beast that his cruiser could not trade fire with and hope to win.

Rasiak's morale wavered, caught between his duty to stand and fight, and his knowledge that it was a hopeless cause. Flag-captain Drost approached his pulpit. *"Rear-Admiral, the enemy fleet has changed course."*

Rasiak hesitated. Should he break off or continue with his battle line's approach?

"The lead enemy vessels are veering to port. They have divided their line," the flag-captain continued. Drost waited a few moments. *"Our vessels are awaiting orders, my lord,"* he urged his commander.

Rasiak turned his head, as if noticing Drost's presence for the first time. His moment of indecision over, the rear-admiral moved into action, barking commands at his staff. *"Maintain current course and speed. Fire all torpedo tubes when in range."* Rasiak had found his resolve and courage.

The deck-shaking earthquake signalled the release of the torpedoes. Ahead of the *Lord Bellerophon*, the enemy fleet had indeed divided. Five vessels, led by the Despoiler class



battleship *Anarchy's Heart*, had manoeuvred to swing around his battle line's port ship. A larger concentration of nine enemy vessels of varying sizes and classes, with the Styx class cruiser *Blood Dawn* in the vanguard, would pass by him off the starboard side. Rasiak's gun teams would be hard pressed with multiple targets for each broadside.

The *Lord Bellerophon's* bridge tracked the torpedoes as they closed in. The first just missed the *Anarchy's Heart*, whilst the second detonated against her void shields to no avail. The third was destroyed by defensive fire, whilst the fourth malfunctioned and detonated in open space. The fifth torpedo narrowly missed an Iconoclast destroyer, part of the battleship's escort squadron, the small ship being nimble enough to swing hard out of the torpedo's path. The sixth provoked a sudden cheer from the bridge crew as it impacted against a second Iconoclast, the torpedo's logis-engine making the last-second corrections to guide it directly into the swerving target. The torpedo's melta warhead overwhelmed the small vessel's shield generators in a flash and tore a great rend through the vessel's aft quarters. The escort was venting plasma, a sure sign that one of her reactors had been breached. The Iconoclast dropped out of the line, fatally wounded, and began to drift helplessly. Soon her plasma reactors would detonate and the ship would be torn to wreckage. Then, the Despoiler's big guns opened fire.

The *Lord Bellerophon's* void shield generators screamed their defiance as waves of broadside volleys pounded the cruiser. Still well beyond her own effective range to respond, the Lunar class cruiser took a pounding. The energy blasts of las turrets flickered through the void, plasma bolts bursting in sun-bright flares along the length of the ship. As yet the damage to her hull was minimal. In response, Rasiak ordered the fleet to move in closer; he needed to return fire.

The two fleets slid past each other in a murderous gun battle. From starboard, the second enemy line was now approaching, their attack heralded by the swarms of bombers and fighters now filling the void between the two fleets. Target icons swamped the bridge's surveyor screens. Every gun and every turret onboard the *Lord Bellerophon* was soon in action, and the ship rattled and shook with each volley. The Sword escorts then added their firepower to the fight, trading blows with enemy escorts, whilst the monitors thundered away at the bigger ships; like fighting dogs attacking a bull grox they tore at the bigger enemy with a strength that belied their size. The void was alive with gunfire streaking, blazing, screaming and exploding in a withering, deadly crossfire.

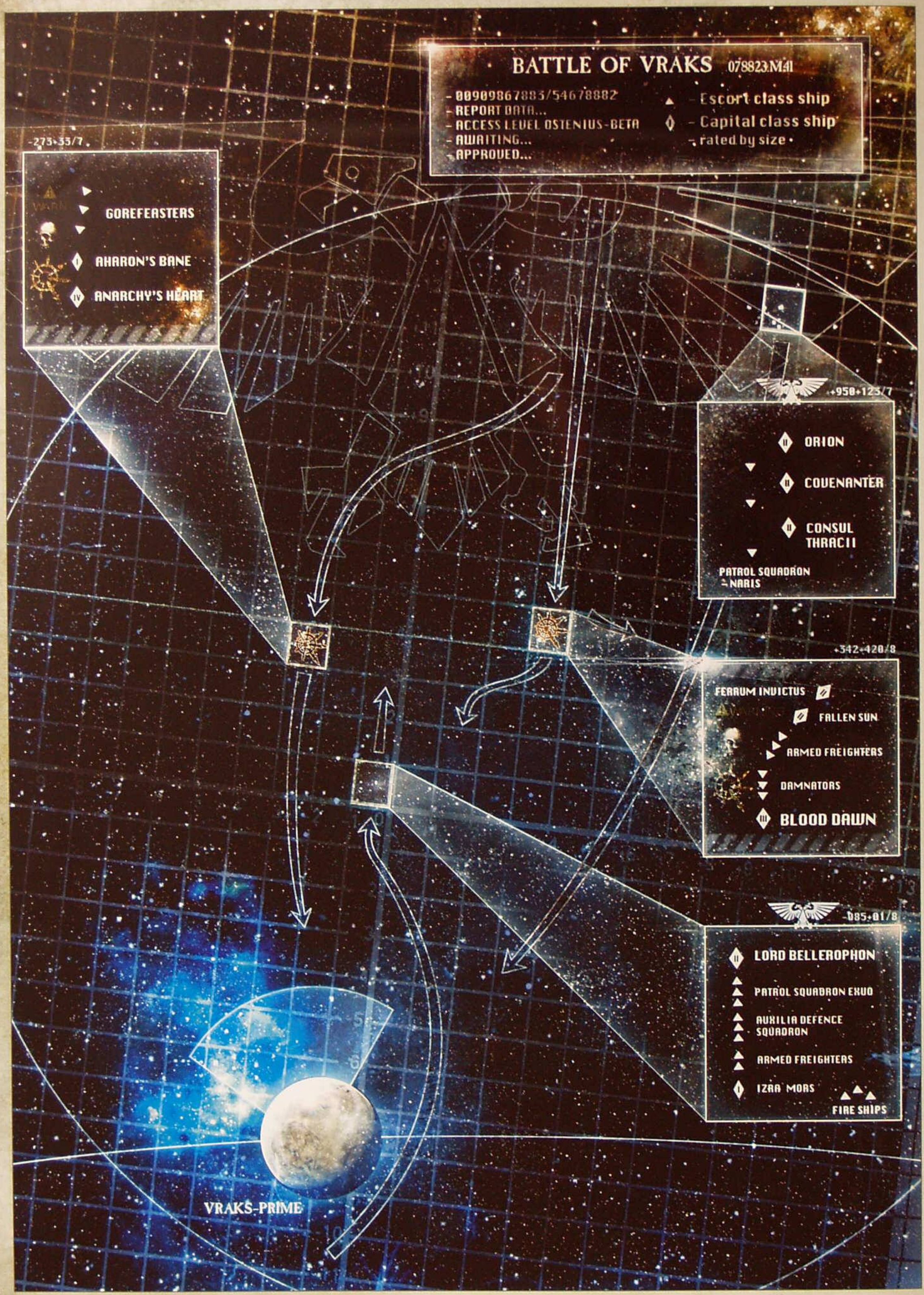
It was a vicious duel and both sides did not escape unwounded. The *Anarchy's Heart* had raked the length of the Imperium's battle line, its firepower stripping shields and buckling armour as it passed. The Sword class *Exuo-Four-One* had been crippled by the enemy battleship's batteries. She was adrift and helpless, raging fires burning on all her decks, the bridge crew wiped out by repeated lance hits that had torn away the superstructure. Two of the monitors were also gone. Both of the armed freighters had miraculously passed through the gauntlet, but neither were unscathed. Void shields were gone, decks were alight, casualties were heavy, but both were still in the fight. The *Izra Mors* had lost three plasma reactors to enemy bombing attacks and was operating on minimal power. With manoeuvring thrusters disabled, she was a sitting target, and Rasiak was forced to abandon her to her fate. Rather than abandon ship, the *Izra Mors'* captain ordered his surviving crew to man the guns and keep shooting. The *Lord Bellerophon* herself had been blasted and buffeted, but in response her guns had damaged the Chaos heavy transport *Aharon's Bane* and destroyed another of the Iconoclast destroyers. The old warship was battered and listing, wounded but still fighting.

The Chaos fleet had also been damaged, but for reasons as yet unknown, two of the cruisers had failed to engage. These had been the rearguard of the second battle line, and even as Rasiak watched on his pulpit vid-screen, they were coming about and seemed to be disengaging. It was a stroke of luck – maybe they were abandoning the fight.

With much of his comms systems destroyed, Rear-admiral Rasiak had no idea that Imperial reinforcements were on their way, reinforcements the two enemy cruisers had already spotted. Battlefleet Scarus had directed the closest battle-worthy force to Vraks. Cruiser Group Mahzur, under Rear-admiral Titus Mahzur, had arrived not far behind the Traitor fleet. Led by the Gothic class *Consul Thracii*, with the Dominator class *Orion* and the ancient grand cruiser *Covenanter* in support, as well as a squadron of escorts, the cruisers were now racing towards Vraks and the void battle. Together, they could swing the fight in the Imperium's favour.

Quickly assessing the battle, Mahzur's aim was to cut off the enemy's approach to Vraks and prevent the landing of the thousands of Chaos supporters undoubtedly onboard the dark fleet. He had his work cut out for him – his ships were already flat out at flank speed, straining their reactors. The two Chaos cruisers moved to intercept Mahzur's vessels and just as the first engagement faded, a second battle flared into life. The Slaughter class cruiser *Fallen Sun* and the Devastation class *Ferrum Invictus* swung hard about, the *Ferrum Invictus* launching her attack craft and opening fire with long-range batteries. Mahzur could not afford to be delayed by the enemy attack vessels, but equally could not ignore them. He ordered his escort squadron and the *Orion* to engage the enemy and hold them off whilst the other two cruisers raced for Vraks, risking dividing his forces.

Meanwhile, Rasiak ordered his remaining battle-scarred ships to regroup. His line of vessels had been scattered and the surviving ships were trying to reform for another pass. Constantly harassed by the Chaos fleet's small escort vessels, Rasiak could not afford to let his guard down. Reforming his fleet was a slow process given the damage they had sustained. Mercifully, the *Anarchy's Heart* and the *Aharon's Bane* had both moved towards Vraks, intent on delivering their payloads to the surface. At least the battleship was out of the fight, even if it meant the siege regiments on Vraks' surface would have to deal with the consequences. The *Blood Dawn* manoeuvred to launch her re-armed attack craft. This time, Dreadclaw assault boats sped towards the crippled *Izra Mors*, intent on taking the stricken giant transport as a prize.


BATTLE OF VRAKS 078823.M41
- 00909867883/54678882
- REPORT DATA...
- ACCESS LEVEL OSTENIUS-BETA
- AWAITING...
- APPROVED...
▲ - Escort class ship
◊ - Capital class ship
- rated by size -
-275-55/7-
GOREFEASTERS
AHARON'S BANE
ANARCHY'S HEART
+950+123/7
ORION
COVENANTER
CONSUL THRACII
PATROL SQUADRON
NARIS
+342+420/8
FERRUM INVICTUS
FALLEN SUN
ARMED FREIGHTERS
DAMNATORS
BLOOD DAWN
-085+01/8
LORD BELLEROPHON
PATROL SQUADRON EXUO
AUXILIA DEFENCE SQUADRON
ARMED FREIGHTERS
IZRA MORS
FIRE SHIPS
VRAKS-PRIME

It was now that Rasiak ordered his reserves into the fray – the three fire ships. The first targeted the *Blood Dawn*, while the other two headed for the enemy ships approaching orbit. It was a brave gamble, aiming his reserves at the biggest enemy vessels in the hope of swinging the battle in his favour. The first fire ship never reached the *Blood Dawn*. Drawing heavy enemy fire, the vessel was quickly destroyed. The second fire ship was caught in a salvo from the *Anarchy's Heart* and was also vaporised well short of her target. The third, although hit, made it through the salvo and, with its plasma reactor throbbing on overload, powered towards the *Aharon's Bane*. The massive transport, once a merchant vessel but long ago captured and rebuilt for darker purposes, was packed full of troops ready to launch an invasion of Vraks. Tens of thousands of howling Chaos worshippers, mutants, beastmen, renegades and the wretched scum of the galaxy were packed into its holds. Already approaching orbit, the massive vessel could not take evasive manoeuvres and the fire ship approached her like a thunderbolt, her bridge crew ignoring instructions to abandon ship in order to steer her directly into the *Aharon's Bane*.

The fire ship hit the Chaos craft in its stern quarters. The merchant vessel's hull buckled and collapsed as the fire ship impacted, crushing decks and tearing a rend deep into the rearmost engine rooms. Seconds later the explosives detonated in an almighty blast that tore the transport apart, scattering debris into orbit as the ship's plasma reactors vaporised, adding to the destruction. Far below on Vraks, hundreds of thousands of troops on both sides looked up to see a bright new star suddenly flicker into existence above the battlefield.

In high orbit, the big transport was crippled and listing, wildly out of control with no drives to counter the ship's momentum. Already caught in Vraks' gravity well, she started to plunge planetwards. Onboard the *Lord Bellerophon* the bridge crew were cheering the impact, watching their monitor screens as the *Aharon's Bane* began her death fall, streaming fire from within her rear decks.

As she hit the atmosphere, the corrupted vessel blazed like a comet. Seen from the surface, she was a streak of fire burning high and bright in the sky. The fireball tore through the atmosphere, but the ship's armoured prow remained intact and its thick ceramite shielding kept the vessel behind it safe. The fickle tides of fate, no doubt under the influence of the dark gods, kept the *Aharon's Bane* together and she burst into Vraks' atmosphere, all the time shedding debris, whilst deep within her sealed holds the raving, insane followers of Chaos bayed to their masters for deliverance as the vessel fell. Despite being severely damaged, the bridge crew regained some control of her systems, and by some dark god-granted miracle, they found the power to break the vessel's wild descent.

The *Aharon's Bane* impacted with the ground close to the Chaylia Plateau, tearing a great gouge into Vraks' surface and throwing up a dust cloud that would smother parts of the planet for days. Like a meteor strike she punched a crater into Vraks' landscape, grinding along on her belly until she came to rest in a steaming, twisted wreckage of metal girders and bent hull plating, resembling the jumbled bones of some ancient behemoth sea-creature. For kilometres around, the ship left its scattered remains. Many of those who had been onboard had been crushed to a pulp by the ship's crash landing, but many more had not been, protected by their masters' dark arts, and from within the vessel's holds the Chaos hordes slowly began to emerge, dazed and blinking, onto Vraks' surface.

Whilst the *Aharon's Bane* fell, the *Anarchy's Heart* manoeuvred into low orbit, and was even now casting hundreds of drop ships and landing craft down onto Vraks. Waves of Dreadclaw assault pods rained down, carrying bands of Chaos Space Marines to the war below. Rear-admiral Mahzur knew he was too late to stop the *Anarchy's Heart* seeding Vraks with her evil cargo, but he still raced onwards in the hope that he could engage and destroy the mighty battleship, a prize worthy of the highest honours of the Imperial Navy.

Behind him, the Dictator class *Orion* was locked in battle with two enemy cruisers. Supported by the Sword class frigates of Patrol Squadron Naris, the cruiser traded broadsides with the enemy, while squadrons of attack craft scrambled and launched to intercept approaching enemy fighters and bombers. As the two sides closed to within range and the guns tore into each ship's hull, the *Orion* saw two of her escorts destroyed. The first took a salvo of powerful laser blasts in a direct hit amidships. The lances blasted clean through the frigate, tearing it in two. The second was destroyed as she closed with the *Ferrum Invictus*, bravely firing until the last as squadrons of enemy bombers mercilessly struck at her hull until she was breached on every deck, many of her crew being sucked out into the void, leaving her as another drifting hulk.

The *Orion* herself had been breached in several places and ruptured pipes on the starboard hangars had filled the decks with toxic coolant. With all of her squadrons already in action, the *Orion* was now in grave danger. The *Ferrum Invictus* was preparing to launch her assault boats in an attempt to capture the hard-pressed cruiser. Abandoned to her uneven battle, the *Orion's* captain conceded to his sub-officers that they had done their part. The enemy cruisers had been drawn into this fight instead of pursuing Rear-admiral Mahzur's force, but now the *Orion* was badly damaged and might soon fall into enemy hands. He ordered the ship to disengage and withdraw rather than continue a fight he could not win.

Meanwhile, the crippled *Izra Mors* had finally been lost. She had made a brave stand but was outclassed and outgunned by the heavy cruiser *Blood Dawn*. Enemy assault boats smashed into her sides and the corridors of the bulk freighter became filled with the din and smoke of close quarters combat. Traitors were soon cutting a bloody swathe through the merchant crew. Many were trapped and surrendered rather than be annihilated, resigned now to a cruel and short life as slave-hands aboard the *Blood Dawn*. The transport's captain led the final counter-attack, but he was hopelessly

outnumbered. Along the corridors and across the cavernous main holds the battle raged for an hour, men fighting with any weapons that came to hand. In the end the bridge fell, and the *Izra Mors* was taken as a prize of battle, lost to the enemy with all hands.

Even as he tracked the progress of Rear-admiral Mahzur's two cruisers, Rasiak was powering up his vessel again. He faced the prospect of meeting the *Blood Dawn* and the *Anarchy's Heart* for a second time, and it was unlikely the *Lord Bellerophon* could sustain the same punishment again. He issued his orders for the remaining vessels to advance with him. All that remained were the single monitor, the two armed freighters and a frigate. As he listened to each ship's status report through the garbled and static-distorted vox-speaker in his pulpit, he felt the *Lord Bellerophon* suddenly lurch beneath him and an ominous rumbling groan echoed through the bridge. Clinging to his pulpit, Rasiak could see the bridge officers scrambling for damage reports. The *Lord Bellerophon* continued to slowly keel over, its bulkheads screaming their distress as the ship's great mass shifted, testing their strength to the limits.

Reports came flooding in: numbers three and four main thrusters had been destroyed by a torpedo. Without her thrusters, she could not hope to lead a second attack to assist Mahzur. Without the cruiser to lead them in, the other small ships could not face the heavy cruiser and battleship that now sat between them and the planet. Mahzur's two cruisers were racing into battle alone. Rasiak ordered that a message be forwarded to the *Consul Thracii*; he was disengaging due to crippling engine damage and would limp away out of the system as best he could. Onboard the *Consul Thracii*, with just the *Covenanter* in close support, Rear-admiral Mahzur was on his own.

The crippling of the *Lord Bellerophon's* engines turned the battle decisively in the enemy's favour. They still had four capital-rated ships in the fight, including a battleship and heavy cruiser. The Imperial Navy could now muster just two cruisers. It was obvious that the Vraks system had been lost. As news of the loss of the *Lord Bellerophon* reached him, the captain of the *Covenanter* requested that they too call off their attack run against the *Anarchy's Heart*. Rear-admiral Mahzur accepted that his intervention had come just too late and gave the *Covenanter* permission to withdraw. He, though, would not.

To Mahzur it seemed that Rasiak had betrayed him by not supporting his attack. Rasiak had failed in his duty as an officer of the Emperor's Imperial Navy and he gave instructions that the captain of the *Covenanter* should see to it that these opinions be passed to the commanders of the Segmentum's fleet on Cypra Mundi. Rear-admiral Rasiak might survive the battle, but Mahzur was determined he should pay for his failure with his career. For himself, Mahzur would not return to base with his tail between his legs. His only chance for glory now was the destruction of the *Anarchy's Heart*. The Emperor stood at his shoulder as he ordered the *Consul Thracii* to ramming speed.

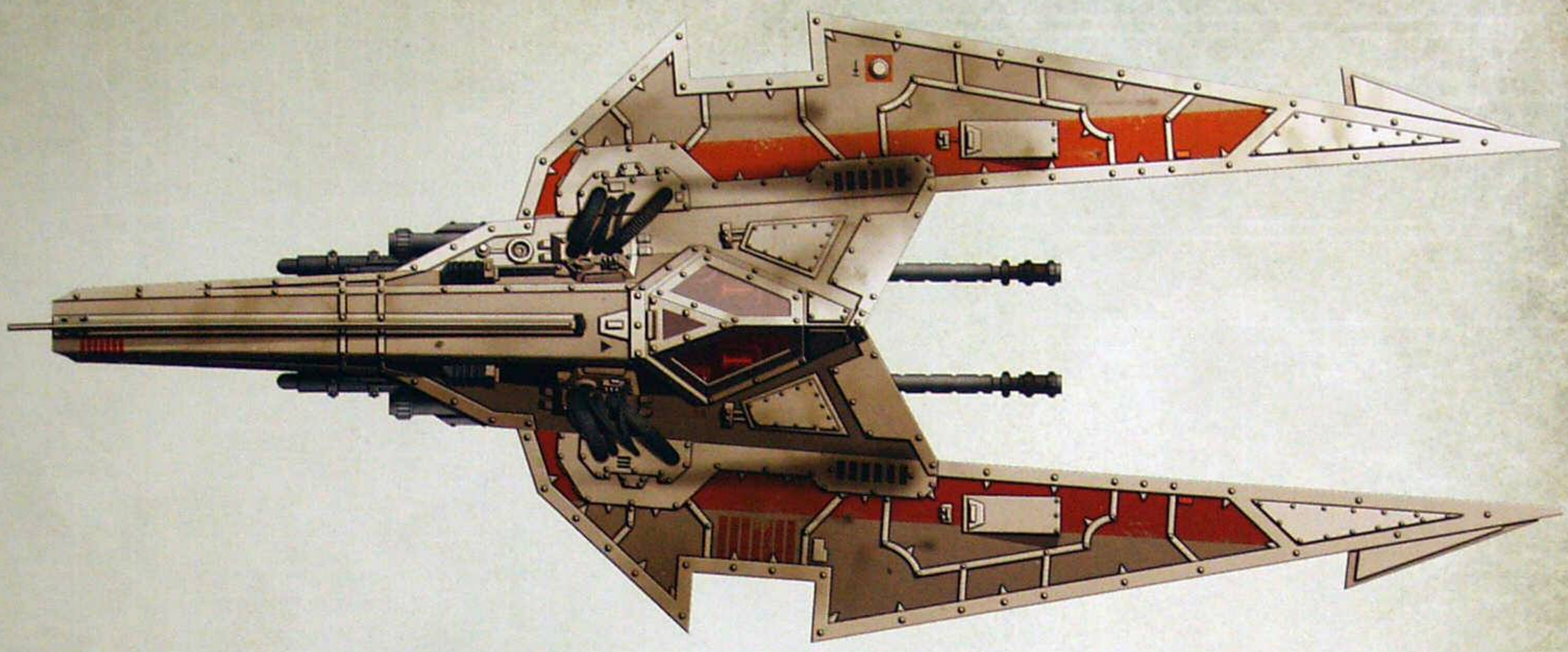
It was foolhardy bravery. The *Consul Thracii* was entering a killing field thick with enemy guns, including those of the defence laser silos on the armoury world. Soon the cruiser was buffeted by incoming fire and taking hits from all sides. The *Anarchy's Heart* quickly had her largest lance batteries and turrets locked on to the approaching flagship and pounded away. The *Consul Thracii's* armoured prow shook violently under the impacts, armour plates metres thick being burned away by the energy beams as they smashed into the *Consul Thracii*. The ship's captain requested that the attack be called off. She wouldn't make it to her target; already most of her void shield generators had been destroyed in the onslaught. Mahzur's response was to have the captain arrested by the ship's commissar and to take direct command of the ship himself.

Rear-admiral Mahzur's single-handed attempt to ram the enemy battleship was the stuff from which Imperial Navy legend is made. It was a heroic but doomed act that cost Battlefleet Scarus a good Gothic class cruiser, and the Rear-admiral and his crew their lives. Officer cadets on Cypra Mundi would argue for decades after whether the attack on the enemy battleship was the height of bravery or foolhardy beyond redemption. For those fighting on Vraks, its sacrifice meant little.

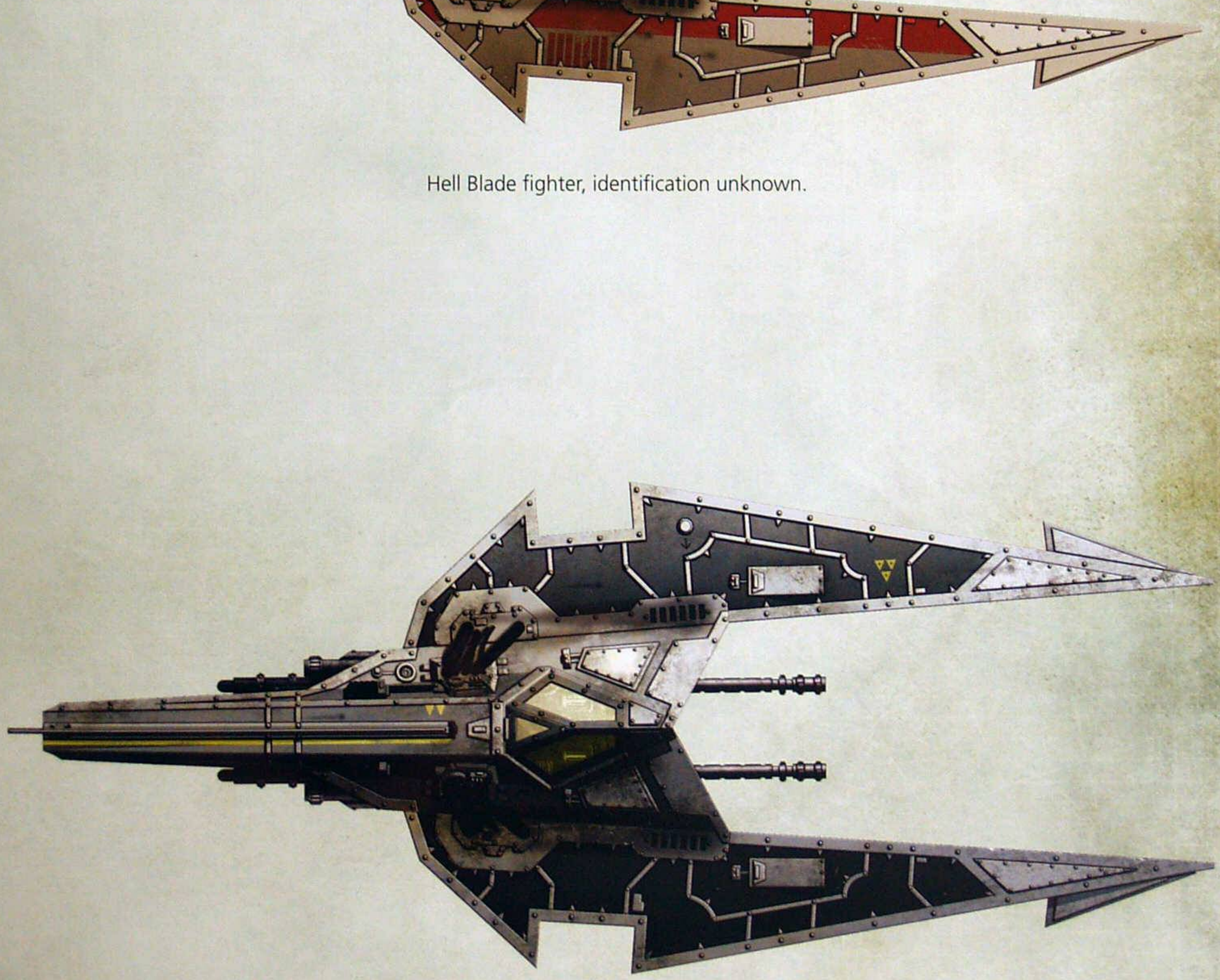
The battle had turned the immediate area of space around the traitor world into a graveyard of such hulks. Debris from the abandoned hulks of eleven Imperial Navy ships now littered the area. The butcher's bill had been an immensely costly one. They had lost the *Consul Thracii*, the largest capital ship to be destroyed. With her had also gone four Sword class frigates, two defence monitors and the heavy freighter *Izra Mors*. The three freighters converted to fire ships had also been lost. Added to the losses was the damage to just about every other vessel still sailing. The *Lord Bellerophon* had survived, but barely, and it would take many years for her to be re-fitted and made ready for duty again. Likewise, the *Orion* was heavy damaged. Only the *Covenanter* had survived with slight damage and was fit to continue her duties.

Of the enemy fleet, kills could be confirmed on the *Aharon's Bane* and at least four Infidel and Iconoclast raiders. But the enemy had seized total control of the Vraks system and was now free to unload its cargo of tens of thousands of troops to the surface. The *Blood Dawn* in turn would launch more Dreadclaws, all full of Khorne-worshipping Berserkers, including the infamous Berserkers of Skallathrax and the Skulltakers warband of the Warmaster Zhufor the Bloodreaver, himself believed to be a trusted lieutenant of Abaddon the Despoiler. The *Ferrum Invictus* would unleash a large warband of Iron Warriors upon the armoury world, whose expertise in siege warfare would aid the Apostate Cardinal's forces greatly.

Defeat in the First Naval Battle of Vraks would also cost the Krieg siege regiments engaged below heavily in blood, and ultimately cost them the victory that the last ten years of hard trench warfare had placed within their grasp.



Hell Blade fighter, identification unknown.



Hell Blade fighter, believed to be flying in support of the Black Brethren of Ayreas warband.

CHAPTER SIX – BREAKING THE DEADLOCK

"For these men, there can be no 'after Vraks'."

Commissar Oblonsk, 19th Siege Regiment

The Greatest Obstacle

By 124822.M41, the 468th Siege Regiment had cracked the second defence line and the floodgates had opened. With Krieg forces pushing forwards on all fronts, the renegade troops had been forced to retreat or face encirclement and annihilation. Recoiling from their positions, the enemy left behind its rearguards to slow the pursuit and rapidly fell back to the inner defence line where its forces could make a stand and fight again.

Encircling the Citadel along a front of one hundred and fifty kilometres, the inner defences formed a killing zone up to eight kilometres deep, and were the oldest and strongest of the Citadel's defences. They comprised a network of well-planned and sighted trench lines, bunkers, pillboxes, gun emplacements, and hardened artillery firing pits reinforced with sandbagged redoubts and supporting positions. Underneath were labyrinthine bunker complexes and shelters, buried far enough down to be considered safe from enemy artillery. Many amongst the 88th Siege Army's High Command believed they now faced their greatest obstacle. The inner defensive zone had been constantly reinforced and upgraded since Vraks' founding. Beyond it lay the fortress' curtain wall, and within that, perched atop a volcanic outcrop, stood the fortress itself, the nerve centre of Vraks. Both were well defended, but they were immovable obstacles that could be pulverised with heavy artillery. Once inside the inner defence line, they believed the curtain wall and fortress itself would fall relatively quickly.

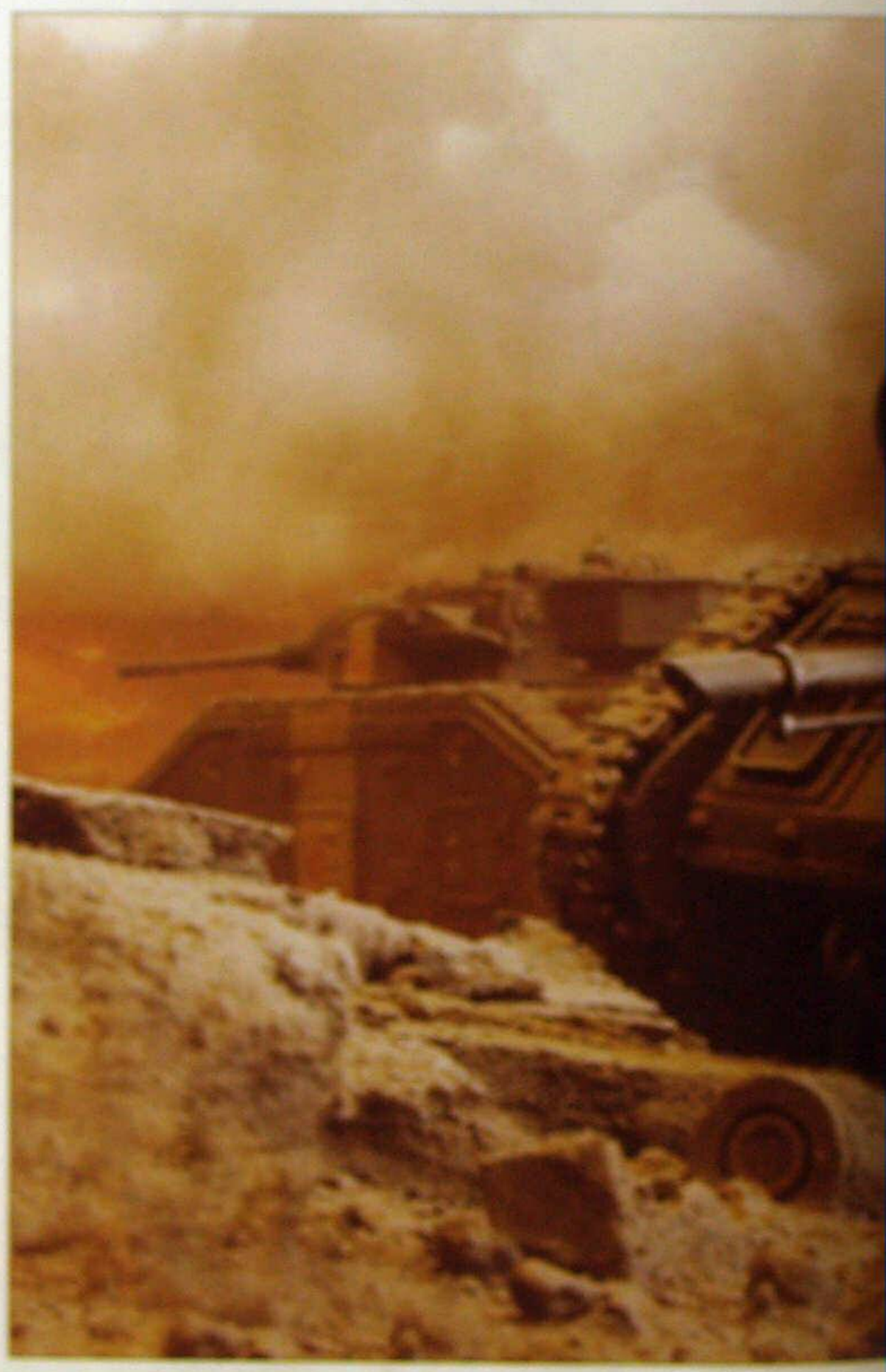
The High Commander of the 88th Siege Army, Lord Commander Zuehlke, observing from his distant headquarters on Thracian Primaris, was keenly aware that he had been given twelve years to recapture Vraks. Twelve years with the full support of the Departmento Munitorum for supplies and replacements behind him. He now had just three years left to complete his mission and given what still faced them, no staff officer seriously believed that the twelve-year timetable could be maintained.

What happened when they ran out of time, nobody yet knew. Most likely it would mean failure and defeat, and as the intensity of the war could then no longer be maintained, supply priority would slip, regiments might be withdrawn and redeployed, and so the prospect of ultimate victory would recede, leaving the 88th Siege Army trapped in a war they could not win. Lord Zuehlke's problem was straightforward. Time was against him, hence a renewed offensive was of the utmost importance, but the commanders on the ground were reporting that their efforts to crack the second defence line had worn their fighting strength down considerably. The losses in terms of both the men of Krieg and their equipment had been staggering.

The Assault on Mortuary Ridge

In Sector 558-470, the 468th Regiment of the 46th Line Korps, holding the korps' right flank, found itself faced with a difficult tactical situation. Their sector of the front faced a low ridge, with their frontline running along a shallow valley, overlooked by enemy positions, exposing the forward companies to plunging fire. Their choice was either to pull back out of range but then leave a vast no-man's land which would eventually have to be re-crossed, or to press on and attempt to gain the ridge and wrestle control from the enemy's forces.

The 88th Siege Army's command urged the 468th Regiment to move forwards and gain a foothold. From this sector there was a series of low ridges running roughly south-eastwards, and each in turn would require capturing as they provided the enemy with the best firing and observation positions.



for kilometres in every direction. An assault was ordered up the ridge which the Krieg Guardsmen had, with their typical macabre sensibilities, titled '*Mortuary Ridge*'.

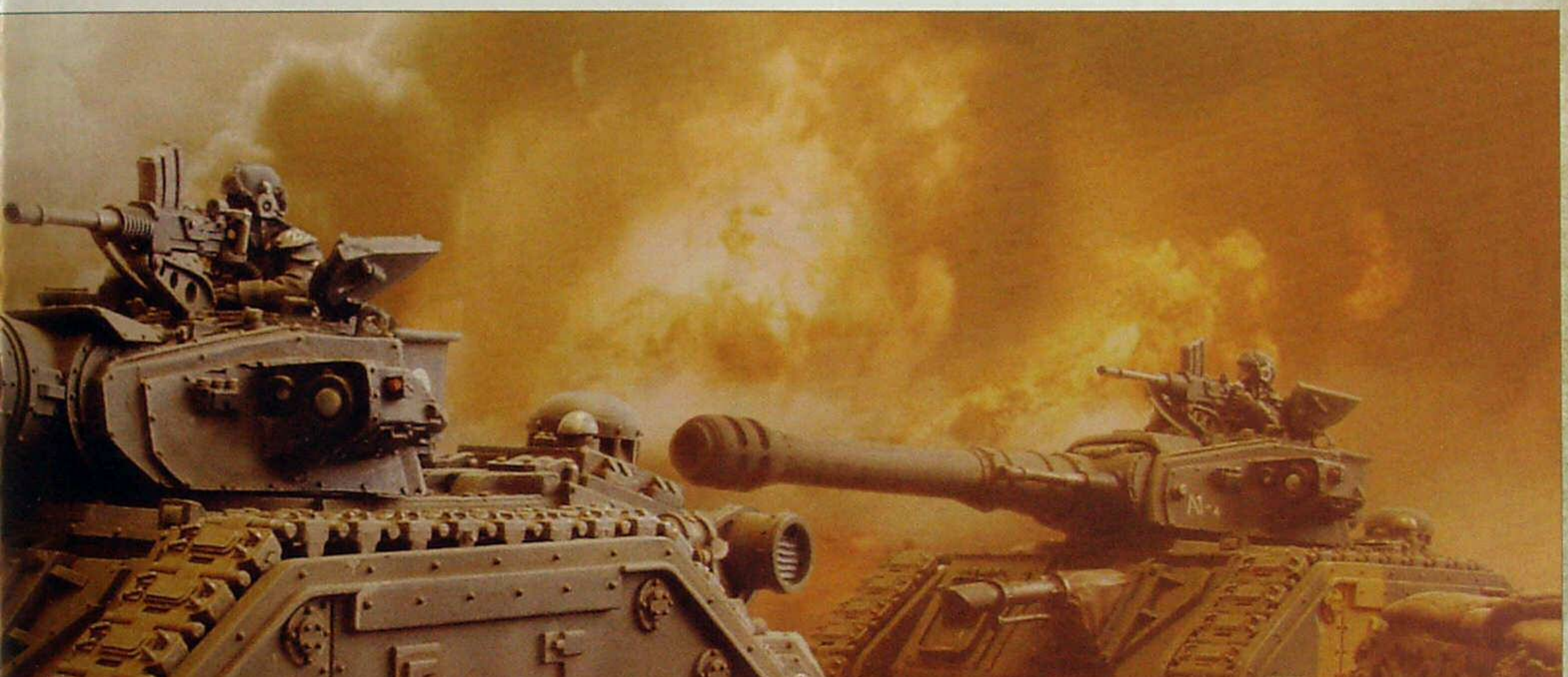
The attack would be carried out along a four-kilometre front, with five companies committed to the battle in the first wave, and a further two in reserve. On the left flank, a further two companies of the 468th Regiment would be conducting the supporting attack. After previous battles none of these units were at full strength, and several were even below half strength. The time for the attack was set at 078823.M41, with tanks of the 72nd Company moving up to aid the main effort just before the off. Of the 72nd Company, only four Leman Russ were available for action, but further armoured support had been requested.

The key to the attack would be its artillery support. The entire regimental artillery strength was in place ready to fire, much of it designated with creating a massive barrage to further isolate the area from reinforcements. In all, three hundred and sixty guns would be firing, but many were low on ammunition and in a dubious state of repair after constant use in recent weeks.

The enemy position atop the ridge line was a strong one. A front line of trenches was backed up by a solid defence line that incorporated numerous pillbox positions for heavy weapons. As well as dug-out shelters below, there were hardened bunkers in the line, and razor wire, tank traps and minefields in no-man's land. To the left of the assault area was a concentration of defences and firing positions designated as Fort C-585, and another strongpoint in the line called the '*Mortuary Redoubt*'. On the rear slope of the ridge were enemy artillery positions, ready to fire a counter-barrage into no-man's land.

In the line stood the 468th Regiment's 31st, 33rd, 53rd, 54th and 68th infantry companies. The 31st Company had the task of clearing the redoubt whilst the 54th faced the daunting task of attacking Fort C-585. Their attack would be supported by the tanks, including two Macharius heavy tanks released from their reserve companies to help deal with the strongpoint.

At 077823.M41, the opening bombardment began. Looking out over the lip of a trench through his magnoculars Captain Fodor, commanding the 54th Company, watched as his objective was shrouded in flames, smoke and dust.



DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG INFANTRYMAN



1. ARMOUR

Helmet: This standard issue Mk IX helmet is made of plasteel, has an adjustable cradle to ensure a snug fit around the head, flares to allow a good seal for the gas mask and is vented via the top spine. This ventilation unit has an internal filter capable of keeping out the majority of known chemical or biological agents.

The shoulder pads are also of plasteel construction and buckle to the greatcoat. Quartermasters', watchmasters' and other officers' shoulder pads are embossed with the rank insignia of the Krieg regiments.

2. UNIFORM

One of the most distinctive features of the regiments raised on Krieg is the heavy greatcoat. It is manufactured on the planet from a hardwearing thick cloth and produced in a variety of colours, from dark green to browns, greys and black. It provides limited protection, but is heavily chemically impregnated against chemical and biological attack – an unfortunate side effect of this being the pungent smell emitted. It is completely waterproof and retains heat effectively.

Its collar bears the regimental tag stitched to the coat. At the start of a campaign, High Command will designate a colour and shape to each regiment – in this case a red triangle; these aid battlefield identification for quartermasters. The Guardsman's trousers are constructed of the same hardwearing material as the coat.

Leg bindings are used to hold the trousers close to the legs, limiting the worst effects of muddy conditions. Boots are standard issue low marching boots with hob-nailed soles for grip. As part of their kit, Krieg Guardsmen carry an anti-vesicant dubbing which is rubbed into their boots to seal them against chemical attacks. When fully equipped, a Krieg Guardsman is completely sealed against a contaminated environment.

3. WEAPONS

This Krieg Guardsman's main weapon is his Lucius pattern, no. 98 lasgun – standard issue to Krieg regiments and stockpiled in vast numbers in its armouries. It takes a standard power pack unit, operating in the 21 megathule range. The power pack is good for twenty-five shots. It is a single shot weapon, and its internal fast discharge generator is placed under extra stress by the larger than standard lasgun charge, reducing its recharge rate and slowing the weapon's rate of fire whilst increasing maintenance time. This is compensated for by the charge's increased impact upon hitting the target.

This Krieg Guardsman is also armed with a single frag grenade. It is a standard issue no. 38 fragmentation grenade. Additional grenades will be issued to squads before an attack.

All Krieg Guardsmen carry a 45cm long sword-bayonet. This heavy-bladed, razor-sharp knife is their only close combat weapon and bayonet drill is practised from a very young age. The bayonet charge remains a preferred tactic of Krieg commanders.

4. EQUIPMENT

The respirator comprises three separate elements: the gas mask, hose and respirator regulator unit, which is worn on the chest.

The regulator unit is easily the most complex piece of equipment used by a Krieg Guardsman. It contains particle filters and a fan which draws air into the regulator, through the filters and then forces it up the breathing pipe. The advantage of this is that the breathing apparatus works via 'positive pressure', blowing clean air into the gas mask. Should the system be compromised then the constant flow will force air out of any hole and not draw it back in, thus helping prevent toxic particles entering the system.

As well as particle filters, the regulator also samples the air for toxic agents, and will automatically introduce antidote chemicals into the air supply. The regulator's satchel also contains a water flask which feeds into the gas mask. The water supply is supplemented by soluble stimulants and nutrient tablets, which allow the wearer to operate beyond unaugmented human physical norms.

The respirator unit has no oxygen supply, so oxygen must be present for the Krieg Guardsman to breathe. The exterior display panel allows officers to see how well the regulator is functioning and other Krieg Guardsmen to see how toxic the atmosphere is. The entire regulator unit is carried inside a leather satchel, which buckles onto the webbing's shoulder straps.

The gas mask consists of a bag, a screw attachment for the breather valve and eye pieces. The eye pieces have a double layer of toughened glass and are treated with an anti-fogging compound.

Webbing: The leather webbing includes carrying straps for the backpack, a respirator filter unit and regulator, four ammunition pouches for lasgun power packs, and additional pouches for carrying other kit such as weapon and respirator maintenance kits, replacement filters and antidote vials, etc.

Backpack: The leather backpack has additional straps to attach a bedroll to, which also doubles as a waterproof shelter-half, and a dry-tin canister for sealing perishable materials against hostile environments.

Small entrenching tool: Each Krieg Guardsman carries an entrenching tool – a small spade. The tool's carrying case is worn on the belt and also has loops for carrying the bayonet when not attached to the lasgun. Larger tools such as mattocks and shovels will be issued when needed for heavier work.



Krieg Guardsman 566-648-87991-72 – Draeta, of the 143rd Siege Regiment, 6th Platoon, 24th Company, during the Siege of Vraks.



The barrage crashed across the enemy's defences, rolling like thunder as it moved forwards over the rear positions, churning the ground and casting boulders high into the air. The almighty bombardment continued as the forward mortar squads opened fire, flinging smoke shell after smoke shell into no-man's land until it was time for the infantry to move.

As the Death Korps advanced, the artillery fell silent and the enemy's own guns opened fire. From the rear it was impossible to see what was happening in the smoke. On the right flank, 33rd Company had pressed forwards the furthest, advancing beyond the Mortuary Redoubt, but were now caught under a lethal crossfire of heavy bolter and stubber rounds from their left. Soon enemy mortar shells began to land, including incendiary rounds that burst in bright orange and yellow explosions, scattering oxy-phosphorous gel which burned through clothing and skin. It was accurate pre-sighted fire and the 31st Company's leading platoons were soon forced to go to ground.

At Fort C-585, Captain Fodor crouched in cover behind the still-smoking wreckage of an overturned Macharius heavy tank, trying to direct his forward platoons and identify enemy positions as targets for his own mortars. The smoke screen had lifted, but dust still lay thick over the battlefield and the sky had darkened rapidly, threatening yet another one of Vraks' now notorious torrential downpours. A stray bullet ricocheted off the tank and hit his helmet, knocking him off balance, but he was otherwise mercifully uninjured. Recovering himself, the captain watched as the remaining Macharius scored a direct hit on an enemy bunker, blasting the reinforced ferrocrete into dust and breaching its walls. The tank jolted forward again, heavy bolters rattling out a stream of shells as the crew inside worked to reload its main barrels for the next shot.

Fodor waved his leading squads on and rose from his cover, his troops quickly at his heels. Bit by bit, crater by crater they were closing in on their objective. Soon his squads were hurling grenades into enemy firing pits and trenches. Fodor raced for cover, sliding into a shallow crater where five Krieg Guardsmen already lay dead, their bodies torn to shreds by shrapnel. He was close to his objective; with only a few more squads he could carry his attack home and take the strongpoint. Calling for his vox-operator he saw his aide flung into the air, one leg severed after stepping on a mine. Fodor crawled to the wounded man, who lay groaning, blood from the stump of his injured leg pooling in the mud about him. The captain hauled the vox-caster from his back and called for assistance.

As Fodor battled for his life in no-man's land, the ferocity of the initial artillery exchange between the two sides slackened off as the gunners found their natural rhythm. Back in the Krieg trenches, the second wave platoons were still organising themselves and issuing extra equipment when they received the urgent order to attack. Men scrambled to their feet as watchmasters roused them to action, and they piled over the parapets and stormed out across the fire-raked ground of no-man's land.

A few of Fodor's men had reached Fort C-585. Hunkering down in the enemy trenches and guarding their flanks, they were the furthest forward of the attack, which was now stalling, like so many before, in the killing ground of no-man's land under withering fire. The second wave scurried across the wasteland as a ragged grey tide to meet them, crouching low against the continued artillery explosions that still erupted about them. They soon overran Fodor's position and raced on to attack Fort C-585, bayonets fixed. Many died as they charged home, but many reached enemy trenches, driving their foe back.

Fodor himself led the attack against one bunker. Already breached by the Macharius' shells, Fodor could see enemy figures still holding out inside. He gathered his men around him and led them towards the objective. Crouching in an enemy trench he worked his way along it, pistol in hand. Once in position his men began to throw grenades around each corner and down into each dug-out they passed. Then a squad's flamer was brought forwards to blast at the bunker's breach. The flamer roared as its bright orange jet of promethium gushed over the bunker, burning and smoking fiercely. A second blast arced through the breach and ignited anything flammable inside. Immediately, Fodor jumped up and rushed the blazing breach, emptying his laspistol as he stormed into the bunker's smoke-filled interior. His men followed and quickly overwhelmed the few enemy inside, killing them all in hand-to-hand combat. During the fight, a stray bullet struck the captain through the wrist, forcing him to abandon his sidearm. In pain, bleeding, blackened and charred from the smoke and flames, Fodor organised the defence of the captured renegade bunker, refusing to retire despite his wounds.

The first of Fort C-585's bunkers had fallen to the assault and the others would soon follow, each after a similarly furious attack. As reinforcements arrived, the surviving Macharius tank rolled into position, creating a new bulwark for the fortress. The 54th Company had captured their objective and now it seemed they had the strength to hold it.

Other attacks further along the line had met with little success though and most had been forced to ground in the craters and shell holes. As news of 54th Company's success spread, the stalled attacks resumed. With 54th Company now clearing trenches ahead, the weight of enemy fire had slackened. Soon the 52nd and 31st Companies also reported that they had achieved their objectives for the day. The first defences of Mortuary Ridge had been captured.

Attack from Above

As the 468th Regiment's attacking companies were seizing their objectives, the darkening storm broke, shattering the skies with flashes of lightning and rolling peals of thunder. The dark sulphurous clouds deluged the battlefield in a blinding monsoon that quickly turned the volcanic dust into sticky grey mud. As the short but violent storm lashed down, the Dreadclaw assault pods and larger landing craft from the *Anarchy's Heart*, now in orbit high above, plunged down onto Vraks. As they did so, the launch bays of the Chaos battleships unleashed their terrifying cargo and the gunners turned their weapons upon Vraks below. In trenches and dug-outs across the Van Meersland Wastes, the Imperium's forces felt the awesome power of the battleships' guns. The orbital bombardment that presaged the arrival of the assault force exploded with an earthshaking roar on the already tortured landscape. The air crackled and fizzed with the impact of lance batteries, in places scorching the rock to black glass with the intensity of their heat.

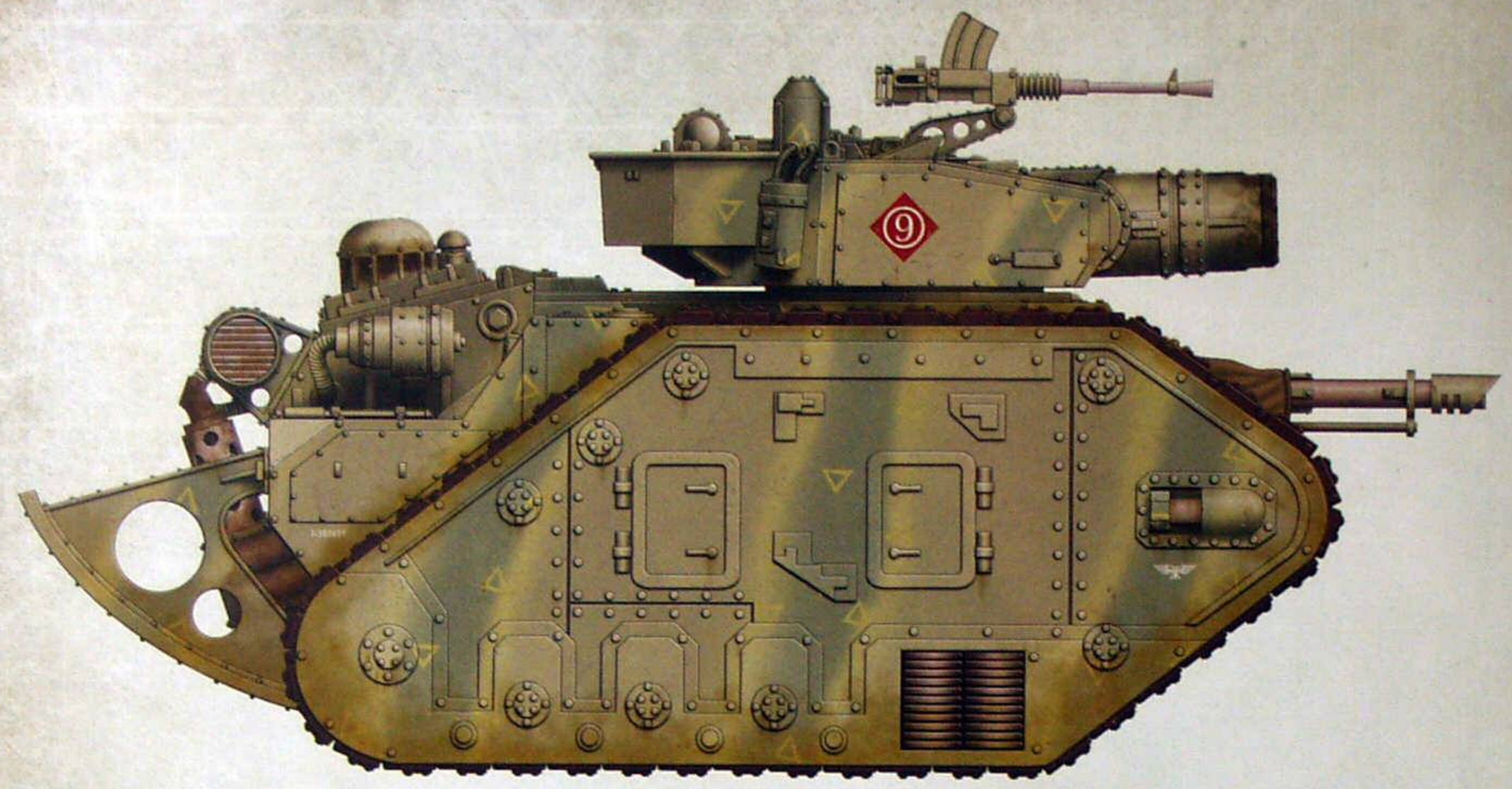
Captain Fodor watched the bombardment from his captured, half-ruined bunker, his wounded hand bandaged and held inside his greatcoat. He saw a great yellow streak of flame race across the stormy sky as a huge shell tore through the atmosphere and fell earthwards. The distant explosion raised a towering mushroom cloud before the reverberating crash of its detonation reached him. All around, fire and debris was falling from the skies. His own trench line at the base of Mortuary Ridge took a direct hit and he felt the shock wave buffet the bunker as it rolled over him.

More lightning split the skies as the drop pods fell, each trailing a fiery comet's tail as it burned in the atmosphere, thrusters driving each towards its target. Then the Chaos forces crashed onto the planet, each drop pod unfolding to release ever-increasing numbers of baying, bloodthirsty servants of the dark gods.

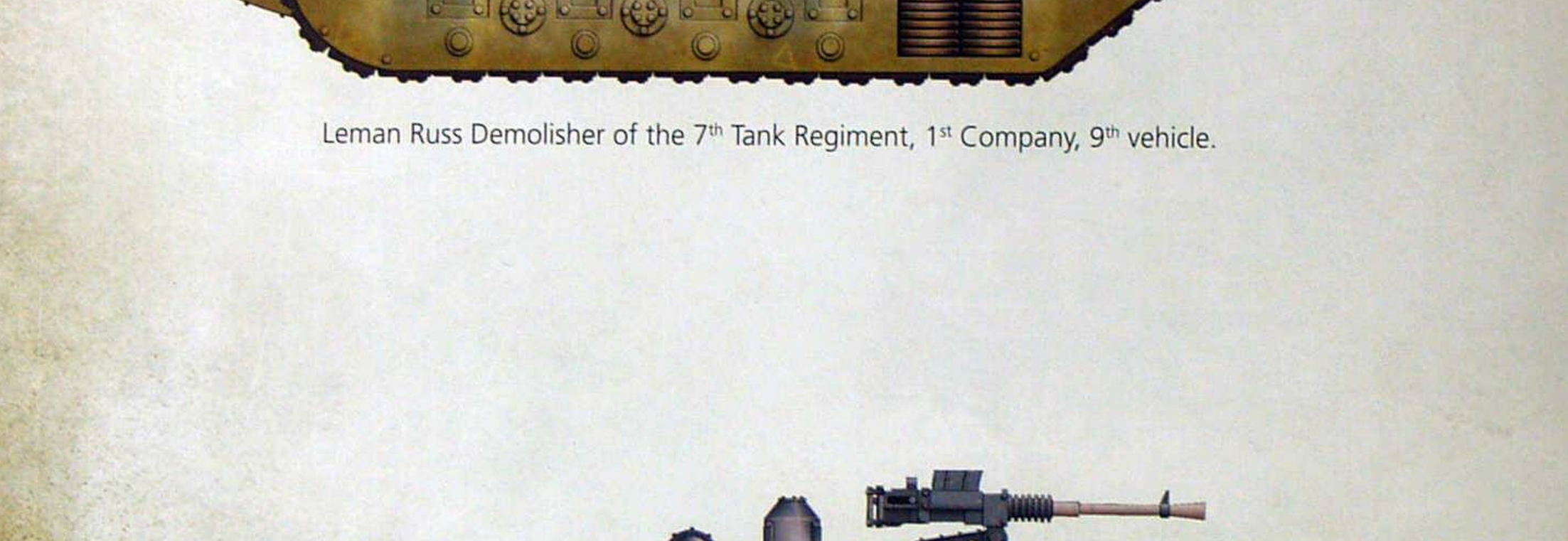
The orbital bombardment ceased as the assault forces landed. Most had aimed their attack at the frontlines around the inner defence lines. Bands of Khorne Berserkers from the Skulltakers, World Eaters and the followers of Skallathrax now roamed the trench lines, attacking with fury wherever they encountered the enemy. This was no frontal assault across no-man's land and the Krieg defences were not prepared for such an attack. Suddenly, artillery positions were being overrun and vital supply trenches were lost to the foe. Command dug-outs were attacked and turned into gore-filled charnel houses by the bolt pistols and chain axes of Khorne's warriors. Chaos and confusion reigned, just as the Lord of Slaughter willed it. The set piece battles of their carefully organised trench warfare could not help the Krieg Guardsmen, who found themselves beset on all sides, and soon reports of similar attacks were coming in from distant sectors, long thought to be beyond the enemy's reach.

At Fort C-585, Captain Fodor and his men were set upon by the crimson-armoured traitors of a Skulltakers warband. Each was an enraged, unholy killer with an insatiable lust for blood and war. The Chaos Space Marines raced from their assault pods and were soon clearing the trenches in savage close combat, piling up the bodies of the slain Krieg Guardsmen as they advanced. It was a desperate fight, and the men of the Death Korps stood little chance. Their opponents were no longer those of the human militia, but Space Marines driven by the power of their insane gods.

Captain Fodor attempted to rally his troops, but many were already falling back across no-man's land. He saw the Macharius firing its heavy bolters as the Traitor Legionaries climbed up its sides and onto the turret. One massive Khornate champion ripped open the main hatch and lifted



Leman Russ Demolisher of the 7th Tank Regiment, 1st Company, 9th vehicle.



Leman Russ of the 61st Tank Regiment. Third vehicle of the 1st Company, 1st Squadron.
Note the replacement battle cannon barrel.



Krieg Guardsman 566-648-87991-72- Draeta, of the 143rd Siege Regiment, 6th Platoon, 24th Company during the Siege of Vraks.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG GRENADIER

1. UNIFORM
This grenadier's uniform is standard issue to all Krieg infantry. The greatcoat, trousers and boots are all exactly the same as those issued to other Krieg infantry, in this case in the 5th Regiment's colours of all black. Under their armour, grenadiers retain their normal uniform, and so wear the same colours as the rest of their regiment.

Grenadiers are chosen from the ranks of infantry squads. This is not a promotion, as grenadiers still carry the same rank, but they are regarded as having a seniority over rank and file Guardsmen by dint of their experience and veteran status. After serving with a grenadier squad for a time, Krieg Guardsman can then be returned to the infantry as a Watchmaster. A Krieg soldier appointed to a grenadier squad cannot refuse, and adopts the skull facemask as a symbol of accepting his fate. Statistically, eight out ten grenadiers are killed in action.

2. ARMOUR
Grenadiers wear distinctive heavy carapace armour. This comprises the Mk IX helmet, rebreather facemask, three-piece shoulder guards, chest plate with additional abdomen plates, and shin and knee guards. All are made of plasteel reinforced with a ceramite layer for additional strength, heat resistance and weight reduction.

This grenadier has stencilled his identification number on his chest plate, and his squad number has been added to his right shoulder pad. The helmet is a standard Mark IX helmet, but has a front plate attached, with the Imperial Aquila embossed to show loyalty. As part of a grenadier's initiation into his squad, he renews his oath of allegiance to the Emperor, and this plate acts a reminder of a grenadier's duty.

3. HELLGUN
The standard armament of the grenadier squads is the Type XIV lasgun (heavy), referred to by troops as the 'hellgun' or, more rarely, 'hotshot' lasgun. In effect this is an overpowered lasgun, firing in the 28 megathule range and incorporating many additional features. The weapon's powerpack is worn as a backpack, and the power cables run to the weapon's rapid discharge generator, which forms the weapon's main mechanism, where energy for each shot is stored. The heavy powerpack supplies enough power to keep the weapon firing for up to two hundred shots, depending upon the power setting and the weapon's condition.

The weapon includes an advanced sight – this is a sophisticated piece of equipment, incorporating x4 magnification and a low-light infra-scope. This detects a target's heat signature, allowing more accurate targeting in darkness or even through some barriers. The careful calibrations required to keep the sight functioning means



that they are often disabled on the battlefield. Another drawback of the weapon is its large muzzle flash on firing, which can give away the firer's position.

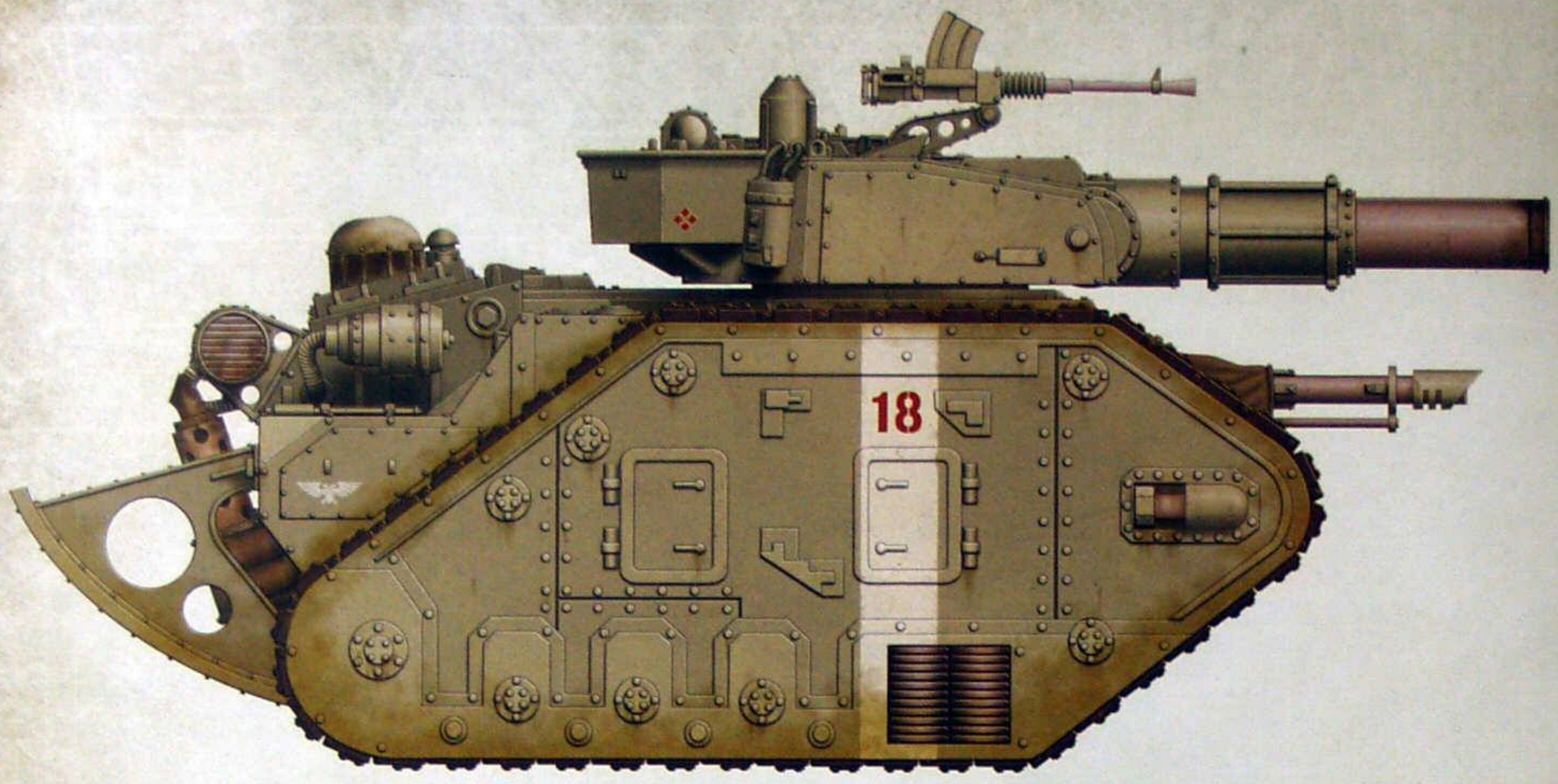
Hellguns are not well-liked by the troops; most prefer the standard lasgun, but regulations require grenadiers to carry them, and the weapon's additional impact and damage is seen as compensation for its faults.

4. EQUIPMENT
As well as his main weapon, this grenadier also carries a good supply of fragmentation grenades, vital when involved in close assaults against fortified enemy positions. Although only frag grenades can be seen here, he may well have additional krak grenades as well.

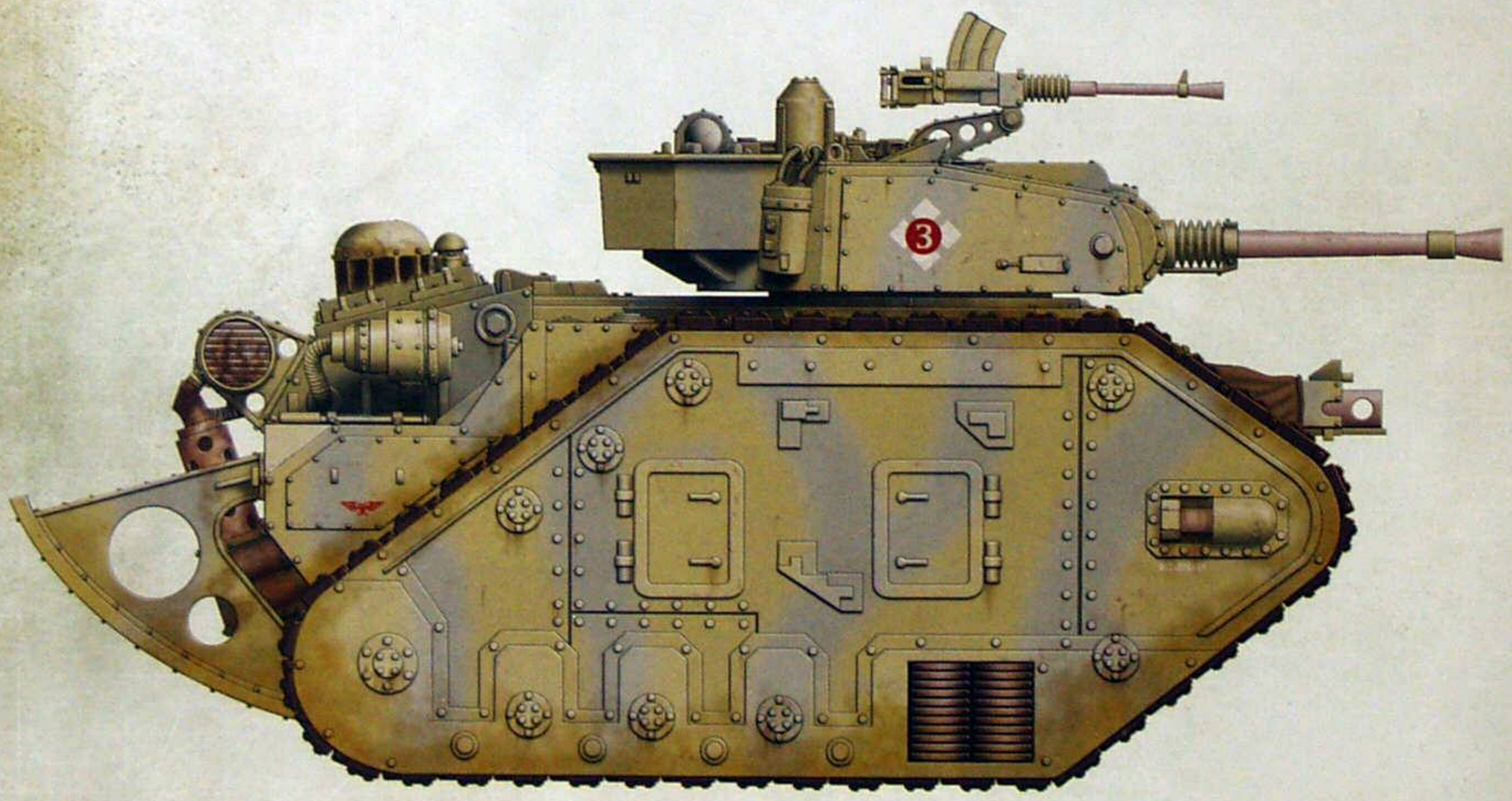
The grenadier's belt pouches contain spare respirator filters, ration packs and the hellgun's maintenance kit.

Because of their extra armour, grenadiers cannot wear the standard regulator unit. Instead they wear the Type V, where the regulator unit is inside a canister that is worn on the back. This unit serves exactly the same purpose as the standard type, and contains the same filters and antidotes. Again, the entire respirator is an over-pressured system.

Although the hellgun does not have a bayonet lug, the grenadier still carries a bayonet for hand-to-hand combat.



Leman Russ of 1st Squadron, 8th Company, 7th Tank Regiment.



Leman Russ Exterminator of 3rd Company, 7th Tank Regiment.

the tank commander clear from the turret, dangling his struggling body by a single hand. It inspected the feeble mortal with a curious eye before a slash of its blood-soaked chain axe decapitated him. The champion roared its triumph to the skies then jumped from the turret in a single mighty power-armoured leap and raced on in search of its next unwitting victim.

All around him, Fodor's men were shooting from the battle-scarred bunker's remaining firing slits. Now it was the captain's turn to grimly defend the bunker as the enemy closed in. The first Traitor Space Marine to leap into the breach was annihilated by a meltagun blast at point-blank range that turned it and its armour into a charred and smoking slag pile, but more soon followed. Fodor's men dived for cover as a grenade detonated inside, the ringing blast stunning them. Another grenade exploded, then another, filling the bunker with blinding smoke. Through the haze the enemy charged, axes held high, their spinning blades spraying blood.

With his uninjured hand, Fodor drew his sword and lunged at the first enemy. His thrust was easily parried aside, the enemy's sweeping chainaxe shattering his blade. The Traitor Space Marine battered him aside, dipping his shoulder and barging into the captain, sending him dazed and sprawling across the floor. Soon the bunker was overrun and the corpses of the defenders lay torn and shredded, their severed heads ritually gathered into a gore-soaked pile before their attackers moved on in search of more skulls for their dark lord and master.

Dazed and wounded, Fodor crawled in search of an exit, but was plucked from the ground by the powerful grip of one of the stragglers. Barely conscious he was lifted from his feet by a hand around his neck. Dangling limply in the air, he saw the steaming face grill of a red-armoured helmet, a baleful light glowing behind its visor. The helmet was blood splattered and scored with unholy runes that appeared to twist and writhe about each other. The fearsome grip tightened around his throat and he began to choke as the Traitor Marine's chainaxe spluttered into life and added the captain's head to the pile.

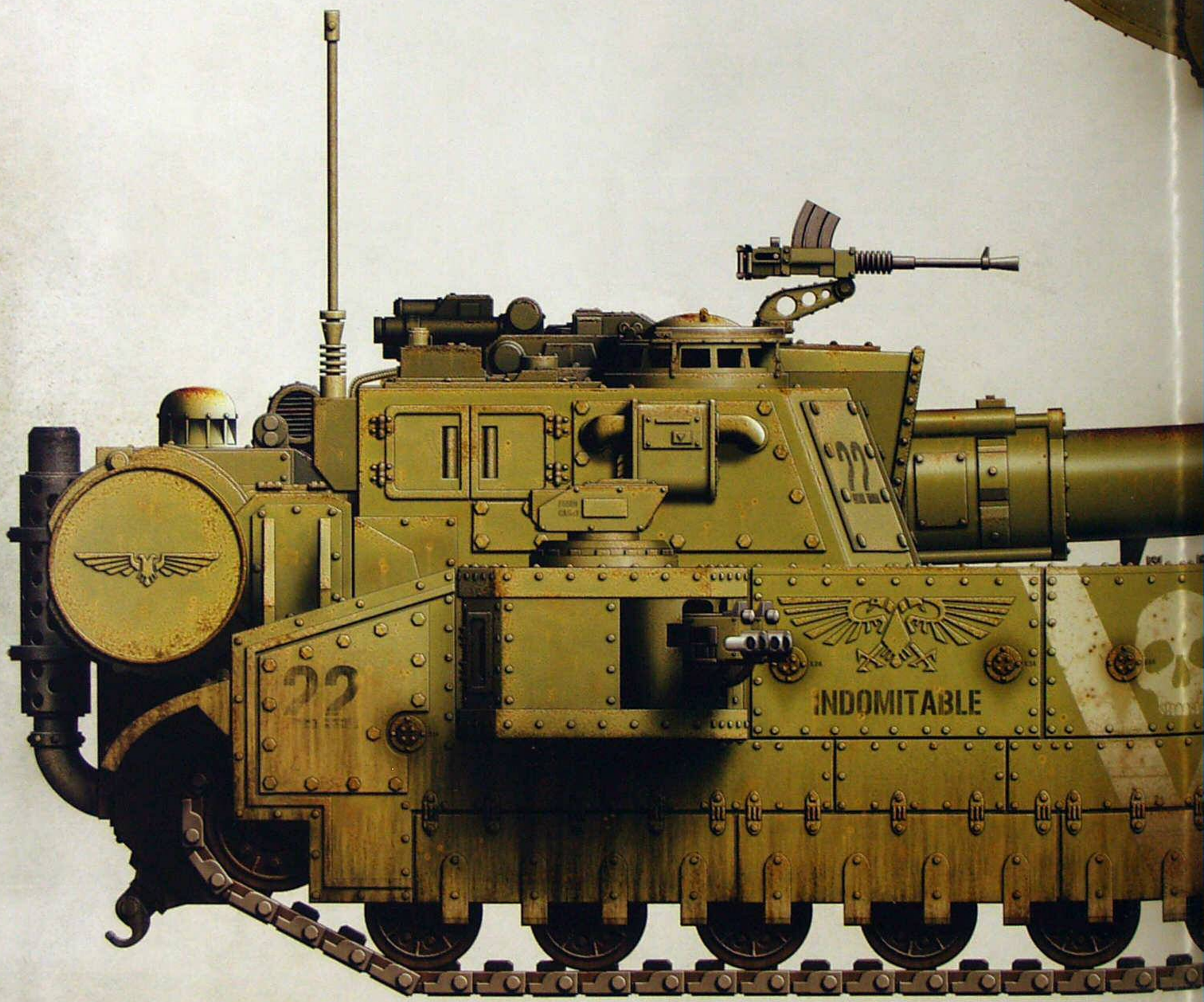
Counter-offensive – Disaster at 61-47

The sudden Chaos attacks had thrown the Death Korps regiments into confusion and transformed the nature of the Siege of Vraks. A slow, static war of attrition had now become a more fluid battle, with the enemy able to strike deep behind the lines. The single long frontline was no longer the only battlefield. Although the devastating attacks caused much damage, as yet the Chaos-worshipping reinforcements did not possess the heavy equipment and

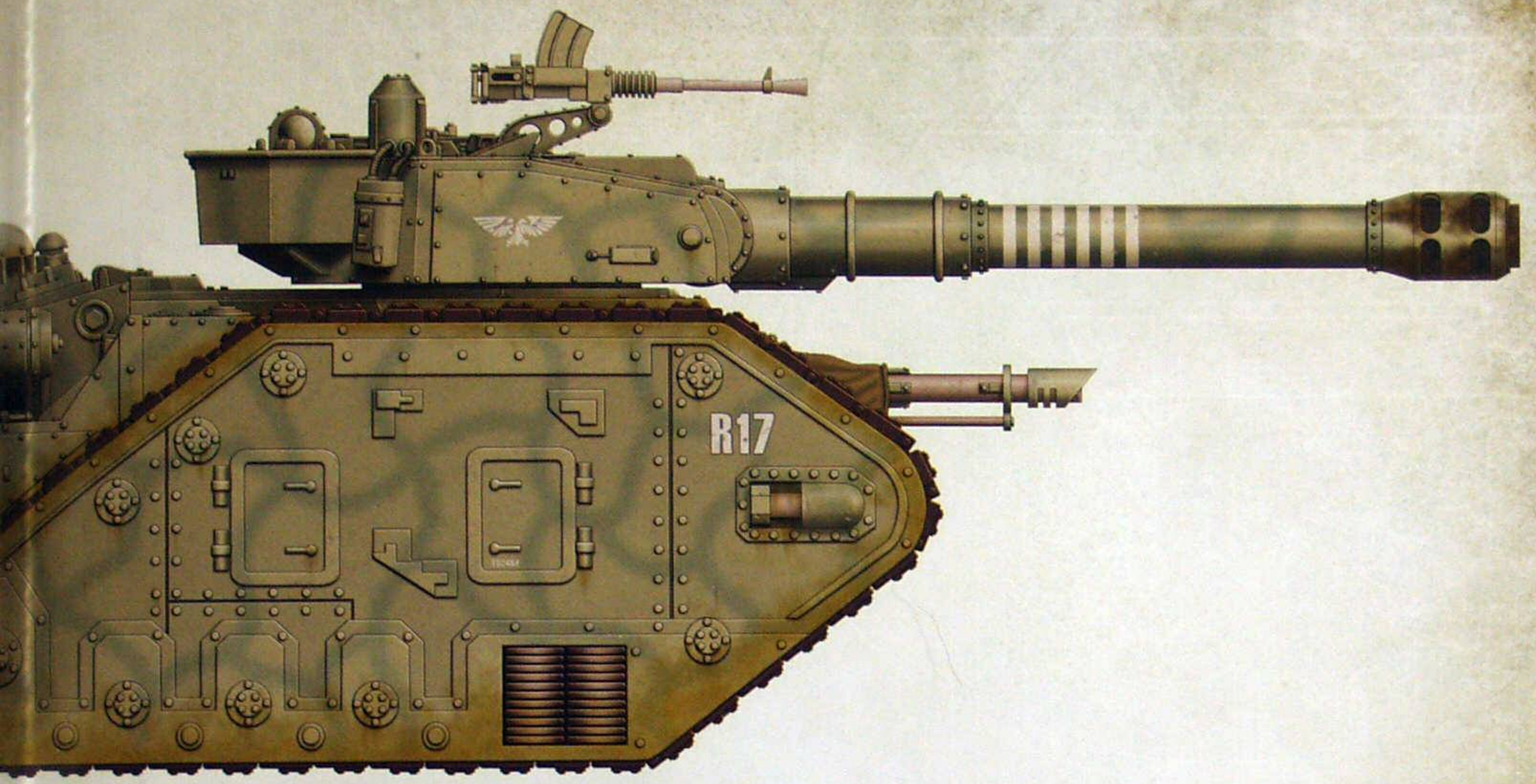


DEATH KORPS TANK REGIMENTS

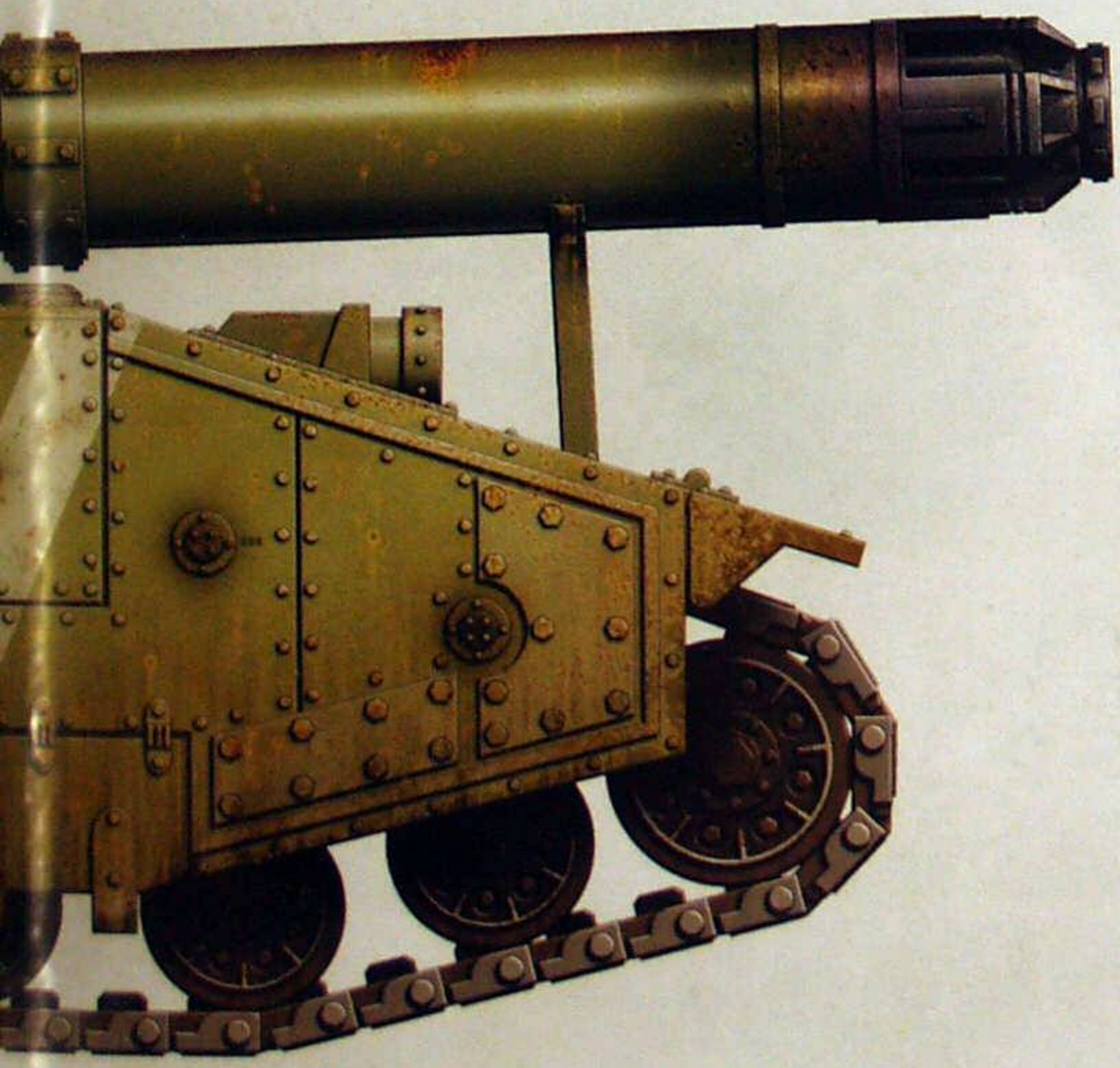
The Death Korps regiments fighting on Vraks deployed hundreds of thousands of tanks over the course of the siege. Many were fielded as individual armoured squadrons or companies tasked with leading or supporting the infantry as they advanced across the hell of no-man's-land. Others were fielded whole as mighty armoured regiments, dozens of tanks sweeping across the battlefield and crushing the enemy beneath their tracks. Most potent of all were the super-heavy armoured regiments, often consisting of a dozen or more Baneblades or one of its variants. These formations were invaluable assets held at army level and only ever committed when ordered by its High Command, for they often formed a vital component of the long term strategy to defeat the renegades once and for all.



Shadowsword of the Krieg 11th Tank Regiment, 14th Titan-hunter Company (Heavy). The 14th was the regiment's only dedicated Titan-hunter unit. This tank was destroyed whilst engaged with enemy Titans during the war on Vraks.



Leman Russ Vanquisher of the 7th Tank Regiment. This is the command tank of 17th Company.



weapons to smash the Krieg regiments' defensive positions. Their raids could not hold the ground they had captured and after their initial shock, the Death Korps regiments began to recover. In places the frontline had been breached and the enemy had capitalised and pushed it back; in others it had held firm. Over the coming weeks more heavy equipment would arrive from orbit, and the Chaos forces could look to make more permanent gains. The Apostate Cardinal's army would also join the attacks, charging out over no-man's land to attack the weakened frontline positions and reclaim lost ground. Where once there had been a clear ring of trenches around the Citadel of Vraks, now the picture was less clear. In places the frontline remained the same, while elsewhere it was forced to withdraw as Traitor forces captured and held ground they had lost over a year previously.

The problem faced by the Krieg commanders was that after holding the initiative for so long and dictating where attacks would take place, they had lost that advantage. Now they were fighting a defensive war. Greater still was the issue of supplies. The loss of the Vraks system had left the 88th Siege Army stranded with its supply lines severed. The replacement men, guns, ammunition, fuel and stores needed to maintain the momentum of the war could no longer be brought in. It was a dire situation. How long could the Krieg regiments fight such a war with ever-dwindling supplies? Lord Commander Zuehlke's staff set to work calculating how long this would be based on all the thousands upon thousands of quartermaster reports they had received.

As their work began, news of the imminent disaster on Vraks reached Segmentum Obscurus high command on Cypra Mundi. Alarmed that after ten years the war on Vraks was in danger of total failure, an investigation was commissioned to determine what had gone wrong. Led by Departmento Munitorum High Logistician-adept Istar Ornus, the investigation was granted the power to remove the current high command overseeing the war if it was found to have failed in its duty to the Emperor.

Meanwhile, more bad news for the Krieg regiments had arrived. A new threat was looming. From its impact site west of the Chaylia Plateau, the *Aharon's Bane* was now disgorging fresh warbands. The ship's crash landing had killed many, but far more had survived and were now preparing themselves for battle. They were a long way behind Krieg lines and worse still, alongside the insane warriors of Chaos stalked many great war machines, amongst them Titans of Legio Vulcanum.

This new threat had one hundred and sixty kilometres of Vraks to cover, but was advancing unopposed. The Krieg regiments of the 1st Line Korps were alerted to the army's presence only when it had bypassed the cavernous Mora Gorge and was approaching Sector 60-53. With the rear of 1st Korps' lines under direct threat, the 88th Siege Army had to move fast to intercept the foe. It fell to the 101st Regiment of the 11th Assault Korps, who were to withdraw from the current battlelines en-masse and reinforce 1st Korps in order to meet the new threat.

The 101st Regiment began its redeployment at 119823.M41. By the time it was in position to launch its counter-attack, the enemy had swept a further fifty kilometres south, occupying the old second defence line as it went. The strategic situation wasn't good. The enemy in front was attacking and the enemy behind was threatening to cut off the 1st Line Korps from the rest of the army. All that stood in the way was the 101st Regiment, which was preparing to launch an attack in Sector 61-47. If it failed, then it was likely to cost the Imperium's army heavily.

At 158823.M41, battle commenced. The 101st Regiment's tanks advanced by companies in line abreast, each Leman Russ and Macharius kicking up a column of dust as they moved at a steady walking pace in parade ground order. With them were the assault korps' few Titan-hunters – Shadowswords and Stormblades. Behind them followed the infantry on foot, followed in turn by the field artillery, still behind its tows. There was little in the way of heavier artillery as there had not been time to move the big guns and the ammunition they required. This was a mobile war for which the siege regiment was not well equipped. There had been no time either to conduct any reconnaissance of the ground.

The oncoming enemy was a horde of foulness; renegades, sub-humans, mutant-slaves, beastmen, pirates and other fugitives from the Emperor's justice. The dregs of the galaxy who had come to Vraks to plunder and win the tainted blessings of their gods. They were led and directed by the Chaos Space Marine warbands, veterans each of a thousand battles. Amongst them stalked the Titans, their huge strides shaking the earth, each broadcasting a dirge of unholy litanies to whip those about them into a murderous frenzy.

The first enemy to strike came as a complete surprise as Chaos Hell Talons and Hell Blades suddenly materialised in Vraks' turbulent skies. Like angry hornets they plunged down on the advancing tanks, which were completely without anti-aircraft defences. As the Talons' bombs fell, weapons fire raked the advancing tank squadrons. First one, then another tank blossomed into flames and smoke. Brown geysers of earth and rock began to spout as the well-drilled formations scattered, seeking what little shelter they could find. With their ammunition expended, the enemy aircraft vanished from the skies as rapidly as they had arrived. Despite their losses, the leading tank companies pressed on. On the horizon, the first enemy Titans were now in sight and the bright flash of their heavy weapons opening fire was observed. The lead tanks also encountered the first enemy ground troops. Chimera-borne infantry were already in position and waiting to open fire. To the left and right, the tell-tale dust columns of advancing armour could be seen.

The Centaur tows had halted and the field artillery pieces were being quickly manhandled to readiness, ammunition carriers coming forward to deliver their stockpiles to each gun. Soon the rapid thump of quad launchers was reverberating across the battlefield, each of their multiple volleys of shells landing in quick succession, small explosions that merged into one and left a thickening cloud of dust smearing the battlefield, obscuring their commander's view.



Now, all who watched relied on the hazy images of their vox-relays to get a picture of the battle. At the front it seemed that the first enemy infantry positions had been overrun, smoking Chimera hulls added to the obscuring haze, but the Titans' long-range weaponry had found its mark and was starting to exact a heavy toll. It was an uneven fight, even with the super-heavy tanks in support. One Shadowsword found itself a firing position from which to engage the advancing Titans, but saw repeated blasts flicker off their void shields to no effect. A return blast from a turbo-laser struck the tank's main gun and damaged it. Seconds later, a succession of blasts tore straight through the engine compartment and superstructure. As the crew leapt out, the air was thick with fire. Tank rounds and laser blasts by the thousand scorched across the battlefield as artillery rounds began to fall.

On the left flank, the enemy's armour had joined the battle. Led by the ominous, squat bulk of Chaos Space Marine Land Raiders, Predators and Vindicators, the Traitors' armour traded shots with Leman Russ tanks, and soon the enemy were advancing again, Titans stalking through the smoke and explosions. The 101st's counter-attack had been broken and was in danger of being shattered completely.

Orders were issued for its forces to pull back, and throughout the long night the battlefield crawled with wounded and smoke-stained tank crews desperately attempting to return to their lines, whilst the enemy triumphantly reclaimed any damaged vehicles they could salvage. In all, nearly seventy tanks had been sacrificed, including eleven super-heavy tanks, along with twenty-seven artillery pieces and yet uncounted support vehicles and infantrymen.

Withdrawals and Retreats

The defeat of the 101st meant that the ring around the fortress could not be maintained. In the aftermath of the battle, 1st Line Korps was ordered to give up its positions and move westwards, but even then they could hardly hope to avoid the juggernaut that was descending upon them. The eastern flank of the inner defence ring was to be abandoned too, and in order to save the rest of the korps' forces, the 19th Regiment was required to act as the rearguard. The order would effectively be a death sentence, as the regiment would now be trapped by the enemy's advance, pinned with their backs to the nigh-uncrossable Demus Trench. Such uncompromising sacrifices were required to save the strategic situation – if only for a short while.

Hundreds of thousands of men and vehicles across the battlefield were now on the move, hurrying to raise up new defences as the enemy relief force advanced to meet them. Any slim chance of taking the Citadel within the designated schedule was now lost. It would take a tremendous effort just to prevent the years-long Siege of Vraks from ending in defeat for the Imperium.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG OFFICER



1. UNIFORM
This Krieg officer wears a non-standard uniform. Such displays of individuality are not favoured by Krieg regiments, whose indoctrination requires them to sublimate individuality to the greater purposes of the Death Korps and the Emperor. But the Departmento Munitorum's regulations governing the equipment of Astra Militarum regiments do require that officers distinguish themselves from the rank and file, to set an example as figures of inspiration and authority on the battlefield. Hence the colonel's uniform is of superior material and design, individually tailored for him. His greatcoat is made of the finest grade Mukaali hide.

The officer's boots are the tall riding boots issued to Death Riders of Krieg, and are regarded of higher quality and comfort than the low marching boots of the infantry; the colonel has no doubt retained them after his time serving with a Death Rider unit. The red sash is worn for battlefield identification, and is also worn by his security detachment.

His gas mask is a lightweight unit. Lacking the large regulator unit, it is only used for shorter durations of exposure, and is generally issued to staff officers who would otherwise spend much of their time inside sealed command bunkers.

2. ARMOUR
Like the rest of his uniform, the colonel's armour is of a non-standard configuration. The breastplate is the same as that issued to Death Riders. In practice, it provides little additional protection.

His helmet is a standard issue Mk IX, with additional decoration added as befits one of an officer's rank. It has a gold eagle crest and the winged skull symbol of the Astra Militarum.

3. INSIGNIA
The Death Korps of Krieg reject the awarding of medals for individual bravery, as this is expected from Death Korps Guardsmen, and all those indoctrinated are willing to face the direst threats without regard for their own survival. It is not in the Death Korps' ethos to recognise individual achievements and those born into the Korps do not seek such glory. Their training requires them to become a faceless cog in a vast war-making machine. Service to the Korps and the Emperor is regarded as reward enough for their sacrifices.

The officer's gorget is actually a small refractor field generator, worn for personal protection by high ranking officers and officials; the generators often being disguised as jewellery or decoration.

Staff officers and higher ranking officers (those above the command of actual regiments in the field) are often seconded from other Imperial Guard regiments or from the noble classes that provide much of the Imperial Guard's upper echelons. Often these positions are retained as hereditary entitlements. Krieg officers, with their narrow doctrine of attritional trench warfare, are not generally considered to be suitable for the more political and diplomatic ranks amongst the staff of an army command.

4. WEAPONS
Sabre: This officer's weapons are carried as a matter of ritual and protocol rather than as practical weapons. Only in the direst of circumstances would a Krieg regiment's senior commanding officer be required to fight, although to have reached this high rank, the colonel will already have a significant wealth of frontline combat experience. His sabre is also another relic of his days leading a Death Rider company.

Laspistol: Although barely visible, the laspistol is carried only as a weapon for personal defence. It is likely to be a standard issue weapon, no doubt kept in spotless condition by the colonel's aides, and well maintained – lacking the wear and tear of frontline service. Many officers will choose to carry other weapons as a matter of personal preference.

This is Colonel Thyran, commanding officer of the 143rd Siege Regiment, 12th Line Korps, seen here during the 469824.M41 'Kagori' offensive, when his regiment forced the first breach in Vraks' inner defence line.





This is Commissar-general Maugh, the senior ranking Commissar attached to 143rd Regiment and the constant companion of the regiment's command staff. Behind him is Ensign 232-165-87509-19-Dseke.

DEATH KORPS COMMISSAR & ENSIGN



1. UNIFORM
Regardless of which regiment a Commissar serves with, be it Krieg, Cadian, Tallarn or Valhallan, his uniform remains the same. Whilst no Commissar will have exactly the same uniform and some degree of personalisation is acceptable, all wear the distinctive black dress uniform, black overcoat and tall cap. All Commissars' uniforms must be black.

Commissars are raised by the military schools of the Schola Progenium as grim, authoritarian figures whose personal loyalty is beyond question. Once their rigorous training is complete, they are assigned to Imperial Guard regiments in war zones across the galaxy and expected to immediately take up a role motivating troops, instilling loyalty and maintaining discipline. A Commissar must be vigilant at all times for signs of moral weakness in the men, and more importantly, in a regiment's officers, as well as keeping a wary eye on any sanctioned psykers attached to the regiment. High ranking Commissars will have a wealth of battlefield experience to draw upon and will also act as additional tactical advisors to the command staff.

This Commissar-general's uniform is heavily decorated and braided, as befits his senior rank. Many Commissars frown upon such ostentation and prefer a more puritanical, unadorned appearance. His uniform also bears decorations from previous campaigns and postings, as well as for personal bravery. The silver gorget is a mark of long service.

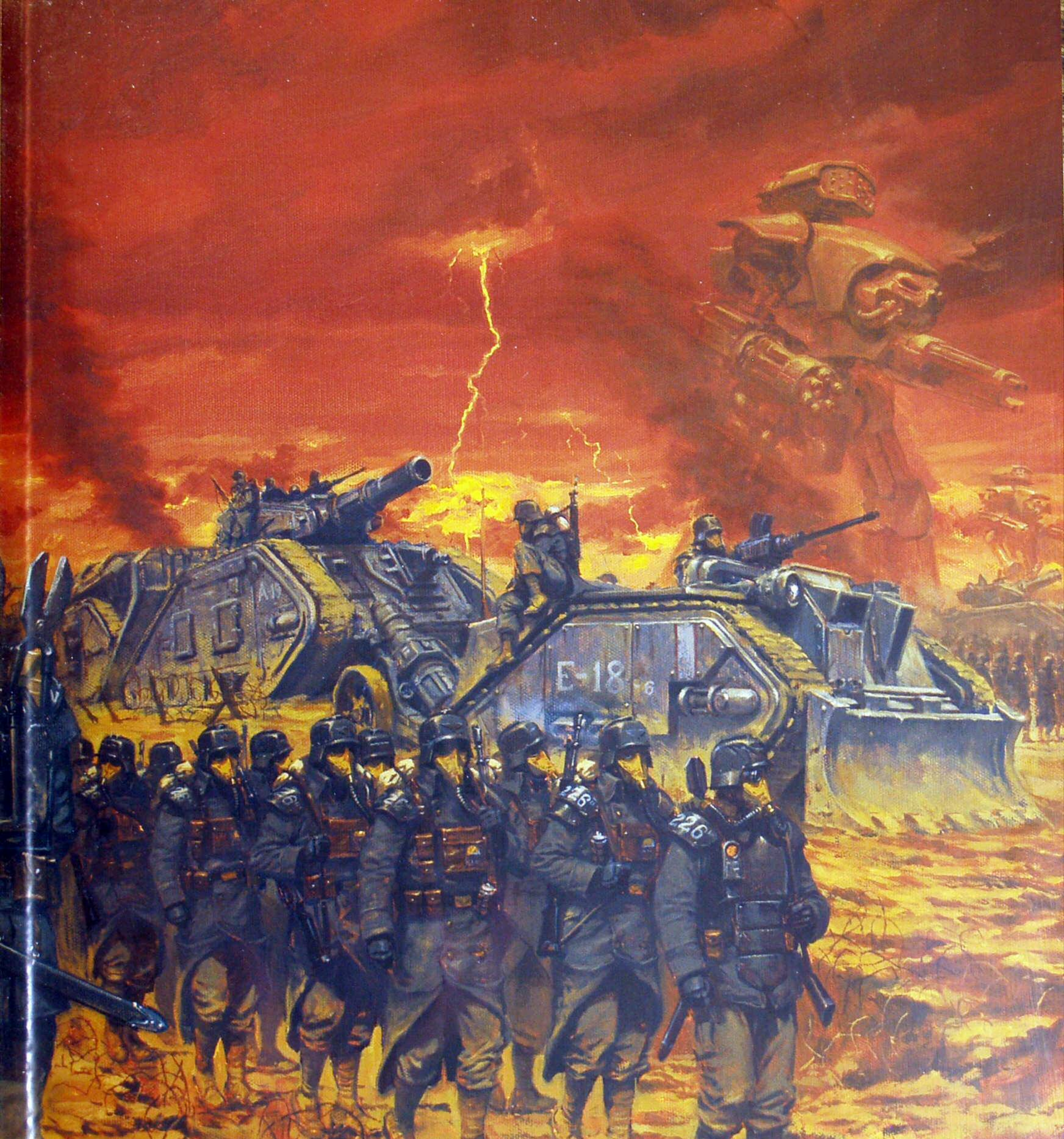
2. WEAPONS
Commissars are allowed a wide degree of choice when it comes to the personal weapons they carry. Many expect to lead from the front and carry power weapons and power fists. This Commissar is attached to the regimental headquarters and is not expecting to lead men in combat so he has kept his weaponry to the basics. He carries a sword and a holstered laspistol. The laspistol allows the Commissar to carry out his powers of summary discipline. All Commissars are empowered with the ultimate sanction of battlefield execution over those they deem to have failed in their duty. His main target will be weak or inadequate officers, but is not restricted to these. Should a Commissar-general feel that it is necessary, he is also empowered to remove the commanding officer from his post and take over command of the entire regiment.

3. ENSIGN
Krieg regiments include the officer rank of Ensign. This is a junior officer chosen to carry the regimental or company banner. It is considered a great honour to be chosen and marks the officer as one with the potential to rise to the most senior rank. The rank of Ensign carries a short term of service, so an officer will not be expected to act as the banner bearer for long before being moved on to a combat command with a front line platoon or a Death Rider squadron.

The Ensign wears the carapace breast and backplate issued to all the regiment's senior officers' security staff, as these men will be expected to accompany the commander on ceremonial duties as well as on the battlefield. To aid recognition in the field, they all also wear a red sash.

4. REGIMENTAL BANNER
The regimental banner is the regiment's most precious artefact, a symbol of its long service to the Emperor, and it bears a history of the regiment's many campaigns. Whilst few men in a Krieg siege regiment have a long life expectancy, the banner will see service in every campaign. It is a rallying point and acts as an inspiration to the men of the regiment, who must all live up to the regiment's former glories. Death Korps of Krieg regiments are well known for their morbid attitude and scant regard for casualties and often use the skull motif. The 143rd's banner itself is also a reliquary and the skulls of former commanding officers, killed in battle, are mounted upon it – watching over the latest recruits even in death. The twin hanging banners bear an embroidered list of the regiment's history of battles and campaigns.


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CHAPTER SEVEN – ON THE EDGE OF DEFEAT

'In the Emperor's service, the Death Korps will pay any price.'

Lord Marshall Arnim Kagori

News of the perilous situation developing on Vraks quickly reached the ears of the Lord Militant Obscurus and his staff on Cypra Mundi. A very powerful man, with thousands of armies at his command and a direct line of communication back to Terra and the High Lords, it was his staff that had originally conceived the plan to besiege Vraks and appoint Lord Commander Zuehlke. Now it fell to those same men to rescue all.

It was first decided to replace the 88th Army's command staff. They had failed in their duty and therefore failed the Emperor and the Imperium, squandering the vast resources that had been put at their disposal. News of his imminent dismissal made little impact upon Lord Commander Zuehlke. With the full knowledge that a man of his elevated social rank could not fall far from grace, Zuehlke was already lined up for a command position on the staff of the 7003rd Astra Militarum Army, mustering to counter continued Ork attacks by the Great Despot of Dregruk. It was for those beneath him to bear the wrath for his failure instead. Those who had not already sought appointments elsewhere faced banishment to penal regiments or field commands on the Eastern Fringe to meet the growing Tyranid invasions, both assured death sentences in all but name.

The commander eventually chosen to take up the poisoned chalice of Vraks next was Marshal Arnim Kagori, a hard-fighting general with an impressive track record of victories. Although now perceived as being old for someone of command rank, he was seen as a safe pair of hands for the 88th Siege Army. Like his predecessor he was a nobleman, the scion of a family with a long history of service in the upper ranks of the Astra Militarum. Amongst his large entourage was his personal chaplain, a sign of the Marshal's devout faith in the Emperor. He was also a man of strict routine and fixed ideas of how a war should be fought. He had commanded the 13th Palladius Siege Regiment during the long siege of Hive Thetis. It was victory in that campaign that had made him the strongest candidate to command the war on Vraks.

Marshall Kagori's first task, after assembling his own staff, was to gather a force to relieve his beleaguered regiments. He needed to quickly break through the enemy's blockade of the system, get fresh supplies and troops on the ground and re-establish the secure supply lines vital to bring the 88th Siege Army ultimate victory. The new commander would mark a change in the Imperium's approach to Vraks. For him, the siege had already dragged on for far too long. It was now time to commit the forces necessary to break the renegades once and for all.

To this end, a relief force was gathered. First to be approached was the Forge World of Lucius. This mighty planet had strong connections with Krieg and had already provided much of the materiel for the war. The enemy's Titans needed to be destroyed too, and the god-engines of Legio Astorum – the Warp Runners – were called upon for this task. The venerable ruling lords of Lucius agreed. A battlegroup of Titans would be deployed to reinforce the siege regiments and provide the ultimate in heavy firepower.

Next, the regiments would need a fresh injection of manpower and the production line of regiments on Krieg was again drawn upon to provide it. More men, including many specialist engineer companies, would be needed in greater numbers than ever. More men, guns and tanks would be embarked for the journey to Vraks over the following weeks.

The Imperial Navy would provide the ships and the protection for the relief convoy, and it also placed a fighter wing and a bomber wing at the disposal of 88th Siege Army. These would combat the enemy's complete aerial supremacy and provide the army with the long-range strike force it had so far lacked. The slow war of attrition was being escalated to total war, utilising almost every means at the Imperium's disposal.

Last Stand of the 19th

The planned new supplies and reinforcements could do nothing to assist the plight of the 19th Siege Regiment. It was cut off, surrounded and with its back to the unbridgeable Demus Trench. It had been a necessary sacrifice to save the other regiments of 1st Line Korps, but that was little consolation for the Krieg Guardsmen now trapped and facing certain death.

The instrument of their destruction would be the warbands of the Plague Father – the dreaded Lords of Decay and the Apostles of Contagion. The blighted followers of the Chaos god Nurgle had also come to Vraks and it was a battlefield to their liking. Already devastated by the ceaseless artillery duel, where the dead lay unburied and the ground had become infectious with disease from the decaying corpses of the slain, it would be a fertile ground for Nurgle's followers and his favoured weapons. With the 19th Siege Regiment trapped, they would become the subjects of the Lord of Decay's special attention and pleasure.

Since the beginning of the war, the Imperium's commanders had suspected that the Apostate Cardinal's forces were in possession of proscribed weaponry. Vraks had once been used as a safe storage dump for chem-weapons that had been forbidden thousands of years before, and it was one of the reasons Krieg regiments had been chosen to conduct the siege. They were troops hardened enough to face such weapons of mass destruction without breaking. Chief amongst the chemical weapon stores was the toxin Trimethyline-Phthaloxyic-Tertius, known as TP-III, an utterly lethal combination of highly acidic and corrosive heavy gases.

Greenish in colour, it was deadly if breathed in, killing in less than 30 seconds due to massive damage to the victim's respiratory system. Even if not inhaled, concentrations of TP-III caused acidic burning and rapid corrosion, melting skin from bone in minutes. In strong enough concentrations, it could even corrode through metal and armour. So far, the Apostate Cardinal had held his captured stocks in reserve as a weapon of last resort.

The arrival of Chaos Space Marine reinforcements on Vraks, whilst strengthening the war on the ground, had in truth weakened the Apostate Cardinal's position as the ruler of Vraks. Amongst his new allies were men who had no intention of following his orders. The warbands had come for their own purposes and where they did not correspond to those of the Apostate Cardinal's, he was simply ignored. Even Arkos, the Warmaster of the Alpha Legion on Vraks, could exercise little influence and was not inclined to. Xaphan had now handed this world to his masters. What was this petty mortal's little uprising to him?

Upon arrival, the Nurgle warbands had not plunged wholesale into battle as the bloodthirsty followers of Khorne had. Instead they had gathered their full strength and carefully selected their first victim. The 19th Siege Regiment would be that target. This would not be warfare for any strategic gain, but an unholy ritual with the aim of turning Vraks' already blighted environment into a toxic nightmare of disease and pestilence. To this end, the commanders of the traitorous warbands forcibly seized the supplies of TP-III from Xaphan's stores and prepared to put them to use. They would show all who fought on Vraks that the true nature of the universe was decay and the only way to survive was to embrace it.

At 711823.M41 the first attacks began, not with an artillery barrage or bombing raid, but in the eerily cold of dawn a strange light could be seen, staining the horizon with a verdant haze. Steadily, the light grew stronger as thickening, bilious clouds rolled towards the trenches. Krieg sentries issued warnings as the unnatural fog approached. Thick and heavy it clung to the ground, tumbling into every shell hole and crater. Then it reached the trenches...

The clouds of TP-III had a hideous effect upon all they touched. All Krieg Guardsmen had been trained to meet chemical attacks and fight on regardless. They were well equipped for just such situations, but against the acid-soaked clouds, respirators provided scant protection. Skin blistered and burned as clothes decayed, exposing the Death Korps to the full horrors of the unearthly environment. A respirator failure resulted in an agonising death for its wearer, the toxic gas quickly burning the respiratory system and melting lungs so that blood bubbled up from within, foaming from the mouth and nose of its victims even as flesh melted away to expose the bones beneath. In places, the chemical mercifully dissipated quickly and the Krieg Guardsmen's protective equipment coped better, but where the toxic gas was at its most dense, it destroyed everything it came into contact with. Entire platoons were wiped out in a few nightmarish minutes, and as the front line became enveloped in turmoil, the first attack began.





The roar of engines reverberated through the poisonous cloud as the Plague Marines approached, their corrupted vehicles charging across no-man's land with abandon. Rhinos, Predators and Land Raiders all emerged from the green-hued mist and opened fire, whilst all along the front, the followers of Nurgle attacked, quickly taking advantage of the turmoil their heinous chemical attack had caused. They crossed no-man's land against little resistance.

The adamantium and ceramite doors of rusted and boil-infected Rhinos and Land Raiders sprang open and out poured the bloated and foul enemy. It was difficult to believe these abominations had once been Space Marines, loyal followers of the Emperor. Now they were a disgusting parody of their former selves. Putrefying flesh hung limply from their pitted and pox-marked power armour. Maggots crawled upon their bodies feasting, and fat flies buzzed around them in swarms. For all their grotesque appearance, they were still superbly disciplined troops and none of their battle skills had been lost with their decay.

Just as against the Khornate Berserkers, even the training and morale of the Krieg Guardsmen were no match for the supernatural power that drove the Death Guard into battle. With their massive strength, the Traitor Space Marines cleaved through armour and helmets, hacking and slashing their way through the Guardsmen as they fought desperately to defend each trench. The men of Krieg fought well, standing and fighting to the last. No other Astra Militarum regiment could have withstood the onslaught of acidic gas and bolter fire so ably, but they could not hold for long. In desperation, platoon commanders called down supporting artillery fire on their own trench lines, and Earthshaker shells were soon screaming in, exploding indiscriminately amongst both sides.

The gas cloud soon dispersed. The fog lifted from the battlefield to reveal more enemy forces approaching. Across no-man's land came a second wave of men, a ragged horde this time of militiamen and mutants, advancing through the Krieg counter-barrage, following in the Traitor Marines' wake. They too were soon in amongst the Krieg ranks, forcing the survivors back along the communication trenches and overrunning the second trench lines.

No aid could be sent to save the 19th Regiment from the assault. It was too late for them and they had no option but to fight their last stand. The few remaining tanks the regiment could field fought from their dug-in positions, hull down, engaging the enemy vehicles as they rolled forwards. The massive weight of the corrupted Land Raiders collapsed the trench walls as they passed over them, crushing anybody left inside.

Night fell, but saw no let-up in the fighting. Colonel Keled, commander of 19th, reported that he would hold for another day, after that his ammunition would be spent, his last artillery overrun and his regiment scattered and annihilated. His men served their Emperor well and the 19th Regiment somehow managed to battle on for a further three days as the frontline shrunk ever backwards.

All communication with the 19th Siege Regiment ceased at 735823.M41. Sectors 61-44 and 62-44 had been turned into a playground for the children of Nurgle. Strange beasts could be seen stalking the trenches and dug-outs, creatures from nightmares that crawled and oozed, and spider-like machines stalked the mists. Here was a land fit for Nurgle's servants. Their master was pleased.

Second Naval Battle of Vraks

Whilst Marshall Kagori's staff were busy collecting together the forces that all hoped would save Vraks, the enemy took advantage of their supremacy on the battlefield the armoury world of Vraks had become. Supported by their new allies, they began to hit back in ever-greater force. Attacks could be expected anywhere along the front and with defensive artillery fire heavily restricted due to ammunition conservation, many succeeded in capturing Krieg trenches and holding them. For almost a year the 88th Siege Army had to endure defeats, withdrawals and retreats at the hands of the reinvigorated enemy forces. As manpower and supplies of all types dwindled, it seemed they were on the very edge of defeat.

But Marshall Kagori had been working unceasingly and at 084824.M41, his fleet was ready to set course for Vraks. It was an armada containing a convoy of transports and supply ships, including the precious Legio Astorum Titan transport, defended by a potent flotilla of escorts. Battlefleet Scarus' first move was to send a scouting force back into the Vraks system. Ordering the fastest vessels in the fleet to the region, the Cobra class destroyers of Ithica squadron were to discover and report on enemy strength in the system. When the three destroyers arrived, they found the drifting hulks and wreckage of the previous battle, but no enemy vessels intercepted them. They returned to report that all was quiet.

Where had the enemy vessels gone? Where was the *Anarchy's Heart*? She could still be in the system, lurking in the outer asteroid fields. The twin Luna class cruisers *Duke De Walle* and *General Dyhane* were detailed to defend the convoy, along with a full strength escort squadron of eight Sword class frigates. The *Duke De Walle* led the way, with her sister vessel, the *General Dyhane*, as rearguard. For the first few days, there was no contact with any enemy vessels. Leaving the dangerous asteroid fields behind, the fleet seemed to be in the clear. Most of the Traitor fleet had in fact dispersed. Their battle won, the raiders had sought new plunder and new victories. But the *Anarchy's Heart* had remained, lurking, watching like a silent predator awaiting an unsuspecting prey. As the relief convoy approached, she was ready to pounce.

Hidden amongst the hulks and drifting debris of the Vraks system, the *Anarchy's Heart* and her escorts were invisible with all systems powered down. They lay quietly waiting, and as the convoy approached, they sprung their ambush. The battleship's great plasma reactors roared into life and power surged down her ancient cables and circuits like warm lifeblood. She was already in range as the escort vessel's captains called for flank speed, their reactors straining at the sudden demand for power. The battleship's first salvo impacted with crushing force and two escort vessels vanished into expanding clouds of debris as they took repeated direct hits from the battleship's huge guns. The *Duke De Walle's* shields were screaming as repeated laser impacts flared off them. A second volley raked her hull and destroyed her starboard thrusters and manoeuvre drives. One supply transport, loaded with fuel and ammunition, was crippled and left drifting.

The Imperial Navy's cruisers responded to the ambush as fast as their crews could. The *Duke De Walle* returned fire, her broadsides sporadic at first, but then growing in intensity. The *General Dyhane* swung about, loosed a wide spread of torpedoes, then powered towards the enemy battleship. As the cruisers engaged, the transports made for Vraks with the escorts in close proximity, interposing themselves between the valuable cargos and enemy guns. It was a brave act and cost the escorts more heavy losses, with two more ships quickly crippled as the *Anarchy's Heart* thundered out with every gun she could bring to bear.

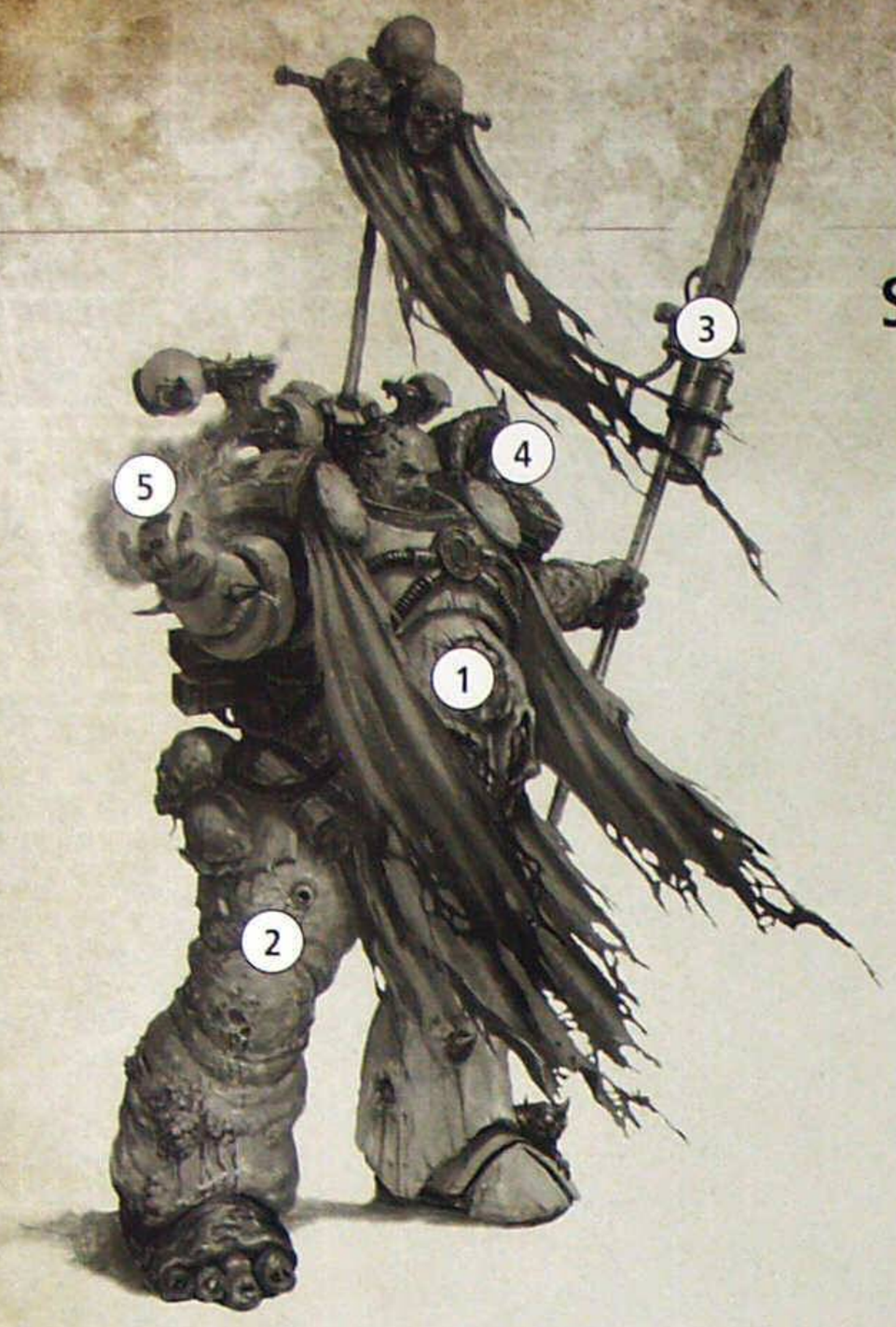
The two cruisers closed into effective range themselves, and although the *Anarchy's Heart* was a potent vessel and her armour was thick, she could not afford to ignore the firepower of the two capital ships. She turned her guns on them, taking repeated torpedo impacts and, deep inside, fires started by the explosions could be seen raging – the beast had been wounded.

But the wounded beast's rage was unholy and merciless. Lances and macro cannons pounded at the two cruisers. The *Duke De Walle* was caught in the maelstrom, riding the impacts as if tossed about in a stormy sea. She was soon burning, massive oxygen leaks bleeding flames into the cold void. The *General Dyhane* took her chance while the *Anarchy's Heart* was distracted and her guns ripped into her enemy's armour.

Damaged, and with her prey escaping towards Vraks, the *Anarchy's Heart* disengaged. Her sudden devastating attack had destroyed four escort vessels and left the *Duke De Walle* crippled and dying. Hundreds of her crew lay dead at their guns, their bodies choking the lower deck corridors, but the *General Dyhane* had remained true to her purpose and never flinched in the face of the battleship's broadsides.

Rather than risk destruction to no further gain, the ancient leviathan withdrew, soon vanishing again into the drifting wreckage, her two escort ships remaining close for protection. The *General Dyhane* could have pursued, but she would then be alone against a far greater foe. Instead she offered what aid she could to the grievously stricken *Duke De Walle*. Crippled with damage beyond the crew's capability to repair, the captain ordered the survivors to abandon ship, leaving the lower deck fires to gut the vessel. They burned for weeks after the surviving crew were ferried across to the *General Dyhane*, leaving the stricken cruiser as another hulk to add to the growing graveyard around Vraks.

Her mission complete, the *General Dyhane* set course for Vraks again.



SORCERER OF NURGLE

Despite its seemingly decayed and rotting state, Necrosius' body appears able to shrug off extremely serious injuries, with unconfirmed reports of his flesh almost instantaneously healing the damage done to it by las fire and bolter rounds. In addition, the sorcerer appeared able to withstand any degree of ambient pollution, including the deadly toxins and gases employed by his own side in the conflict, without additional protection.

1. ARMOUR

Necrosius' armour is a corrupt relic; although incomplete it appears to incorporate elements of Mk IV and Mk V Astartes power armour, along with augmetic modifications of unknown origin, including what appears to be a dangerously unstable power core venting contaminated blackish-yellow vapour. Necrosius himself appears to have partly fused with the armour as it has been damaged or burst in order to accommodate his mutated form, to the point where it is impossible to know where the sorcerer ends and the armour begins.

2. MUTATED FORM

Fallen far from the glorious form of Mankind and the sacred triumph of Adeptus Astartes physiology, Necrosius' body has become subject to the warping effects of Chaos. This has manifested in horrifically bloated necrotic mutations, swelling of the flesh and what appear to be numerous cancerous lesions and the stigmata of uncounted diseases and infections.

The gifts of Nurgle usually take the same form; disfigurement and contamination with diseases of the skin. These often (but not always) cause bloating of the flesh – as seen clearly here.

Such a severe case of neurofibromatosis with attendant tumours should induce chronic pain, but it seems not to affect Nurgle's followers in any way. Subcutaneous tumours have caused the flesh to expand. Cysts have formed and then burst, spewing blood and pus. Skin lesions of this severity would be fatal to any mortal, but Necrosius and his ilk welcome such infection as a sign of their god's favour. To their corrupt minds, such unsightly dermatosis simply adds to the Nurgle warband's fearsome appearance and acts to intimidate those that must fight them.

3. WEAPONRY

Force glaive: As encountered on Vraks, Necrosius appeared to be armed with a heavily modified force weapon, based or perhaps converted from an Imperial design of the kind favoured by Space Marine Librarians. The psycho-responsive metal of the force weapon allows a psyker such as Necrosius to focus murderous energies into the blade, rendering it able to cleave through even hardened ceramite and directly sever the life force of an individual wounded by it.

Bolt pistol: Although not visible here, Necrosius is known to be armed with a bolt pistol, which he has personally adapted to fire 'plague bolts'. The warheads of each bolt are converted to contain biological warfare agents, which are scattered when the bolt explodes. These are believed to be adaptations of the psyker's own invention.

Blight grenade: Also known as a 'death-head's of Nurgle', these are highly effective improvised grenades. Each is made from the head of a conquered enemy. The more powerful the enemy the better, so enemy champions are highly prized. The head is sealed with wax and then filled with infectious blood, pus, acid and other putrid creations and allowed to rot down. The result is a missile which will burst upon impact, the internal pressure throwing out infectious liquids and gases in all directions.

4. NURGLING

The tiny, impish Daemons of Nurgle are called Nurglings – each is a small replica of Nurgle himself. Their small size should not be mistaken for any lack of threat. They are vicious creatures, attacking in swarms that bite and claw with infected fangs. Their festering bites will quickly make a minor wound turn dangerously gangrenous. Nurglings attach themselves to the most powerful and favoured servants of Nurgle.

5. PYSCHIC MANIFESTATION

The use of warp power will often incur physical manifestations of power, summoned from the æther. Most commonly this might be lightning or flashes of energy, but the use of psychic activity has been noted to cause all manner of other manifestations, from rapid temperature changes, sudden winds, disembodied voices, screaming or howling, unexpected levitation, to inducing fits or uncontrolled psychotic episodes.

Necrosius is also adorned with the blasphemous and macabre trappings of a sorcerer, including shrunken heads, fetishes, glyph-carved icons and a personal banner bearing the foul symbols of Chaos, harvested body parts and the like. These totems are thought to have use in ritual practices, providing a psychic focus for the sorcerer's malign energies as well as fulfilling other symbolic functions.



The reviled Sorcerer of Nurgle Necrosius, the Master of the Apostles of Contagion, also known as the Hand of Nurgle. Following the Vraksian war, his whereabouts remain unknown by agents of the Imperium.

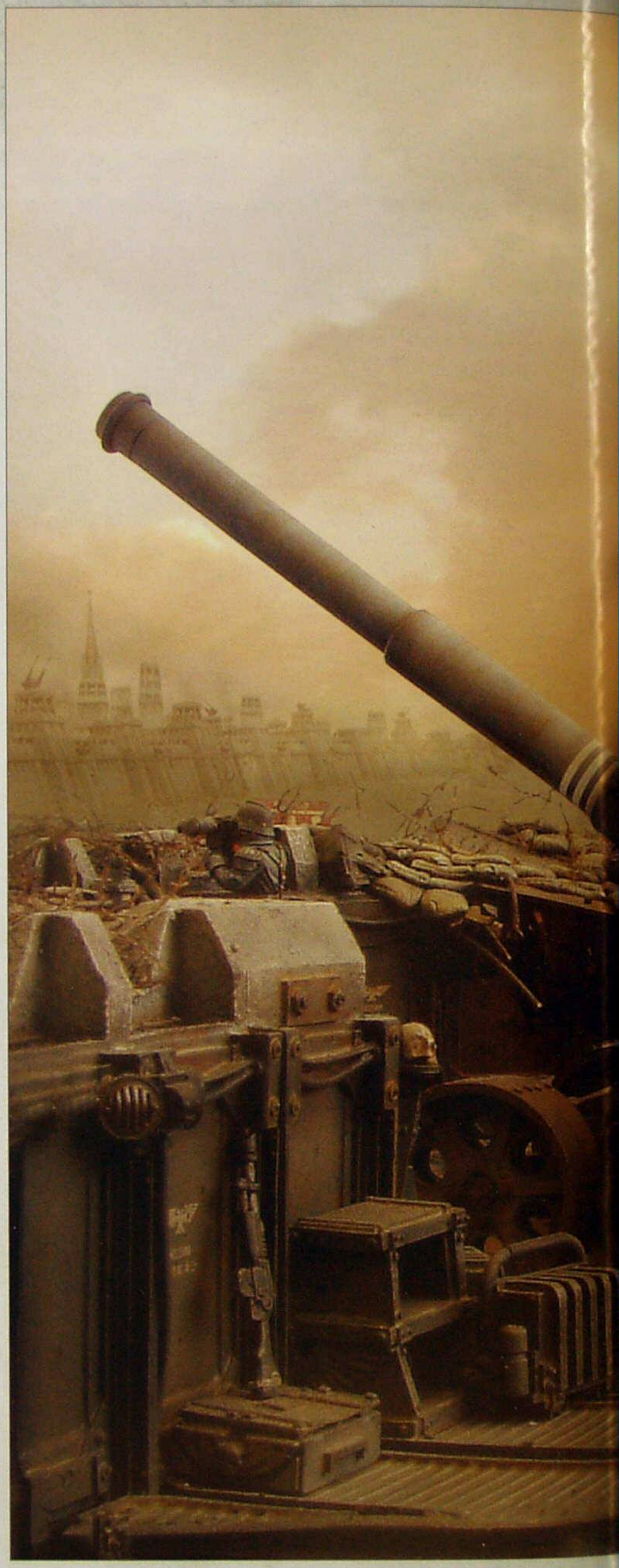
Planetary Landing
The convoy had had a narrow escape but, by their bravery and sacrifice, the two cruisers had saved the day and maybe the entire campaign on Vraks. Most of the supplies and all the Titans would reach their destination and join the war. The *Anarchy's Heart* was still out there, lurking somewhere, but she was badly damaged and would not risk another such encounter with her foe.

The convoy arrived in Vraks' orbit and began to disembark its cargo. Soon tanks by the hundreds, ammunition by the thousands of tonnes, men by the hundreds of thousands, and fuel and all manner of equipment were being landed and prepared for immediate transport to the front. Amidst the many unloading cargo landers, a huge armoured landing ship set down. Its great slab-sided doors rolling back to reveal the Titans within, and down the exit ramps walked the Warhounds and Reaver Titans of the Legio Astorum battle group, under the orders of their ancient and venerable High Princeps Rand Drauca. In all there were twenty-two Titans, each bedecked in honour banners and emblazoned with the aquila and the black eclipse symbol of their Titan Legion. Ten Reavers towered above all, tall and imposing, whilst before them strode twelve Warhounds. The battle group was ready for deployment.

Back from the Brink – the 'Kagori Offensive'
Even whilst the 19th Regiment was being massacred to the last man, Marshall Kagori's new offensive was being planned, ready to begin the next big attempt to crack the inner defence line. The '*Kagori Offensive*', as it had become known, was set to start at 249825.M41. Its aim was to recapture all the ground lost since the enemy counter-offensive at 078823.M41, and to crack the inner defence lines, precipitating a breakthrough to the curtain wall. It was an incredibly ambitious plan and took almost a year to prepare the battered siege regiments for the coming offensive. This would be Marshall Kagori's first bold stride towards winning the war.

A major decision for the Marshall's headquarters would be the deployment of the Titan battle group. Although the lines of command did not permit him to give the Legio Astorum Princeps direct orders, his reports to the lords of Lucius Forge World would influence any decision they made. In the end, after a careful review of the situation, it was decided that all the Titans would support a main effort in the sectors held by the 12th Line Korps' four siege regiments: the 143rd, 149th, 150th and 158th. This effort would also be backed up by elements of the 8th Assault Korps, including its powerful super-heavy tanks.

The first part of the plan involved a prolonged artillery bombardment and so the new shells and mortar bombs were prioritised for the bombardment korps and artillery companies. The barrage of the enemy was gradually stepped up over the weeks before Marshall Kagori's grand plan was ready to be put into action. The artillery shells rumbled overhead constantly, keeping up their steady rhythm to harass the foe and make the movement of troops and supplies to the front dangerous. In the last days before the







infantry offensive was to begin, the bombardment intensified, then was stepped up again until the guns were hammering away relentlessly, barrels glowing red hot whilst breach blocks and recoil pistons wore out under the strain.

At 249825.M41, everything was finally in place. In the forward trenches all across Vraks the first assault companies stood ready, bayonets fixed, awaiting the order to attack. Across no-man's land the artillery shells impacted in a furious tempest on the enemy frontlines, reaching a crescendo in a constant thunderous roll, smothering the enemy in dust and shrapnel. Then, suddenly, the guns fell silent.

In Sector 54-46, Colonel Thryan of the 143rd Regiment had joined his men. Beside him an ensign carried the much-honoured regimental banner at his shoulder. Exactly on time, the colonel ordered the launch of a single red flare that arced into Vraks' sky, burning like a bright drifting star. The master vox operator flashed the codeword throughout the Krieg regiment, and the order to attack was given. It was time to attack once again.

The men scrambled up and over the parapets like so many thousands of times before and out into the crater-scarred killing fields of no-man's land. Behind them Leman Russ and Macharius heavy tanks thumped into gear and began to grind forward. Batteries of mortars launched a barrage of smoke and high explosive shells to keep the enemy gunners' heads down. Still further back, High Princeps Rand Drauca received the attack signal on the command bridge of his Reaver, *Praetorian*. The other Titans followed their commander's lead and Legio Astorum strode into battle.

For the first few hours it seemed that the battle was being fought in the same old way – heavy losses for small gains. But on 12th Line Korps' front, the attack was proceeding well. The god-engines of Legio Astorum were advancing, crushing everything in their path. Engaging the enemy with all their formidable firepower, the Titans smashed a path forward as their void shield generators flared under the impact of enemy weapons. In Sector 54-45, the enemy counterattacked with its own tanks and infantry, and a battle developed in the centre of no-man's land.

Soon Thunderbolt fighters screamed overhead, adding their payloads of bombs and strafing autocannon to the maelstrom of fire descending upon the enemy. The forward trenches were overrun, and Krieg infantry platoons and grenadier squads were pushing on through the maze of trenches and dugouts, clearing as they went. By the end of the first day, the 158th Regiment had recovered the ground it had lost previously, and all the regiments reported good progress wherever the Titans had backed them up. At nightfall, the Titans withdrew to safe laagers as fresh infantry and tanks were moved forwards into position ready for the next day's continued push.

Across the Van Meersland Wastes, the siege regiments reported a variety of successes and failures. Some had been repulsed by weapons fire or thrown back across no-man's land by heavy enemy counterattacks. Wherever the Chaos Space Marine warbands joined the fighting, the Krieg infantry fared poorly. The 5th Regiment had come under intense attack from enemy chemical weapons and sustained heavy losses. In response, the regiment requested that they be allowed to respond in kind. Marshall Kagori, against the advice of many of his staff, granted permission for their own chemical weapons to be used. The 5th Regiment's barrages were soon soaking the land in more poisons. Little did they suspect that they were playing exactly into enemy hands, even with the losses this inflicted.

The second day of the offensive started with more air attacks, but this time the enemy countered, and Thunderbolts and Hell Blades twisted and swooped high above the battlefield as the two sides braced themselves for another day of intense fighting. As another great lightning storm rolled about them, Drauca's Titans pitched forward into the battle again. *Praetorian* itself quickly destroyed eleven enemy armoured vehicles that its crew had spotted moving forwards as reinforcements, its missile launcher firing salvos of missiles as its gatling blaster and laser blaster turned the column into a burning, smoking ruin. Just as the weapons moderatii reported the target eliminated, the Reaver's augurs identified enemy Titans approaching. After the previous day's heavy losses, the enemy had responded to the Titan attack with their own. Legio Vulcanum had come to match its ancient war machines against the loyalists. The High Princeps issued new orders. Enemy Titans were approaching; they were to be the priority targets. Whilst the land battle raged about their feet, the Reavers and Warhounds engaged the enemy Titans in their own separate duel.

Turbo-lasers and volcano cannon flashed, void shields sparked and flared, blazing under the high-energy impacts of massive weapons. Soon missile launcher pods were empty. The gatling blasters were glowing as the six-barrelled battle cannon hammered out shell after shell. Evenly matched, the god-engines tore at each other, rocking under the impacts, armour scorched, rent and dented. *Invigila Alpha* was the first to fall. Closing with the enemy, the Reaver was raked by fire from a Vulcan mega-bolter, the roar of its gatling barrels spitting out thousands of rounds per minute, known as the *'laughter of the devil'* to Titan crews, but the last of her void shields was overloaded and shut down. Before the Tech-Priest could power up the generators to raise the shields again, the Titan took a direct hit to the command bridge. A super-heated blast melted through the thick armour and blast-shielded screens, immolating the entire bridge crew in seconds. The tortured screams of the Princeps and moderatii burned into the Titan's cognitive engine via the mind-impulse links as they were obliterated. Its higher functions destroyed, the Reaver ground to a halt, weapons still held erect, but silent now. More enemy fire lashed the Titan as it stood motionless and defenceless. The sole surviving Tech-Priest could not abandon his dying machine. He simply fell to his knees in prayer as the Titan shuddered and groaned in its own death agonies. Peppered by more enemy fire, *Invigila Alpha* stood in defiance, a blasted and scorched silent sentinel looming over the battlefield. There the god-machine would remain for the duration of the war, a towering landmark in an otherwise barren landscape.

The titanic battle lasted all day, giants duelling over the heads of men as they fought back and forth along the trenches. Progress had slowed without the direct aid of the Titans and there was hard fighting all along the front. By the end of the second day, when the Titans withdrew, little extra ground had been captured. Day three would see the battle resume and then continue into day four.

Both sides had taken heavy losses as the fighting resumed on day five. Weary men in grey greatcoats gathered weapons and ammunition and prepared for another day in the meat grinder. Of all the regiments in the offensive, the 143rd had pushed the furthest, driving a salient into the enemy lines in Sector 54-45, and here the Titan battlegroup would concentrate its efforts. A slim crack might be forced open, and failing that, it would draw the enemy Titans to them and with any luck, allow another regiment to force a breakthrough further down the line.

With the Titans re-armed and battlefield repairs made, Drauca again led his survivors back into the war. After five days of constant battle, the enemy line was thinning. Now, outnumbered and bearing the scars of the last three days, the Legio Vulcanum war machines pulled back to regroup. The enemy infantry could not hold alone against Drauca's firepower. They managed to topple one Warhound with the direct hits of a battery of Basilisks – repeated artillery shells eventually sending the Warhound crashing to the earth to lie forlornly in the mud, but it was their only success. Meanwhile, the 143rd Regiment was pushing ever forwards, and the tanks and Death Riders of the 8th Assault Korps joined the rout.

One more day of fighting saw the inner defence line breached and fresh tank columns streaming through the gap. Kagori's offensive had broken through the defensive belt and was now driving ever deeper towards the curtain wall. The Titans had won him the battle and were withdrawn from the frontline to the reserve, to refit and await their next deployment. They had made the difference. Their battle losses – some four Reavers and seven Warhounds – would have to be replaced from the Forge World of Lucius. It was estimated that, in all, a dozen enemy Titans had been destroyed, a fine total for Drauca's men, who could return to Lucius with honour.

The battle to reach the curtain wall of the Citadel was not over yet though. There were still many more battles to be fought, but Marshall Kagori was already preparing to put a new phase of his offensive into operation. A large stride had been taken towards victory. The outcome of the siege was no longer in doubt. The enemy had lost heavily and new replacements would soon arrive again for the Krieg regiments. The enemy's losses were irreplaceable and Kagori knew that attrition always favoured the besiegers.

The 88th Siege Army could at least claim that they were once again winning the Siege of Vraks.



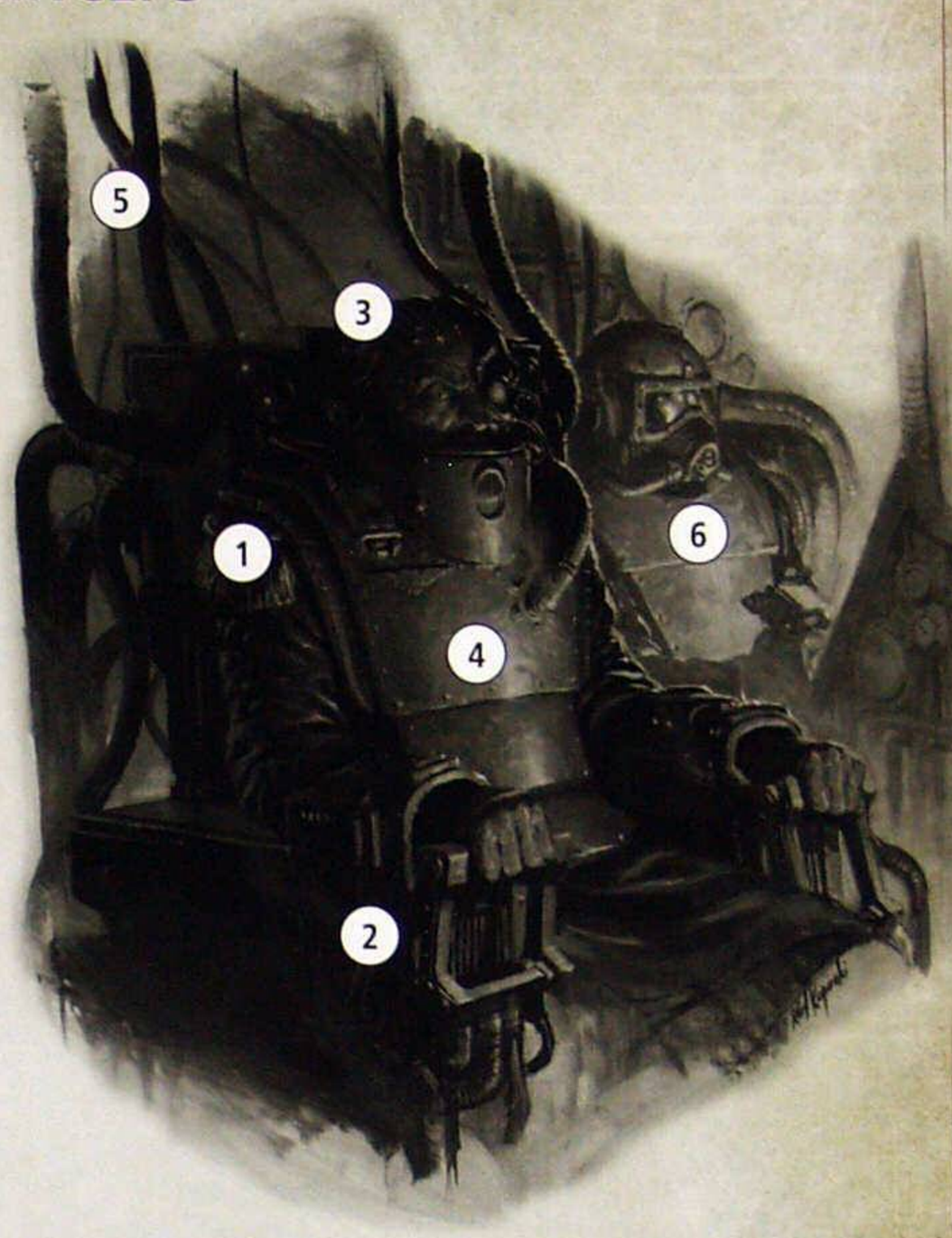
Reaver Titan '*Praetorian*' of the Legio Astorum (the Warp Runners). This god-engine was commanded by High Princeps Rand Drauca, one of the most decorated commanders of his Legio (as demonstrated by the extensive honours displayed on the *Praetorian's* kill-banners).



Traitor Warhound of Legio Vulcanum II (the '*Dark Fire*'), codification unconfirmed. This war machine was reported destroyed by Legio Astorum Titans during the 'Kagori' offensive of 828.M41.


Karl Kopinski

TITAN PRINCEPS



1. THE HIGH PRINCEPS
High Princeps Drauca is a veteran commander of the Legio Astorum, the Warp Runners of the Adeptus Titanicus. The most senior battlefield commander of the Legio during the entire Vraks campaign, this dour warrior was responsible not only for the battlefield command of *Praetorian* in combat against the forces of Chaos, but also the Legio's wider tactical operations and strategic planning. Although his rank afforded him title and status equivalent to a senior colonel of the Astra Militarum or a flag-captain of the Imperial Navy, Drauca's lack of ostentation in uniform or display of the numerous decorations his lauded career had afforded him was in keeping with both his own character and that of his legion. Each Titan Legion has its own idiosyncrasies of operation and ritual, and the Warp Runners have long had the reputation for preferring to adorn their mighty war engines with bold heraldry and striking decoration, while its moderatii and princeps favour an austere uniform and puritanical code of conduct.

During the Battle for Vraks, as well as the destruction of numerous 'lesser opponents', *Praetorian* was credited with the annihilation of seventeen enemy tanks, two 'Brass Scorpion' Daemon Engines and a Traitor Warhound Titan in separate engagements.

During the last stages of the Vraksian war, as the loyal Space Marine Chapters arrived and warp phenomena began to increase exponentially on Vraks, the Legio Astorum deployed to support the attacks on the Citadel. Their guns added to the cauldron of artillery fire that hammered the Citadel daily. During the final assault, as the Angels of Absolution dropped into the heart of the Citadel, *Praetorian* was once again in the thick of the battle. By this time, the traitorous Legio Vulcanum had been defeated and the loyal Titans advanced almost unopposed as they smashed into the Citadel.

2. COMMAND THRONE
The armoured command throne of the Reaver is mounted at the centre of the battle-bridge in the Titan's head. The command throne is the hub of the Titan, and allows for control of all the Titan's functions, should it be required, via the master override systems. As a last resort, the Princeps has access to these manually activated overrides to control the Titan's gross motor functions, reactor output and so on – shown here in the arms of the command throne.

3. MIND IMPULSE UNITS
A sacred mystery of the Adeptus Mechanicus, mind impulse unit interfaces come in a variety of forms. The most common is shown here, being a series of cranial socket connectors and cyber-optic implants, and are favoured by the traditions of the Legio Astorum (although other Titan Legions prefer to use spinal-cortex coils, or even more drastic measures, such as the fully immersive vitro-tanks). Mind impulse units allow for the direct and intuitive control of the Titan and for the Princeps to receive information from its logis-engine, auspex and control systems directly through their own senses via neural connectors.

4. ARMOURED CUIRASS
As well as helping to protect the Princeps from injury from shrapnel caused by secondary damage from impacts, the heavy cuirass itself contains power and life support systems which provide the Princeps with clean air. It also serves to help regulate body temperature and monitor their life signs for dangerous feedback from the mind impulse unit.

5. SUPPORT UMBILICALS
These armoured umbilical cables carry power, life support and data feeds to the command throne, and incorporate multiple redundant channels so that if any one is severed or interrupted during battle, others can take their place.

6. MODERATII
Although the Princeps' commands are carried out primarily via the mind impulse unit interface, many of the Titan's functions are in the hands of attendant Moderatii. In a Reaver there are two Moderatii, one dedicated to controlling the Titan's primary weapons systems, the other acting as helmsman, monitoring auspex feedback and battlefield tactical displays.

CHAPTER EIGHT – THE WAR BENEATH VRAKS

"Subterran im Genitus"

Motto of the Death Korps of Krieg Engineer Korps

The ultimate victory over the inner defence line, four years after it had first been scheduled and with an as yet unknown casualty list, saw Marshall Kagori introduce a new phase to his campaign plan. Since his arrival as commander of the 88th Siege Army, it had always been his intention to make greater use of the large numbers of specialist Krieg engineer companies available to him, and open up a new front to the war – deep underground.

Kagori's plan involved using these troops, all well trained in the digging of mines and counter-mines, to tunnel under the Vraksian defences, allowing his men to bypass strongpoints or attack them from the rear, thus limiting their effectiveness. By adding a new dimension to the war, firstly he hoped to take the enemy by surprise and gain quick victories over the strongest enemy positions and, secondly, that the enemy would lack the resources to match his plans and be at a strategic disadvantage. If necessary he would dig his way right under the fortress and bypass its defence lasers and void shields altogether.

The commanders of the Krieg engineer companies were instructed to make preparations for this new phase of the siege. It was planned that the tunnelling would ultimately serve one of two purposes. Shallower tunnels or 'sap' tunnels would allow for the quick and safe movement of men for surprise attacks, and deeper tunnels would be dug to undermine enemy defences and position large 'mines' – a massive collection of explosives that could be detonated from below, destroying a position ahead of a surface attack.

The Attack on Armoury 55-46

As the operation progressed, the most heavily undermined area of the entire front was in Sector 55-46, with both 12th Line Korps and 46th Line Korps making constant use of engineer companies to attack enemy positions. Here the main objective was the capture of the large underground armoury known to be located at 554-467, which was still being used as a stockpile and a safe shelter for enemy equipment. It had already been heavily shelled by the Krieg siege guns, but with little effect as the important war materiels were buried deep underground and therefore heavily protected.

As the Death Korps engineers dug forwards, they attempted to work their way towards the armoury with the objective of effecting a break-in and overrunning the facility in a surprise assault, but the enemy detected their approach and counter-mined the area heavily. Soon, deep below Vraks' shell-tortured surface, a second war was raging in the darkness. A labyrinth of shafts, galleries and tunnels was forming, and with the element of surprise lost, the heavy tunnelling equipment was brought in by both sides to speed up the digging. Slowly though, by strength of numbers, the Krieg engineers gained the upper hand, pushing the enemy back, and at 790825.M41 reported that they were finally in a position to attempt to breach the underground armoury. In all, five full strength companies would be dedicated to the task of breaking in and then securing the breach. Behind them, more companies were ready to exploit their foothold. These were stiffened by grenadiers squads, themselves equipped with melta bombs and demolition charges to aid in the mission.

Enemy reinforcements had been rushed to the armoury, including a warband of the Berserkers of Skallathrax, whose lust for hand-to-hand combat would be well sated in the bitter tunnel fighting to come. Unknown to the Krieg commanders, most of the enemy's heavy equipment and stores had been evacuated to safety, leaving the armoury almost bare. The stage was set for a savage isolated battle beneath Vraks, where no tank, artillery shell or mortar bomb could aid either side.

To assist with the underground battle, 150th and 471st Siege Regiments were ordered to launch attacks in the neighbouring sectors. Although just diversions, they were to push hard and draw in more enemy forces, stretching their resources. The 27th Artillery Company was positioned with orders to fire a box-barrage over the attack, to help seal it from further reinforcements.

Deep below Sector 55-46, the lead companies filed down the shafts and tunnels, all carrying heavy loads of equipment and rations for a sustained battle. Two tunnels had been excavated under the armoury and inside each of these a huge breaching charge had been laid. Hundreds of tonnes of explosives had been packed in and when the detonations came, they would smash wide holes through to the armoury above and annihilate any enemy forces within. Then, as the dust settled, the engineer squads would rush in and start the job of clearing the armoury's galleries, warehouses, storerooms and barracks.

At 803825.M41, the order to detonate the breaching charges was given. Captain Garis of 20th Engineer Company signalled to one of his men to activate the detonator, then the world collapsed. The explosion could be heard in the trenches above ground, rumbling like approaching thunder, shaking the ground like an earthquake. Within the armoury, the twin charges demolished two storerooms, the force of the erupting explosion sending chunks of rock as large as a Leman Russ battle tank hurtling through the area to shatter on impact with the crumbling walls. Those defenders caught too close to the epicentre were crushed by the shockwave or trapped in the rubble.

The first squads through the twin breaches clambered into a world of eerie darkness, shrouded in a thick choking fog. Rubble lay everywhere, piled metres high. The squads spread

out, flashlight beams flickering as they climbed over the rubble scree. Whatever had been in place to defend these rooms had been destroyed and, for now, the engineers were able to advance unresisted.

In the darkness the renegade militiamen were holding their nerve and waiting, fingers poised over triggers. Then, the echoing retort of a heavy stubber shattered the silence. A long stream of bullets ricocheted down the corridor and tore through the engineers. Then more guns opened fire, bright muzzle flashes in the darkness, grenades exploding with ear-shattering force. Men were hit, cut down with nowhere to hide, their bodies piling up in the corridors. The Krieg engineers returned fire, shotgun blasts ringing and echoing. The traitor gunners continued to fire at the engineers attacking down each corridor, or across each storeroom. The Krieg engineers threw grenades back, trying to dislodge each gunner in turn, but they were protected behind their barricades and any wounded defender was quickly replaced by another gunner. Flamers were brought forward, filling each corridor with blazing promethium that consumed the oxygen, replacing it with toxic fumes.

The first attack had stalled; each probe forward was cut down in turn in a blaze of weapons fire. The engineers had a slim toe-hold inside the armoury, but could advance no further. Concerned with the lack of progress, Captain Garis of 20th Company came forward to assess the situation. He ordered his men to set melta charges to blast holes in the interior walls. They could create their own corridors, blasting through into rooms from unexpected directions. He also authorised the use of gas grenades to dislodge the defenders.

Garis' intervention got the engineers on the move again. He led the way as one melta charge revealed a dark narrow corridor beyond. Jumping through, with squads at his back, he advanced to a set of steps leading downwards, the bottom of which was sealed by a heavy metal blast door that had been welded shut. Quickly, he had a melta charge placed and fell back to a safe distance as it detonated in a bright orange flash, the door itself becoming molten and steaming violently before the centre collapsed inwards in a pool of liquid slag. Beyond, the enemy were waiting, crouched behind a barricade in the darkness, shielded from the melta charge's superheated blast. They were ready, poised to pounce, chainaxes gripped tight in one power-gauntleted hand, bolt pistols and plasma pistols in the other. As Captain Garis advanced again, climbing through the now cooling breach, the enemy sprang up and charged.

Screaming an unholy curse to their god, their bloodlust overtook them. The Khorne Berserkers counterattacked in a rush of bolt pistol explosions and the shriek of chainaxes as the spinning blades bit deep. Captain Garis was the first to die, torn into bloody offal in seconds. The engineer squads behind recoiled as one after another they were cut down, and the corridor became a slaughterhouse. In the darkness, the followers of Khorne killed all they found and left the mangled bloody corpses to rot.

The violence of the counterattack halted the engineers' advance again. They sealed the breaches against the Khorne Berserkers, who were now stalking the corridors, and fought to hold on to the ground they had captured. For the rest of the first day, the deadlock could not be broken. The next day the grenadier squads were sent into the attack from reserve, hoping that they could succeed where the engineers could not. Again they had to face a headlong rush along fire-swept corridors and were cut down by the dozen. But in some places they did dislodge the defenders with a well-aimed grenade, and turned the barricades to their own defence.

Again the Berserkers counterattacked, charging the barricades, heedless of the enemy fire slashing about them. At one barricade defended by grenadiers, the Berserkers charged as hellgun shots ricocheted off their power armour, leaving



deep scorch marks. Grenades exploded but the Berserkers barely broke stride. Then a heavy flamer was fired, sending a burning torrent of promethium down the tunnel. The lead Berserker ignited; doused in burning fuel he staggered but ran on, a blazing inhuman torch, chainaxe raised to strike, still screaming Khorne's name as he leapt the barricade. Those grenadiers who did not run were cut down. What could mere men, even the stoic men of Krieg, do against such insane and reckless foes?

The third day of battle saw it take a turn for the worse. The enemy had expected the engineers' attack and had prepared well, including the digging of counter-mines in secret. They aimed to cut the enemy approach tunnels, and as the battle raged within the armoury, their miners stole ever closer to the Krieg tunnels. A sudden explosion collapsed one, an engineer squad on its way to the armoury was killed in the cave-in. Suddenly, the flow of men and supplies to the battle was cut to just a single tunnel. The engineers could not afford to have their last lifeline severed. Engineer squads were pulled from the front in order to dig new counter-mines and to man extra listening posts for enemy digging. The heavy artillery still drumming above made the task all the harder.

For three days it had been a desperate fight. Of the first five engineer companies committed to the attack, all had taken horrendous casualties. Of the six hundred men in each company at the start of the battle, many were now below half-strength. The 20th Company was down to just one hundred and eighty-seven men. Many had been slaughtered in close combat with the Traitor Space Marines.

After four days of no gains, the attack was called off. The enemy were digging again, seeking to attack the remaining supply tunnel. An attempt to break through the first collapse had ended in disaster as the enemy had been waiting for the fresh Krieg troops and fired a second charge, causing a new collapse and trapping or killing more engineers. It seemed there would be no breakthrough here, and one by one the Krieg squads pulled back.

Dirty, smoke-blackened and with many walking wounded, they emerged from the tunnels below into the frontline trenches, weary men that had been underground for four days, locked in a pitiless battle. For now they had failed to capture the objective, but they would try again. In all, three such battles would be fought for the armoury until it was finally overrun by advancing ground forces of the 471st Regiment. The enemy forces that were trapped within by the advance were afforded no mercy. The exits were all sealed and guarded, then the armoury was pumped full with corrosive gas, interring them below ground forever.

The Sector 57-44 Mine

Failure in Sector 55-46 did not stop the progress of the underground war in other sectors, and every regiment now had engineer companies attached and at work below ground. A second frontline was forming below the trenches and the stealthy tunnel fighting continued day after day, extracting its toll from both sides, but with the Krieg engineers slowly progressing towards their ultimate objective – the curtain wall. This was itself no single defence line. Over the long years of the war the curtain wall, a tall, thick defence bristling with weaponry and housing bunkers and barracks, had been reinforced with extra trenches and pillboxes laid in front to form another formidable defence line. If not as thick as the previous three, still it must be taken by direct assault.

Marshall Kagori's plan had always been to undermine the curtain wall, lay large mines and blast breaches through it. Hammering it with siege artillery and bombing it from the air might work, but would redirect resources that were always in demand elsewhere. Until such time as the trenches could be dug closer to the wall and it could be targeted by direct fire, then a large mine posed the best chance of making a successful breach.

At 673826.M41, over one year after the mining operation had first begun, the objective was reached. In Sector 57-44, the 383rd Engineer company reported it had located the wall's deep foundations and was in position to set a mine and attempt a breach. Working in total secrecy and silence, the engineers ferried the explosives to the chamber constructed to house them. Each explosive charge was carefully stacked and a secondary detonator attached back to the main detonator. Meanwhile, on the surface, an attack was being prepared by the 308th Siege Regiment. It would fall to them to lead the way and force a route through the last defences between the fortress and ultimate victory.

Across Vraks other mining operations were stepped up to draw enemy attention away whilst the mine was readied. In Sector 56-46, heavy cutters were used in a sudden drive for the curtain wall as a deliberate diversion. Quickly spotted by the enemy, they drew several counter-mines and provoked more bloody underground firefights.

The 57-44 mine would be the largest yet. A colossal amount of explosives were needed to make an adequately wide breach, almost emptying 34th Line Korps' stockpiles. 714826.M41 was set as zero-hour for detonation. The 34th Line Korps' high command gathered in a distant bunker to observe the operation and subsequent attack from a safe distance. The cables were checked and double-checked, and all engineers removed to safety as the countdown grew ever closer to zero.

A massive shock wave thundered down the underground tunnels, blowing earth and rock back through the entrances. The ground began to tremble violently as a yellow flame shot dozens of metres into the air, followed quickly by dense columns of smoke and then the debris behind it. Growing like a mountain in the sky, the black column of rock, earth and masonry rose up and up, ever upwards, forming a broad mushroom cloud until it peaked and began to tumble back down. With a great booming crash the shock wave rolled out across no-man's land, rattling the dugouts and trenches of 308th Regiment as it swept over them. As the smoke cleared, the curtain wall was gone. Nothing remained except a yawning crater. The mine had done its work and the 88th Siege Army had their breach. Now all they had to do was seize control of it.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG SIEGE ASSAULT ENGINEER

Engineer 902-833-28733-63-Drusan
Heavy Assault Platoon
19th Siege Regiment

Siege assault engineers are specialised troopers found in the siege regiments of the Death Korps of Krieg, and their patterns and battle doctrines are replicated across many other regiments of the Astra Militarum. They are trained and equipped for a close assault role, forcing breaches in enemy lines, destroying fortifications and bolstering their own side's defences when utilised in a defensive role. They are drawn from a regiment's strongest and most aggressive troopers, and are often given additional training and psycho-indoctrination in order to heighten these characteristics.

In addition to heavy carapace armour to protect them from the increased volume of enemy fire they attract as they spearhead an infantry advance, siege assault engineers carry a range of specialised equipment. The items shown below are carried by all members of an Engineer squad and further, more specialised, items still are carried by individual engineers, including seismic augurs, atmospheric auspexes, subterranean guidance trackers and lethal acid gas canisters.



DEATH KORPS ENGINEERS SQUAD EQUIPMENT

1. Lucius Pattern Shotgun: Replaces lasgun in engineer role, as befits close assault/anti-fortification missions.

2. Mpandex Pattern Mk XI Folding Shovel: Secondary close assault weapon (many sharpened to aid in this role). Also used extensively for burying slain comrades.

3.Mpandex Pattern Mk LI Pickaxe: Favoured close assault weapon amongst assault engineer units.

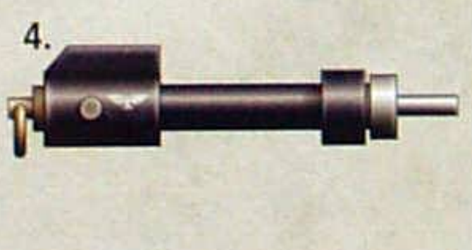
4. Lucius Pattern Mk XXXII Melta Charge: Shaped photonic warhead for use in anti heavy-vehicle/fortification role.

5. Lucius Sub-pattern Mk XXXVIII M39 Frag Grenade: Fragmenting casing, explosive core, fixed two-second fuse.

6. Lucius Pattern Mk XXVII M40 Krak Grenade: High explosive light anti-vehicle/fortification role.

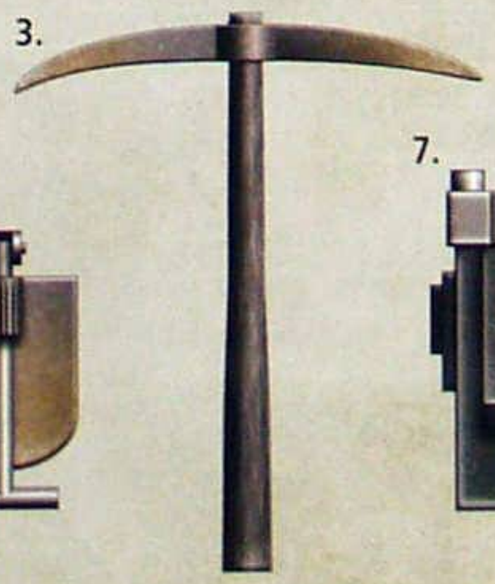
7. Lucius/Mars Pattern Detonator Unit: Issued for remote detonation of high explosive detonation charges.

8. Detonator Cable: Command line for remote detonation operations.

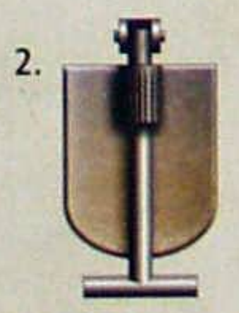




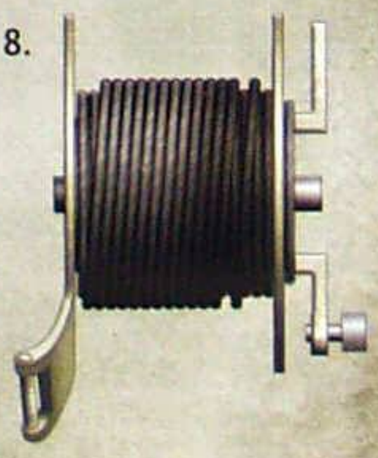












DEATH KORPS ENGINEER



1. UNIFORM
Krieg Engineer uniforms are a modified version of the standard infantry uniform. The long greatcoat has been discarded in favour of a short tunic jacket to reduce encumbrance and aid mobility when operating in the very confined spaces of tunnels. The trousers, leg bindings and boots remain standard issue. The uniform is treated against chemical and biological attack.

2. SHOTGUN
All engineers carry shotguns as their standard weapon on the battlefield. In the confines of tunnel fighting, the weapon's short range and inherent inaccuracy is not a major drawback. The shotgun's powerful blast means Engineers can sweep a tunnel clear and potentially hit multiple enemies at the same time. These weapons are sometimes favoured by veteran Krieg Watchmasters for trench and dug-out clearance.

The weapon is a Lucius pattern Mk XXIIc semi-automatic shotgun. It has an eight-round revolving magazine, uses a gas-operated self-loading action to fire and can be loaded with a variety of ammunition, including solid slugs, pellet-loaded canisters and low velocity flares. The revolver action is prone to mechanical failure, but the weapon's high gauge and the heavy cartridge fired make it a deadly weapon at very close quarters, although it is infamous for its ferocious recoil.

3. EQUIPMENT
Engineers carry a lot of specialised equipment for their duties. Worn instead of the standard issue backpack, they wear a simple frame to which other equipment is then attached. This engineer is carrying a pair of heavy duty cutters and a folding spade. Other squad members will be carrying additional equipment such as mattocks and pickaxes, rope and cable, detonators and various shaped explosive charges used for blasting during mine construction. Technical equipment such as seismic augurs and geothermic auspex are also common.

Engineers wear the Type VI respirator, a modification of the Type V utilising twin air lines. This respirator can also be fitted with an oxygen supply as well as a regulator unit. During deep mining operations, air will become very scarce and dangerous gases can build up quickly. This emergency supply allows an engineer to continue to work in any atmospheric conditions. The respirator mask is also fitted with a monocular infrared night vision eye piece, allowing engineers to work and fight in the total darkness below ground.

4. ARMOUR
Like grenadiers, engineers wear distinctive heavy carapace armour to improve survivability when in close combat with the enemy. The armour comprises the standard issue Mk IX helmet, rebreather mask, shoulder guards, breastplate and additional abdomen plates. The shin guards are not used, being replaced by kneepads, as most engineering work must be done whilst crouching or kneeling. Each breastplate also mounts a powerful flashlight for use whilst working in darkness.

5. OTHER WEAPONS
Although his shotgun does not have a bayonet lug, this Engineer still carries a sword bayonet. The long knife makes a fine close combat weapon, being almost the length of a short sword and very useful in the close confines of tunnel fighting.

This Engineer is well supplied with krak grenades. All Engineers carry grenades as standard for use in close confines, and are trained in the use of other special weapons such as melta bombs, demolition charges and chemical warfare agents.



Watchmaster 221-548-95664-08-Garis, commander of Engineer Squad 226, attached to the 143rd Regiment's 20th Company during the Sector 54-45 offensive.

CHAPTER NINE – INTO THE BREACH

"With every death on Vraks, our victory comes closer. There is no army in the galaxy that can stop the forces we began to invoke so many years ago. Soon they shall be unleashed at our bidding!"

Deacon Mamon – declared '*Extremis Diabolus*' by the Conclave of Scarus 059826.M41

The guns of 308th Regiment opened fire immediately. The barrage that signalled the start of the attack impacted beyond the curtain wall, shells bursting in rapid succession as the artillery prepared the ground for the first wave of infantry in their Gorgon transports. Before the dust had settled, the Gorgons' engines roared into life. The thirty massive transports, supported by Leman Russ, Baneblade and Macharius heavy tanks, and loaded with two fully equipped Krieg companies, began to grind forwards, slowly at first but gathering pace as the toxic air became choked even further with thick exhaust fumes. Within, crowded shoulder-to-shoulder, stood ranks of Krieg Guardsmen, jostled and shaken by the Gorgons' rough passage towards the objective.

The curtain wall itself was an imposing structure. Completely encircling the Citadel, it was six storeys high, thirty metres thick at its base and topped by a reinforced parapet. There were hundreds of towers, each armed or providing firing slits for heavy weapons that had clear lines of fire down onto any enemy below. Within the walls were bunkers, armouries, shelters and corridors. It also mounted automated sentry guns as well as the heavy weapons positioned along the parapet. If this wasn't enough, the defences were supplemented by more trenches, pillboxes and defence lines in front, with mines, razor wire, tank traps and anti-tank ditches ringing them. The one compensation for the attackers faced with the daunting prospect of breaching it was that it lacked the depth of the other defensive rings. It was a single line of reinforced ferrocrete, which once destroyed could be quickly swamped by overwhelming numbers.

As the Gorgons advanced, counter-fire from the renegade's artillery started to land; just a few mortar shells at first, bursting amongst the Gorgon formations, lashing them with dirt and shrapnel but doing little harm. Heavier shells followed as more batteries received the co-ordinates and orders to open fire. Soon the intensity of the bombardment grew, mortar bombs and Earthshaker shells mingling with the deep booming detonations of massive Bombard impacts. Through the thunderous explosions, the Gorgons rode onwards. One unlucky vehicle took a direct hit, a shell falling directly into the open troop compartment. Trapped within its confines, the explosion wrought carnage amongst the densely packed Krieg Guardsmen and the Gorgon slewed to a smoking halt, its deck a scene of horror awash with blood.

From the curtain wall, the enemy gunners opened fire. Lascannon blasts scorched the air as they smashed into the first assault wave. Impacts whined and ricocheted off the Gorgons' heavy frontal armour, designed to absorb just such punishment. The supporting Leman Russes returned fire, their battle cannon firing and recoiling, their shells smashing into the wall and sending masonry tumbling as each shell gouged rends in the thick defences. As the two sides traded blows, a second Gorgon was hit and burst into flames, its fuel igniting. The Imperial Guardsmen within tumbled out, many already on fire, human torches stumbling in the mud until they fell and lay still. A third Gorgon was immobilised. A fourth exploded in a fireball.

The leading assault transports were close now. The order was given to fix bayonets and inside each Gorgon fifty gleaming blades flashed from their scabbards as one and snapped into place. The first ramps began to fall, smashing down into the mud as the Gorgons crawled to a halt. Within, the watchmasters and officers issued the order to charge. The Krieg squads surged forward, hob-nailed boots clanging over the metal ramps as they plunged out into the thickening maelstrom of fire.

The first officer out of his transport, leading 15th Platoon, 7th Company, died before he cleared the ramp. Shot through the head, he fell dead as his men leapt over his body. More were cut down by streams of heavy stubber and heavy bolter rounds as eager renegade gunners clamped hard on their triggers. All along the sector, the defenders hurled fire into the attackers. As platoon after platoon charged forward, they were met with accurate grazing fire, cutting down whole squads as they scrambled to get to grips with their foe.

At the crater's rim, the Krieg Guardsmen found themselves scrambling over a wall of earth and rock. Huge chunks of masonry, all that remained of the wall and its foundations, lay scattered about, providing cover but preventing the tanks and Gorgons from advancing any further. The Gorgons' job complete, the drivers threw them into reverse and began to back away, their own weapons blazing a stream of suppressing fire over the heads of the infantry in front. From here on in, deeper into the breach, it would be an infantry battle, man against man.

The 19th Company commander, Captain Naler, was already on the ground, urging his men forwards, when a mortar bomb impacted at his feet, lacerating him with shrapnel wounds and severing his left leg below the knee. Critically wounded, the captain fell. Close by, Commissar Moroth saw the captain fall and immediately took command. Power sword in hand, he ordered the squads in his vicinity to follow him over the rim and down into the deep crater below. Charging through plunging fire, his peaked cap plucked from his head by a passing bullet, the commissar reached the far embankment, dropping prone as the squads around caught up and followed his example. They were now the furthest forwards of any of the attacking platoons. The breached wall's ruined ends towered above them, swept clear of defenders by the devastating weapons fire from the tanks. The commissar



started to climb the steep rise, the rocks below him still steaming from the heat of the explosion. He had almost reached the top when the enemy counterattacked.

Knowing the attack against the breach must come, the enemy had raced to bring up any forces it could to block it, dragging in troops from neighbouring sectors through the hail of artillery now descending amongst them. Waiting at the top of the crater's lip, hidden amongst the masonry rubble, were the Ogryns. Held back until the last moment before being spurred into action by their surgically fitted chemical injectors, the brutish creatures rushed down to meet the Krieg Guardsmen as they climbed upwards. The Ogryns' momentum carried them through the first squads, hacking indiscriminately as they went. The Krieg Guardsmen, caught by surprise and already at a disadvantage due to the slope, stood little chance.

Hacking and slashing, roaring in drug-induced pain, the Ogryns bludgeoned their way into the depths of the crater. Commissar Moroth was thrown aside by the first charge, his power sword falling from his grip. He emptied his laspistol into one beast, which shrugged off the wounds as if they were no more than insect stings. As he reloaded, a second Ogryn rushed him, wielding a huge rock-cutting drill. Unable to defend himself, the blade's spinning teeth chopped into the commissar, killing him in a spray of blood and entrails. Still more Krieg squads were climbing down into the crater and a swirling mêlèe had formed in the bottom as the Ogryns fought with a reckless fury. It was a bloodbath. Ogryns fell, each taking ten or more Krieg Guardsmen with them until the crater floor was carpeted with the dead and dying of both sides.

More artillery then began landing, directly hitting the crater itself, mangling and flipping bodies and killing infantrymen and officers on both sides. As the Krieg Guardsmen fought hand-to-hand in the breach, their tanks were unable to push on; the way forward was too heavily blocked by rubble. Without them in close support, the loyalists struggled to fight their way forwards in the face of fanatical traitor resistance.

Behind the fighting, a second wave of attackers was on the move – Centaur carriers loaded down with heavily armoured grenadiers leading the way as more infantry platoons joined in the attack. The enemy fought with a divinely inspired courage that belied their numbers. Losses from both sides had been heavy. Of the first two Krieg companies into the breach, most had become casualties, and many platoons had been wiped out altogether. The second wave fared no better as darkness fell. The breach just could not be captured and held; time and again the infantry scrambling into the killing zone, only to be cut down as the enemy repositioned its guns to sweep the crater clear, or counter-charged. In darkness, the attackers withdrew, most dragging wounded comrades with them. The dead lay thick, in places piled on top of each other three or four deep, and the hulks of tanks and Gorgon hulls littered the area. Under cover of night, the quartermasters and their servitor aides emerged to count the cost and scour the battlefield for equipment to reissue to those still living, like carrion birds stripping the dead.

The 308th Regiment's commanders conceded that the first attempt to capture the breach had failed. Colonel Tolan agreed to another attempt, and was given time to properly prepare for another set piece attack. Next time he would lead it personally and face death rather than a second defeat.



OGRYN BERSERKER



1. EQUIPMENT

This Ogryn has been heavily surgically altered using proscribed neurological and bio-chemical processes. This crude adaptation starts by lobotomising the Ogryn, turning it into an imbecilic, docile creature, unable to even feed itself and becoming utterly enslaved to its masters – that is until its chemical injectors are activated. The injectors deliver a cocktail of potent, highly dangerous drugs, including the banned combat drug called 'Slaught' into the Ogryn's bloodstream and muscles. Slaught, once favoured by such notorious Space Marine Chapters as the Flesh Tearers and World Eaters, stimulates the subject's adrenaline glands and the neural pathways to the areas of the brain that govern aggression. With these driven into overdrive, the user becomes a raging psychopath, driven by a bloodlust that cannot be sated. Other drugs are also injected, including various phencyclidines that give the taker massively increased strength and an almost super-human ability to block pain – with side effects inducing hallucinations and a desire for self-mutilation. Strong beta-adrenoreceptor blocking drugs augment this, allowing the Ogryn to fight on with wounds that would usually kill it outright.

The downside of this drug-fuelled rampage is that the body's system is unlikely to be able to cope with the drugs for long, and vital internal organs will quickly start to fail. Ogryn Berserkers on Vraks were a one-use weapon, hurled into the enemy in furious counterattacks with the single aim of inflicting as much damage as possible before collapsing, or being killed in their turn.

Although the Ogryn bears the heretical symbols of a Chaos worshipper, these must have been added by its masters. Even before surgery, Ogryns' brains do not easily comprehend concepts such as ideology or religious worship, although they do have a strong basic instinct for loyalty to their leaders (making them useful as bodyguards). An Ogryn only needs to know who its enemies are, not why it must fight. The removal of this creature's higher brain functions (such as they are), means it fights only on instinct.

2. ARMOUR

The Ogryn's armour has been constructed from scrap metal and attached to the Ogryn's harness, clothing, or to the Ogryn itself, via chains and loops. This crude armour provides rudimentary protection against enemy fire, is more useful against enemy hand-to-hand attacks (should any enemy be unfortunate enough to be caught in hand-to-hand combat with the creature) and adds extra bulk and weight to the Ogryn, allowing it to smash opponents out of the way as it charges. Additional blades have been welded to the armour, making the frenzied Ogryn difficult to approach without the risk of injury. Underneath the Ogryn's armour, it wears the tattered remains of its work overalls.

3. WEAPONS

This Ogryn carries two close combat weapons. Its main weapon is a rock-cutting saw, which has been surgically attached to its arm. It includes its own motor, and diamantine-tipped cutting blade. The tool would normally be used during demolition work for cutting through plasteel and ferrocrete. Used against flesh, it has spectacularly gory effects.

Each Ogryn is armed with its own tools, scrounged from the labour corps supplies, and often modified to make them into more efficient weapons. As well as powered weapons such as rock drills, cutters and angle-grinders, Ogryns also carried sledge hammers, pick axes, shovels, spiked clubs, crowbars or even crude cleavers made from sharpened steel off-cuts. Being expendable troops, little effort was made to arm them during the battles on the armoury world of Vraks.

The Ogryn's secondary weapon is a crudely forged punch-blade, strapped to its left arm with heavy chains. Like the creature's armour, these have been roughly fashioned from scrap metal.

Second Assault

On 820826.M41, the 308th Regiment got its second chance to seize the breach and take a vital step closer towards ending the Siege of Vraks. Their attack was meticulously planned. The first assault had only failed because no armour had been able to force its way through the rubble, so the 4th Siege Artillery Regiment, positioned south of the Darro Rift, was given the task of shelling the breach day and night with heavy bombard shells in an attempt to break up the rubble enough to allow the Krieg tanks to cross it. This softening-up was to go on for two weeks – a huge drain on the resources of the 34th Line Korps. Meanwhile, Colonel Tolan prepared his new assault units. The Gorgon transports had proven to be a success and they would once again carry his men to the enemy, with the full support of more Krieg tank and heavy tank companies.

This time, the 308th Regiment's assault was met by a better prepared defence by their foe. The Gorgon transports encountered an intense fusillade of enemy krak missiles and lascannon as they closed in on the objective. Many were knocked out, joining the other rusting hulks in no-man's land. The enemy artillery had been allowed time to zero-in, and responded quickly with overwhelming force. Colonel Tolan led his men into the crater again, but once more found the enemy defending it with fanatical zeal. The colonel himself was killed in the assault, cut down with the regimental standard bearer at his side as he fought hand-to-hand with the traitors holding the breach.

The attacks further along the walls to the north and south gained some success. Two new smaller breaches were blasted in the walls, widening the possible targets, but again they could not be captured and held. In one fight, the breach changed hands eight times before the Krieg attack was forced to withdraw. The second assault had been repulsed just as the first had been. A third would be needed...

Third Assault and Onwards

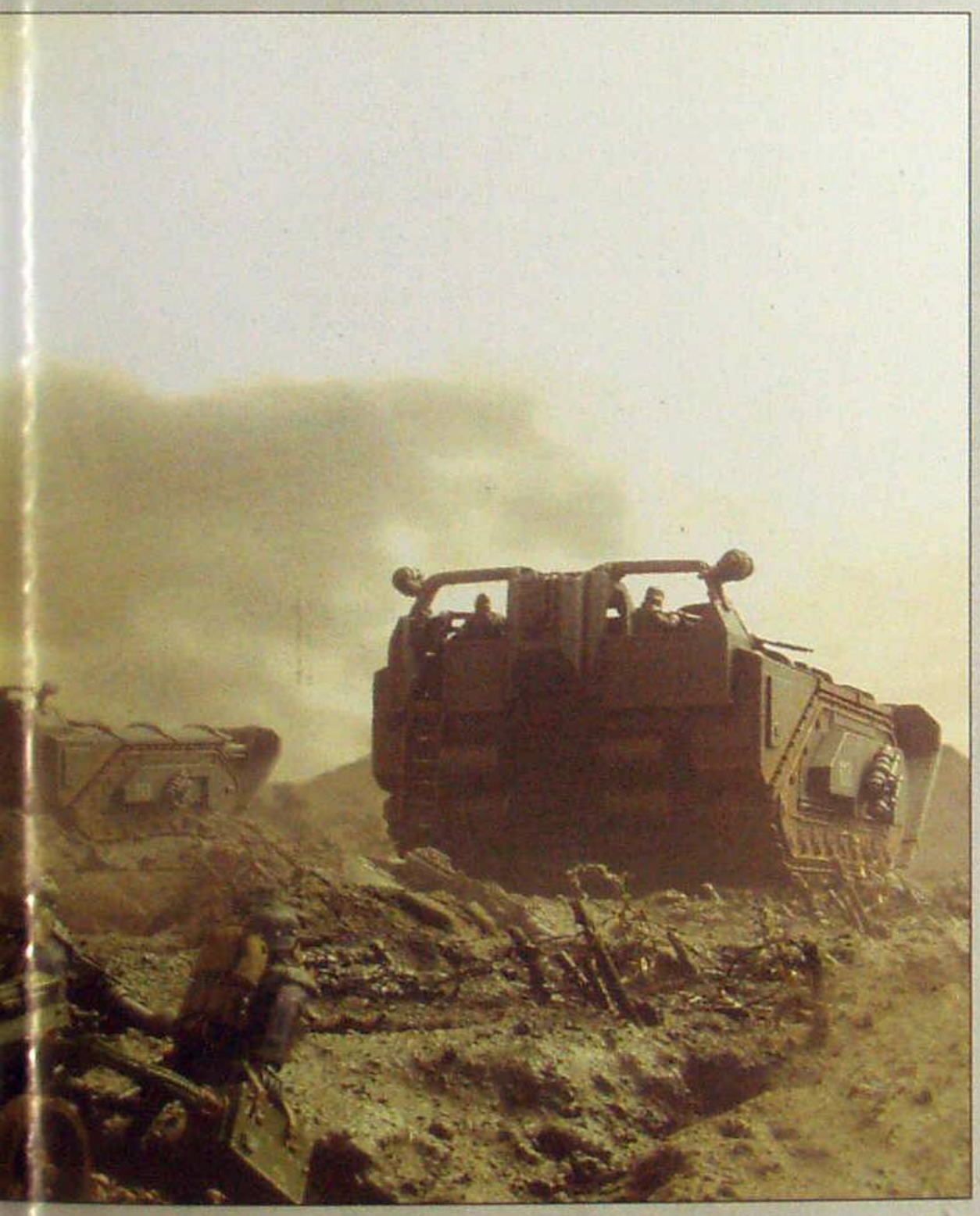
This time the 8th Assault Korps was brought into the line to lead the attack on the walls. Again, the tides of Krieg infantry swarmed up the breaches, and again they were repulsed. The enemy was fighting back with everything it had. Over the course of the next year, four more assaults were attempted and all ended in bloody retreats. Titans joined the battle, and the area around Sector 57-44 became the bloodiest and hardest fought of the entire siege so far. The battle was a meat grinder that drew in both sides' men and massacred them. The fourth assault ended when the enemy detonated their own massive mine under the original crater, in the process killing hundreds of Krieg Guardsmen caught in the pit at the time. The explosion deepened the area further and scattered tonnes of rubble, but it effectively ended the attack.

How was the breach to be captured? Marshall Kagori was concerned that it was taking up too many resources. Requests for more aid from the Titans were turned down. The fighting here might be intense, but there was still a war to conduct. The entire region was still one big battleground.



The Chaos Spaces Marine forces continued their series of devastating attacks. Alpha Legion troops were identified conducting raids deep behind the front line, destroying key artillery positions and ammunition storage dumps. The 1st Line Korps found themselves fully engaged with the forces of Nurgle, and faced with the horrors of continued chemical warfare. The Titans of Legio Vulcanum were still out there, lending their strength wherever a major assault attempted to gain ground. The Legio Astorum Titans were needed to counter their threat, and became scattered across the Van Meersland Wastes, chasing reported sightings of their foe. Daily, the frontline was ablaze with furious battles. Underground, the war had become a stalemate just like above ground. The two sides were evenly matched. After countless furious battles, over one million more Krieg Guardsmen were consigned to the Emperor's Peace by Vraks, and the war's tempo slackened.

The Marshall's great plans for a new impetus had run their course. The enemy had matched them and, with herculean efforts, held its ground. In places, the gains saw Krieg regiments within sight of the curtain wall. In others they remained trapped at the inner defence lines. No longer surrounded, the enemy could launch flanking attacks and raids far to the east. Out here, far from the trenches, the Krieg Death Rider companies saw their own hard fighting; riding long distances to scout out enemy infiltrators, and running skirmishes with enemy reconnaissance units were a daily occurrence.



And so another year of the Siege of Vraks had passed, with heavy losses and small gains in ground, and no end in sight for the battle-weary Krieg Guardsmen who would have to endure it. One piece of good news reported to Marshall Kagori was that patrol sweeps of the Vraks system had found no trace of the lurking battleship *Anarchy's Heart*. All believed she must have fled the system, too badly damaged to risk another battle. The supply lines into Vraks were secure once again.

The Long War Continues

After the latest surge in fighting, the long war of attrition resumed. Marshall Kagori accepted the gains his offensive had made and drew up new plans for the recapture of the lost ground, but he realised now that the attrition would have to go on, indefinitely if needed. In all it had been estimated that eight million men had started out defending Vraks and their self-proclaimed messiah. Now how many were left? If the 88th Siege Army had killed the enemy at the projected rate of one for every two casualties borne by its regiments, then over three million heretic souls had been purged from the galaxy since the start of the war. That meant the 88th Siege Army wasn't even halfway through the Apostate Cardinal's manpower reserves, and he had since been reinforced by the followers of Chaos.

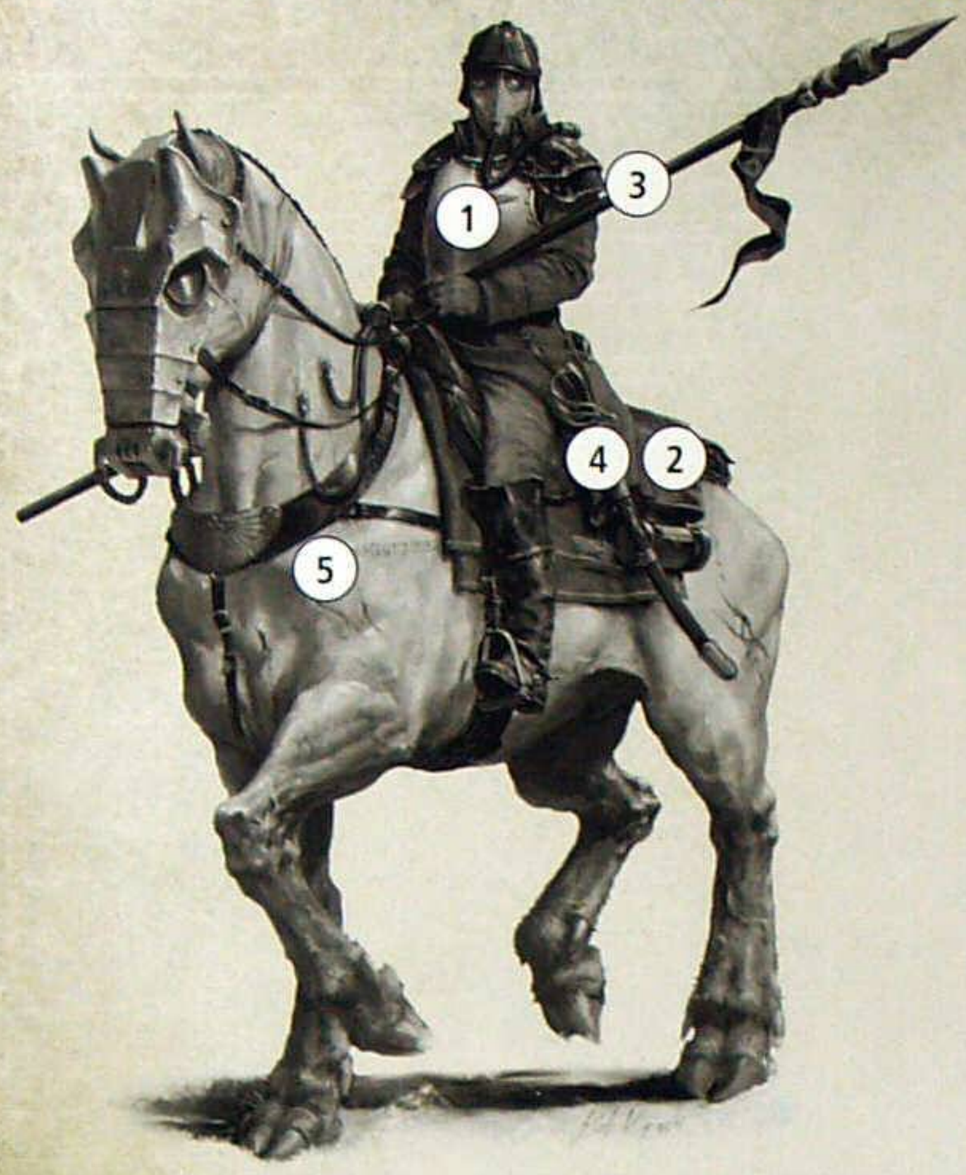
Xaphan himself had not been seen for many years. Some of Kagori's officers argued that perhaps a servant of the Officio Assassinorum should be dispatched to Vraks to eliminate him in an effort to speed up the end of the war. Ultimately, all knew it would serve little purpose. It was more likely that the Chaos Space Marines had taken direct command in the Citadel. This war was now being fought to their plans and their desires.

So the two armies were once again at deadlock. The long war must continue. The projected date for the end of the siege had passed almost two years before. The Administratum had accepted the extension and found the extra resources, but the Departmento Munitorum was now conducting another of its long reviews of the campaign. The twelve-year plan had run its cycle and more, but it had not brought the projected victory nor did it look like it would soon.

Marshall Kagori argued against it, but the commitment of resources that Vraks had demanded could no longer be maintained. The Administratum's planning required Krieg's Guardsmen for other war zones and the high priority the campaign on Vraks had enjoyed must be downgraded. The siege was not to be abandoned; the heretic forces must still be fought and defeated, and Vraks returned to the Emperor's rule. This new policy just meant that it would take longer and cost more in the long run.

The Marshall and his advisors argued in council with the Departmento's delegates sent to inform him of the decision. It didn't help his cause. The revised plans had already received their stamp of approval on Terra by the Office of the Master of the Departmento Munitorum. Marshall Kagori would have to revise his plans accordingly. He had another five years before the next review would be undertaken.

DEATH RIDER OF KRIEG



1. UNIFORM
Death Riders wear the same standard issue uniforms as Krieg's infantry, including the distinctive heavy greatcoat. The Mk IX helmet is the same, with an additional badge attached to the front, marking the Krieg Guardsman as a Death Rider. The riders are selected for their aptitude during training on Krieg, and will have already undergone a rigorous series of exercises on the surface of that world before deployment to Vraks.

In addition to his distinctive uniform, the Death Rider wears an ornamental breastplate. This is a cumbersome item, worn as a matter of tradition rather than practicality and many units choose to discard it, especially when on long-range patrols, in order to conserve weight. It is made of plasteel with a hardened chrome facing.

The uniform is completed by tall, hardwearing riding boots. These boots are also popular with high-ranking officers, often men who have served with Death Rider squadrons in the past, as they are regarded to be much more comfortable than the standard low marching boots.

2. EQUIPMENT
The Death Riders' role as a siege regiment's reconnaissance force, as well as acting as second-wave shock troops during a breakthrough, means they must carry a lot of their equipment themselves. Squadrons will operate far ahead or on the flanks of the main forces, and so must be self-sufficient. Saddlebags are used for carrying rations and other important supplies such as chemical filters, along with bedrolls and spare ammunition.

This Death Rider wears a Type V respirator unit, the same one issued to grenadiers, with the regulator unit inside a canister on his back.

3. HUNTING LANCE
The Death Rider's primary weapon is his explosive hunting lance. This 3.5 metre long weapon is constructed of a hollow, lightweight metal shaft tipped with a spear point, which is also connected to the impact fuse of the weapon's shaped charge. This small explosive charge is constructed to direct the blast and fragmentation towards the target and away from its user. Once detonated, the lance's wielder is left with only the shaft, which is then discarded. The lance also bears the squadron's pennant. In close quarters combat against densely packed enemy, or in close confines, the lance is incredibly unwieldy and all Death Riders carry at least one back-up weapon – following tradition, after the initial 'shock' impact of the charge has been expended, this will often be a sabre.

4. SABRE
This is a long, heavy-bladed sword used mainly for thrusting with the tip rather than slashing. The skewer-like 95cm blade is designed to resist buckling in the impact of a thrust delivered at the charge. The blade ends in a sharp 'spear' point and the bowl-shaped guard gives protection to the hand.

The rider's third weapon (not visible here) will be a laspistol. Carried but rarely used, except as a weapon of last resort, the heavy pistol is difficult to aim and reload whilst mounted, and is generally thought to be ineffective as a ranged weapon.

5. DEATH RIDER MOUNT
The Death Rider's mount is a heavily genetically modified version of the original Terran horse, with many adaptations setting it apart from its ancient ancestor. These creatures are grown in vitaegenic cloning vats deep below Krieg, with production being carefully monitored by Adeptus Mechanicus Biologis. Each creature is individually number-branded for identification purposes.

Having been designed to endure the galaxy's worst battlefield conditions, its physique is far stronger than the more ancient form of horse, with its hind legs capable of clearing trenches and powering the creature through thick mud or over rubble. Its splayed feet are also better adapted to moving in heavy terrain.

The creature is almost completely hairless. It no longer has a tail, only the remaining stump, and its mane has almost entirely been bred out, leaving just short bristles which do not become tangled and require no maintenance. Its neck is also longer, with broader shoulders and girth.

Psychologically, these creatures are far more aggressive than their domestic ancestors, with drug injectors used to make the creature fearless. In battle, the creature will charge directly into a foe and will not be startled by weapons fire or explosions. Due to the creature's unstable body chemistry, it has to be constantly monitored by its rider and stabilised with additional chemicals. This means the creature can sustain injuries that would kill lesser beasts, but leaves many with horrible scars from previous wounds.

It is also equipped with armour to protect its head, and a adaptive respirator system to protect it from poison gases and toxic atmospheres.



Death Rider 094-343-18560-22-Barjnak of the 19th Squadron, 143rd Siege Regiment, seen here during the 760824.M41 offensive in Sector 554-461. He is wearing the standard issue uniform of a Death Rider of Krieg.



In response to this bitter blow, the Marshall dispatched a delegation of his own staff officers, with a mission to enlist more aid quickly, before the Departmento Munitorum's new policy started to take effect.

Strike Force Ainea

Marshall Kagori's delegates rendezvoused with the strike cruiser *Arx Fidelis* in the Cantus system. The Adeptus Astartes vessel was returning from a patrol sweep through the dangerous Fydae Nebula and using the Imperial Navy victualling station at Cantus IX to re-supply before returning to base. On board was a combined strike force of elements of four companies of the Red Scorpion's Chapter, led by Commander Ainea of 3rd Company. He had with him approximately one hundred battle-brothers from the 1st, 3rd, 6th and 8th Companies who had attacked and destroyed an Ork pirate stronghold. It had been a routine mission and the engagement had seen the xenos forces crushed.

Kagori's delegation was met with due ceremony and Commander Ainea listened to their request. The Marshall needed assistance in prosecuting the war on Vraks. His regiments were locked in a stalemate and now he was turning to the Emperor's finest for assistance. The commander agreed to review the situation, particularly upon hearing of the involvement of Traitor Space Marines, and put the request to his Lord High Commander.

Several weeks passed before Marshall Kagori got his answer. The Lord High Commander of the Red Scorpions had agreed to the deployment. It appeared that the opportunity to rid the galaxy of a dangerous heretic and the Traitor Legionaries that had allied themselves with him was too much of a blessing from the Emperor to pass up. Strike Force Ainea would proceed to the Vraks system and assess the campaign on the ground before deciding where best to deploy themselves. Kagori was warned that this would only happen under the proviso that Ainea was to remain at all times under his own offices. No Red Scorpion was to be placed under any other commander. Ainea had sole discretion and free rein in the use of his forces.

The Marshall agreed, satisfied that the elite strike force was willing to help even as the Departmento Munitorum was reducing its support. He had the Space Marine commanders briefed upon their arrival. They chose the breach at Sector 57-44 – here was where their small force could best effect the outcome of the siege. They would plan and launch a fresh attempt to seize the breach and crack the curtain wall. It would be codenamed Operation Execution Place.

The Execution Place

The Red Scorpions mission would be a lightning assault, conducted in darkness and requiring superb timing. The spearhead of Captain Ainea's attack was the 1st Company's squads – veteran battle-brothers in Terminator armour. Ainea

and Codicier Yaec would lead them personally, utilising the *Arx Fidelis'* teleport chamber to deliver this potent assault team directly into the breach. For this attack he would need to be incredibly accurate; this involved getting his teleporter send them as close to the target as possible and therefore having a teleport homer beacon in place – nothing could be left to chance.

The mission of placing the teleport homer at the breach would require a small volunteer team to drop in via Thunderhawk, seconds before the Terminators were in position. This team would use jump packs to land, then set up the beacon so that the *Arx Fidelis'* surveyors could lock on to it. The Terminators would then teleport in and begin the main attack. Meanwhile, as the spearhead was engaging, a second ground assault team would be ready to race to the Terminators' position in the strike force's armoured vehicles. As the Terminators seized the breach, so the ground forces would arrive to hold it against the inevitable enemy counterattacks.

When the Space Marines had secured the breach, they would signal the mission complete codeword and a special battle group from 11th Assault Korps picked for the task would be the first through the breach. This exploitation force would include support from the Titans of Legio Astorum. High Princeps Drauca agreed to the plan and would personally join the force in his Reaver battle Titan *Praetorian*. If all went to plan, the Red Scorpions could then hand over security of the breach to the Krieg commanders and withdraw back to their strike cruiser. The heretics were about to face a true army of the Imperium for the first time, an all-arms attack. Zero-hour was set at 989826.M41.

The *Arx Fidelis'* captain was briefed. He would be taking his vessel into range of Vraks' remaining defence laser silos; they would no doubt detect his approach and quickly open fire. The cruiser was taking a risk, but it only had to weather the enemy defences long enough for Ainea's force to teleport into the battle. Then the captain should make evasive manoeuvres and head for safety with all speed, his role in the mission complete.

Zero-hour approached as the *Arx Fidelis* came under fire. Defence laser blasts streaked skyward as the strike cruiser blasted into low orbit, her bombardment cannon returning fire as she approached. Several defence laser blasts smashed into the vessel's thick armour as her void shields failed under repeated impacts.

Whilst the *Arx Fidelis* was being buffeted and smashed by the defence laser salvoes, a single Thunderhawk gunship was racing low over the dark surface of Vraks, approaching the breach from the south at no more than fifty metres above ground, skimming the contours below as it approached the target. At the rear ramp stood five Space Marines, Sergeant Culln's assault squad. The sergeant secured the homing beacon to his armour as the pilot warned them to standby as the drop zone approached. In response, the Space Marines' jump pack turbines whined into life, the ramp slowly descending to reveal the slate-dark sky beyond.

On command Culln's men jumped, plunging out through the darkness and into the violent current of the Thunderhawk's slip stream. With jump packs straining at full power to break the short fall, the five assault Space Marines aimed directly for the centre of the breach crater. In seconds they had landed, smashing into the ground with an impact that would have killed lesser men.

The enemy had been forewarned of the Thunderhawk's approach by the sound of its three great rocket engines. It passed directly overhead flying flat out. It was a swift black shadow, a roar of engines, and then it was gone – quickly receding into the distance. But enemy sentries were alert now and started scouring the area. Searchlight beams criss-crossed the breach as Sergeant Culln set up the beacon, his men surrounding him, covering every direction. Then suddenly, the squad was spotted. At first a few shots pierced the darkness, whining overhead as Culln hurried to direct the beacon's signal back to the *Arx Fidelis*. Then more shots whizzed past. The enemy was coming.

The beacon bleeped into life as the *Arx Fidelis'* surveyors locked on. Sergeant Culln immediately gave the order to open fire. Bolt pistols barked their distinctive sound as each shot ignited before the sudden thunderous explosion of its warhead on impact. Sentries on the crater's rim burst apart with the force of the bolts, torn limb from limb. The battle had begun.

Just five Space Marines stood before hundreds of the foe. Undaunted, Culln's squad ignited their jump packs again and launched themselves up the crater's slope. Chainswords slashed and hacked, and bolt rounds roared in the night in their furious assault. Squad Culln cut down the first sentries, but the alarm had already been raised. More traitors were now rushing to man the defences. A missile's fiery trail streaked from the darkness, smashing one battle-brother clean in the chest, the blast of its krak warhead piercing his armour and severing his torso. Another Space Marine had taken a wound to his head, his helmet punctured, leaving his face a bloody ruin of flesh and blood. Outnumbered and outgunned, even the Emperor's finest could not hope to stand for long. Culln needed reinforcements.

The air near them suddenly came alive, fizzing and sparking with the raw power of the Warp. As the blinding brightness faded to darkness, Ainea's Terminators appeared in a flash of light and a halo of sizzling power, directly on target. Now the slaughter truly began. Ainea's storm bolter hammered a stream of bolts as the veterans advanced, the defenders' fire pattering off their Terminator armour and storm shields impotently as if nothing more than hailstones. Their thunder hammers and lightning claws cut a swathe through the traitors. In darkness all was confusion, but the Space Marines knew their plan and retained their discipline, working together to systematically clear the breach. Bright tendrils of energy wreathed Yaec's force weapon as he stood shoulder-to-shoulder with his commander, whilst lightning leapt from his fingers, smiting down any who stood before him with the power of the Warp, tamed and at his command. Those enemies who did not run were slaughtered without mercy.

As the Terminator-armoured battle-brothers began their attack, so Veteran Sergeant Zhyr's strike force was racing across no-man's land, deploying squads into battle lines to complete their advance on foot. Amongst their ranks stalked the three lumbering Dreadnoughts. The darkness did not shroud their attack for long. Searchlight beams played across no-man's land, locked on to the Space Marine vehicles and the enemy firing began.

Zhyr's battle-brothers advanced, boltguns returning shots in a steady, accurate barrage. From behind the advancing squads, missiles and lascannon blasts raced overhead, impacting against the wall's parapets. Heavy bolters were blazing constantly, rocket-powered shells shrieking as they tried to suppress the enemy's strongpoints. Pre-ranged artillery fire began to land. Zhyr himself was flung through the air by a close impact, landing unharmed in a rain of rock and hot shrapnel. The veteran sergeant struggled to his feet and urged his brothers onwards. Their commander was ahead of them, fighting for the breach – they must reach him.

Zhyr's leading tactical squad reached the edge of the crater. Under heavy fire they paused to regroup and reload, laying down a suppressing volley of boltgun fire. Dreadnought Chaplain Nalr was with them, his lascannon barrels glowing red-hot. They were soon joined by Brothers Rzasa and Daeres, whose rock-cutting power drill was smashing the largest boulders to clear a route for the following vehicles. Behind him came the first Vindicator. Another of its huge shells launched, looping a high trajectory onto the wall parapet above, its shattering detonation gouging into the rock and sending masonry crashing to the ground.

Zhyr's main force had reached the mine's crater. With Chaplain Nalr at the fore, they now plunged down into the crater's bottom where so many Krieg Guardsmen had fought and died before them. Racing through the plunging fire and thickening artillery barrage, they climbed the far slope. Driven forwards by their power armour, they never broke stride as they raced to their commander's aid.

Just ahead of them, Commander Ainea's brothers met a counter-charge by the Ogryns head-on. The commander's power sword was slicing left and right, severing the leg of one enraged beast, which stumbled and fell, still swinging wildly with its heavy club. The Ogryns' attack was quickly cut to pieces; they were no longer facing mere Imperial Guardsmen. Thunder hammers sent the creatures reeling, their drug-altered nervous systems overloaded by the weapons' fearsome impacts. Lightning claws slashed and thrust, raking through crude plasteel armour like paper to dice Ogryns into gory hunks of meat. Alongside Ainea stood the sole survivor of Culln's assault squad, the sergeant himself, wielding his chainsword in both hands, his bolt pistol discarded, empty of ammunition. For his heroic efforts in the breach that bloody night, Sergeant Culln would later be elevated to the Chapter's 1st Company.

Zhyr and Chaplain Nalr rendezvoused with their commander. Both were battle-scarred, their armour dented and scorched, but the Red Scorpions had captured the breach. Enemy bodies lay scattered across the ground, adding to the mouldering bones of the long dead. The Red Scorpions' lightning attack had succeeded where all the Krieg attacks had failed. The enemy had been unable to stop the Terminators' sudden teleport assault, the fury of their attack or the psychic-fuelled power of Codicier Yaec. Commander Ainea formed his newly arriving reinforcements into a defensive perimeter. They had taken the breach. The mission complete signal was transmitted. Now they must hold until the Krieg battlegroup and Drauca's Titans arrived. Ainea and his brothers knew this battle had not been won yet.

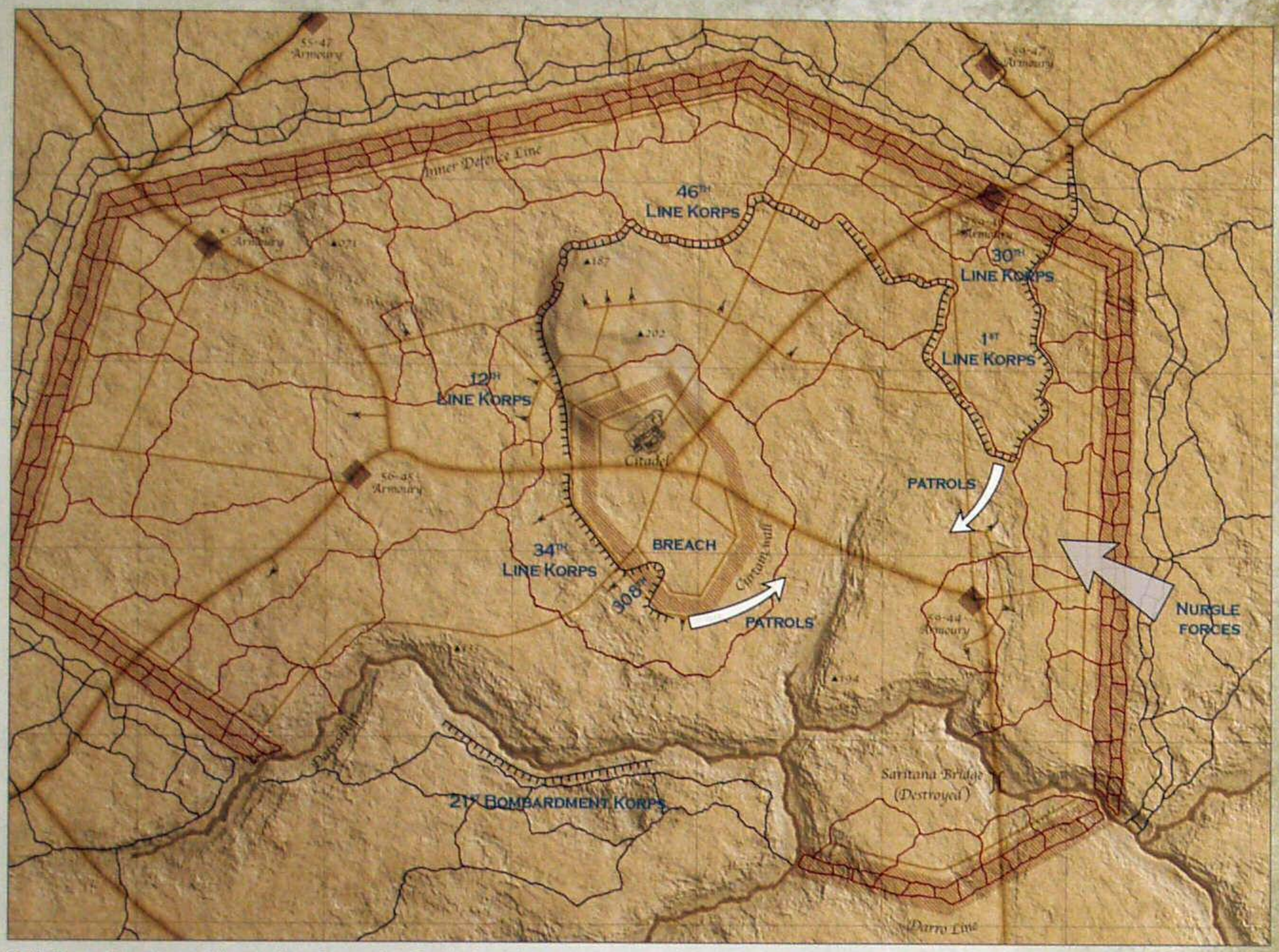
The enemy began to enact the plans it had put in place to counter any breaching of the curtain wall by Imperial forces. A rapid response force of tanks and Chimera-borne infantry was stationed to move quickly to push back against any breakthrough. As news of the defeat reached their commanders, this force was sent into the counterattack to blunt any exploitation and drive on to retake the breach. With it would follow the Traitor Titans.

Before dawn, the two opposing forces were on a collision course. Commander Ainea's battle-brothers occupied the blasted wreckage of the curtain walls and the rubble-strewn ground. Devastator squads were positioned at the breach, with the Terminators withdrawn, ready to rush in and block any breakthrough should the enemy attack get too close. Here the Red Scorpions would stand, unbreakable in their defiance. Enemy shelling was still landing accurately and Ainea's men had to dig in and erect hastily built barricades. Behind his strike force, reinforcements were on the way.

The 11th Assault Korps' battle group had been preceded by engineer squads. These set about demolishing the remaining obstacles around the breach. Following them came tanks, the spearhead of the breakthrough force, each company again escorted by a super-heavy tank. Behind them followed infantry and field artillery, which were soon deployed and supplied, ready for immediate action.

In the first glimmers of dawn, the enemy counterattack began. Titan weapons opened fire at long range, raking the breach with earth-shattering impacts, causing more of the wall to collapse. A Razorback took a direct hit and was vaporised by the high-energy beam of a volcano cannon, leaving only black scorched rocks to mark the machine-spirit's passing. Chaplain Nalr lost an arm, torn brutally away by a large white-hot piece of shrapnel. The Krieg artillery then returned fire.

From far to the rear, the siege guns sent shells rumbling and whining over the Space Marines' heads, impacting about the Titans' feet. Ainea watched the blossoming explosions through his magnocular scanner. He could see enemy vehicles racing forward, heavy tanks with infantry carriers behind. Several carriers were already burning, caught in the artillery strikes and belching acrid smoke. More incoming Titan fire blasted his positions, leaving craters and shattered rocks. Where was Drauca? He needed to be able to respond to the heavy firepower before it was too late. These massive guns would make short work of even the indomitable Space



88th Siege Army's positions after Operation Execution Place.

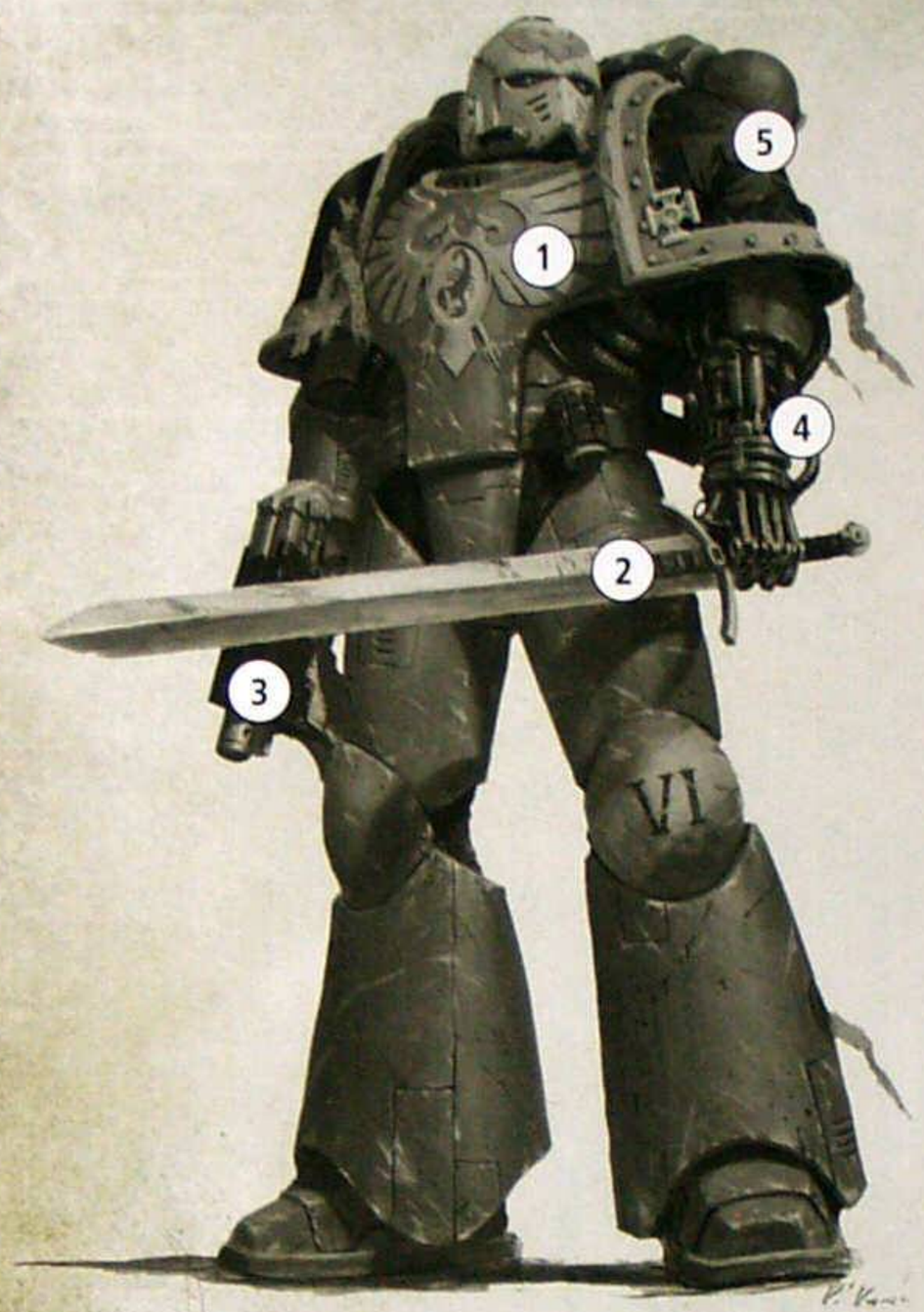
Marines. He turned to scan back towards the Krieg lines and, through the lingering smoke, he saw the lumbering form of a Reaver Titan appear.

High Princeps Drauca's Reaver strode towards the breach, stepping over and around the tanks and light vehicles still ploughing forwards. At full striding speed, the Titan raced ahead. Drauca's augurs had already detected the enemy Titans. His weapons moderatii was busy calculating long-range firing solutions for all weapons. In the Reaver's wake followed two Warhounds. *Praetorian* was first through the breach as its void shields flared and crackled under the initial impacts. Ainea looked up as the towering war machine stepped directly over him, its Princeps riding far above, eight storeys high. He had a magnificent view of the battlefield, fitting for the god-like powers of the machine at his control. Ainea smelt ozone and felt the air vibrate as the Reaver's three turbo-laser destructors powered up and suddenly burst into life, blindingly bright triple beams flashing. He tracked the bolt's flight and saw the void shields of the enemy Titan flare from the impact. Pistons whined as the great war machine strode clear of his men, two smaller Warhounds behind, almost nimble by comparison with the Reaver's earth-shattering footfalls. The Warhounds also opened fire. Satisfied, Ainea snapped his helmet back into place. With the Titans locked in their own duel, his men could concentrate on the approaching enemy tanks.

Firing was intensifying as the enemy closed in. Lascannon and krak missiles shrieked. A Chimera exploded into an expanding orange fireball. Ainea withdrew. This time he would keep an overview of the battle; his battle prowess was not needed yet – that would come later. For now it was a long-range duel of firepower. Looking back again he could see the first Shadowsword Titan-hunter slowly crawling its way across the crater, cresting the slope and gunning its engine hard as it forced aside the remaining rubble. Soon, it too would be engaging the enemy Titans.

The enemy counterattack pressed hard all day, but more Krieg forces poured through the breach and out into the wider battlefield beyond. Several times, enemy infantry reached the breach, only to be repulsed by the charge of Ainea and his Terminators. Ainea himself was wounded in the fighting by a direct hit from a plasma blast. His Terminator armour saved his life, but the thick breastplate had been punctured, the searing heat of the violent impact burning away the armour and the commander's chest, exposing the black carapace implant within. When an apothecary dragged Ainea from the field, assisted by Sergeant Culln, the commander was barely conscious, but still issuing orders despite the obvious pain of his wound. It was a grievous injury but once the apothecary had administered stabilising drugs, he declared that the commander would live, with the aid of extensive cybernetic rebuilding to make him battle-worthy again.

RED SCORPIONS VETERAN SERGEANT



1. POWER ARMOUR
This Space Marine's power armour has been heavily adapted by the Chapter's artificers. It combines features from a common Mk VII suit and an ancient Mk IV suit. The majority of the upper suit is from the Mk IV 'Maximus' armour, mostly notable in the helmet's design. The suit is marginally lighter than the early Mk III armour due to the newly available alloys at the time – the ability to create them lost over the millennia, meaning that most of these suits are now considered precious relics of war.

This suit's leg armour is taken directly from Mk VII armour, and little adaptation is required to make the two patterns operate together. Although Mk VII is regarded as standard issue, Space Marine armour is considered a personal item of wargear and most sets will be embellished and modified by their owner. Upon his death, the armour will be returned to the armoury and then reissued to a new recruit.

2. POWER SWORD
The sergeant's main weapon is his power sword, carried as a weapon and as a mark of seniority amongst his men. Crafted by the Chapter's artificers, it is a hand-and-half broadsword (wielded in one or two hands) containing a small power field generator in the pommel. When activated, it wreaths the blade in a crackling energy field that disrupts the molecular composition of anything it hits, greatly assisting armour penetration. Like his armour, his sword is also treated as an artefact of the Chapter, and retained as such in the Second Company's shrine until needed. Upon the sergeant's death, the sword will be handed on to a newly promoted sergeant, who will be expected to live up to the example set by the sword's former bearers.

3. BOLT PISTOL
The sergeant's sidearm is a Mk VIII Ultra pattern bolt pistol, a common sidearm amongst Space Marines. Just like the larger boltgun, it fires self-propelled bolts with a mass-fused, armour-piercing, high-explosive warhead that penetrates a target before detonating – literally blowing it apart from inside.

Other specialised rounds are also available for the pistol and it incorporates many other advanced features, such as palm-print genetic identification coding, which is read by the power armour's autosenses before activating the weapon. Targeting information and an ammunition counter are also fed via the autosenses to the Space Marine's helmet display.

Its magazine holds just ten bolts, and the weapon fires single shots or pre-selected three round bursts. The pistol is regarded as a potent weapon for troops expected to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, and acts as a back-up weapon for officers and those equipped with cumbersome heavy weapons.

4. CYBERNETIC ARM
Whilst a Space Marine's enhanced physique allows him to recover from wounds that would kill lesser mortals, it is not uncommon for those with serious injuries to replace the damaged limbs or organs with cybernetics. Each cybernetic enhancement is designed and built to specification in the Chapter's Apothecarion. This adamantium arm will be able to replicate all arm movements and actions with very little loss of dexterity due to its sensitive neural pick-ups and cognitive-actuation enhancers. It will require careful maintenance between deployments.

Some Chapters hide cybernetics under a synthetic skin, but others prefer to wear them openly, showing off old injuries as a mark of honour. In this case, Sergeant Zhyr lost his arm to a plasma impact whilst serving as a Terminator in the First Company. After being stabilised and recovered, he was transferred to the Chapter's Apothecarion, where the remains of his ruined arm were removed and replaced. As a result of his injury, he was transferred back to the Second Company as a Veteran Sergeant, where his battlefield experience could be put to best use.

5. INSIGNIA

The Red Scorpion's Chapter badge is worn on the left shoulder pad by all its battle-brothers. Zhyr also carries purity seals on his armour. Awarded by his Company Chaplain, these seals prove a Space Marine's loyalty and faith in the face of the corrupting power of Chaos. They offer his soul additional protection against daemonic attack and improve his resolve when faced by foes that might shake a lesser man's faith in the divine power of the Emperor as the protector of Mankind.

Although no longer a Terminator, Zhyr still bears the Crux Terminatus (also known as Terminator Honours). This golden cross marks the Veteran Sergeant as having once served the Chapter as a Terminator in the First Company, earning him the right to display the highly regarded Crux Terminatus for the duration of his service. The Crux also indicates that, having completed the required training, the Chapter could recall him to the First Company if required.

The white helmet is a traditional badge of a veteran. In the Red Scorpions Chapter, any battle-brother who has completed fifty missions is considered a veteran and granted the distinction of wearing such an honorific.

The Sergeant's squad number is worn on his kneepad – in this case 6th – a Tactical squad. The Tactical squad markings (a large arrow) will be worn on his right shoulder pad (but are not visible here).

Veteran Sergeant Zhyr, commander of 6th Tactical squad, 6th Company, seen here during Operation Execution Place.

Command on the ground now passed to Veteran Sergeant Zhyr and Brother Nalr as they orchestrated the stoic defence. All day the Red Scorpions fought until their ammunition was expended. By then the Krieg forces had fought the enemy to a stalemate. One of Drauca's Warhounds had been destroyed by a volcano cannon strike, leaving just two great legs jutting skyward, the scout Titan's torso and head obliterated in a catastrophic plasma reactor explosion that had illuminated the battlefield like a second sun bursting into life. But the enemy had been heavily damaged in the exchange of fire and had withdrawn rather than be destroyed. Rand Drauca could list another victory over the despised Legio Vulcanum traitors on *Praetorian's* honour banner.

When Zhyr determined that the Krieg forces were now in position in such strength that no enemy attack would move them, he ordered his own survivors to withdraw. The Red Scorpions fell back, mostly on foot or by clambering onto the hulls of the few surviving vehicles. Ninety-six battle-brothers had begun Operation Execution Place. Just thirty-four returned, many of them bearing hideous wounds. Commander Ainea was badly wounded and Venerable Brother Nalr had lost his lascannon right arm. Brother Daeres had been destroyed, lost to a tank's armour-piercing shell that had punched through his Dreadnought's sarcophagus. The wreckage was towed away to be rebuilt so that one day it could be used by another hero of the Adeptus Astartes to continue to fight for the Emperor.

The apothecaries searched the battlefield and collected the all-important progenoid glands of the slain, then the bodies were loaded into Rhinos for transport back to the Chapter's fortress. Sergeant Culln was still alive. His jump pack now discarded, he trudged back; his armour was rent and pitted, his left shoulder pad torn away and his helmet shattered and lost. Soon the Thunderhawks would arrive to lift them back to orbit. High above, the *Arx Fidelis* had survived its exchange with Vraks' defence lasers. It had been damaged in the approach, but escaped without further harm.

Their mission was complete. The Red Scorpions' sacrifice to the Emperor's cause on Vraks had been made. The price for victory had been paid in the loss of many brave battle-brothers and the machine spirits of vehicles vanquished forever, but the Chapter's role in the siege had been a vital one. Few other forces in the Emperor's service could have done what they had achieved. Thanks to the Red Scorpions' sacrifices, in Sector 57-44 the Krieg Guardsmen were finally through the curtain wall.

Now, only the great Citadel of Vraks lay before them.

Harbingers and Portents

On Thracian Prime, Marshall Kagori was interrupted in his routine round of briefings and reports from Vraks. Intelligence on the breakthrough in Sector 57-44 was being reviewed and, given the changing situation, new supply calculations were needed. The Marshall's plan to employ a Space Marine Chapter had worked and it seemed that the 88th Siege Army was finally within sight of the ultimate objective. The crisis since the defeat at the First Battle of Vraks had been contained. Then a servitor appeared carrying a message for the marshall. An important Imperial dignitary and his retinue had arrived at his headquarters – a representative of the Emperor's Inquisition.

Kagori put his briefing on hold to meet with the stranger. Not even a high-ranking marshall of the Imperium, with millions of men at his command, would keep an Inquisitor waiting. Under his heavy, thick robes the visitor was tall, almost unnaturally so, and built like a Space Marine, wide in the chest and shoulders, all muscle. His rich attire was trimmed in exotic furs. His face bore the scars of battle, his eyes were piercing and otherworldly, even inhuman one might say. Around his neck he wore a heavy chain, and from it a heavy golden 'I' of the Inquisition hung as a badge of office. Behind him stood a retinue of equally strange individuals. Servitor-scribes whirred and hummed. Ritually-scarred feral warriors glared. A small cherubim creature hovered on feathered wings at its master's shoulder. One pale, thin, dark-robed figure in his retinue was blind, his eyes milky white orbs – an astropath. He was branded with the sign of Imperial conditioning – a mark of a survivor of the fabled Soul-Binding undertaken by his kind.

The Inquisitor addressed the Marshall sternly but with respect. He introduced himself as Lord Hector Rex, bearer of the Inquisitorial Mandate and Proctor-General of the Scarus Conclave. The war for Vraks was in danger, he explained. The Inquisitor had taken many readings with the Emperor's Tarot. His seers had been meditating on the subject, using their clairvoyance to search the probable future. All the signs were grim. Vraks was a world ready to explode.

As an Inquisitor-Lord, Hector Rex knew what he was talking about – this was no mere warning, it was the truth. The future of Vraks was grim, far bloodier than anything the war had yet seen. The renegades might have been pushed back, but in the wider scheme of the dark gods, the work of mere mortals was almost complete. Rex already knew that the traitors were openly worshipping the unnameable powers and had made allies of Traitor Legionaries. Soon they would be offering themselves as hosts for possession and attempting to summon daemonic creatures. If they succeeded, Vraks might quickly be beyond saving. All around the system, the Warp was already in ferment. The 88th Siege Army was in serious danger. Urgent action must be taken. So Lord Rex did the only thing he knew would give the millions of loyal servants of the Emperor on Vraks a chance. He invoked his Inquisitorial Mandate and indentured the entire 88th Siege Army into the Ordo Malleus' service.

As this meeting was underway, on Vraks itself the signs and portents were foreboding, but there were none present who understood the changing nature of the war. A second sun had been reported by pilots over the Van Meersland Wastes, whilst the planet's naturally volatile atmosphere was becoming more so. Lightning storms flickered constantly in the upper atmosphere and the clouds were once more darkening to blood-red. Some sentries even claimed to have seen the dead of previous battles rise up from the mud of no-man's land and walk again. Time was running out.



Brother Chaplain Nalr. A veteran of the Red Scorpions and a survivor of both of the Chapter's deployments to Vraks. The Dreadnought was damaged during the attack, but was later recovered for repairs.



Brother Daeres of the Red Scorpions Chapter, Mk IV Dreadnought. Brother Daeres fought alongside the 3rd Company throughout the Chapter's deployment to Vraks.

RED SCORPIONS VANGUARD VETERAN

Brother-Sergeant Culln
10th Squad, 1st Company

Veteran Sergeant Culln is depicted here wearing a suit of Mk IV 'Maximus' pattern Astartes power armour with a later model jump pack. This pattern of armour has its origins in the later Great Crusade and few Adeptus Astartes Chapter Forges now have the ability to produce it. Culln's armour is replete with numerous indications of his many victories, from purity seals conferred by the Chapter's Reclusium to the Aquila pendant worn about his neck.

Panoply of War

1. Artificer-wrought Power Sword.

2. Mk XXc Mars Pattern Plasma Pistol.

1.





Veteran Sergeant Culln, depicted as he deployed to the assault on the Cardinal's Palace.

2.



RED SCORPIONS TACTICAL SPACE MARINE

Brother Gez
Demi-squad Daml
6th Tactical Squad, 6th Company

6th Squad was committed to the final assault on the Cardinal's Palace, along with the bulk of the Red Scorpions strike force; its specific objective to link up with Krieg Engineer squads breaking through to the palace's sub-levels. As the Assault squads scoured the ruined upper halls, a detachment of three Tactical squads, including the 6th, descended towards the lower levels, dividing into demi-squads – also known as Combat squads – in order to maximise fire-and-movement protocols in the dark passages.

The fighting in the tunnels lasted for the best part of three days, during which the Tactical squads of 6th Company faced a horde of heretics, madmen and mutants. The further into the darkness the squads pressed, the more hideously mutated and insane the enemy they met, until it seemed that Xaphan must have confined the most fallen of his servants to a dark prison far beneath his palace. At length, 6th Squad fought its way through to its objective point, only to discover the Krieg Engineer Company they were to link up with had been slaughtered. Demi-squad Daml fought its way back to the surface and later rejoined the Red Scorpions' main force. Upon rendezvousing with 6th Company, it was discovered that the other half of 6th Tactical Squad had not returned. Despite several missions to discover the fate of the five battle-brothers, their fate remains unknown.



This depiction demonstrates the Red Scorpions' close adherence to the dictates of the Codex Astartes in the markings and heraldry they bear upon their power armour. Brother Gez also bears the sacred Palatine Aquila on his right grieve. This icon is worn by many servants of the Imperium, but is especially prominent in the Red Scorpions Chapter.

Panoply of War

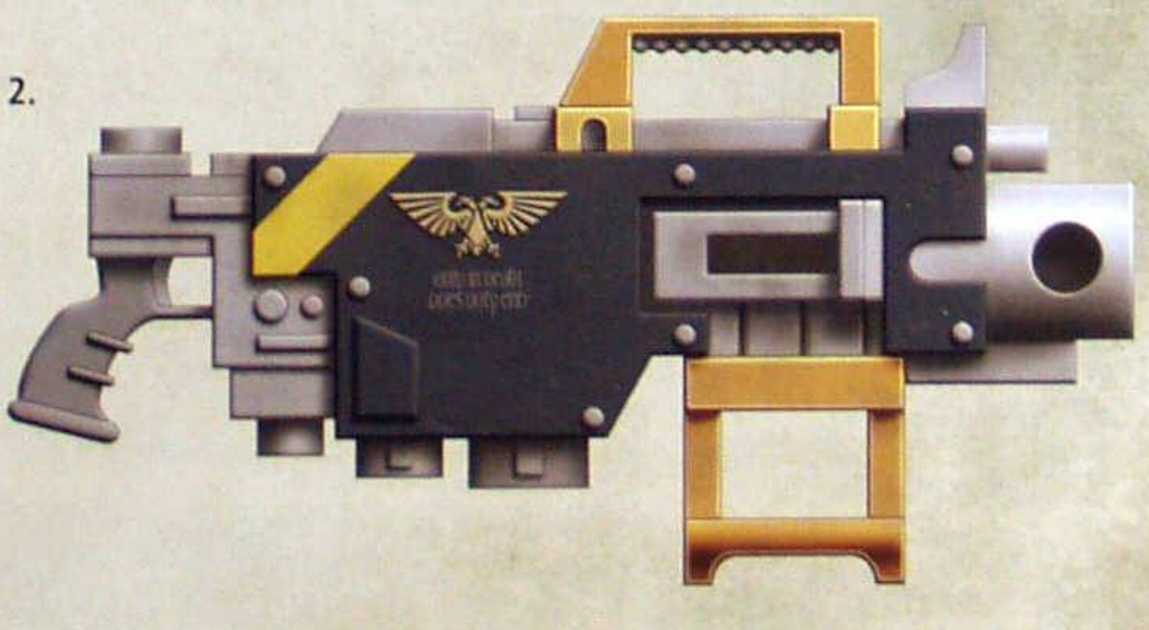
1. Shoulder Pauldron bearing Red Scorpions Chapter Icon.

2. Mk IV Maxima Pattern Heavy Bolter.

1.



2.




MORTIS



ORDO MALLEUS INQUISITOR LORD



1. ARTIFICER ARMOUR
The Inquisitor's artificer armour is a unique item, modified for his physique. It is unlikely the suit was actually made for the Inquisitor and more likely is an artefact of the Ordo Malleus, modified for the Inquisitor's large stature.

Constructed of shaped adamantium and plasteel plates encased in a ceramite ablative layer, the suit has much in common with a Space Marine's powered armour, including the exoskeletal array of actuators and fibre bundles which mimic muscle movements. These are connected via a neural interface to the wearer's motor neural system. When worn, the suit will not overly impede the user's mobility. The armour plates are shaped to deflect as well as absorb blows.

The suit has numerous integral systems, including a rebreather mask and communications systems. Note that even in battle the Inquisitor has chosen not to wear the helmet, and it may be that the suit no longer has a compatible helmet, the original being long lost.

Instead of a helmet, the suit has been modified to contain a psychic hood, acting to focus the user's mental powers. Typical of the Inquisitor's preference, part of the hood has been forged into the shape of the symbol of the Inquisition.

The armour's breastplate mounts a reliquary, inside which is a small, intricately carved statuette of the Emperor, another ancient artefact, its origins unknown.

2. WEAPONRY
The Inquisitor's primary weapon is his force sword. This is a legendary weapon, a valued relic of the Ordo Malleus, usually kept in a stasis chamber against decay or the wiles of the dark gods. Named *Arias*, legend has it that it is a force weapon once blessed by the hand of the Emperor himself, in the times when he still walked the galaxy as a man. In appearance it is a large broad-bladed greatsword, usually wielded two-handed. Only a very strong and large user could wield it single-handed.

The Inquisitor's sidearm is an antiquate variant of a bolt pistol. Built by a master armourer, it was awarded to Inquisitor Rex by his tutor, Lord Thor Malkin, upon his graduation from the rank of Interrogator to full Inquisitor and his taking of the oath of allegiance.

Rumour has it that it once belonged to the famous Rogue Trader Joff Zuckerman, a compatriot of Lord Malkin for many years. It holds just three bolts in its internal magazine, all of which will be psy-bolts for exorcising daemons.

3. STORM SHIELD
Forged into the symbol of the Inquisition, this artificer built shield is the Inquisitor's first line of defence. Constructed of thick armaplas under an ablative ceramite layer, the rear of the shield contains an energy field unit which, when activated, generates a disruptive energy field that surrounds the Inquisitor. Equally capable of absorbing the energy of a high-powered laser weapon or the cut of a sword, the field is linked via cabling to the armoured suit's internal power source.

This storm shield is a huge example of its type, standing at 1.5 m tall; its weight alone would prevent most men from wielding it. Similar examples can be found in the armouries of the Adeptus Astartes.

4. INSIGNIA
The Inquisitor wears the Crux Terminatus. This marks him out as a man who has successfully completed Terminator training. It is uncommon (but not unknown) for an Imperial servant outside of a Space Marine Chapter to receive this award. It proves he has passed the rigorous standards and tactical competence required to don Terminator armour.

The Inquisitor bears a small censer, into which are placed holy unguents. When burned, these are repellent to Daemons. When expecting to encounter daemonic creatures, a larger censer will be used, with an acolyte or priest directed to bear it.

Important documents are carried as scrolls on his belt. These will be copies made by his scribes, and may contain orders or a list of suspects to be investigated.



Ordo Malleus Inquisitor Lord Hector Rex, the Saviour of Vraks, seen here before his assault upon the Cardinal Gate.

CHAPTER TEN – THE UNQUIET DARKNESS

'"We are at war with forces too terrible to comprehend. We cannot afford mercy for any of its victims who are too weak to take the morally correct course. Our mercies destroy us; they weaken us and sap our resolve for the long battle ahead. Put aside any such thoughts. They are not worthy of Inquisitors in the service of the Emperor. Praise His name, for in our resolve we only reflect His unbreakable purpose of will."

From the *Book of Exorcisms*, the Verses of Inquisitor Enoch

Even before he had arrived on Vraks, Inquisitor-Lord Rex had dispatched an astropathic message to the moon of Saturn, Titan, where the Grey Knights within their fortress-monastery awaited such calls for aid. From there a cruiser, loaded with the finest warriors the Imperium could train and equip for such soul-testing combat, would be dispatched, along with orders to place themselves in the service of the Inquisitor-Lord. Chosen to lead the elite strike force was Brother Captain Stern.

The Grey Knights were not the only Space Marine force Inquisitor-Lord Rex had turned to – potent though they would be. The Red Hunters Chapter also had a long history of putting themselves at the service of the Inquisition. Although still a Chapter of Space Marines that looked to the *Codex Astartes* for its organisation and spiritual guidance, the Chapter also made its squads available for rapid responses to Inquisitorial calls for assistance. The Inquisitors fighting on the frontline alongside Rex would also have an honour guard of Red Hunters squads to call upon.

Finally, Inquisitor-Lord Rex made one more gambit. The Red Scorpions Chapter had already fought on Vraks, as had the Dark Angels Chapter. He would dispatch envoys to both to request their aid again. In the case of the Dark Angels, he had little hope of success. The Dark Angels were a Chapter that surrounded themselves in secrecy and mystery, and rarely had any contact with the Inquisition. The Red Scorpions, however, might be a little more forthcoming. They were a Chapter obsessed with the purity of their gene-seed, purpose and honour. They might, if the negotiator was careful and worded his request well, be persuaded to return to Vraks to finish the job they had started.

Whilst Hector Rex was reorganising the 88th Siege Army on Thracian Prime, the first Inquisitors arrived on Vraks to begin field operations. So terrible were the coming events of the war expected to be, that in all, thirty-eight Inquisitors of Lord Rex's chamber-practical and their retinues had swiftly redeployed to Vraks. They would be placed in each regiment's headquarters to observe operations and to lead from the front when the time came. Even the venerable Lord Thor Malkin, Hector Rex's mentor, had volunteered for service on Vraks. The old man, now more metal and bionics than flesh and bone, would once again don his armour and take up his force weapon. Vraks would be the veteran daemonhunter's final battle against his oldest foe. He may be aged, but no one in the Scarus Sector knew more about the nature of Daemons and their banishment. Lord Rex was honoured to once again be fighting by his side.

Closing the ring

"But to wrestle with the Daemon and emerge from the battle unscathed, we must maintain Purity of Purpose.

We must each conquer ourselves in order to win a thousand battles."

Brother-Captain Stern of the Grey Knights,
prior to the Cleansing of Vraks

The first major tactical issue the Inquisitor-Lord and his staff had to tackle was no different from that which Marshall Kagori had already been wrestling with. One look at the strategic holo-map would show that the siege could not be completed whilst the eastern flank remained wide open. The encirclement of the Citadel was incomplete and whilst it remained so, the enemy would have an escape route. Even the capture of the Citadel might not see the war end if the renegades could withdraw to fight again another day. Also, the current position meant that 30th Line Korps was unable to move forward, having to act as a rearguard to the 1st Line Korps against attack from behind. Useful regiments and guns were being tied down on the defensive.

Inquisitor-Lord Rex gave orders that the ring was to be sealed. The offensive, involving multiple regiments, would swing like a door hinged upon the 1st Line Korps' positions. From the north this offensive would have over sixty kilometres to cover, and from the reports gathered from Death Rider patrols, Nurgle-aligned warbands and their allies were still infesting the entire area. In order to hasten the attack, the 7th and 11th Tank Regiments were ordered to attach themselves to the 30th Line Korps, becoming the armoured fist that would conduct the left hook and smash through the enemy.

It would take time to get organised for the offensive, but for the time being it was to be the priority of 88th Siege Army's staff. The other regiments were told to hold their positions and conduct nothing but nuisance raids and patrolling whilst the Citadel was sealed within a ring of guns. Expecting fierce resistance and counterattacks by Nurgle's followers, Inquisitors would be assigned to support the offensive, and the Grey Knights strike force, under Brother-Captain Stern, would act as a rapid reserve, waiting in their strike cruiser *Honour-Amentum*, ready to intervene wherever the enemy seemed strongest or daemonic activity was encountered. The time set for the start of the battle was 273827.M41.

In the wake of a successful offensive, two more major operations were also in the pipeline. The first would see the 1st Line Korps' three regiments push to the curtain wall,

tightening the noose around the Citadel and hemming the defenders in. The second would see the 46th Line Korps, the least experienced of the army's major units – its three regiments had seen a mere six years of service on Vraks so far – push down from the north to take the high ground and the vantage point at Point 202. With these two operations complete, the ring around the Citadel would have closed up to the curtain wall and the enemy would be sealed in an ever-shrinking pocket.

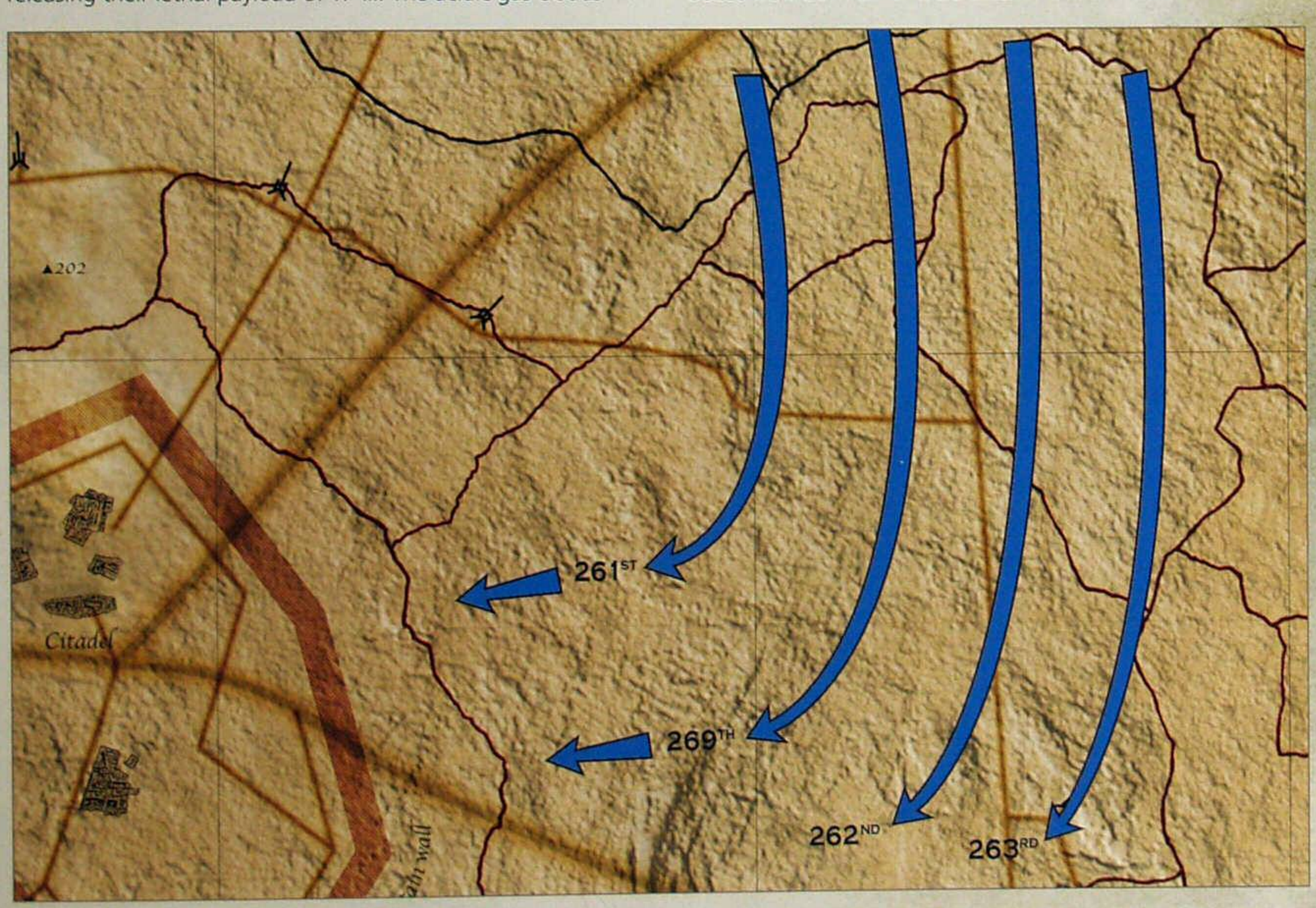
A Green Hell

It was at 273827.M41 that the guns opened fire, a rolling barrage of shells from the guns of 30th Line Korps mixed with smoke shells to obscure the 263rd Regiment's first lunge forwards. With terrific force the barrage slammed down, battering the already tortured landscape as the leading infantry companies clambered up the ladders and out of their trenches. The tanks were close behind, their companies combining with the infantry to form armoured battle groups. In the wake of the artillery bombardment, the steady, well-ordered advance began.

At first progress was good, but then the enemy counter-barrage began to land. Wherever a rolling barrage was falling, an attack would not be far behind. First mortar shells were impacting, soon followed by heavier artillery rounds. They were exploding all around, but mingling with the grey smoke plumes was a green-tinged fog – chemical shells releasing their lethal payload of TP-III. The acidic gas clouds were soon advancing across the 263rd Regiment's front. Casualties were high, throwing the attack into confusion. Units became lost in the thick smoke and chemical smog, and squads that blundered into a concentration of gas were quickly wiped out; nothing remained – they simply vanished as the acid ate away their flesh and bones.

Through it all the tanks rumbled on. Within their sealed hulls the crews were safe from the gas, and they now formed the point of the attack. Enemy armoured vehicles fired blindly, or closed in to point-blank range. Unable to co-ordinate tanks, infantry and artillery, the enemy scored quick victories, blasting tank squadrons into burning hulks before withdrawing again. But despite their successes, the enemy lacked the numbers to halt the advance. By the end of the first day, they had made ten kilometres of ground. The next day would see the 263rd lunge forwards again. To the south, the 262nd Regiment would also join the battle.

On the fourth day, enemy resistance stiffened. They'd now had time to organise a more effective defence, and the warbands of the Plague Marines had moved into place, with their own armoured vehicles in support. Worst still, all manner of hideous mutants and plague-ridden creatures were now unleashed upon the battlefield. Amongst the chemical smog, these beasts howled and wailed in pain and fury; Ogryns, now barely recognisable as such. Chaos Spawn, in all shapes and sizes. Unnamed, tormented creatures that oozed acidic slime. All were thrown into the battle.



30th Line Korps' offensive – 273827.M41.

RED HUNTERS TACTICAL SPACE MARINE

Brother-Sergeant Tenorius
Squad Tenorius (2nd Tactical Squad)
3rd Company
Inducted Household of
Inquisitor-Lord Hector Rex

Attached to Inquisitor Giaus Kahn's strike force, Squad Tenorius was committed to the audacious, but doomed attempt to capture the Citadel of Vraks' armoury gates. It was cut off and annihilated in the battle; its deeds known only to the Emperor.

The Red Hunters Chapter is tied to the Inquisition by ancient bonds of honour and duty. Fighting in Inquisitorial strike forces and providing honour guards for the most senior of Inquisitor-Lords, the Red Hunters have confronted numerous horrors no mortals can face and be allowed to live should they survive, lest they taint others. As such, the Chapter's line brethren are routinely mind-scoured to preserve their souls, a fact that makes them even more valuable weapons in the hands of the secretive and often necessarily brutal Inquisition.

Panoply of War

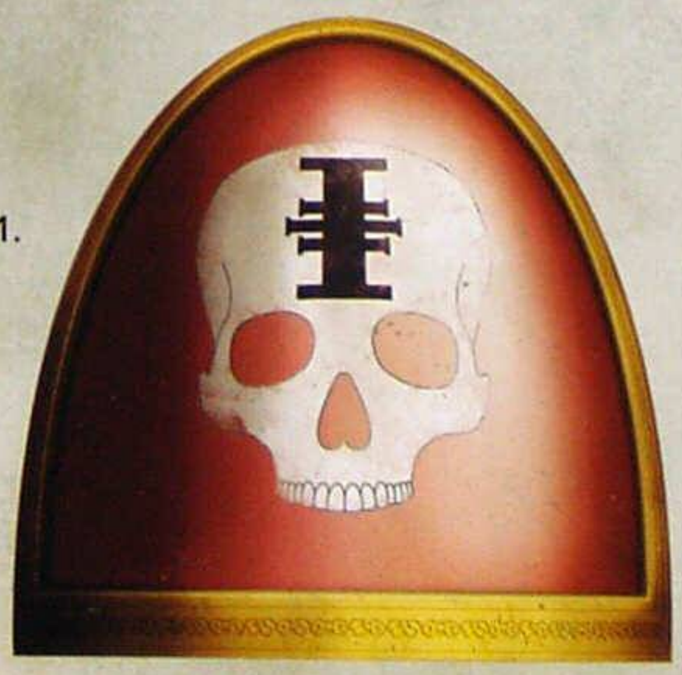
1. **Red Hunters Chapter Iconography:** The Red Hunters follow the dictates of the Codex Astartes in most regards. It is notable that in recent decades they have ceased displaying company-specific colours, all companies sporting gold trim instead. The symbol of the Inquisition is displayed prominently on Red Hunters' heraldry, indicating the formalised bonds between the two bodies.

2. **Vulkan Pattern Combi-flamer**



Brother-Sergeant Tenorius is depicted here as he deployed to his final battle, clad in Mark VII 'Eagle' pattern Astartes power armour. The gold helm stripe marks him as a veteran squad leader, and the numeral and arrow on his right shoulder pad indicate his assignment to the 2nd Tactical Squad. The numeral on Tenorius' left knee armour indicates the 3rd Company.

1.



2.



RED HUNTERS TERMINATOR

Veteran-Brother Sameer
Squad Zokura (3rd Squad)
1st Company
Inducted Household of
Inquisitor-Lord Hector Rex

Squad Zokura was attached to various Inquisitors for those missions it participated in during the final battles for the Citadel of Vraks. It was held in reserve during the assault on the Cardinal Gate and stood down before being deployed, therefore becoming one of the few units assigned to that battle to survive it. Later on, Squad Zokura fought alongside the warband of Inquisitor Verily Wroth, earning her commendation when they saved her from certain death during a daemonic incursion. During tunnel clearing operations in the Undercroft, the squad achieved a kill ratio of 97:1.

The elite brethren of the 1st Company bear either white or silver heraldic bands on their helms, squad sergeants often rendering the entire helm in the chosen colour. The company's numeral is born on the left knee.

Panoply of War

1. **Mars-Ultima Pattern Storm Bolter.**

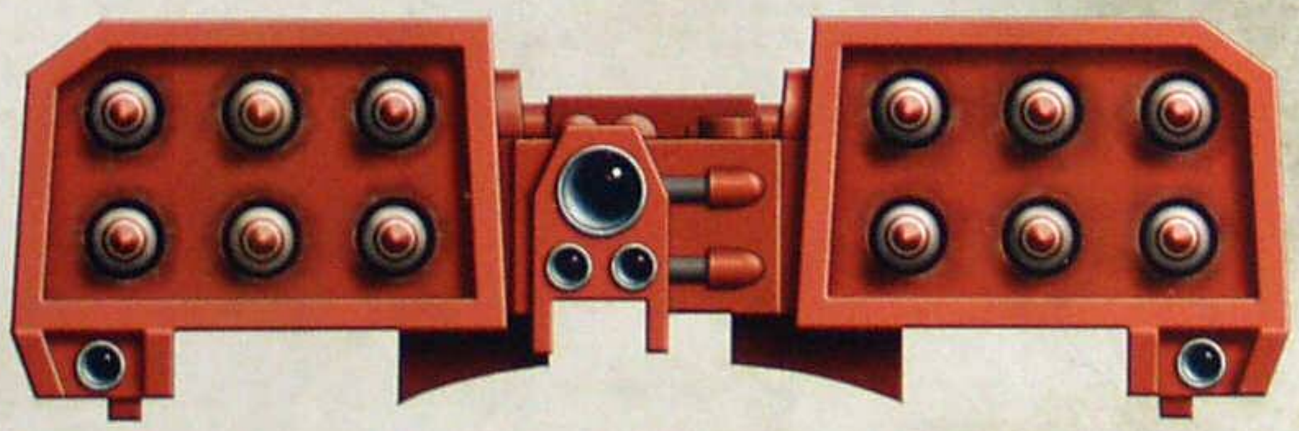
2. **Cyclone Missile Launcher:** This shoulder-mounted rapid-firing multiple missile launcher is pre-loaded with krak and frag warheads. It provides a Terminator squad with heavy, versatile firepower in addition to their storm bolters.

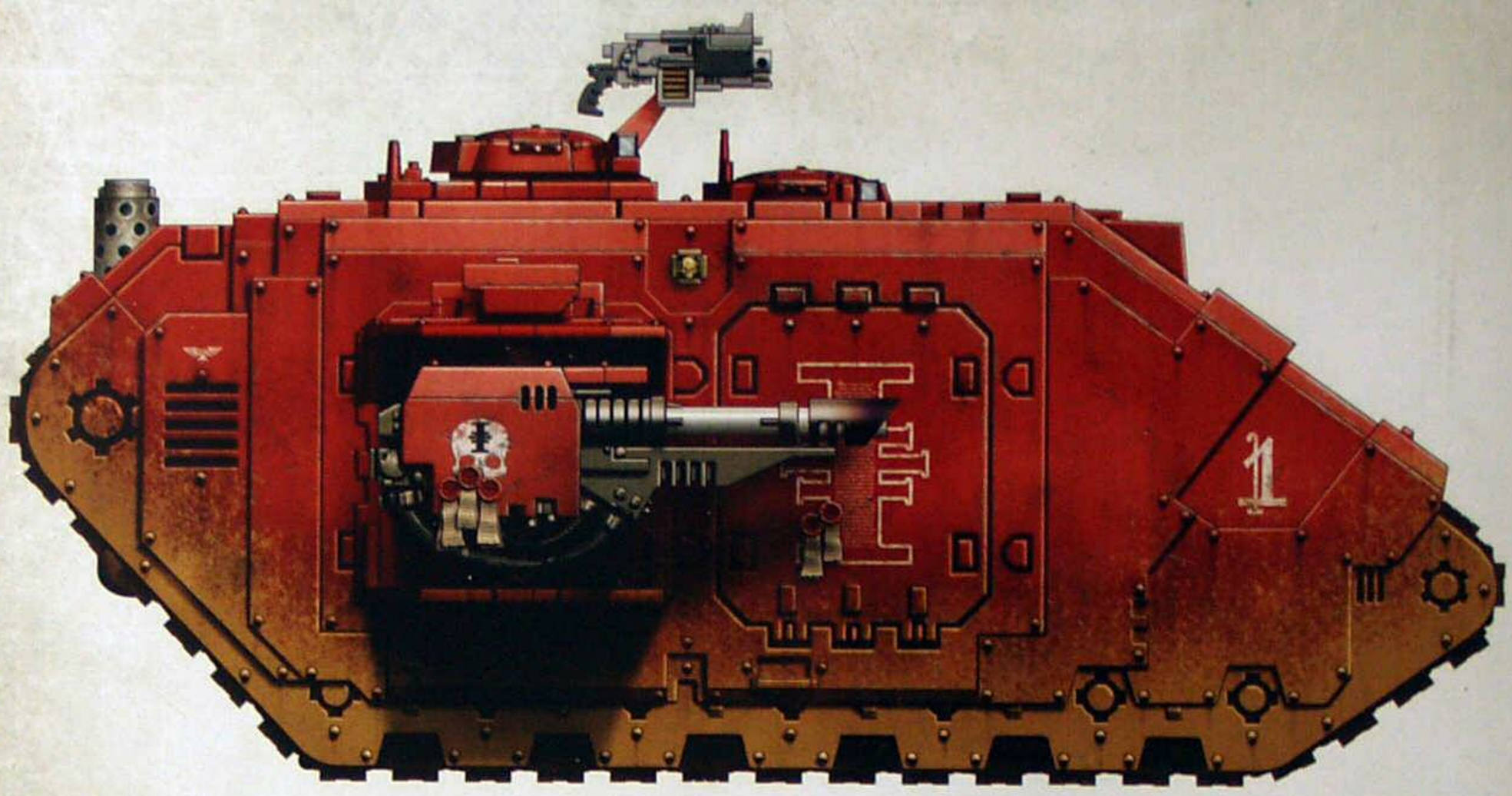


Sameer was equipped with a cyclone multiple missile launcher for Squad Zokura's aborted assault on the Cardinal Gate, changing to a heavy flamer for the battles in the tunnels beneath the Undercroft.

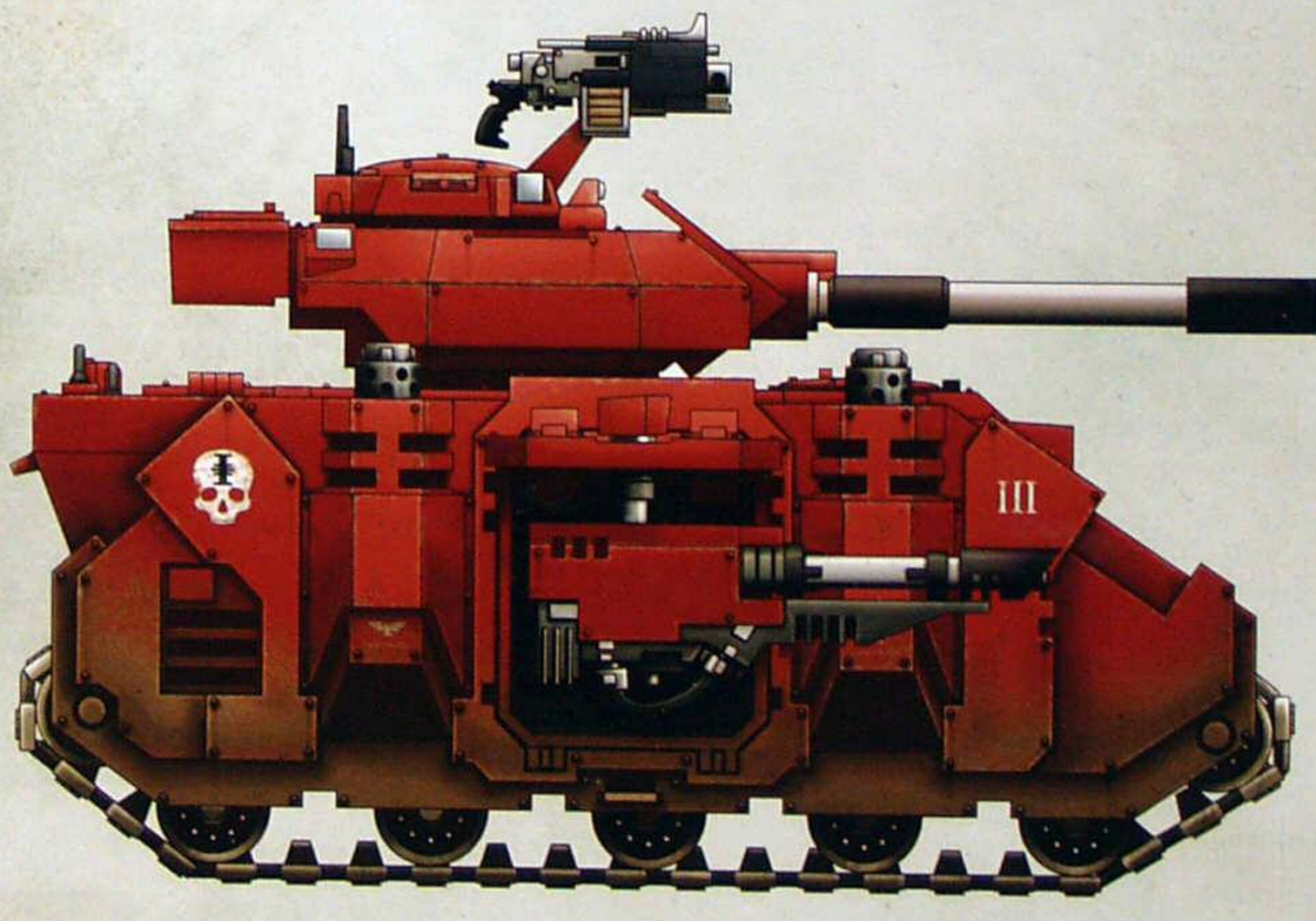
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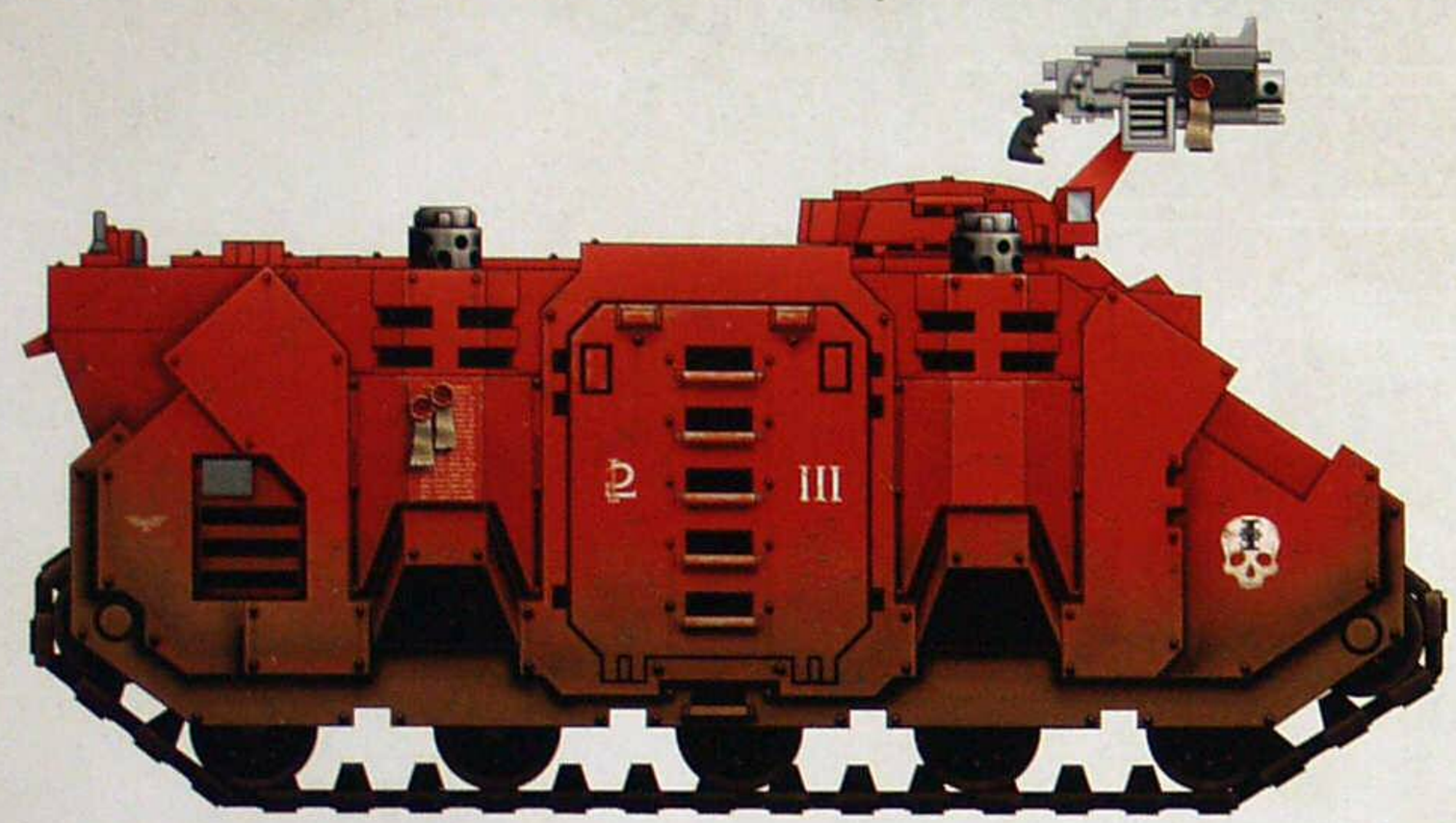




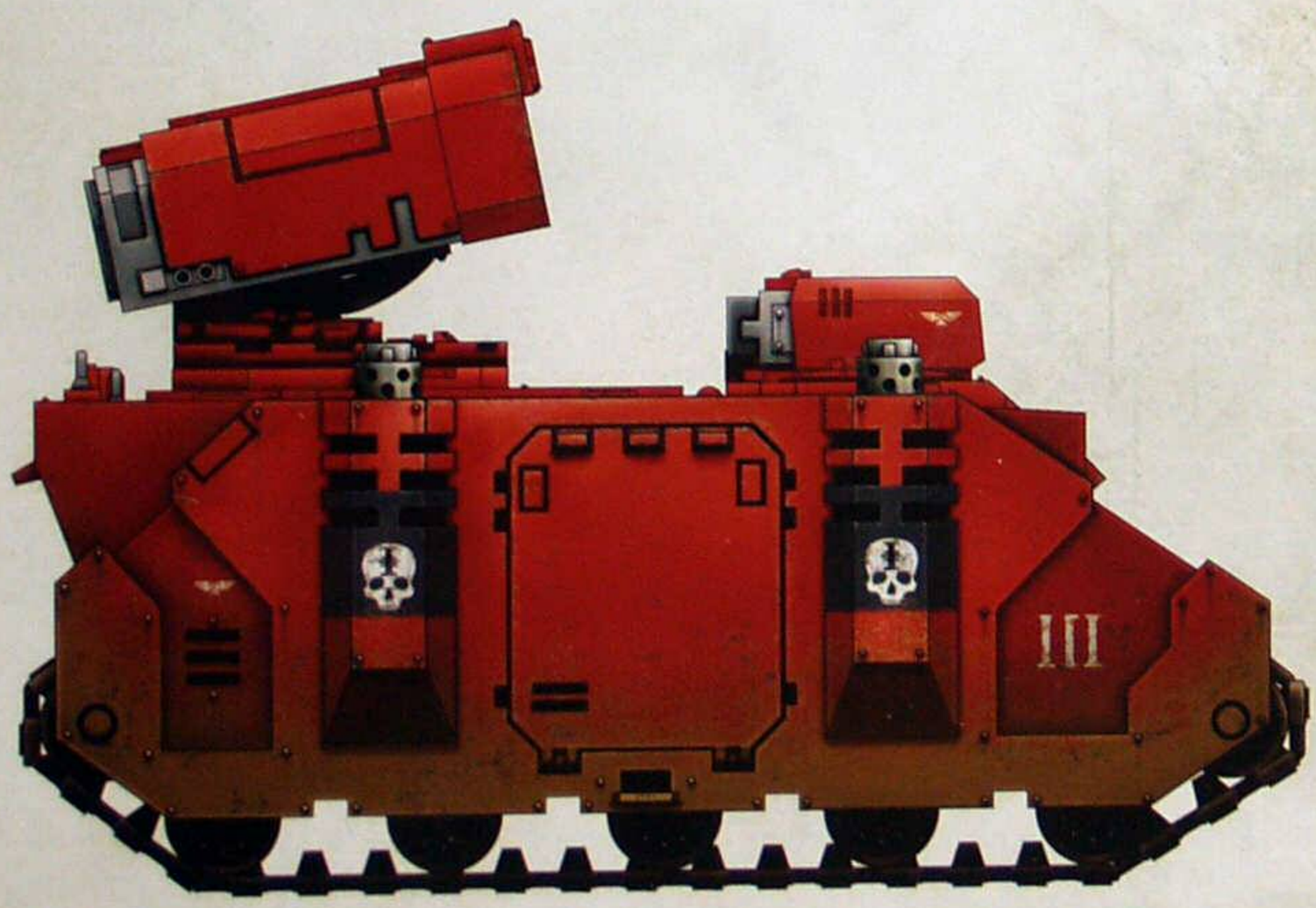
This vehicle, fitted with additional armour plating, was attached to the Red Hunters 1st Company and carried Veteran Squad Izila during the assault on the Cardinal Gate. The numeral '1' is the vehicle's identifier.



This vehicle was fitted with additional armour in preparation for the Red Hunters' deployment to Vraks, for which it was attached to the 3rd Company, which formed the backbone of the Chapter's strike force.



This up-armoured Rhino bore the 2nd Squad of the 3rd Company, text inscribed on its flank listing the names of every battle-brother to have served in that squad throughout the previous three decades.



Three Whirlwinds supported the Red Hunters' deployment on Vraks. All were of the Helios pattern, a less frequently seen variant with its distinctive targeting cupola mounted over the vehicle commander's position.



As it moved forwards, the 269th Regiment reported encounters with plague zombies. These were hordes of creatures of ragged flesh and bone which shambled through the mud and smoke armed only with their teeth and nails, but hungry for the taste of warm flesh and blood. They were the remains of the long dead, risen from their battlefield graves to fight again by some blasphemous art known only to the followers of the dark gods. The dead of both sides now fought for the enemy. Mindless and unarmed, they were cut down by the Krieg Guardsmen in their hundreds, but still they came on, heedless of losses. Inquisitor Thor Malkin came to the 269th Regiment's aid. Here was some blasphemous witchcraft that must be punished, but if the dead fought for the enemy, then their manpower was all but inexhaustible – a war of attrition could not be fought against an enemy that would not stay dead! Soon the 262nd Regiment, then the 263rd Regiment, were also reporting encounters with plague zombies – the festering corpses of their long-dead comrades were coming back to life around them.

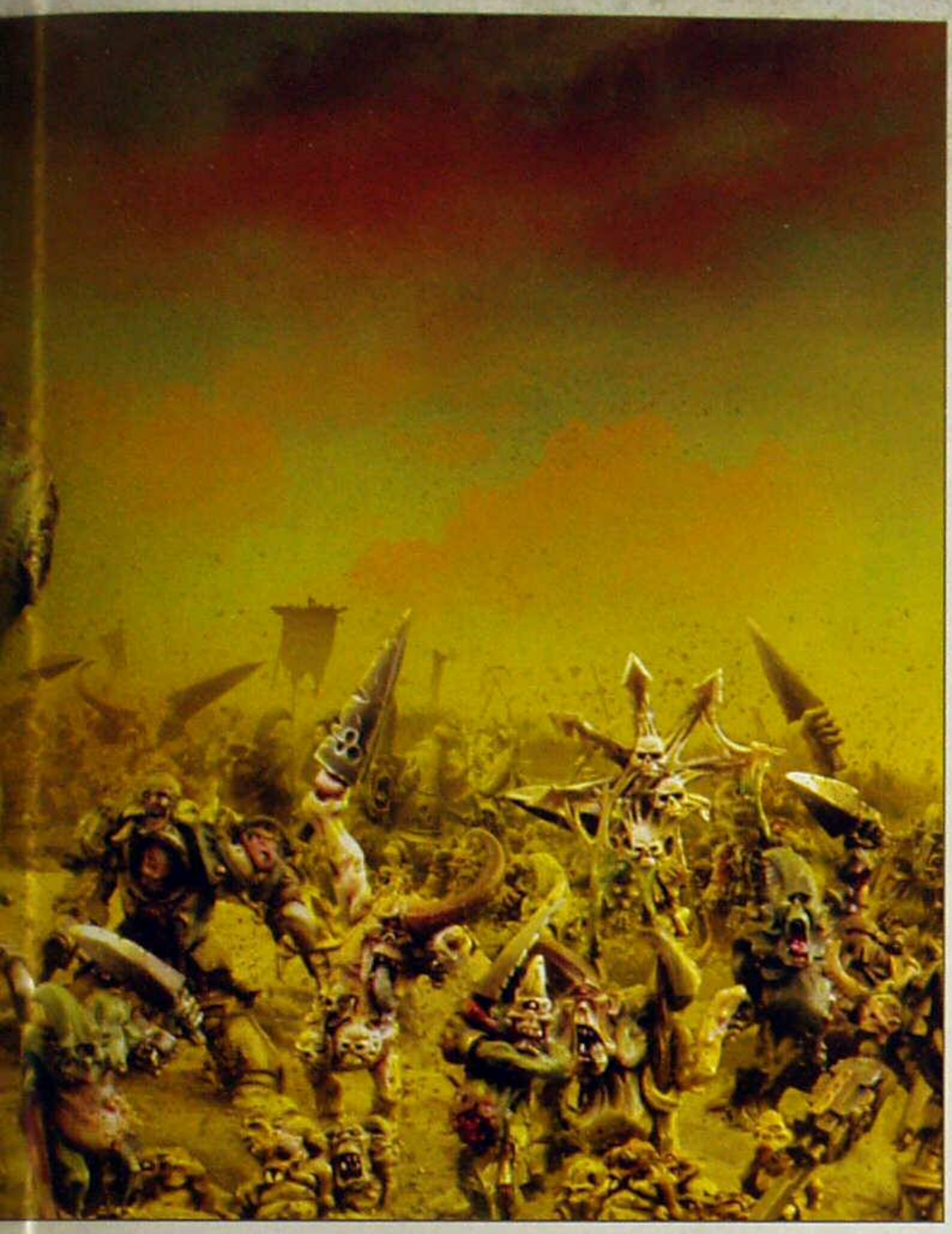
After eight days of fighting, the 34th Line Korps' offensive had become embroiled in a green hell. The initial gains were being held, but the 263rd Regiment's long attack had only reached midway towards its vital objective. The number of enemies facing them was now almost a match for the Krieg forces – the offensive was at a deadlock. To break the stalemate, those commanding the battle finally ordered the use of chemical weapons, adding to the poisonous landscape with chemical shells, and in the process coating Sectors 59-45 and 60-45 in a toxic soup that would make them uninhabitable for millennia.

Warp Rift

Nurgle was delighted with the poisoning of Vraks; with each passing day more and more of the landscape was becoming the deadly infectious quagmire that his offspring most loved. At 298827.M41, he released his children to play.

The first warp rift on Vraks opened in Sector 59-44. It was detected immediately by the *Honour-Amentum's* warp-augurs, at the summoning of the Nurgle sorcerers of the Lords of Decay and the Apostles of Contagion. Their long poisoning ritual was complete, and now they brought forth Nurgle's own daemonic servants.

The Daemons they summoned came from the Blighted Pit – the legions of Scabeiathrax the Bloated; swarms of Plague Bearers and mischievous Nurglings. Amongst them came cavorting Beasts of Nurgle, spreading disease wherever they touched. In the midst of them all came Scabeiathrax himself, Papa G'aap, a great corpulent mass of virulent decay, his body rank with every disease known to Mankind and many others as yet unknown. Where his feet fell, the ground turned black beneath them. Nurglings sprouted from his



leprous skin as large pus-filled boils exploded, birthing the many mites of Nurgle that followed in his wake, constantly fighting amongst themselves for the scraps of rancid flesh that shed from their master. Scabeiathrax paused on occasion to belch a stream of blood, bile and vomit to fill a shell crater so his children might have a pool to bathe in. His daemonic legions seemed endless; thousands upon thousands of Plague Bearers now wandered Vraks seeking fresh victims to infect.

For Captain Stern and his battle-brothers, the true enemy had arrived. The *Honour-Amentum* quickly manoeuvred into position as Captain Stern's squads assembled for the final rituals of warding before entering the teleport chambers.

The Battle for Armoury 59-44

Armoury 59-44 was the last of the great underground storage facilities still in enemy hands, except for the vast armoury catacombs beneath the Citadel itself, and for the 30th Line Korps it was the key to their offensive. The korps' commanders believed it was this armoury that the enemy were using as their main base for the battles now being fought. The offensive drive had stalled, but the attack upon the armoury would be what would decide this assault's fate.

Already subjected to repeated heavy artillery bombardments, the weapons fire now intensified with the addition of three of the independent companies, which would pound the area night and day. A fresh armoured force, composed of units from the 61st Tank Regiment and attached heavy tank units, alongside infantry of the 262nd Regiment, all led by Inquisitor Elias Vokes, had been given the task of attacking and overrunning the armoury. They would have additional air support and anything else that Inquisitor Vokes felt was required. It was here that the backbone of the enemy's defences would be broken.

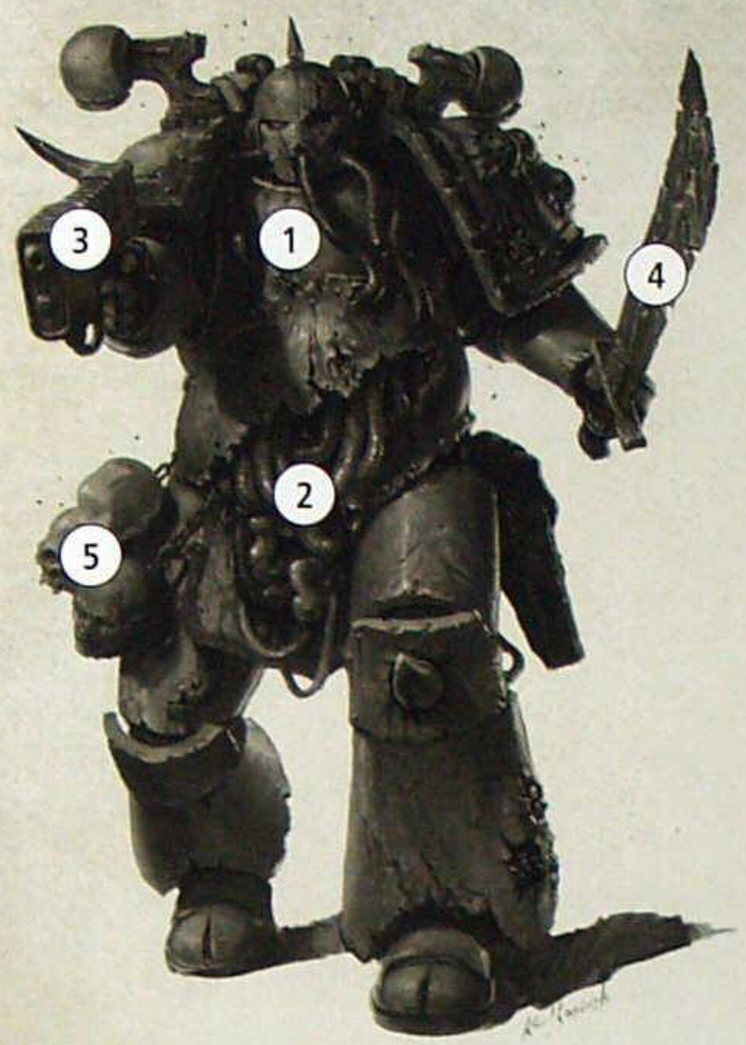
The battle began at 311827.M41, with Inquisitor Vokes and his retinue leading the way in his personal Rhino, whilst the Leman Russ and Macharius heavy tanks fanned out. They were climbing up the slopes towards the armoury just three kilometres ahead. The remains of a strongpoint, once one of Vraks' many defence laser silos, was the first objective designated to be cleared. The ruined silo was infested with enemy soldiers, no longer the simple human renegades of the earlier war, but now a host of mutants and degenerate sub-humans, backed by Plague Marines of the Traitor warbands – and now also by Daemons.

As the artillery shells fell, the Krieg armoured vehicles moved into battle, a cluster of grey and brown-clad Guardsmen gathered behind each tank for cover as they advanced. The enemy counterattacked immediately. Pouring out from the armoury came a tide of possessed and daemonically powered war machines that lumbered and spewed filth from their weapon barrels, havoc launchers firing more shells filled with chemical and biological agents. With them came the Plague Bearers, chanting a name from drooling lips. *"G'aap! G'aap! G'aap!"* they called upon their leader as the stinking host of Nurgle attacked. The fighting was ferocious as the battle cannon roared back and forth. Inquisitor Vokes was in the very centre, fighting alongside his accompanying Storm Troopers, directing fire and issuing orders, his own bodyguard around him.

Then the Great Unclean One came. A four storey-high bloated sack of filth, his rusted Blade of Decay dripping countless poisons. The enemy cheered the arrival of the emissary of Nurgle, whilst Plague Bearers called his name and danced with glee. Scabeiathrax pushed a Leman Russ onto its side, flipping the sixty tonne tank as if it were a child's toy. Then he spewed out the Wind of Nurgle, and before him countless Guardsmen died in its lethal noxious stink. Inquisitor Vokes raced to meet the beast, leaping from his still-moving Rhino, his bodyguard behind him. Even the Ordo Malleus Inquisitor stood no chance in the face of the Greater Daemon. Beset by swarms of leaping Nurglings that gnawed at his armour, Vokes waded towards his foe. Scabeiathrax smiled warmly at this new enemy and waved him to come closer so that he might inspect the little *'man-being'* who sought to challenge him.

A swipe of the Blade of Decay saw most of Vokes' bodyguard die, the Inquisitor's men withering into dust before his eyes. In return he emptied his boltgun into the beast's belly, each bolt psychically charged. Where the shells exploded, offal and bile spilled forth from the wounds, which the Nurglings lapped up at the Daemon Lord's feet. Scabeiathrax gave a hearty laugh then, as Vokes reloaded, smashed down his

PLAGUE MARINE



1. ANCIENT CORRODED ARMOUR
Although this ancient suit of power armour has been corroded and corrupted almost past recognition, its structure still bears the hallmarks of the older style Mk III 'Iron' pattern suits favoured by the Death Guard Legion during the pre-Heresy era. Even though more modern suits had become available to them by that time, the Death Guard retained a large stockpile of this heavier pattern, preferring it for both its durability and the ease with which they customised it to better handle the rigours of the toxic battle zones in which the Legion excelled. This armour suit has clearly suffered severe corrosion and structural breaches over its millennia of service, and has been further modified with a heretical pattern 'open vent' reactor backpack, blasphemous iconography, and has swelled to contain the monstrous bulk of its bloated occupant.

At some point this armour has suffered catastrophic damage to the belly plate. The extent of armour penetration would indicate it was caused by a power weapon, most likely a raking blow from a lightning claw. The damage would have been terminal even for a Space Marine's enhanced physique, but to this Death Guard Space Marine, the damage was merely superficial.

2. BLOATED AND DECAYING FLESH
The flesh of the Plague Marine is bloated, distended and corpulent, seething with organic corruption and decay, and terrible to look upon. The stench alone given off by them is enough to incapacitate. This seemingly dead and decaying flesh, however, makes the Plague Marine almost impossible to stop with conventional small arms fire, and they are able to shrug off injury and damage that would commonly defeat even the superhuman physiology of the Adeptus Astartes. In combat against these horrific servants of Chaos, mass concentrated firepower or weapons more commonly employed to deal with armoured vehicles are recommended as the key to a successful confrontation.

The decaying flesh also attracts maggots and flies These creatures commonly accompany all Nurgle's forces, and some even cultivate them, considering them sacred creatures. Blistering through the armour's shoulder pads are maggot hives which constantly produce large fat, black flies.

3. PLASMA PISTOL
In contrast to the Plague Marine's other equipment, this plasma pistol appears to be a more recent Imperial model, probably a Mk XI or Mk XII 'single core' pattern, likely taken from the spoils of war on the battlefield. Already showing signs of corruption and ill-repair, the tortured machine-spirit of this weapon will probably make it prone to catastrophic magnetic field failure and hazardous thermal flashbacks which might kill a human operator. However, given the Plague Marine's unhallowed tolerance for injury and pain, the dangers are likely to prove inconsequential to this malignant warrior.

4. CONTAMINATED BLADE
Of unknown origin and design, the Plague Marine carries a 'cleaver' type combat weapon of the sort often, and not inaccurately, named a '*plague knife*' by the Imperium's observers. Wielded with the superhuman strength and speed of these creatures, these unpowered blades can pierce most forms of body armour, and can breach the protection of ceramite power armour if a vulnerable location is struck. If the skin of a victim is cut, the contaminated and necrotic slime that covers the blade will almost invariably infect the wound and poison the bloodstream, leading to a slow and agonising death in over 90% of cases. Even the augmented metabolism of the Adeptus Astartes is not entirely immune to this effect. As yet the Adeptus Biologis have no antidotes that have any effect on the toxins. Rumours persist that some of these weapons are further empowered by the dark taint of the Warp against which no flesh can be spared. Only the Ordo Malleus know the truth.

5. BLIGHT GRENADES
Also known as a 'death's-head' grenade, this device is made from a conquered foe of Nurgle. Constructed by Nurgle sorcerers, the severed head is covered with a waxy mix of slime and blood until it is watertight. The brain cavity is then filled with pus and left to fester, becoming a poisonous gas. The result is a missile which bursts on impact, releasing a deadly acidic gas.

A corrupted Plague Marine encountered during the later stages of the Vraks campaign, affiliation unknown, although its ancient pattern of armour indicates a connection to the Death Guard Traitor Legion or one of its sub-factions, most likely the Apostles of Contagion.



DEATH GUARD PLAGUE MARINE

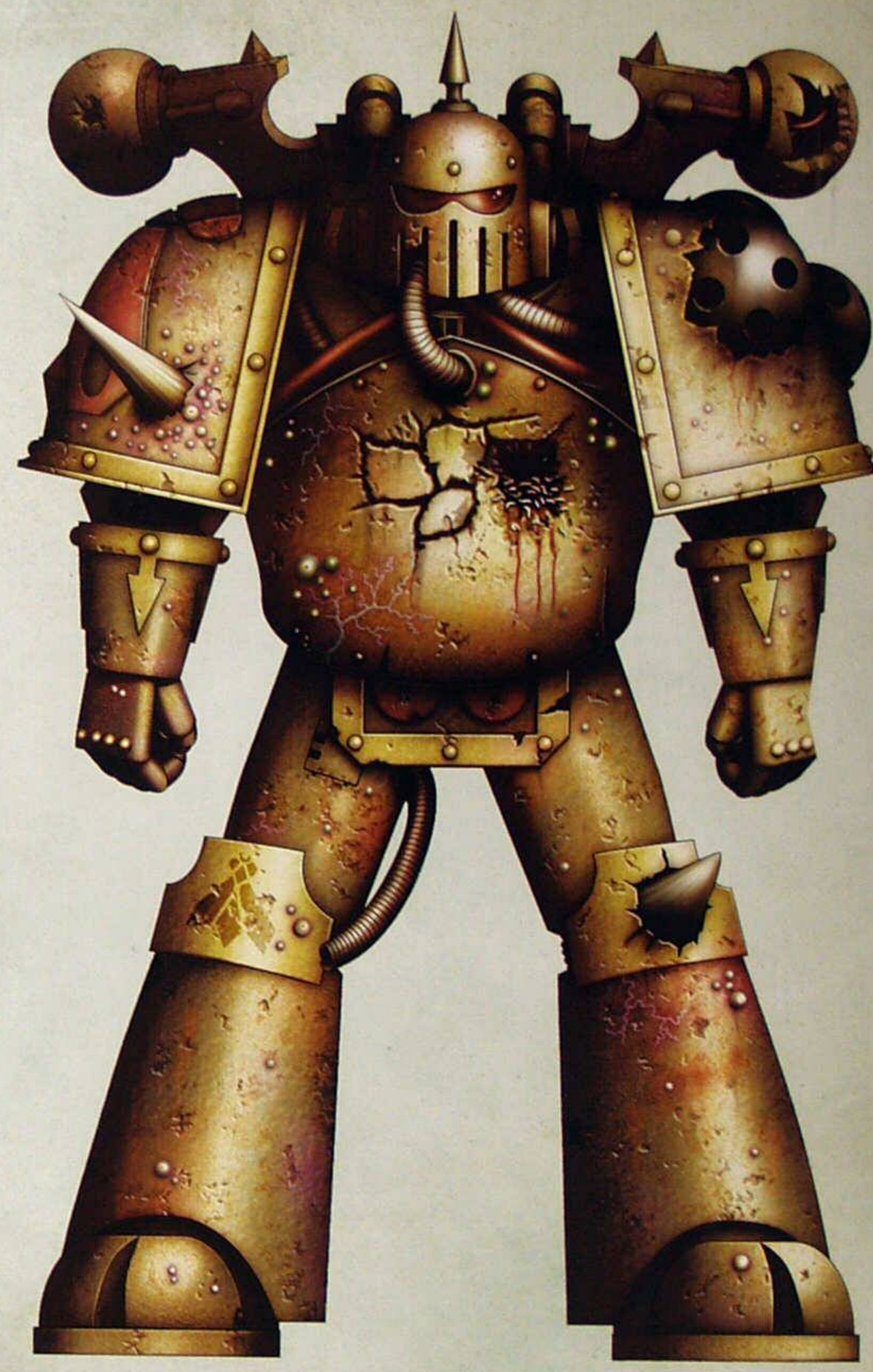
Unnamed Traitor Legionary
Apostles of Contagion
Death Guard Sub-faction

The Apostles of Contagion were led by the arch-renegade Necrosius, the self-proclaimed 'Hand of Nurgle' and are thought to have been responsible for the extensive Plague Zombie infestations that afflicted so many fronts across Vraks. The warband sustained heavy losses during the Vraks war and it remains a subject of conjecture amongst the savants of Inquisitor-Lord Rex as to whether these losses were planned as part of some vast death ritual, or the result of friction within the faction.

It was the Apostles of Contagion who unleashed vast clouds of lethal acid gas across large areas of the frontline, in the process slaying many thousands of Imperial Guardsmen and achieving the additional goal of creating numberless hordes of Plague Zombies. The warband was observed utilising thousands-strong waves of these piteous creatures as expendable bullet soaks and offerings to the fell Daemon-god they worship. For this crime, Necrosius and his fallen brethren have been codified by the Ordo Malleus as deserving of the most severe level of censure.

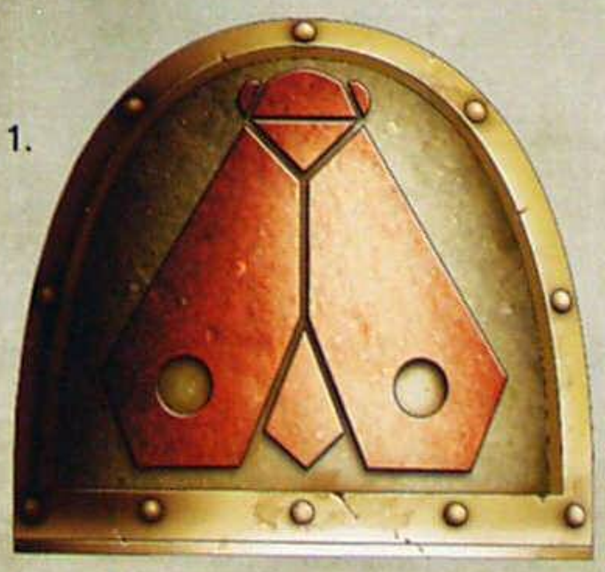
Panoply of War
1. Blasphemous Warband Icon.

2. Corrupted Ultima Pattern Boltgun.



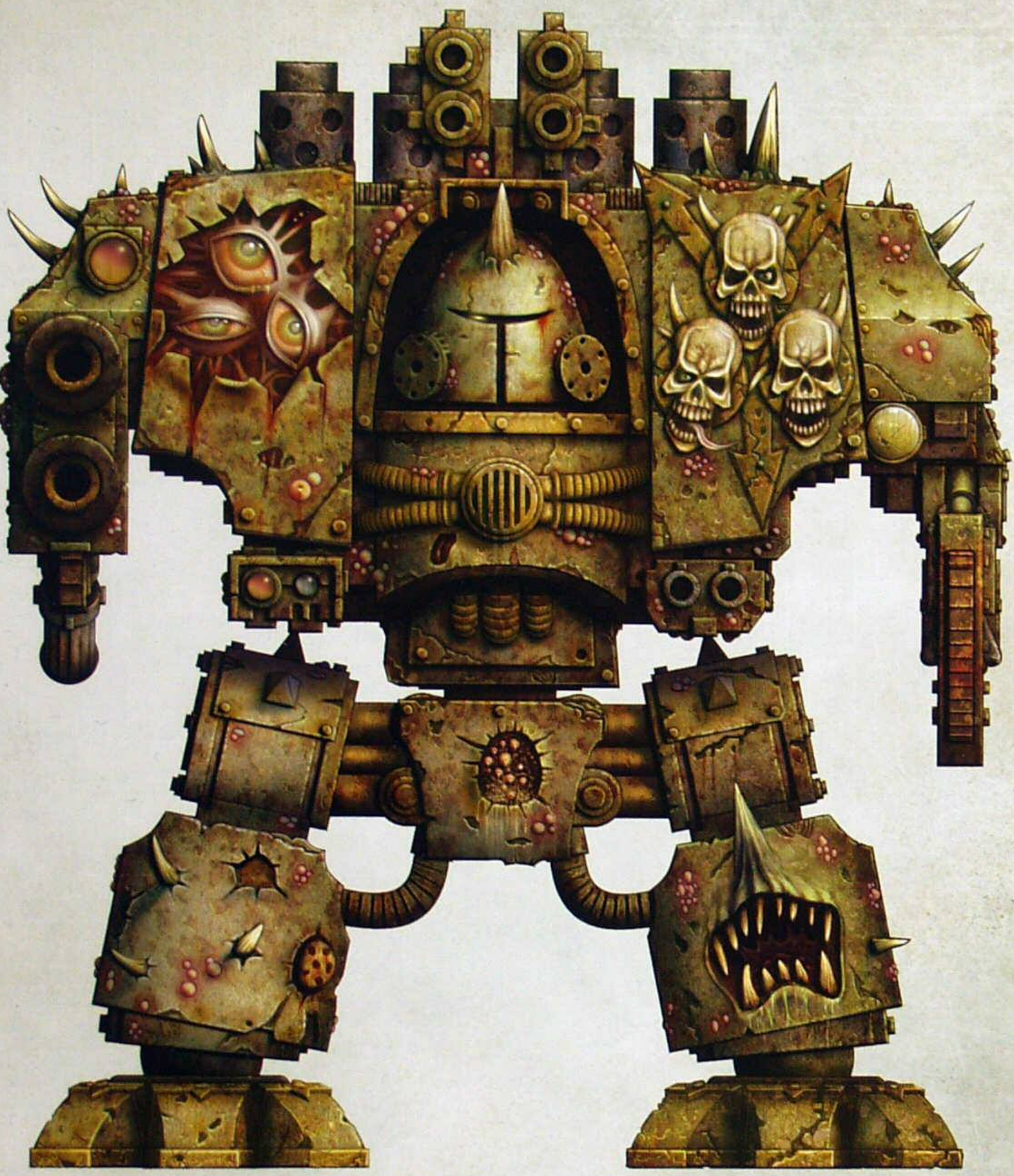
This unidentified Traitor Legionary of the Apostles of Contagion displays the vile stigmata so often witnessed upon the corrupted bodies of those whose souls are dedicated to the Plague God. Fragments of ancient Mk IV 'Maximus' Astartes power armour are visible, along with a back pack of the Anvillus pattern.
Other elements are unique to the Plague Marines, in particular the distinctive helm. Note extensive corruption of the armour's surface.

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DEATH GUARD CHAOS DREADNOUGHT

'Ferrum Infernus' Class Corrupted Mark IV Dreadnought

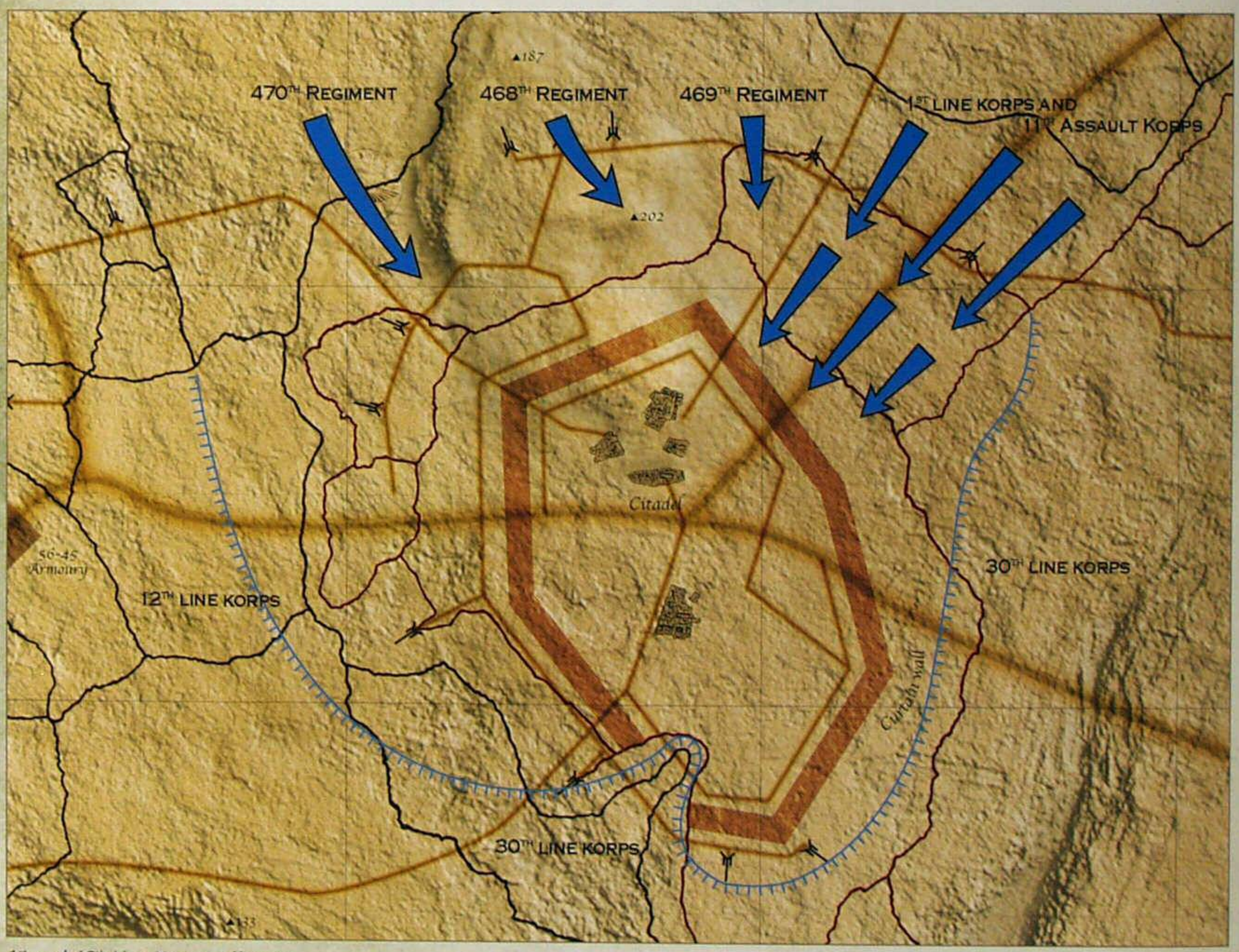
Like all those who have aligned themselves with Nurgle and received his favour, disease and decay have covered the hull of this Dreadnought. This appears to have had no negative impact on the Dreadnought's capabilities and may in fact have improved them.

iron blade with unnatural swiftness and power. On impact, the Inquisitor's armour rusted and crumbled. Inside, his flesh shrivelled with age then began to shed from his bones. Scabeiathrax watched amused as the Inquisitor quickly decayed into nothing before his eyes then, still chuckling to himself, moved on again to find his next plaything.

In a flash, the Grey Knights arrived. A patina of blue lightning playing about them as the squads teleported into the thick of the fighting. With psycannon bolts flailing the Daemons and nemesis force weapons flickering with psychic energy, they cast the foe back into the Immaterium. Squad after squad of the silver-armoured Space Marines appeared, raking the enemy ranks with weapons fire, and then plunging into the foe to cut them down. Brother-Captain Stern was at their head, his own force halberd glowing white hot with energy as he exerted his carefully honed mental powers through the weapon and into the Daemons, who vanished back into the Warp, shrieking the name of their god as they disappeared.

The Grey Knights' teleporter attack slashed a swathe into the enemy's ranks. None were spared the holy wrath of the Grey Knights as the *Honour-Amentum* began to bombard the area with searing lance battery impacts and barrage bombs. Scabeiathrax saw the massacre of his children and was no longer amused. His mood suddenly changed from contented happiness to one of wrath. He bellowed out in anger and lurched towards the Grey Knights.

The Grey Knights stood their ground and fired their weapons into the corpulent beast's body. Several battle-brothers died, swept away in a tide of vomited bile. The Blade of Decay cut more down. Then Captain Stern charged, his brow furrowed with the power now being directed into his nemesis force halberd. With a cry he unleashed its power in a blast of light that flickered and burned across the beast's body. The Great Unclean One writhed in pain and staggered backwards, its sorcerous blade falling from its grip. All around Scabeiathrax, Nurglings exploded in a shower of noxious slime. Scabeiathrax roared in anger and lurched forward, trying to break Stern's psychic grip, but the captain's will was too great. He redoubled his efforts, pouring every part of his soul's energy and faith in the Emperor into the attack, which had grown into a swirling vortex of power lashing everything it touched. Unable to escape and feeling his power draining, Scabeiathrax began to laugh, a loud booming sound that reverberated across the battlefield, but it could not break Stern's iron will. A few more seconds and the Great Unclean One was gone, his laughter still echoing but his physical form disintegrated. The hurricane of power unleashed about Stern



1st and 46th Line Korps' offensive.



and his victim died with the mighty Daemon. Where once the Great Unclean One had stood, now there was just black-tainted earth.

The defeat of Scabeiathrax by the Grey Knights turned the battle. The enemy saw their master vanquished and fled the field. The Daemons that remained were soon exorcised by the Grey Knights, with their reinforcements now arriving from orbit in Thunderhawk gunships. Captain Stern was spent, his duel having exhausted even his formidable powers, but his surviving battle-brothers continued the advance.

By nightfall, the Grey Knights were leading the Krieg units against Armoury 59-44 itself. Without pausing for respite, the Adeptus Astartes squads plunged into the armoury's subterranean chambers and galleries, clearing them room by room, corridor by corridor. What they found down in the darkness below was a nightmare of twisted creatures and men driven insane by daemonic possession. With psycannon and incinerator, the Grey Knights cleansed the armoury of their taint in a two-day operation. Meanwhile, above ground, the Krieg troops, now reinforced, established a perimeter and hunted down the survivors. The ring had been closed and the enemy were once again trapped inside.

The Rise of Zhufor

As the fighting continued, day after bitter day, and the Krieg siege regiments pressed ever onwards, even the defender's Chaos Space Marine allies could not save them from the juggernaut of war the Imperium had set in motion. For the first time the renegades' ammunition, food and fuel were becoming scarce. In some units, supplies were being hoarded, and other units saw their stocks dwindling daily. Morale amongst the original defenders was falling. Some still fought with fanatical determination born of insanity or an unshakable belief in their dark gods, but others despaired and, risking the wrath of their enforcers, threw down their weapons or fled. This was a first – if one sector gave up the fight, then the next might too, and soon Xaphan's heretical army would fall apart. For the enemy commanders this could not be allowed to happen. They were men, or creatures who had once been men, who would not allow this war to end yet. The Traitor Legionaries would never break. They lived only to kill the False Emperor's servants, but they had not come to Vraks to see the war end without eking out every last drop of slaughter they could.

One such man was Zhufor, Lord of the Skulltakers. Reports from the front that some units had fled rather than fight and that the enemy was almost at the curtain wall brought swift and bloody retribution. Zhufor could not suffer such weak-willed cowardice, and Khorne must see it avenged. It was only during the Ordo Malleus' long and thorough investigation into the events behind the Vraksian war that information regarding affairs within the upper echelons of the Vraksian traitors was revealed. At the time, the Emperor's commanders were unaware of what was happening within the Citadel's walls. Only prisoner interrogations and the use of telepathic psykers from the Schola Psykana would later deduce a clear picture.

GREY KNIGHTS SPACE MARINE

Brother-Justicar Jedidiah
Strike Squad Jedidiah
3rd Brotherhood
Strike Force Arturus

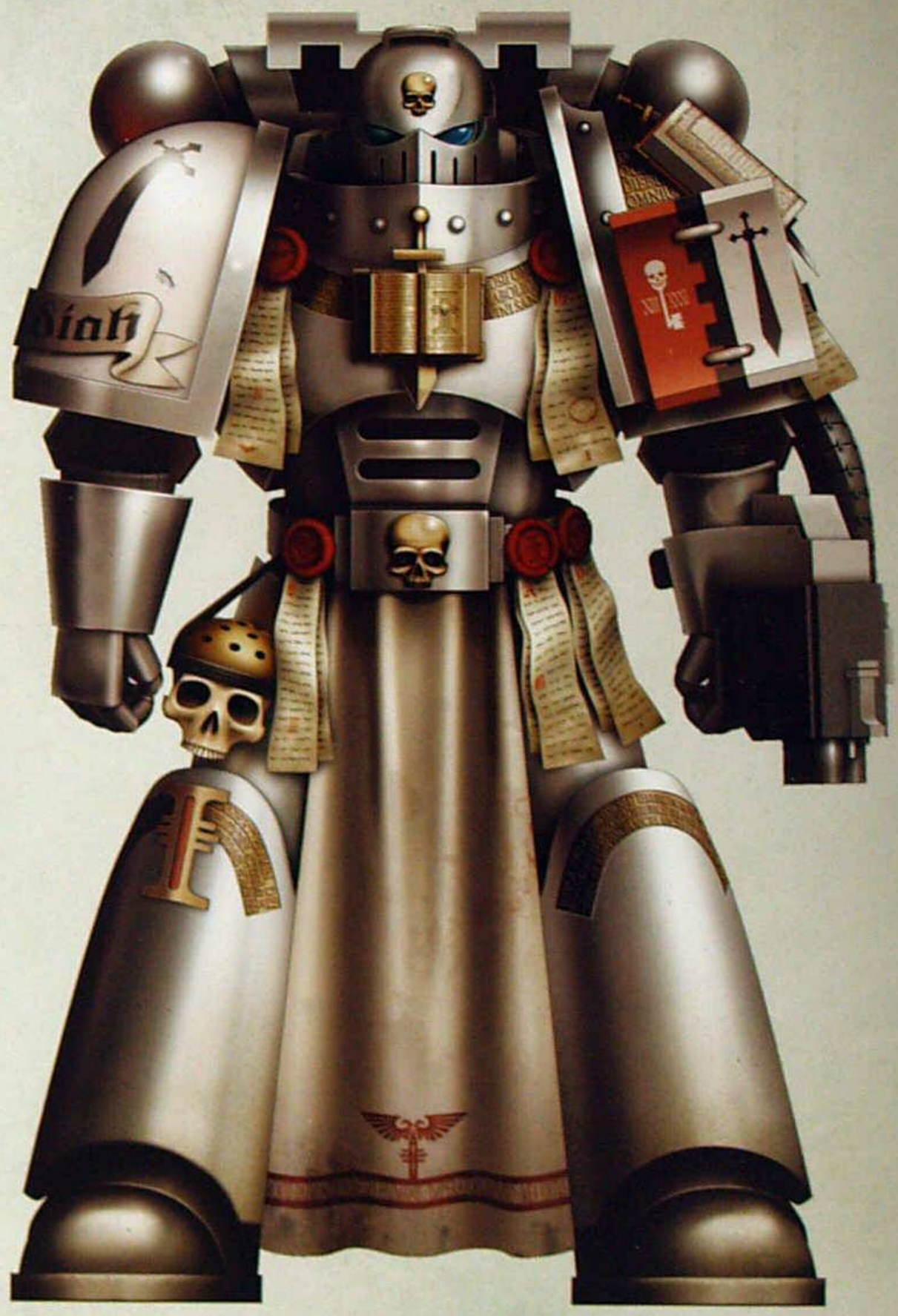
Jedidiah and his brothers were assigned to Strike Force Arturus and would form the mainstay of the 3rd Brotherhood's efforts against the daemonic incursion threatening to erupt at Vraks. He led his Strike Squad during the assault on the Cardinal Gate, during which he and his brethren faced and slew scores of unholy warp fiends, the Emperor watching over them throughout the battle so that, miraculously, none of their number were fatally injured.

Jedidiah is depicted here clad in the distinctive Aegis pattern Astartes power armour, wrought in the Grey Knights Chapter Forge and unique to that Chapter. Each suit is crafted by the hand of one of the Imperium's most accomplished armour-smiths, although their names will never be known to humanity at large, so vital is it that they toil in secrecy. Jedidiah bears multiple purity seals; the text on each warding his body and his soul against the evil of the Daemon.

Panoply of War

1. **Shoulder Pauldron:** All Grey Knights bear their own individual and unique heraldic devices, the meaning of which is known only within the walls of their Chapter Fortress on Saturn's moon, Titan, and recorded in exacting detail in the Rolls of Honour by the Servitor-Scribes of the Inner Sacristry.

2. **Incinerator:** Similar in function to a standard flamer, incinerators fire a torrent of psychically-imbued promethium that scours the soul and banishes the Daemon back to the depths of the Warp.



Jedidiah's name is listed in the Rolls of Honour of the Grey Knights Chapter in connection with seventy-seven glorious battles and, by his hand, innumerable fiends have been cast to the Warp and many hundreds of heretics punished for their crimes against the Emperor.

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GREY KNIGHTS TERMINATOR

Brother-Captain Mattan
3rd Brotherhood Strike Force Stern

The bulk of the Grey Knights force dispatched to Vraks to counter the imminent Warp incursion were drawn from the 3rd Brotherhood, of which Brother-Captain Stern was its commander. Four of the Brotherhood's six Terminator squads were mustered to participate in this gruelling mission, and they would form the anvil to the hammer of the Interceptor squads, as well as the Purifiers detached from the Chapter's Chambers of Purity and the Paladins of the Hall of Champions.

Brother-Captain Mattan was Stern's second-in-command for the duration of the operation. He was assigned the task of leading all four of the force's Terminator squads while Stern himself led the vanguard units.



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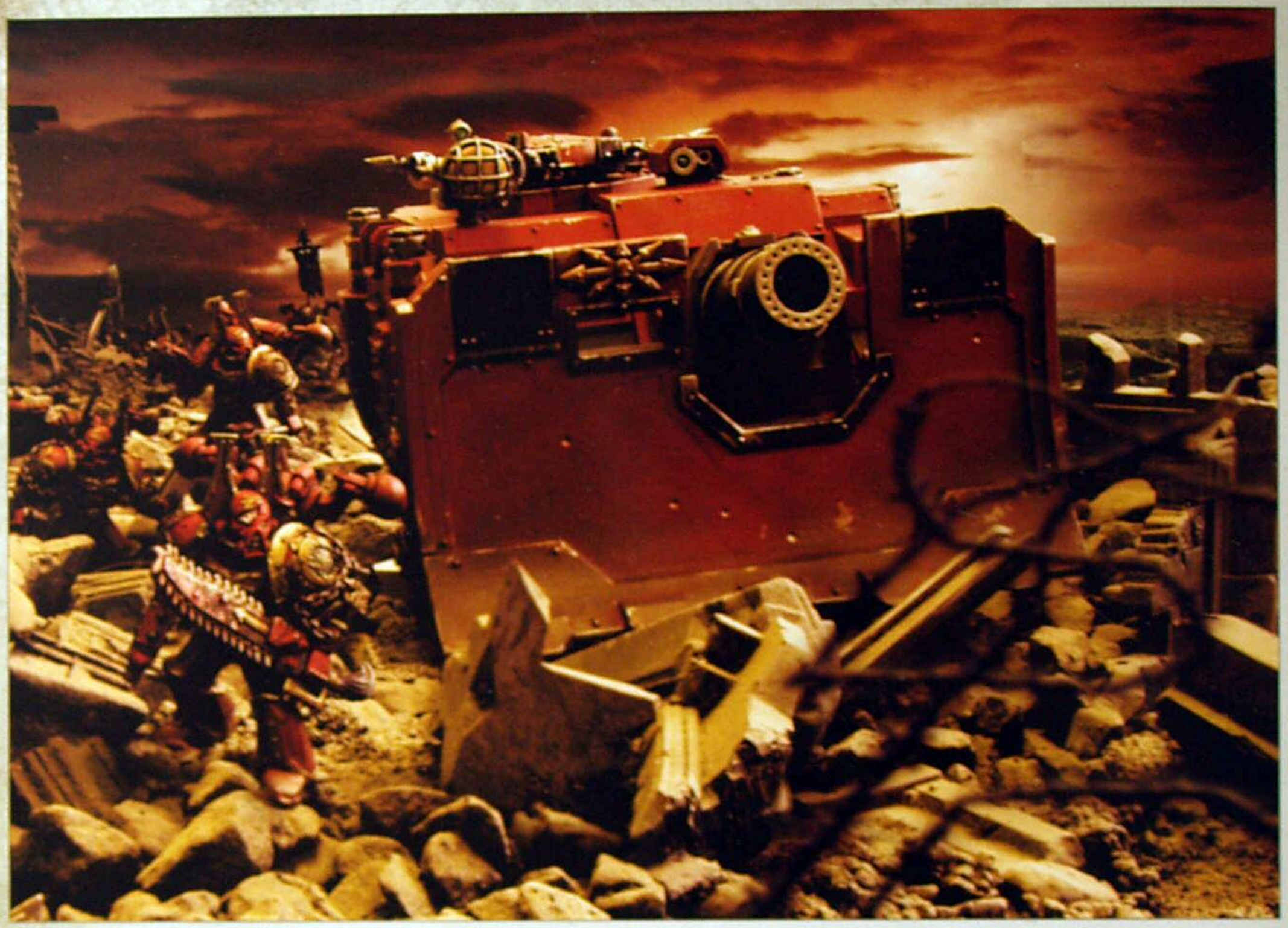


This celebrated veteran officer of the Grey Knights Chapter has battled Daemons and heretics the length and breadth of the galaxy in wars whose names the histories of the Imperium can never relate. He was wounded in battle against a daemonic horde while fighting on Vraks; his injuries so severe, he was returned to Titan in a stasis-warded abeyance-chamber, and it would be over a year before he was pronounced sufficiently recovered to fight again.

Panoply of War

1. **Nemesis Force Sword:** The Nemesis force sword is the weapon of choice of the majority of Grey Knights, and all are highly accomplished in its use.

2. **Nemesis Force Halberd:** Nemesis weapons combine the weaponsmith's arts with psychic engineering to create a weapon through which a bearer who possesses psionic powers can channel his will even as he strikes his enemy down.



Driven by his own burning ambition and an unquenchable desire to prolong the war, Lord Zhufor, commanding the largest Khornate warband, moved to stop the rot before it threatened to completely destabilise his plans. He had only come to Vraks to bring slaughter in Khorne's name, and he neither served the Apostate Cardinal or recognised his authority. Death was Zhufor's only motivation – to continue the killing until the last drop of blood had been squeezed from Vraks. For him, this war was far from over. Zhufor planned to take over Vraks.

First he moved to subjugate the Khornate warbands and unify them under his leadership. This gave him by far the largest Khornate faction on Vraks and then, with their support, he moved to take over the entire Vraksian renegade army – and that meant the removal of the reclusive Apostate Cardinal and his ineffectual cronies.

No doubt the Lord of the Skulltakers had always planned a coup, or was acting under orders from his own master, Abaddon, to run the war on Vraks to his own suiting. Zhufor had bided his time, but now he chose to strike. Mastery of the Khorne-worshipping warbands was the first of his two tasks. They respected only martial prowess and few could match Zhufor's.

A giant of a man, he led by example and by fear. Now he challenged the leader of the Berserkers of Skallathrax to a duel – at stake would be the leadership of both warbands. To refuse would be an affront to Khorne, and would no doubt see his opponent ousted by his own ambitious followers anyway. Such a battle between his champions would please Khorne mightily.

So, stripped of armour and armed only with chainaxes, the two Chaos lords fought to the death, Zhufor winning the combat after a vicious battle. Striking the head from his foe, he raised it to the baying crowd and claimed, by right of conquest, lordship over the Berserkers of Skallathrax. None opposed him. Zhufor was now Khorne's chosen champion on Vraks; the Berserkers of Skallathrax would fight for him.

Next, Zhufor subjugated the Sanctified. To do so he made them an offer – swear to follow him for the duration of the war and in return he would provide the Sanctified with all they needed to open a warp portal on Vraks, offering them the tens of thousands of sacrificial victims needed to create a gateway through which the Daemon legions could pour onto the battlefield. Zhufor also gave them a name and a bold promise. The promise was that he would aid in the summoning of the greatest Daemon legion in Khorne's endless armies. The name was a powerful one – An'ggrath.

The pact was too alluring to refuse. The Sanctified joined forces with Zhufor in order to summon the Guardian of the Throne of Skulls himself; the Lord of Bloodthirsters would come forth to bring fresh slaughter. The Khorne warbands were now united under Zhufor.

The Lord of the Skulltakers now had the single most powerful faction under his sway, so he turned it against the other Chaos warbands. The ultimatum was simple – join him or face destruction at his hands. To prove his mettle, Zhufor suddenly attacked and killed the lord and champions of the Black Brethren of Ayreas. Outnumbered and taken by surprise by the treachery, the survivors surrendered after a brief battle. The other warbands followed – all save Arkos the Faithless and the Alpha Legion. They would not submit to Zhufor, but in order to save his warband from being attacked, Arkos made his own treacherous deal. Of all the warband leaders he alone had the trust of Xaphan. Arkos knew that the Apostate Cardinal was already little more than a symbolic leader – Arkos had really been directing the war for years – but many of the Vraksian renegades still saw the Apostate Cardinal as their messiah, a figurehead they fought for. He had proclaimed himself as such. Arkos agreed to turn traitor against Xaphan. To maintain his own independence, he would allow Zhufor to finally remove the Apostate Cardinal from power.

The treacherous pact made, Arkos was true to his word. In secret, the Alpha Legion let Zhufor and his personal bodyguard of Terminator-armoured killers into the Cardinal's Palace. Those Disciples of Xaphan not assassinated by the Alpha Legion were quickly slaughtered by Zhufor and his men, who swept through the palace leaving a trail of butchery behind them. Deacon Mamon and his closest guards fled to save themselves and would later be found fighting alongside the Nurgle warband of the Tainted – although Mamon's own refuge was to be short lived. The Apostate Cardinal himself was captured alive, Zhufor plucking the mewling fool from his gaudy throne. Xaphan had played his part on Vraks but now Khorne only had one use left for him – as a sacrifice. Xaphan's skull would be the crowning glory to mark the total defeat of the Imperium's forces on Vraks. For his part in bringing the armoury world to its knees, the Apostate Cardinal would be the last skull that would join the millions already piled before the Blood God's throne. Zhufor threw the Cardinal and his surviving cronies into the Citadel's deepest dungeons to await their fate.

Zhufor's coup was complete. By blood and treachery, he had made himself master of Vraks. The war was his to fight. Millions would now march on his command and, as promised, there was a warp portal to unleash upon the doomed world.

To Hangman's Hill

Unaware of the turmoil and sudden demise of Apostate Cardinal Xaphan, or the emergence of Zhufor as the new warlord of Vraks, Inquisitor-Lord Rex kept a stern vigil over the offensives of the 1st and 46th Line Korps. At first the big push towards the curtain wall had been much slower than he had anticipated, but now the enemy had cracked and the daily gains were growing. Enemy prisoner numbers had soared. The quartermasters' reports showed that the gains included massive quantities of abandoned vehicles and captured equipment. In some sectors it seemed that the enemy's will to fight had been broken.

The 1st Line Korps' 3rd Siege Regiment was now within striking distance of the curtain wall, and Inquisitor-Lord Rex gave orders for the regiment to capture the main gate in Sector 579-459, or to force a breach elsewhere and hold it. Either way, the korps' offensive would only end when they had forced a passage through the curtain wall. To help secure their victory, Drauca's Titans would be deployed to aid them in the battle.

In the 46th Line Korps' sector, progress had also been slow and ponderous. The construction of the temporary road had held back the entire assault, with companies clinging to the hillside awaiting tank support that was unable to reach them. Hundreds of Krieg engineers had perished under enemy shell fire, and their tanks had made little headway. Still, even without the tanks, one-by-one the defence laser silos were overrun in pitched battles. Standing in their ruins, the Death Korps could see up ahead of them that the enemy had erected a gory trophy from the bodies of captured loyalist troops atop Point 202. Makeshift gibbets had been erected and prisoners were hung from them, their ragged bodies silhouetted against the skyline as a warning to the Emperor's men. With their typically macabre sensibilities, the Krieg Guardsmen named it 'Hangman's Hill' and continued on with their attacks.

At 628827.M41, the 468th Regiment's 15th Company was finally within striking distance of the summit. Proceeded by the crash of mortar rounds landing amongst the rocks that littered the slopes in great sprays of fire and dust, an arcing signal flare gave the order to attack. The battered platoons scrambled upwards; most were now no more than twenty men strong. Skidding and slipping on the treacherous scree but still shooting, the Krieg Guardsmen dashed for the summit. Grenades bounced down from the hilltop to land amongst the rocks and detonate in clouds of shrapnel and grey smoke. Las blasts whistled past the attacking squads. A sniper bullet drilled the company commander through the head; his helmet punctured,he lay slowly dying for several hours – aid unable to reach him. On top of the summit a brawl of bayonets, knives and swords had begun between the two sides. The enemy fought the first Krieg squads back, but more soon followed.

Three times 15th Company stormed up the slope and three times they were repelled by fierce hand-to-hand combat. They tried again under cover of darkness, and after battling through the night, finally seized Hangman's Hill. A single junior officer was all the company could manage to muster to take command of the defence before their reinforcements could arrive. The expected enemy counterattack never came though, another sign of their growing weakness. The hanging bodies were cut down and the regiment's banner was brought forwards to plant upon the summit. The Krieg Guardsmen had taken their objective, and below them was the curtain wall.

And beyond it, now visible in the distance, was the Citadel of Vraks itself.

THE DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG

THE DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG SIEGE REGIMENTS

The Astra Militarum, or the Imperial Guard as it is also known, is the largest fighting force in the Imperium, and the largest military organisation in the long history of Mankind. It is huge; billions upon billions of men-at-arms and millions of tanks and artillery guns stand ready to fight for the Emperor. It is the Imperial Guard that must bear the brunt of the Imperium's wars. Wherever there is conflict, there is the Imperial Guard.

Many of its units are formed into infantry regiments comprising tens of thousands of men, but there are other, more specialised, regiments included within its ranks such as the siege regiments of the grim world of Krieg. Veterans of a life of unceasing training in the rad-scoured wastes of their homeworld, the Death Korps of Krieg stand apart from the regular ranks of the Astra Militarum. Bound by an ancient oath to die in service to the Emperor for their ancestors' disloyalty, the warriors of Krieg are fearless in the face of even the most terrible foes and show no mercy to those who dare defy Imperial decree.

USING THE DEATH KORPS SIEGE REGIMENT ARMY LIST

The Death Korps Siege Regiment army list uses all of the standard rules for selecting an army, as found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. It may be used in conjunction with either the Unbound or Battle-forged methods of army construction, but when fielded as a Battle-forged army may only use either the Combined Arms Detachment or Allied Detachment Force Organisation charts or those additional Force Organisation charts included in this book. All units which are chosen from the Death Korps Siege Regiment army list are considered part of the Death Korps of Krieg Faction and are not considered a supplemental army list to *Codex: Astra Militarum*.

Allies and the Death Korps Siege Regiment Army List

The Death Korps Siege Regiment is a variant Imperial Guard army, but unlike more commonplace Imperial Guard regiments, the sheer fanaticism of its Krieg Guardsmen and the nature of their deployment at the frontline of some of the harshest fields of war in the 41st Millennium mitigate somewhat their ability to use or be used as allies.

When included as part of an army comprising Detachments of differing Factions, a Detachment of the Death Korps of Krieg Faction is considered Battle Brothers with the following Factions:

- Astra Militarum
- Elysian
- Detachment D-99
- Space Marines
- Space Wolves
- Adepta Sororitas
- Imperial Knights
- Inquisition

Detachments of the following Factions are considered Allies of Convenience:

- Grey Knights
- Blood Angels
- Dark Angels

Detachments of any other Faction are considered Come the Apocalypse Allies and vice versa.

Using Force Organisation Charts

The army list may be used in conjunction with any of the Force Organisation charts presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Each chart is divided into a number of categories that correspond to the sections of the army list, and each category has one or more boxes – this is referred to as the Primary Detachment. Each light tone box indicates that you **may** take one choice from that section of the army list, while a dark tone box means you **must** take a choice from that section. In addition to the Primary Detachment, several optional choices may be available, including a Fortifications choice and an Allied Detachment. If one of these options is selected, their Force Organisation charts follow the same rules as that of the Primary Detachment. The full rules governing Force Organisation charts can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

Using the Army List

The Death Korps Siege Regiment army list is split into six sections: HQ, Elites, Troops, Dedicated Transports, Fast Attack and Heavy Support. All of the squads, vehicles and characters in the army are placed into one of these categories depending upon their role on the battlefield. Each model is also given a points value, which varies depending on how effective that model is in battle.

Before you choose an army, you will need to agree with your opponent upon the type of game you are going to play and the maximum total number of points each of you will spend. Then you can pick your army following the guidelines given in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

DEATH KORPS SIEGE REGIMENT WARGEAR

For the sake of convenience, many special rules and examples of specific and unique wargear for the Death Korps Siege Regiment have been provided here in their entirety. In cases where the details of particular special rules, items of wargear and equipment are not found here, you should refer instead to the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, *Codex: Astra Militarum* and their most up-to-date FAQs.

Acid Gas Bombs
These canister bombs unleash billowing clouds of acidic gas, capable of killing defenders within their protected bunkers and redoubts. Acid gas bombs are counted as unusual grenades (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

Shooting: When a unit equipped with acid gas bombs makes a shooting attack, one model can choose to throw an acid gas bomb rather than using another ranged weapon.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Acid gas bomb	8"	X	6	Assault 1, Blast (3"), Poison (4+), Ignores Cover

Battle Scope
A bulky ocular device, the battle scope provides the bearer, and the unit they are with, with the Night Vision special rule.

Death Rider Hunting Lance
The Death Riders of Krieg carry reinforced lances fitted with explosive warheads. They are close combat weapons with the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Hunting lance	-	+2	3	Melee, First Charge, Specialist Weapon

First Charge: Death Riders use their hunting lances the first time they successfully charge into close combat, after which they cannot be used again. In addition to the profile above, a model armed with a hunting lance fights at Initiative step 5 in the phase they use it.

Death Korps Platoon Standard
A Death Korps Platoon Standard serves as a focal point on the battlefield and extols the grim determination of the Death Korps. A unit that contains a model with a Platoon Standard counts as scoring an additional wound for the purposes of calculating close combat results.

Death Korps Regimental Standard
For a soldier of the Death Korps, the standard of their regiment represents the triumph of their discipline and the glory of their sacrifice in the Emperor's eyes. Any unit of the Death Korps Faction within 12" of a Death Korps Regimental Standard counts as scoring an additional wound for the purposes of calculating close combat results and may re-roll failed Morale checks and Pinning tests.

Mole Launcher
An unusual weapon to say the least, the mole launcher, as its name implies, launches a guided explosive shell that burrows through the ground to reach its target, rather than projecting it through the air. Somewhat arcane devices whose ammunition is difficult to manufacture, mole launchers have a considerable advantage against conventional barrage weapons in that they can be used successfully in confined and built-up areas, and even in the confines of a hive spire or starship if it is large enough. As mole launchers detonate their shells under their targets, they can also be particularly effective against vehicles and buildings.

The man-portable mole launcher carried by some Death Korps combat engineer teams is one of the smallest and most portable of these weapons in service. Far larger weapons of this type exist, but their use is largely confined to highly specialised units such as the Ordo Reductor of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Mole launcher	8"-24"	5	5	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Subterranean Barrage, Strikedown

Subterranean Barrage: Weapons that have this type operate using the standard Barrage rules found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, however they may only ever fire indirectly. Against targets with an Armour Value, the lowest listed Armour Value is always hit, regardless of the direction of fire – this represents the mole launcher shell exploding upwards from the ground. Weapons with this special rule may be used to fire indirectly in games of Zone Mortalis, contrary to the usual rule.

Vox-caster
Failed Leadership tests for orders issued to a unit with a vox-caster can be re-rolled, provided the officer's unit also has a vox-caster. An officer may not use a vox-caster's ability on his own unit.

DEATH KORPS SIEGE REGIMENT VEHICLE WARGEAR

Co-axial Weapon
A weapon with this special rule will specify another weapon mounted on the same vehicle. When a target is declared for this weapon, the co-axial weapon must fire at it first if it is within range. If the co-axial weapon hits the target, the other weapon gains the Twin-linked special rule for that attack.

Mine Plough
A vehicle equipped with a mine plough rolls two D6 when making a Dangerous Terrain test instead of just one D6. The test is only failed if the result of both rolls are 1s. In addition, whenever the vehicle moves through an enemy Infantry unit as part of a Tank Shock move and is not destroyed, the enemy unit takes D3+1 S2 AP- hits.

In special missions where land mines and similar booby traps are used, the mine plough grants a 4+ invulnerable save against such special attacks and clears minefields it passes through on a 5+.

Armoured Track Guards
A vehicle equipped with armoured track guards has a 4+ save against any Immobilised results on the Vehicle Damage table (note that Hull Point damage from such an attack is still inflicted, but the Immobilised result is ignored).

Camo Netting
A vehicle with camo netting increases its cover save by +1. Note this means such a vehicle will always have a 6+ cover save, even if in the open.

Enclosed Crew Compartment
Vehicles with the enclosed crew compartment upgrade no longer count as having the Open-topped portion of their unit type.

DEATH KORPS SIEGE REGIMENT SPECIAL RULES

Death Korps
The Death Korps of Krieg are infamously resolute and grimly determined soldiers, able to fight on where others would flee or break down in terror. They are hardened by the bleak conditions of their birth world, fortified by iron faith in the Emperor and subjected to a brutal regime of indoctrination and military training from infancy.

As well as having a higher Weapon Skill than a common Imperial Guardsmen (this has already been included in their profiles), units with this special rule are immune to Fear and do not take Morale checks for suffering 25% casualties during the Shooting phase or Movement phase.

Iron Discipline (Death Korps Officers only)
Death Korps officers have no fear of death and will gladly lay down their lives in the name of the Emperor, and will demand and expect nothing less from those they command.

Any unit with the Death Korps special rule that is Falling Back but has at least one model within 6" of a Krieg officer (of any rank) may attempt to regroup using their unmodified Leadership, regardless of whether or not it has been reduced to 25% or less of its starting number.

DEATH KORPS SIEGE REGIMENT SPECIAL ORDERS

Issuing Orders
Any model with either the Senior Officer or Junior Officer special rules may issue orders to any friendly unit of the Death Korps Faction at the start of the Shooting phase, provided that model is not locked in combat, embarked in a vehicle or building, Falling Back or has Gone to Ground. Issuing an order does not prevent an officer from acting in any phase (Shooting, Running, etc). A Senior Officer may issue up to two orders from either the Senior Officer or Junior Officer list in any given turn and the Junior Officer may issue only a single order from the Junior Officer list.

To issue an order, the controlling player must select the order to be issued by a given model with either the Senior Officer or Junior Officer special rule as well as a single target non-vehicle unit of the Death Korps Faction within 12" – this can be the officer's own unit. The target unit must then take a Leadership test. If the test is passed, the order takes effect as noted in its description. If the test is failed, the order does not take effect. Unless an order causes the target unit to make a shooting attack or Run move, receiving it does not prevent the target unit from acting later in the same turn.

If a double 1 is rolled for the target unit's Leadership test, once the current order has been resolved, any further orders issued to the same unit in the same turn are automatically successful and do not require a Leadership test. However, if a double 6 is rolled for the target unit's Leadership test, the order automatically fails and the target unit may not be issued any more orders in that turn.

Orders cannot be issued to units that are embarked in either a vehicle or building, nor can orders issued by an officer of the Death Korps Faction target models of a different Faction. Unless otherwise stated, orders cannot be issued to units which are locked in combat, Falling Back or who have Gone to Ground.

Senior Officer Orders

Duty unto Death: If this order is successfully issued, the ordered unit may re-roll any failed Leadership tests it is called on to take until the Shooting phase of the controlling player's next turn (including Morale checks, Pinning tests, etc). If forced to take a Leadership test while this order is in effect and a double '1' is rolled, the unit becomes Fearless until the Shooting phase of the controlling player's next turn.

Bring it Down!: If this order is successfully issued, choose one enemy vehicle (or squadron of vehicles) or Monstrous Creature (or unit of Monstrous Creatures) or Flying Monstrous Creature (or unit of Flying Monstrous Creatures) visible to the officer. The ordered unit immediately shoots at the nominated target, counting their weapons as twin-linked.

Get Back into the Fight!: This order can only be issued to a unit that is Falling Back or that has Gone to Ground. If the order is successfully issued, the ordered unit immediately regroups if Falling Back or, if it has currently Gone to Ground, the effects of Going to Ground end; this means it no longer has +1 to its cover saving throws and all restrictions incurred by Going to Ground are cancelled. As a result of this order, the squad may shoot and move as normal this turn.

Junior Officer Orders

Dig In: If the order is successfully carried out, the ordered unit now gains a bonus of +1 to any cover save provided by a terrain feature (but not a Fortification) until the beginning of the controlling player's next turn. If the unit does not occupy a terrain feature or otherwise possess a cover save, it gains a 6+ cover save. A unit targeted with this order may not choose to Run at any point during the Shooting phase, nor make any kind of move or charge during the following Assault phase.

First Rank, FIRE! Second Rank, FIRE!: If this order is successfully issued, the ordered unit immediately shoots at any target which is visible and within range. All models firing a lasgun gain an additional shot for the duration of the Shooting phase.

Clear the Trenches: If this order is successfully issued, the ordered squad treats their lasguns as being Assault 2, Range 12", rather than Rapid Fire, Range 24" weapons and, in addition, the ordered unit gains the Move Through Cover special rule for the remainder of the controlling player's turn.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG WARLORD TRAITS

When generating their Warlord traits, a Death Korps Siege Regiment Warlord may either roll on one of the Warlord Traits tables in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, or instead may roll on the following table:

D6	Warlord Trait
1	**Unflinching Defence:** *No matter what enemy or terror they face, the warlord stands as an exemplar of the stubborn defiance of the men of Krieg and inspires them to feats of bravery beyond those of the average Guardsman.* The Warlord, and all Death Korps units within 12", add +1 to the number of wounds caused when determining the winner of any close combat in which they are involved whilst within their own deployment zone.
2	**Shattering Bombardment:** *The Death Korps are justly famed for their devastating use of artillery and tanks to shatter their foe's defences.* While the Warlord is alive, select a single weapon in a unit within 6" of them in each Shooting phase that has the Ordnance special rule. That weapon counts as being twin-linked for this turn.
3	**Victory or Death:** *Such is the unyielding will of the warlord, terror and suffering mean little in the pursuit of victory.* The Warlord, and any Death Korps of Krieg unit they are with, gains the Fearless and Feel No Pain (6+) special rules while embarked within a fortification or while benefitting from a cover save provided by a defence line.
4	**Smoke Barrage:** *Many siege regiment attacks are preceded by a heavy barrage of smoke and blind shells, blanketing the battlefield in a thick obscuring fog through which the Death Korps advance like spectres.* The Warlord's controlling player may choose to use the Night Fighting rules in the game. If they do so, there is no need to roll for this as it is considered night time for the first game turn.
5	**Martyr's Defiance:** *The Death Korps siege regiments count themselves among the honoured dead even as they dig their trenches and man their fortifications, knowing that they may be redeemed by spending their life's blood in defence of the positions they hold.* The Warlord, and any Death Korps units within 6", gains the Preferred Enemy (Infantry) special rule when in a friendly deployment zone.
6	**Siege Master:** *The warlord is a veteran of uncounted sieges and knows, with almost preternatural skill, the vulnerabilities in his enemy's defences.* At the start of the game, after deployment but before the game begins, nominate a single piece of terrain in the enemy's deployment zone (note that this cannot be a fortification purchased for their army). The cover save provided by this terrain is lowered (ie, made worse) by -1 (eg, 5+ becoming 6+, etc).

HQ

Death Korps Company Command Squad..... 100 points

The company command squad is the central command element of any battlefield deployment of a Death Korps siege regiment, bound to oversee a section of the overall regimental assault. Death Korps officers are trained to lead their men from the front, forming the point of any attack and providing a rallying point for the company as they advance.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Company Commander	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	9	4+
Veteran Guardsman	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+
Veteran Weapons Team	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	7	5+
Master of Ordnance	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+
Officer of the Fleet	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Company Commander
- 4 Veteran Guardsmen

Unit Type
- Company Commander, Master of Ordnance, Officer of the Fleet: Infantry (Character)
- Veteran Guardsman, Veteran Weapons Team: Infantry

Wargear (Company Commander)
- Carapace armour
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Refractor field

Wargear (Veterans)
- Flak armour
- Lasgun (one Veteran carries a regimental standard and laspistol instead)
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades

Wargear (Master of Ordnance)
- Flak armour
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

Wargear (Officer of the Fleet)
- Flak armour
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

Special Rules (All)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Company Commander)
- Senior Officer

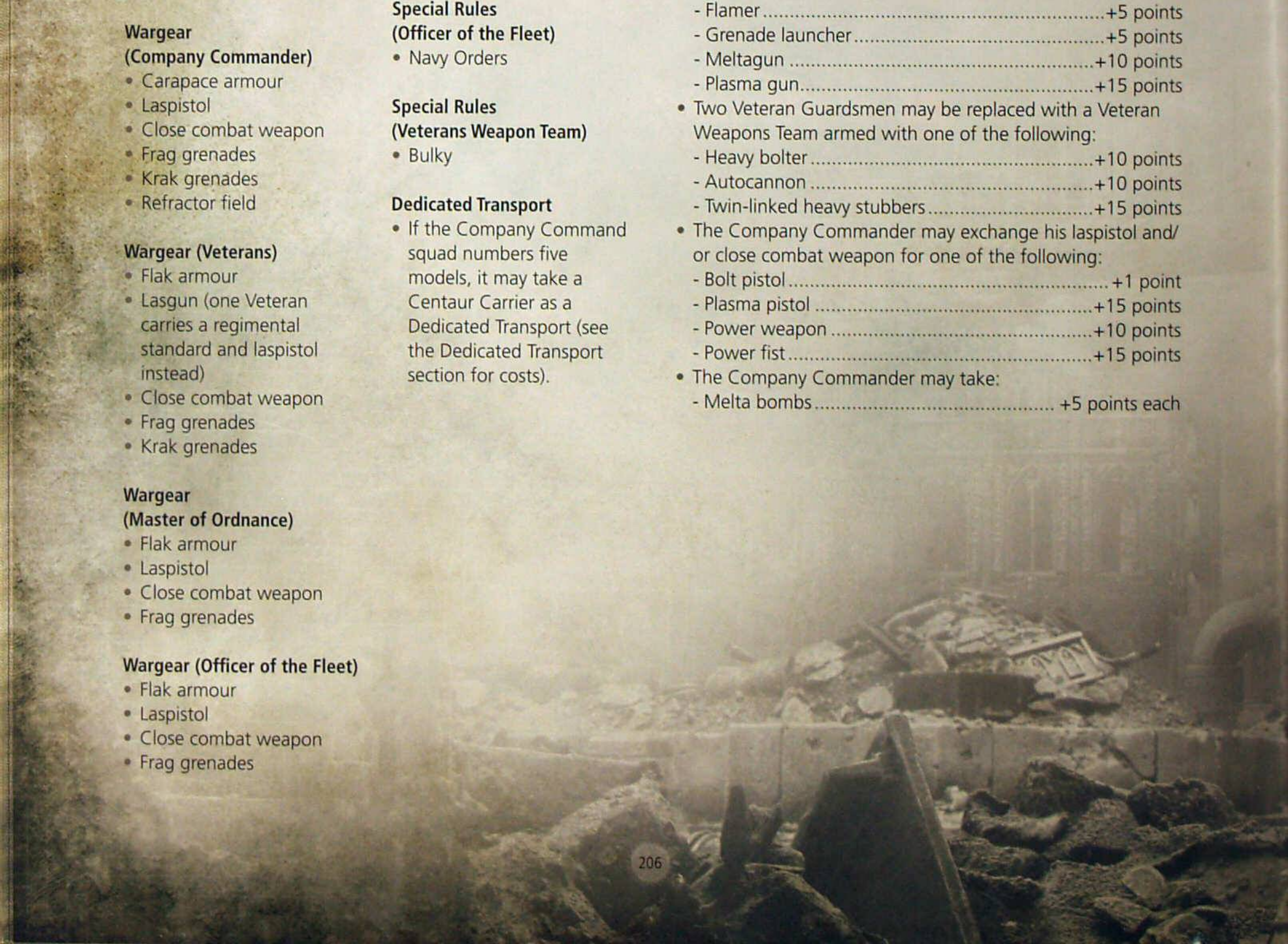
Special Rules (Master of Ordnance)
- Artillery Bombardment

Special Rules (Officer of the Fleet)
- Navy Orders

Special Rules (Veterans Weapon Team)
- Bulky

Dedicated Transport
- If the Company Command squad numbers five models, it may take a Centaur Carrier as a Dedicated Transport (see the Dedicated Transport section for costs).

Options
- The unit may be joined by a:
  - Master of Ordnance .....+20 points
- The unit may be joined by an:
  - Officer of the Fleet .....+20 points
- The unit's Veterans and Veteran Weapons Team may be upgraded to wear:
  - Carapace armour..... +10 points for the entire squad
- One Veteran, other than the Regimental Standard Bearer, may carry a:
  - Vox-caster .....+5 points
- Up to two other Veterans may replace their lasgun with a:
  - Flamer .....+5 points
  - Grenade launcher .....+5 points
  - Meltagun .....+10 points
  - Plasma gun.....+15 points
- Two Veteran Guardsmen may be replaced with a Veteran Weapons Team armed with one of the following:
  - Heavy bolter .....+10 points
  - Autocannon .....+10 points
  - Twin-linked heavy stubbers.....+15 points
- The Company Commander may exchange his laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol ..... +1 point
  - Plasma pistol .....+15 points
  - Power weapon .....+10 points
  - Power fist.....+15 points
- The Company Commander may take:
  - Melta bombs..... +5 points each



Artillery Bombardment (Master of Ordnance only)
The Master of Ordnance may make a Shooting attack with the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Bombardment	Infinite	9	3	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5")

An Artillery Bombardment is resolved separately from other Barrage weapons fired by the same unit in the same Shooting phase, but must still choose the same target as the rest of the unit.

Navy Orders (Officer of the Fleet only)
An Officer of the Fleet may take a Leadership test at the beginning of the controlling player's turn, before any Reserves rolls are made. If the test is successful, choose one of the following Navy Orders to immediately take effect. If you have more than one Officer of the Fleet, all modifiers are cumulative.

- **Coordinate Reserves:** The controlling player receives +1 to all Reserves rolls until the beginning of their next player turn. Note that when making Reserves rolls, a roll of a 1 is always a failure regardless of any modifiers.
- **Intercept Reserves:** The opposing player suffers a -1 penalty to all Reserves rolls until the start of the controlling player's next player turn. Note that when making Reserves rolls, a roll of a 6 is always successful regardless of any modifiers.

HQ

Commissar-general ..... 70 points

Commissars are a rare sight amongst the ranks of the Death Korps, whose renown for stern discipline and courage is well earned, and those who do serve alongside such regiments find them grateful for the added rigour of the commissar's scrutiny. As symbols of Imperial authority and duty, the line troopers of a siege regiment quickly turn to the guidance of their commissars should the commander of a Krieg company fall in battle.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Commissar-general	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	10	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Commissar-general

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Bolt pistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Refractor field
- Flak armour

Special Rules
- Independent Character
- Stubborn
- Summary Execution
- Aura of Discipline
- Chain of Command

Dedicated Transport
- A Commissar-general may select a Centaur Carrier as a Dedicated Transport (see the Dedicated Transport section for points cost).

Options
- The Commissar-general may exchange his bolt pistol and/or close combat weapon for:
  - Boltgun ..... Free
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points each
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points each
  - Power fist. ..... +15 points each
- The Commissar-general may take any of the following:
  - Carapace armour ..... +10 points
  - Camo cloak ..... +10 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points

Summary Execution
If a unit that includes a model with this special rule fails a Fear test, Morale check or Pinning test, the controlling player may choose to remove one model from the unit as a casualty, with no saves of any kind allowed, in order to have the unit pass the test. If the controlling player chooses to remove a model, roll a D6.

On a 3+, the controlling player chooses which model is removed. On a 1 or 2, the opposing player chooses. Note that a model with this special rule may never be chosen as the model to be removed.

Aura of Discipline
Any unit included as part of the same army that is part of either the Death Korps or Astra Militarum Factions and is within 6" of a Commissar-general may use the Commissar-general's Leadership value for any Fear test, Morale check or Pinning test.

Chain of Command
A Commissar-general may only be an army's Warlord if the Primary Detachment contains no models with the Senior Officer special rule.



HQ

Death Korps Quartermaster Cadre ..... 75 points

The quartermasters of the Death Korps hold an exalted and dreaded duty among the ranks of their regiments; they account for the deeds and souls of their fellows, tend the wounds of the stricken and deliver the gift of death to those who are beyond help. The most senior of their number take to the battlefield accompanied by detachments of medicae-servitors, where they can be found where the fighting is fiercest, haunting the front lines like spectres of the grave, exhorting the soldiers of the Death Korps to the sacrifice and glory of a martyr's death.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Quartermaster Revenant	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	9	4+
Medicae-servitor	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	8	4+

Unit Composition
- 1 Quartermaster Revenant
- 2 Medicae-servitors

Unit Type
- Quartermaster Revenant: Infantry (Character)
- Medicae-servitors: Infantry

Wargear (Quartermaster Revenant)
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Medi-pack
- Carapace armour

Wargear (Medicae-servitors)
- Close combat weapon
- Carapace armour

Special Rules (Quartermaster Revenant)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline
- Vitae Mortis
- Chain of Command

Special Rules (Medicae-servitor)
- Mindlock

Dedicated Transport
- A Quartermaster Cadre may take a Centaur Carrier as a Dedicated Transport (see the Dedicated Transport section for costs).

Options
- The Quartermaster Cadre may be joined by:
  - Up to two additional Medicae-servitors.... +10 points each
- The Quartermaster Revenant may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol ..... +1 point
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
- The Quartermaster Revenant may take
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points

Vitae Mortis
All friendly units with the Death Korps special rule with one or more models within 6" of the Quartermaster Cadre gain the Feel No Pain (6+) special rule. Note that if they already possess the Feel No Pain special rule, then the Vitae Mortis has no further effect.

Mindlock
The altered and fragmented mind of a Medicae-servitor requires constant instruction from the Quartermaster to function correctly. Unless led by the Quartermaster, a unit of Medicae-servitors must roll a D6 at the start of each of the controlling player's turns. If the result is a 1, 2 or 3, the unit may not move or assault that turn, though it will fight in close combat if it is already engaged.

Chain of Command
A Quartermaster Revenant may only be an army's Warlord if the Primary Detachment contains no models with the Senior Officer special rule.



ELITES

Death Korps Grenadier Squad..... 60 points

Death Korps grenadiers form a core of superbly trained Imperial Guardsmen experienced in surviving the worst possible war zones in the Imperium. Such elite troops are used to augment the fighting strength of the regiment at key points along the line of attack, advancing alongside the line troopers and sworn to sacrifice their lives so that the foes of the Imperium might be destroyed by their deaths.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Watchmaster	4	4	3	3	1	3	2	8	4+
Grenadier	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	4+
Grenadier Heavy Weapons Team	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	7	4+

Unit Composition
- 1 Watchmaster
- 4 Grenadiers

Unit Type
- Watchmaster: Infantry (Character)
- Grenadiers: Infantry

Wargear (Grenadiers)
- Hot-shot lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Carapace armour

Wargear (Watchmaster)
- Hot-shot laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Carapace armour

Special Rules (All)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Grenadier Heavy Weapons Team)
- Bulky

Dedicated Transport
- A Grenadier Squad numbering five models may take a Centaur Carrier as a Dedicated Transport (see the Dedicated Transport section for costs).

Options
- May have up to:
  - Five additional Grenadiers..... +12 points per model
- The Watchmaster may exchange their hot-shot laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol or boltgun..... Free
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist..... +15 points
- The Watchmaster may take melta bombs..... +5 points
- One Grenadier may carry a vox-caster..... +5 points
- Up to two Grenadiers not already upgraded may carry one of the following weapons instead of their hot-shot lasgun:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points each
  - Grenade launcher..... +5 points each
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points each
  - Plasma gun..... +15 points each
  - Heavy stubber ..... +10 points each
- Two other Grenadiers not already upgraded may form a Heavy Weapons Team armed with a heavy flamer ..... +10 points



ELITES

Hydra Flak Platform ..... 50 points

Emplaced weapons platforms form the mainstay of the siege regiments' artillery and air defence batteries, complementing their static methods of warfare. Though the Hydra platform does not have the mobility of the track-mounted variant, it sacrifices none of the ferocious firepower that makes it a threat to any aerial aggressor.

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Hydra Flak Platform	3	10	10	10	2

Unit Composition
- 1 Hydra Flak Platform

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Immobile)

Wargear
- Two twin-linked Hydra autocannon

Special Rules
- Immobile Vehicle

Options
- The Hydra Flak Platform may take
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points per model

Immobile Vehicle
An Immobile Vehicle cannot move under any circumstances after its deployment. Any special rules which force it to move will instead cause the vehicle to take a single Glancing hit. If an Immobile Vehicle sustains a Vehicle Immobilised damage result, then it loses an additional Hull Point instead, wrecking the platform.



ELITES

Death Korps Rapier Laser Destroyer Battery ..... 45 points per model

Death Korps siege regiments favour the rapier laser destroyer for close range anti-armour and fortification duties, especially in the confined spaces of underground siege works and other Zone Mortalis battlegrounds where more traditional artillery is either unsuitable or unavailable.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Combat Engineer	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	4+
Rapier	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Rapiers, each with a single Death Korps Combat Engineer Crewman, forming a battery.

Unit Type
- Artillery

Wargear (Crew)
- Close combat weapon
- Combat shotgun
- Frag grenades
- Carapace armour

Wargear (Artillery)
- Laser destroyer array

Special Rules (Combat Engineer)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Rapier)
- Extremely Bulky
- Explosive Demise

Options
- Any Rapiers in the battery may have:
  - One additional Combat Engineer Crewman each.....+8 points

Explosive Demise
When the Rapier loses its last wound, roll a D6. If the result of this roll is 2-6 then remove the Rapier as a casualty as normal. If the result of the roll is a 1, then place a Large Blast (5") template onto the table, centred on the Rapier. All models, friendly and enemy, under this template take a single S3 AP- hit. Once these hits are resolved, remove the Rapier as a casualty as normal.



ELITES

Death Korps Field Artillery Battery ..... 55 points each

When tasked with the reduction of enemy fortifications or infantry formations, the Death Korps siege regiments turn to massed deployment of medium artillery, often towed into advanced positions by Centaur transports. Both quad launchers and heavy mortars are highly effective weapons, able to saturate enemy positions with high explosive death and leave them open for waves of Death Korps infantry.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Death Korps Crew	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+
Heavy Quad Launcher	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+
Heavy Mortar	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+

Unit Composition
- 1-4 Heavy Quad Launchers or Heavy Mortars, each with three Death Korps Crew, forming a battery.

Unit Type
- Artillery (Immobile)

Wargear (Crew)
- Lasgun
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Close combat weapon
- Flak armour

Wargear (Artillery)
- Heavy quad launcher or heavy mortar

Special Rules (Death Korps Crew)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Dedicated Transport
- A Field Artillery Battery squad may take a number of Centaur Carriers as towing vehicles (see the Dedicated Transport section for costs). If this is done then they must be bought on a one-for-one basis for the artillery pieces. When being towed, the unit must retain coherency just as if it were a vehicle squadron. If a squad wishes to move away and does not have sufficient remaining towing vehicles, any models left behind are destroyed.

Options
- Any artillery piece may take up to:
  - Two additional Death Korps Crewmen..... +8 points each

Immobile
An Immobile Artillery piece cannot be moved after it has been deployed except by the use of a specialised vehicle, and ignores any effect which forces it to move. This only affects the platform; the crew are subject to all normal Artillery rules. When called upon to Fall Back, the crew must leave their guns behind and Fall Back; the platforms are then removed as casualties.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Heavy Quad Launcher	12"-60"	5	5	Heavy 4, Barrage, Blast (3"), Shell Shock

Shell Shock: Due to the repeated rapid impact of the Heavy Quad Launcher's shells, Pinning tests taken against its attacks are at -1 to the target's Leadership value.

TROOPS

Death Korps Infantry Platoon.....(Total Cost of Units)

The true strength of the Death Korps lies in its grim foot soldiers, the ranks of disciplined and relentless infantry that make up the korps of the siege regiments. Their cold hearted courage and sinister aspect have made them among the most famous and feared of all the regiments of the Astra Militarum.

Each Death Korps Infantry Platoon comprises 1 Death Korps Platoon Command Squad, 2-6 Death Korps Infantry Squads and 0-3 Death Korps Heavy Weapons Squads.

Each Infantry Platoon is deployed in place of a single unit in missions that limit the number of units that can be deployed. In addition, when making a Reserves roll or Outflanking roll, roll once for the whole Infantry Platoon.

*Death Korps Platoon Command Squad ..... 50 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Platoon Commander	4	4	3	3	1	3	2	8	5+
Guardsman	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+
Commissar	4	4	3	3	1	3	2	9	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Platoon Commander
- 4 Guardsmen

Unit Type
- Platoon Commander & Commissar: Infantry (Character)
- Guardsman: Infantry

Wargear (Guardsman)
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Wargear (Platoon Commander & Commissar)
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Special Rules (All)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Platoon Commander)
- Junior Officer

Special Rules (Commissar)
- Stubborn
- Summary Execution (see page 208)

Options
- The unit may be joined by a Commissar.....+30 points
- The Platoon Commander and Commissar may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol.....+1 point
  - Plasma pistol.....+15 points
  - Power weapon.....+10 points
  - Power fist.....+15 points
- The Platoon Commander and/or Commissar may also be upgraded to have any of the following:
  - Carapace armour.....+3 points
  - Melta bombs.....+5 points
- One Guardsman may carry a platoon standard ...+10 points
- One other Guardsman may carry a vox-caster .....+5 points
- Up to two Guardsmen that have not been upgraded with an option above may replace their lasgun with:
  - Flamer.....+5 points
  - Grenade launcher.....+5 points
  - Meltagun.....+10 points
  - Plasma gun.....+15 points

**Note that this unit may only be chosen as part of a Death Korps Infantry Platoon.*

TROOPS

*Death Korps Infantry Squad ..... 70 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Watchmaster	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	8	5+
Guardsman	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Watchmaster
- 9 Guardsmen

Unit Type
- Watchmaster: Infantry (Character)
- Guardsman: Infantry

Wargear (Guardsman)
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Wargear (Watchmaster)
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Special Rules
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Options
- The Watchmaster may take melta bombs..... +5 points
- The Watchmaster may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Lasgun ..... Free
  - Bolt pistol ..... +1 point
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
- One Guardsman may have a vox-caster ..... +5 points
- One Guardsman not already upgraded may carry a:
  - Platoon standard ..... +10 points
- One Guardsman not already upgraded may carry one of the following weapons instead of their lasgun:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points
  - Grenade launcher ..... +5 points
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points

**Note that this unit may only be chosen as part of an Infantry Platoon.*

*Death Korps Heavy Weapons Squad..... 60 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Heavy Weapons Team	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 3 Heavy Weapons Teams

Unit Type
- Infantry

Wargear
- Mortar
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Special Rules
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline
- Bulky

Options
- Any Heavy Weapons Team may exchange its mortar for a:
  - Heavy bolter ..... +5 points each
  - Autocannon ..... +5 points each
  - Twin-linked heavy stubber ..... +5 points each
  - Lascannon ..... +15 points each

**Note that this unit may only be chosen as part of an Infantry Platoon.*

TROOPS

Death Korps Combat Engineer Squad ..... 50 points

Death Korps combat engineers have the particular task of carrying out siegecraft, demolitions and breaching actions on the battlefield. In order to accomplish this, they are equipped with a variety of specialised equipment tailored towards demolitions and close-quarters combat, such as carapace armour and combat shotguns, as well as mole launchers and melta bombs.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Watchmaster	4	4	3	3	1	3	2	8	4+
Engineer	4	4	3	3	1	3	1	7	4+
Engineer Heavy Weapons Team	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	7	4+

Unit Composition
- 1 Watchmaster
- 4 Engineers

Unit Type
- Watchmaster: Infantry (Character)
- Engineers: Infantry

Wargear
- Shotgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Acid gas bombs
- Carapace armour

Special Rules (All)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Engineer Heavy Weapons Team)
- Bulky

Dedicated Transport
- A Combat Engineer squad numbering five models may take a Centaur Carrier as a Dedicated Transport, while a Combat Engineer squad of any size may take a Hades Breaching Drill* as a Dedicated Transport (see the Dedicated Transport section for costs).

**Note that if this is the case, the squad must be deployed in Reserve with the Hades and enter play using its special deployment rules rather than being carried onboard. In addition, any Combat Engineer squad that takes a Hades as a Dedicated Transport becomes an Elites choice instead of a Troops choice.*

Options
- The unit may have:
  - Up to five additional Engineers ..... +8 points per model
- The Watchmaster may take:
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
- The Watchmaster may exchange his shotgun and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol ..... +1 point
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points
- One Engineer may carry a vox-caster ..... +5 points
- One other Engineer may carry one of the following weapons instead of their shotgun:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points
  - Grenade launcher ..... +5 points
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points
  - Demolition charge ..... +20 points
- Two other Engineers may form a Heavy Weapons Team armed with one of the following weapons:
  - Heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Mole launcher ..... +15 points



DEDICATED TRANSPORTS

Centaur Carrier ..... 40 points

The Centaur is a light armoured carrier and towing vehicle used to carry out battlefield deployment of light artillery and small units of specialised infantry. It is surprisingly fast and powerful for its size, and favoured by the Death Korps both because of its reliability and its ability to cope with hazardous terrain.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Centaur Carrier	3	11	10	10	2

Unit Composition
- 1 Centaur Carrier

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Transport, Fast, Open-topped)

Wargear
- Heavy stubber
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

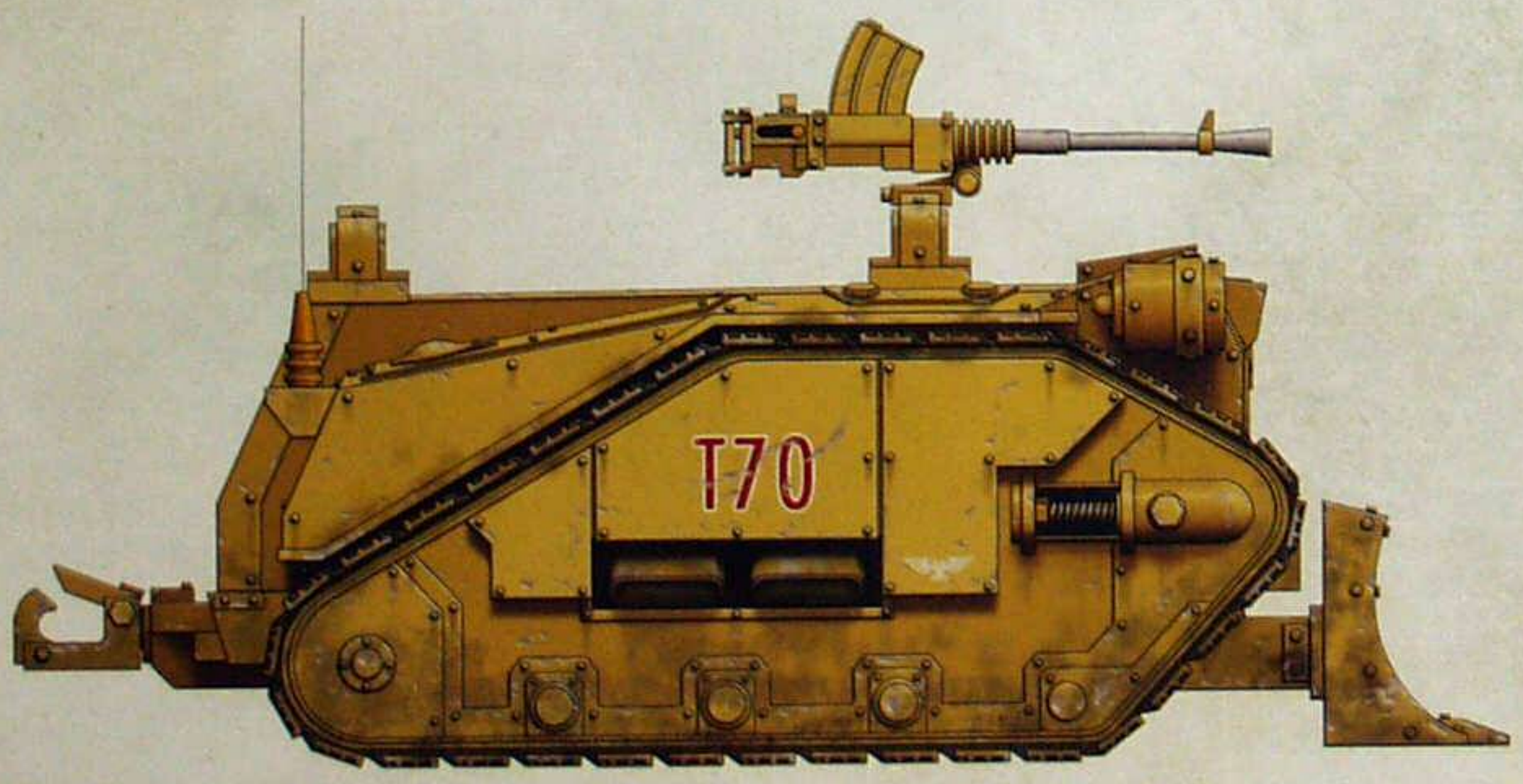
Special Rules
- Artillery Tractor

Transport Capacity
- The Centaur can transport five models.

Options
- A Centaur Carrier may take any of the following upgrades:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points

Artillery Tractor
If the Centaur begins its Movement phase in contact with a friendly model of the Artillery type that has not moved this turn, and does not have more crew than the currently available transport capacity of the Centaur, then it may attempt to tow that model.

The Centaur makes an immediate move of up to 12". Once it has finished moving, the Artillery model may be placed anywhere within base contact of the Centaur and the crew are placed as if they had disembarked from the Centaur. The Artillery model and its crew may neither move nor fire in a turn when it has been towed, and the Centaur may neither fire any weapons nor move Flat Out this turn.



The crew of Centaur T70, attached to the 83rd Krieg Armoured Regiment, received several commendations for the defence of the guns they were assigned to transport during an enemy counter-attack.

DEDICATED TRANSPORTS

Hades Breaching Drill ..... 60 points

A piece of heavy industrial equipment militarised for battlefield use, the Hades is a powerful tunnelling device which is capable of boring its way through rock, earth and even reinforced ferrocrete, and creating a tunnel through which troops can follow. Originally intended primarily for mining operations, the Hades Drill's destructive potential has long been exploited by Death Korps siege regiments for siegecraft – undermining fortifications, breaching bunker networks and sundering bastions from below. This, however, is both an extremely dangerous and unpredictable assignment, and the risk to the troops accompanying the drill of being buried alive through mishap or enemy action is great.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Hades Breaching Drill	2	-	8	7	3	1	1	8	3+

Unit Composition
- 1 Hades Breaching Drill

Unit Type
- Infantry

Wargear
- Melta-cutter drill

Special Rules
- Move Through Cover
- Hammer of Wrath
- Extremely Bulky
- Tunnelling
- Subterranean Assault
- Specialist Equipment

Subterranean Assault
A unit which includes at least one Hades Breaching Drill must begin the game in Reserve and deploy onto the table using the Deep Strike rules.

On a turn in which it arrives using the Deep Strike rules, it gains a 4+ invulnerable save just as if it had moved using the Tunnelling special rule.

Tunnelling
A unit in which at least one model has this special rule can choose to move through the ground in the Movement phase or the Assault phase. If not using the Tunnelling special rule, the unit moves and charges using the standard movement rules.

Movement Phase: When moving during the Movement phase using the Tunnelling special rule, a unit with this special rule may move up to 12" in any direction, ignoring any terrain or models it passes through during that move. The final position of a unit moving using the Tunnelling special rule may not be within impassable terrain or within 2" of any enemy models.

A unit that has moved in the Movement phase using the Tunnelling special rule gains a 4+ invulnerable save until the beginning of the controlling player's next Movement phase, but may not choose to Run in the Shooting phase or charge in the Assault phase.

Assault Phase: When making a charge using the Tunnelling special rule, a unit rolls an additional D6 to determine the distance moved, but uses the two lowest dice to determine the final result. Overwatch fire may not be made at a unit charging using the Tunnelling special rule and the charging unit ignores all terrain and battlefield debris effects and counts as having assault grenades.

In addition, the Hades Breaching Drill makes D6+2 Hammer of Wrath attacks instead of just one, and all such attacks are resolved using the profile of the melta-cutter drill on any turn in which it uses the Tunnelling special rule during the Assault phase.

If used to charge a building or fortification in which an enemy unit is embarked, roll a D6 for each enemy model within the building. On a 4+, that model takes an automatic Str 4 AP 2 hit.

Specialist Equipment
Unlike most units, the Hades Breaching Drill does not operate on its own and must be attached to another unit before play begins. Each Hades Breaching Drill must be attached to a single Death Korps Combat Engineer Squad before deployment and becomes a part of that unit.

A Hades Breaching Drill may not leave the unit it is attached to during the game, and if all other models in the unit are destroyed, it is automatically removed from play.

No Death Korps Combat Engineer squad may include more than one Hades Breaching Drill, and the drill does not count as a separate unit for the purposes of Victory points scored for destroyed units, but does count as a casualty for the purpose of determining when Morale checks must be made.

FAST ATTACK

Cyclops Demolition Squad .....30 points per Cyclops Team

Death Korps engineers make use of the Cyclops remote detonation vehicle to carry out breaching actions under the most extreme conditions. These sturdy vehicles are capable of deploying enough explosive to sunder any protective bastion or, in extremis, to obliterate enemy units, although such frivolous expenditure of these valuable units is discouraged.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Cyclops	-	-	-	6	2	-	-	-	4+
Death Korps Operator	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Cyclops teams, each comprising 1 Cyclops Demolition Vehicle and 1 Death Korps Operator, forming a unit.

Unit Type
- Death Korps Operator, Cyclops*: Infantry

**See Remote Control*

Wargear (Death Korps Operator)
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Flak armour

Wargear (Cyclops)
- Cyclops demolition charge

Special Rules (Death Korps Operator)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Cyclops)
- Remote Control
- Extremely Bulky
- Fearless

Remote Control
Cyclops units are deployed together but as soon as the game begins, the Cyclops Demolition vehicles that are part of the unit may immediately be individually detached from the unit and act separately and move on their own to close with and attack their targets. The Cyclops cannot function more than 48" away from their operators. If they become separated by a greater distance than this, the Cyclops simply stops and can do nothing until the operator is back within 48". Likewise, if all operators in the unit are killed, the Cyclops can do nothing but is left in play (and may still suffer accidental detonation if destroyed). If all the unit's operators are killed, the unit itself counts as being destroyed at the end of the game.

Cyclops carry no ranged weapons and cannot fight normally in assaults, but can themselves be targeted normally, being hit automatically in assaults. They may however carry out charges – this is to bring them in range to detonate! Cyclops Demolition vehicles, and any unit containing them, can never make sweeping advances in combat.

Cyclops Demolition Charge
The Cyclops is, in essence, a mobile bomb and can be detonated by remote control in any of the controlling player's Assault phases regardless of whether it is in combat, and in any of their opponent's Assault phases in which the Cyclops is in combat. This detonation occurs on initiative step 10 of the Fight sub-phase. When the Cyclops detonates, first centre the Large Blast (5") template on its model and resolve the attack as shown on the profile below. Then remove the Cyclops, which is automatically destroyed by its detonation.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Cyclops Demolition Charge	N/A	9	3	Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5")

Accidental Detonation
If a Cyclops Demolition vehicle is destroyed by any means, roll a D6. On a result of 6, it detonates.



FAST ATTACK

Hellhound Flame Tank Squadron

The short ranged, but devastating, Hellhound flame tank and its many variants are employed by the siege regiments as support for infantry assaults, moving forwards under cover from the regiment's artillery weapons and forcing a breach in enemy lines.

Hellhound ..... **125 points per model**
Devil Dog ..... **135 points per model**
Bane Wolf ..... **130 points per model**

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Hellhound	3	12	10	10	3
Devil Dog	3	12	10	10	3
Bane Wolf	3	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Hellhound, Devil Dog or Bane Wolf tanks, forming a squadron

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Fast)

Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Wargear (Hellhound)
- Inferno cannon

Wargear (Devil Dog)
- Melta cannon

Wargear (Bane Wolf)
- Chem cannon

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with either:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Multi-melta ..... +10 points each
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +5 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
  - Armoured track guards ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take one of the following:
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Mine plough ..... +15 points per model



FAST ATTACK

Death Korps Death Rider Platoon .....(Total Cost of Units)

Though fewer in number than the detachments incorporated into assault brigades, siege regiments include Death Rider platoons in their organisational structure. These elite assault formations are used to follow up successful breakthroughs, harrying the retreating enemy and making sure few live to reach any fallback position.

Each Death Korps Death Rider Platoon comprises 0-1 Death Korps Death Rider Command Squadron and 1-6 Death Korps Death Rider Squadrons.

Each Death Rider Platoon is deployed in place of a single unit in missions that limit the number of units that can be deployed. In addition, when making a Reserves roll or Outflanking roll, roll once for the whole Death Rider Platoon.

*Death Rider Command Squadron ..... 100 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Squadron Commander	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	8	4+
Death Rider Veteran	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	7	4+
Death Rider Commissar	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	9	4+

Unit Composition
- 1 Squadron Commander
- 4 Death Rider Veterans

Unit Type
- Squadron Commander & Death Rider Commissar: Cavalry (Character)
- Death Rider Veteran: Cavalry

Wargear
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Death Rider hunting lance (all except Commissar)
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Carapace armour

Special Rules (All)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Augmented Mounts

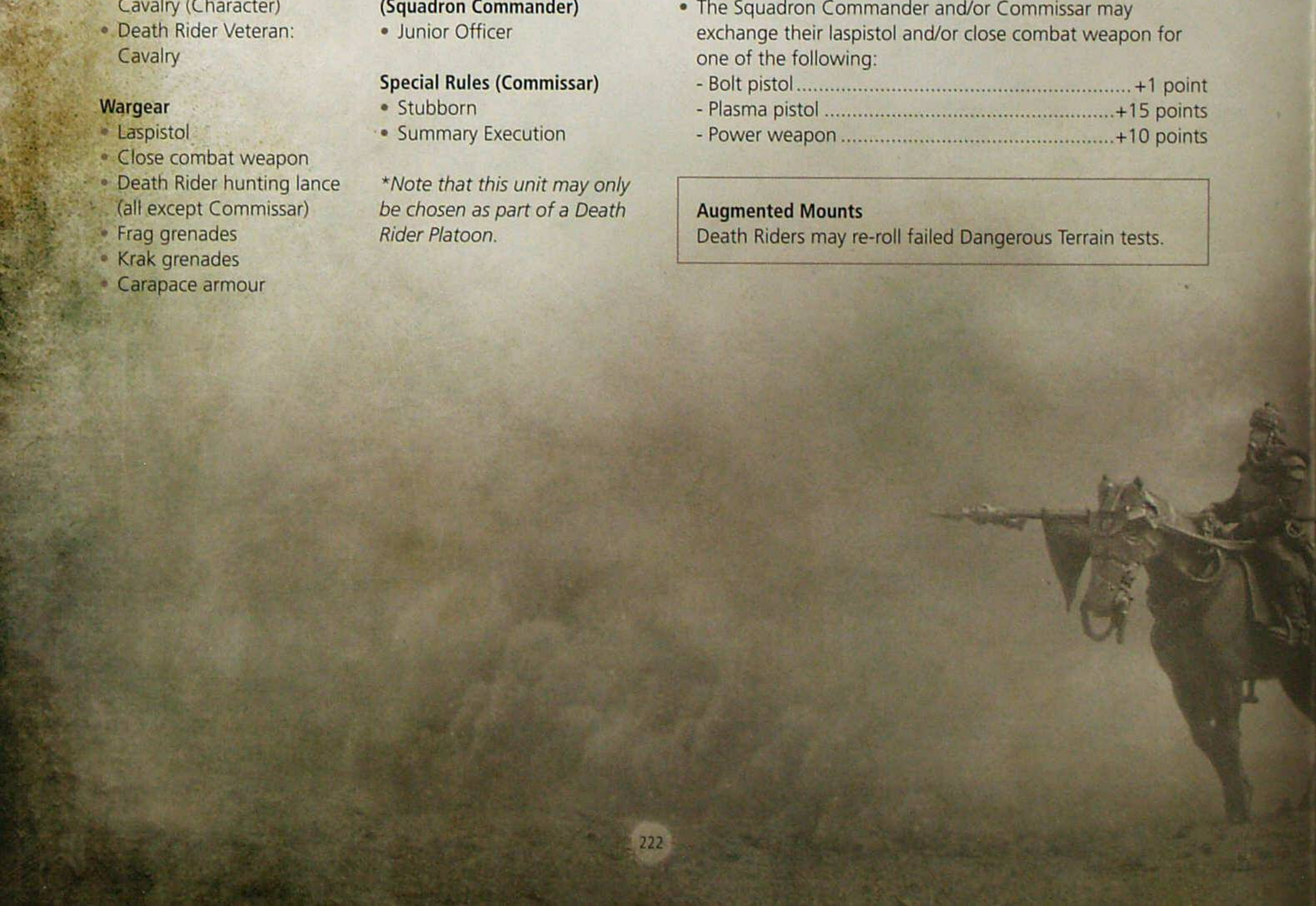
Special Rules (Squadron Commander)
- Junior Officer

Special Rules (Commissar)
- Stubborn
- Summary Execution

**Note that this unit may only be chosen as part of a Death Rider Platoon.*

Options
- A Death Rider Command Squadron may be joined by a:
  - Death Rider Commissar .....+35 points
- The Squadron Commander may also be upgraded to have any of the following:
  - Demolition charge .....+20 points
  - Melta bombs .....+5 points
- The Squadron Commander and/or Commissar may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol .....+1 point
  - Plasma pistol .....+15 points
  - Power weapon .....+10 points

Augmented Mounts
Death Riders may re-roll failed Dangerous Terrain tests.



FAST ATTACK

*Death Rider Squadron ..... 85 points each

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Ridemaster	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	8	4+
Death Rider	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	7	4+

Unit Composition
- 1 Ridemaster
- 4 Death Riders

Unit Type
- Ridemaster: Cavalry (Character)
- Death Rider: Cavalry

Wargear
- Carapace armour
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Death Rider hunting lance
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades

Special Rules
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Augmented Mounts

**Note that this unit may only be chosen as part of a Death Rider Platoon.*

Options
- A Death Rider Squadron may have up to:
  - Five additional Death Riders ..... +15 points each
- The Ridemaster may take melta bombs ..... +5 points
- The Ridemaster may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Bolt pistol ..... +1 point
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points

Augmented Mounts
Death Riders may re-roll failed Dangerous Terrain tests.



HEAVY SUPPORT

Thunderer Siege Squadron ..... 140 points each

These engines of war were originally a field modification of damaged Destroyer tank hunter hulls, replacing the rare laser destroyer array with a massive demolisher cannon. More readily available in large numbers than the rarer Leman Russ Demolisher, these sturdy vehicles see considerable use in the siege regiments as fortification breakers.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Thunderer	3	14	13	11	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Thunderer Tanks forming a squadron

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank)

Wargear
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Demolisher cannon

Options
- Any Thunderer may take any of the following:
  - Pintle-mounted heavy stubber or storm bolter ..... +5 points each
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points each
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points each
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points each
  - Armoured track guards ..... +10 points each
- Any Thunderer may take one of the following:
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points each
  - Mine plough ..... +15 points each



HEAVY SUPPORT

Death Korps Leman Russ Tank Squadron

The mainstay of the armoured might of the Astra Militarum, the Leman Russ battle tank is a formidable war machine – it is huge, heavily armoured and able to carry a bewildering array of heavy weapons, from the ubiquitous battle cannon to the armour destroying Annihilator lascannon or roaring Punisher gatling cannon.

Leman Russ ..... **150 points per model**
Leman Russ Exterminator ..... **130 points per model**
Leman Russ Vanquisher ..... **135 points per model**
Leman Russ Eradicator ..... **120 points per model**
Leman Russ Demolisher ..... **170 points per model**
Leman Russ Punisher ..... **140 points per model**
Leman Russ Executioner ..... **155 points per model**
Leman Russ Annihilator ..... **150 points per model**
Leman Russ Conqueror ..... **115 points per model**

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Leman Russ Battle Tank	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Annihilator	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Conqueror	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Exterminator	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Vanquisher	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Eradicator	3	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Demolisher	3	14	13	11	3
Leman Russ Punisher	3	14	13	11	3
Leman Russ Executioner	3	14	13	11	3

Unit Composition
- A vehicle squadron is composed of 1-3 Leman Russ tanks, in any combination of types.

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Heavy)

Unit Type (Leman Russ Conqueror only)
- Vehicle (Tank, Fast)

Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Wargear (Specific)
- Leman Russ Battle Tank: Battle cannon
- Leman Russ Annihilator: Twin-linked lascannon
- Leman Russ Conqueror: Conqueror cannon and co-axial storm bolter
- Leman Russ Exterminator: Exterminator autocannon
- Leman Russ Vanquisher: Vanquisher battle cannon
- Leman Russ Eradicator: Eradicator nova cannon
- Leman Russ Demolisher: Demolisher siege cannon
- Leman Russ Punisher: Punisher gatling cannon
- Leman Russ Executioner: Executioner plasma cannon

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with one of the following:
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points per model
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take a pair of sponsons, each armed with:
  - Heavy bolters ..... +20 points per model
  - Heavy flamers ..... +10 points per model
  - Multi-meltas ..... +20 points per model
  - Plasma cannon ..... +30 points per model
- Any model may take any of the following upgrades:
  - Pintle-mounted heavy stubber or storm bolter ..... +5 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take one of the following upgrades:
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Mine plough ..... +15 points per model
- The entire squadron may take:
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points per model
- Any Leman Russ Vanquisher may take a:
  - Co-axial storm bolter or co-axial heavy stubber ..... +15 points

HEAVY SUPPORT

Death Korps Heavy Weapons Platoon ..... 60 points per squad

Concentrated formations of man-portable heavy weapons are widely used to suppress enemy positions prior to a massed infantry charge. Among the Death Korps, these weapons are mounted on heavy wheeled carriages for deployment in rough terrain.

Death Korps Heavy Weapons Platoons are composed of 1-3 Heavy Weapons Squads.

Each Platoon is deployed in place of a single unit in missions that limit the number of units that can be deployed. In addition, when making a Reserves roll or Outflanking roll, roll once for the whole Platoon.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Heavy Weapons Team	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 1-3 squads each composed of 3 Heavy Weapons Teams, forming a platoon

Unit Type
- Infantry

Wargear
- Lasgun
- Mortar
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Special Rules
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline
- Bulky

Options
- Any Heavy Weapons Team may exchange its mortar for a:
  - Heavy bolter ..... +5 points each
  - Autocannon ..... +5 points each
  - Twin-linked heavy stubber ..... +5 points each
  - Lascannon ..... +15 points each



HEAVY SUPPORT

Death Korps Bombard Battery

One of the few mobile artillery weapons utilised by the siege regiments, the Colossus Bombard is a relic weapon of ancient provenance. Though short ranged when compared to weapons such as the Earthshaker cannon, the damage inflicted by the huge rocket-assisted shells the bombard launches more than compensates.

Colossus Bombard ..... 140 points per model

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Colossus	3	12	10	10	3

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped)

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Colossus tanks forming a battery

Wargear
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Colossus siege mortar

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with a:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Enclosed crew compartment ..... +15 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +5 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- The entire battery may take:
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points per model



HEAVY SUPPORT

Death Korps Heavy Artillery Battery .....75 points each

Unlike more traditional regiments, the Death Korps siege regiments employ large numbers of static heavy artillery platforms instead of more mobile tracked units. These platforms, while lacking in mobility, are both more swiftly manufactured and more easily maintained and repaired in the field, allowing the Death Korps to field them in vast numbers. Any infantry assault is therefore invariably preceded by a massive artillery barrage.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Heavy Artillery Carriage	-	-	-	7	4	-	-	-	3+
Death Korps Crew	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	5+

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Heavy Artillery Carriages, each with 4 Death Korps Crew

Unit Type
- Death Korps Crew: Infantry
- Heavy Artillery Carriage: Artillery

Wargear (Death Korps Crew)
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Wargear (Heavy Artillery Carriage)
- Earthshaker cannon

Special Rules (Death Korps Crew)
- Death Korps
- Iron Discipline

Special Rules (Heavy Artillery Carriage)
- Gun Carriage
- Immobile Artillery

Options
- All Heavy Artillery Carriages in the unit may upgrade their Earthshaker cannon to a:
  - Medusa siege gun ..... +25 points per model
- A unit of Heavy Artillery Carriages entirely armed with Medusa siege guns may be upgraded to have:
  - Bastion breacher shells ..... +5 points per model
- The entire unit may have:
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points per model
- Any Heavy Artillery Carriage may have:
  - Up to four additional Death Korps Crew.... +8 points each

Gun Carriage
This model may be moved if attached to a vehicle capable of towing it (see the appropriate Vehicle special rules). This is possible even though the model has the Immobile Artillery special rule.

Breacher Shells
A Medusa upgraded to fire breacher shells uses the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Breacher shells	48"	10	1	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Armourbane

Immobile Artillery
An Immobile Artillery piece cannot be moved after it has been deployed, and ignores any effect which forces it to move. This only affects the platform and the crew are subject to all normal artillery rules.

When called upon to Fall Back, the crew must leave their guns behind and Fall Back, and the platforms are then removed as casualties.

LORDS OF WAR

Death Korps Siege Regiments armies have access to a range of Lords of War choices, many of which can be found in other Imperial Armour books. The following is a complete list of all the choices available to a Death Korps Siege Regiment army:

- **Valdor Tank Hunter:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Baneblade Super-heavy Tank:** *Warhammer 40,000: Apocalypse*
- **Crassus Armoured Transport:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Praetor Armoured Assault Launcher:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Gorgon Heavy Transporter:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Malcador Heavy Tank:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Malcador Defender:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Malcador Annihilator:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Malcador Infernus:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Marauder Bomber:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*

DEATH KORPS MACHARIUS HEAVY TANK

Though considered by many to be poor distaff cousins of the mighty Baneblade, the Macharius is favoured by many Krieg regiments over the Baneblade due to its rugged construction and lack of rare and exotic components. This relative simplicity allows the Macharius to be more easily maintained and more quickly constructed, and this super-heavy tank is fielded in large numbers by the warriors of Krieg.

Macharius ..... 325 points

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Macharius	3	14	13	12	6

Unit Composition
- 1 Macharius

Unit Type
- Super-heavy Vehicle

Wargear
- Macharius battle cannon
- Twin-linked heavy stubber
- Two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers

Options
- A Macharius may take a:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber .... +5 points
- A Macharius may exchange its two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers for one of the following options:
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy bolters ..... +10 points
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy flamers ..... +10 points



LORDS OF WAR

DEATH KORPS MACHARIUS VULCAN

Refitted with the fearsome Vulcan mega-bolter, the Macharius Vulcan is intended to annihilate enemy infantry formations in a thunderous hail of explosive death. These vehicles are almost always assigned large formations of supporting infantry due to their lack of anti-tank weaponry and relatively limited ammunition supplies.

Macharius Vulcan..... 405 points

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Macharius Vulcan	3	14	13	12	6

Unit Composition
- 1 Macharius Vulcan

Unit Type
- Super-heavy Vehicle

Wargear
- Vulcan mega-bolter
- Twin-linked heavy stubber
- Two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers

Special Rules
- Vulcan mega-bolter

Options
- A Macharius Vulcan may take a:
  - Hunter-killer missile .....+10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ....+5 points
- A Macharius Vulcan may exchange its two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers for one of the following options:
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy bolters.....+10 points
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy flamers.....+10 points

Vulcan Mega-bolter
If the Macharius Vulcan remains stationary in its controlling player's Movement phase, it may fire its Vulcan mega-bolter twice in that turn's Shooting phase (both shots must be directed at the same target).



LORDS OF WAR

DEATH KORPS MACHARIUS VANQUISHER

Replacing the battle cannon of the standard Macharius with a Vanquisher battle cannon, the Macharius Vanquisher is a deadly tank-hunter; it is able to destroy entire squadrons of lighter vehicles and even threaten larger super-heavy tanks with its hyper velocity salvoes.

Macharius Vanquisher ..... 375 points

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Macharius Vanquisher	3	14	13	12	6

Unit Composition
- 1 Macharius Vanquisher

Unit Type
- Super-heavy Vehicle

Wargear
- Macharius Vanquisher battle cannon
- Twin-linked heavy stubber
- Two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers

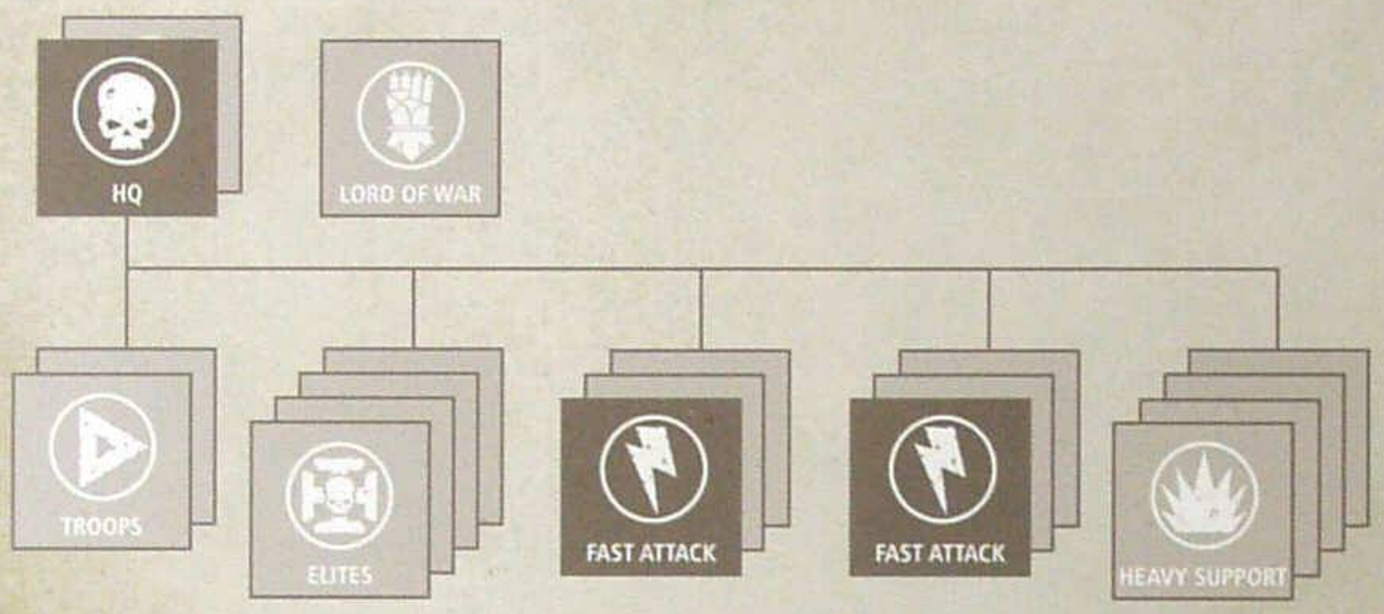
Options
- A Macharius Vanquisher may take a:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber .... +5 points
- A Macharius Vanquisher may exchange its two sponson-mounted heavy stubbers for one of the following options:
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy bolters ..... +10 points
  - Two sponson-mounted heavy flamers ..... +10 points



KRIEG DEATH RIDER SQUADRON – BATTLE-FORGED DETACHMENT

Mounted on genetically engineered beasts bred for fearlessness and aggression, the Death Riders of Krieg, when mustered in numbers, can sweep aside almost any foe in a wave of lance detonations and thundering hooves.

The following rules present a unique Detachment for use in Battle-forged armies using the Death Korps of Krieg Siege Regiment army list, and follow all of the rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.



Compulsory
- 1 HQ
- 2 Fast Attack

Optional
- 1 HQ
- 2 Troops
- 4 Elites
- 4 Fast Attack
- 4 Heavy Support
- 1 Lords of War

RESTRICTIONS

Death Korps: All units in this Detachment (except Fortifications) must have the Death Korps of Krieg Faction. In addition, the compulsory HQ choice must be a Death Rider Company Command Squad (see below).

Death Riders Squadron: All compulsory Fast Attack choices must be filled by Death Korps Death Rider Platoons.

COMMAND BENEFITS

Objective Secured: All units selected as part of a Death Korps Death Rider Platoon from this Detachment have the Objective Secured special rule. A unit with this special rule controls objectives even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker, unless the enemy unit also has this special rule.

Thundering Charge: In any Assault phase where two or more Death Rider Command Squads, Death Rider Company Command Squads or Death Rider Squadrons declare a charge on the same enemy unit, they gain the Fear special rule until the end of that Assault phase.

Death Rider Command: Any one Death Rider Command Squad may be upgraded to a Death Rider Company Command Squad, and the Squadron Commander upgraded to a Death Rider Colonel for +50 points. If this option is chosen, the Death Rider Colonel is automatically the army's Warlord, regardless of Leadership values, and may roll on either the Death Korps Warlord Traits table or any of those found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

A Death Rider Colonel has the following profile, special rules and wargear – all of which completely replaces the Squadron Commander and his special rules and wargear:

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Death Rider Colonel	5	4	3	3	4	3	3	9	4+

Special Rules: Senior Officer, Death Korps, Iron Discipline, Feel No Pain (5+), Augmented Mounts and Skilled Rider.

Wargear: Carapace armour, laspistol, close combat weapon, Death Rider hunting lance, frag grenades, krak grenades and refractor field.

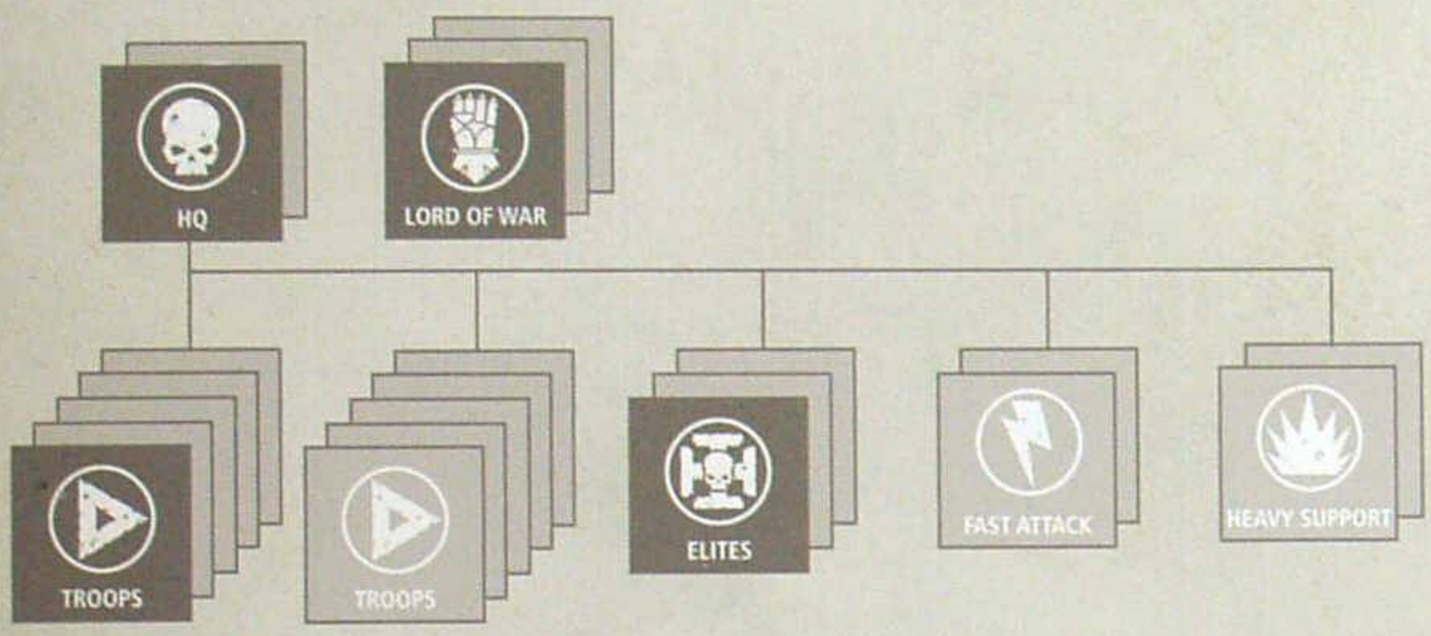
A Death Rider Colonel may take any of the options available to the Squadron Commander.

In addition, a Death Rider Company Command Squad may have any one Death Rider Veteran exchange his Death Rider hunting lance for a Death Korps Regimental Standard for free.

KRIEG GORGON ASSAULT SQUADRON – BATTLE-FORGED DETACHMENT

When the time comes to assault the fortified positions of the enemies of Mankind, the Death Korps' famed siege regiments prefer to advance aboard entire squadrons of immense armoured Gorgon transports, trusting in its armour and the Emperor's benevolence to see them safely to their targets.

The following rules present a unique Detachment for use in Battle-forged armies using the Death Korps of Krieg Siege Regiment army list, and follow all of the rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.



Compulsory
- 1 HQ
- 1 Troops
- 1 Elites
- 1 Lord of War

Optional
- 1 HQ
- 9 Troops
- 2 Elites
- 2 Fast Attack
- 2 Heavy Support
- 2 Lords of War

RESTRICTIONS

Death Korps: All units in this Detachment (except Fortifications) must have the Death Korps of Krieg Faction.

Gorgon Assault: All Lords of War choices selected for this Detachment must be Gorgon Heavy Transporters. In addition, all Gorgon Heavy Transporters must begin the game with at least one friendly Death Korps unit embarked upon them.

COMMAND BENEFITS

Objective Secured: All units selected as part of a Death Korps Infantry Platoon from this detachment have the Objective Secured special rule. A unit with this special rule controls objectives even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker, unless the enemy unit also has this special rule.

Unstoppable Advance: Whilst there is at least one friendly unit of the Death Korps Faction embarked on a Gorgon Heavy Transporter from this Detachment, the Gorgon Heavy Transporter gains the It Will Not Die special rule.

Fix Bayonets!: Any Death Korps of Krieg Infantry unit that disembarks from a Gorgon Heavy Transport and declares a charge on the same turn gains the Furious Charge special rule until the end of that Assault phase.



RENEGADES OF VRAKS

THE LOST AND THE DAMNED

RENEGADES OF VRAKS ARMIES

On the fortress-world of Vraks, the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan has raised the banner of rebellion, calling forth a vast army of the wretched and misguided, an army that unknowingly dances to the tune of the dark gods of murder and plague. This army is pitted against the vengeful legions of the Emperor, and steeped in years of grinding trench warfare and senseless death, it no longer resembles any sane force. The defenders of Vraks, whether willingly or through the trickery of those they follow, have become the slaves of darkness, the lost and the damned.

THE RENEGADES OF VRAKS ARMY LIST

This army list is intended to allow players to recreate the hordes of militia, conscripted workers and surgically altered abhumans fielded by the arch-heretic Xaphan in the defence of Vraks. Depending on which options are selected, players can use this list to represent either the relatively unchanged militia forces of the early stages of the war, or the later warp-touched abominations that were herded into the killing fields of Vraks. The Renegades of Vraks army list is considered to be a variant of the Renegades and Heretics army list presented in *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and Damned*, and is of the same Faction.

This army list has been designed to be used in conjunction with the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, and references several rules and items of wargear which can be found in that publication.

Allies and the Renegades of Vraks Army List
When selecting an allied contingent for an army using the Allies matrix, a Renegades of Vraks army is considered identical to a standard Chaos Space Marines army, save that it may select an allied contingent from a Chaos Space Marines army as Battle Brothers, and a Chaos Space Marines army may select an allied contingent from the Renegades of Vraks list as Battle Brothers.

Using Force Organisation Charts
The army list may be used in conjunction with any of the Force Organisation charts presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook or those additional Force Organisation charts included in this book. Each chart is divided into a number of categories that correspond to the sections of the army list, and each category has one or more boxes – this is referred to as the Primary Detachment. Each light tone box indicates that you **may** take one choice from that section of the army list, while a dark tone box means you **must** take a choice from that section. In addition to the Primary Detachment, several optional choices may be available, including a Fortifications choice and an Allied Detachment. If one of these options is selected, their Force Organisation charts follow the same rules as that of the Primary Detachment. The full rules governing Force Organisation charts can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

Using the Army List
The Renegades of Vraks army list is split into six sections: HQ, Elites, Troops, Dedicated Transports, Fast Attack and Heavy Support. All of the squads, vehicles and characters in the army are placed into one of these categories depending upon their role on the battlefield. Each model is also given a points value, which varies depending on how effective that model is in battle.

Before you choose an army, you will need to agree with your opponent upon the type of game you are going to play and the maximum total number of points each of you will spend. Then you can pick your army following the guidelines given in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

RENEGADES OF VRAKS ARMY WARGEAR

Any wargear not listed here can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

Vox-caster
If the unit is equipped with a vox-caster, you may re-roll the dice used to determine their Leadership value. The second result must be used however, even if it is lower than the first.

Command Net Vox
A unit equipped with a command net vox gains all the benefits of a vox-caster, and any other friendly unit within 12" may use the unit's Leadership value when taking a Morale check.

Sub-flak Armour
This grants a 6+ armour save.

Chaos Sigil
A unit equipped with a Chaos Sigil gains the Stubborn special rule and may re-roll its first Morale check or Pinning test failed in each game turn.

Combat Drug Injectors
This item may be activated on any turn in which the unit it is included in declares a charge. The affected unit gains the Rage special rule for the remainder of that turn, but at the end of the Assault phase, the unit must pass a Toughness test using the unit's majority Toughness value. If this test is failed, the unit must remove D3 models chosen at random, with no saves of any kind allowed.

Banner of Hate
All infantry units from the same Primary Detachment as the unit carrying a Banner of Hate with one or more models within 12" of it must roll 3D6 for Morale checks and Pinning tests, and must choose the two lower results.

Banner of the Apostate
An infantry unit carrying a Banner of the Apostate adds +1 to their score to determine which side wins an assault. Note that the effects of multiple banners of this type are not cumulative.

Mine Plough
A vehicle equipped with a Mine Plough rolls two D6 when making a Dangerous Terrain test instead of just a D6. The Dangerous Terrain test is only failed if the result of both dice is a 1. In addition, whenever the vehicle moves through an Infantry unit as part of a Tank Shock move and is not destroyed, the enemy unit suffers D3+1 S2 AP- hits.

Camo Netting
A vehicle with camo netting increases its cover save by +1. Note this means such a vehicle will always have a 6+ cover save, even in the open.

Enclosed Crew Compartment
Vehicles with this upgrade no longer count as having the Open-topped portion of their Unit Type.

RENEGADES OF VRAKS ARMY SPECIAL RULES

Uncertain Worth
Renegades aren't always reliable troops. While some are fanatically loyal, others have been forced to fight and will run away at the first chance, while yet more are simply unpredictably insane.

This is represented by a militia unit's random Leadership value. The first time a unit with this special rule is required to take a Leadership test, roll a D6 and add 4 (giving a result of between 5 and 10). This is the squad's Leadership value for the rest of the game and should be noted down for reference. This Leadership characteristic is subject to all the usual modifiers during play.

Curse of Mutation
The sulphuric pollution present in the air and soil of Vraks, as well as the taint of Chaos that festered over the long years of the war, produced many aberrations, many of which were pressed into service as cannon fodder by the renegades.

For each unit with this special rule, roll once on the table below to see what effect their mutations have:

Curse of Mutation table

D6	Result
1-2	**Horrific Disfiguration:** The unit gains the Fear special rule, and all friendly units without the Curse of Mutation special rule reduce their Leadership value by -1 when within 6" of this unit.
3-4	**Unnatural Senses:** The unit gains the Acute Senses and Scout special rules, but counts all Blast, Barrage and Heavy type weapons as having the Blind special rule.
5-6	**Horns, Claws and Fangs:** The unit gains the Hammer of Wrath special rule, and resolves all Hammer of Wrath attacks at +1 Strength. However, they must always declare a charge in any friendly Assault phase in which they are within 12" of an enemy unit. If multiple enemy units are within 12", the controlling player decides which unit a charge is declared on.

Chaos Covenant
Though far less tempting to the powers of Chaos than the post-human warriors of the Adeptus Astartes, many human leaders have earned the attention of the Chaos gods, entering into unholy bargains to gain short-lived ascendancy among their peers. Such individuals rarely maintain the interest of their patrons for long, often being consigned to an ignominious fate as a squirming Chaos Spawn, but a rare few do manage to achieve such notoriety that they transcend their mortal form to join the lower ranks of their patron's hierarchy of daemonic servants.

Renegades of Vraks models with access to a Chaos Covenant may select one of the following options:

- **Covenant of Khorne:** Any unit which contains at least one model with this special rule may re-roll all failed To Wound rolls on the first turn of any close combat.
- **Covenant of Nurgle:** Any unit which contains at least one model with this special rule also gains the Feel No Pain (6+) special rule.

Fanatic
Xaphan's closest supporters and followers were fanatically loyal to their traitorous master, devoted to his warped and twisted creed.

When rolling to determine this unit's Leadership value, as per the Uncertain Worth special rule, a model with this special rule rolls 2D6+4, and discards the lowest dice.

Aura of the Witch
Unbound by the Emperor's restrictive wards, rogue psykers manifest a dangerous power. Even the least amongst their number are deadly and unpredictable foes.

A model with this special rule gains a 5+ invulnerable save and the Fear special rule. However, it may never join another unit or become the army's Warlord.

RENEGADE DEMAGOGUE DEVOTIONS

A single Demagogue in any one Renegade Command Squad in the army may be upgraded with one of the following options, and no more than one Demagogue in the army may purchase any of these upgrades. A Demagogue that has been upgraded with one of the options listed below will always be the army's Warlord, regardless of the Leadership value of any other HQ choices included in the army.

Ordnance Tyrant .....+30 points
Commanding a basic knowledge of the arcane sciences of munitions and ballistics, these grim and merciless individuals were responsible for the great artillery hosts that were removed from the vaults of the Vraks' armoury. Counting the progress of the war in the expenditure of ammunition rather than its cost in lives, they thought nothing of directing fire over friendly positions if it would inflict damage on the foe at a reduced cost in weight of fire.

A Demagogue with this Devotion may select Renegade Artillery Batteries, Renegade Strike Batteries, Renegade Bombard Batteries or Renegade Heavy Ordnance Batteries as Elites choices as well as Heavy Support choices, and may select Renegade Field Artillery Batteries as non-compulsory Troops choices.

In addition, if any friendly model within 12" of the Demagogue fires a weapon with the Barrage and Blast special rules, the controlling player may choose to place the template so that friendly models are under the template, so long as the template's central hole is entirely under the base of an enemy model (this may be an enemy model locked in combat). When friendly models are under the template of a barrage or blast weapon using this rule, they are affected normally by the weapon, and wounds inflicted can cause Morale checks or Pinning tests as normal.

Primaris-rogue Witch.....+25 points
Deep in the Undercroft below the fortress of Vraks, a multitude of rogue psykers awaited the dread arrival of one of the secretive Black Ships. With the coming of the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's rebellion, many of these were released to serve in his armies as weapons of desperation, and the most powerful of these abominations quickly became leaders in the renegades' cause.

A Demagogue with this Devotion gains the Psyker (Mastery Level 1) and Fearless special rules, but may only use Psychic Disciplines from the following list:

- Daemonology (Malefic only)
- Biomancy
- Pyromancy
- Telekinesis

For +25 points, the Demagogue may be upgraded to Psyker (Mastery Level 2).

A Demagogue with this Devotion may not take a Chaos Covenant of Khorne, and an army whose Demagogue has this Devotion may take Rogue Psyker Covens as Elites choices as well as HQ choices.

Master of the Horde.....+20 points
The marshals of Xaphan's armies knew that the quality of their followers could not match that of the battle-hardened soldiers of the Astra Militarum. Their only advantage lay in the vast numbers of devoted followers they could bring to bear on the isolated battlefields of Vraks.

Whenever an individual Renegade Infantry Squad bought as part of the same army as a Demagogue with this Devotion and numbering at least 15 models at the start of play is removed from play as a casualty, or flees off of a table edge, roll a D6. On a 5+, the controlling player may place a unit identical to the unit removed from play into reserve – this unit has all of the models and upgrades listed on the controlling player's army list, but does not have any Dedicated Transports that may have been originally attached to the unit.

An army whose Demagogue has this Devotion must contain at least two Renegade Infantry Platoons and increases the maximum size of Renegade Infantry Squads to 30 models.

Arch-heretic Revolutionary .....+25 points
Xaphan's chosen servants were fanatical believers in the false creed he espoused, willing to commit atrocities in his name and wielding absolute authority over his horde of misguided followers.

A model with this Devotion gains the Zealot special rule, and may take any one Covenant of Chaos for no additional points cost.

Any unit of Renegade Infantry or Renegade Veterans may be upgraded to have the Fanatic special rule for +20 points for the entire unit, and any Renegade Enforcer Cadre may include up to 10 Enforcers rather than the usual limit of five.

Shock Legion Taskmaster .....+25 points
Those individuals amongst Xaphan's lieutenants who possessed a rudimentary knowledge of surgical technique, a brutal single mindedness and a taste for close quarters mayhem, were set as wardens of the hordes of modified ogryns incorporated into his legions as shock troops.

A Demagogue with this Devotion must select Renegade Ogryn Brute squads to fill all compulsory Troops choices, and may additionally select Renegade Ogryn Brute squads as Troops choices. Any units of Renegade Ogryn Brutes that are selected as either compulsory or non-compulsory Troops choices never count as scoring units or benefit from the Objective Secured special rule.

In addition, the Demagogue is equipped with a Neural Goad and gains +1 WS. The controlling player may, at the start of their Movement phase, choose to inflict D3 Wounds that cannot be saved by any means onto any one unit of friendly Renegade Ogryn Brutes within 12" of a model equipped with a Neural Goad. These units gain the Fleet and Furious Charge special rules until the beginning of the controlling player's next turn.

RENEGADE WARLORD TRAITS

When generating a Warlord Trait for a character selected from the Renegades of Vraks army list, you may choose to roll on the following table instead of rolling on the tables found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

D6	Result
1	**Fanatical Convert:** *This warlord's faith in his new gods is absolute; no sacrifice is too great in the pursuit of their worship.* When any friendly unit with the Uncertain Worth special rule is destroyed within 12" of this Warlord, the controlling player should roll a D6. On a 5+, the controlling player scores an additional Victory point. This does not affect any Victory points scored by the opposing player for that unit's destruction.
2	**Iron-fisted Tyrant:** *Those who fight under the banner of this warlord do so to avoid their master's wrath, not in honour of the dark gods of Chaos.* At the start of the Renegade army's turn, this Warlord's controlling player may choose to remove D3 models from the Warlord's unit from play. If this option is used then all fleeing friendly units with the Uncertain Worth special rule may make an immediate Regroup test using the Warlord's Leadership value, regardless of the number of models left in the unit.
3	**Prophet of Doom:** *The terrible prophecies uttered by this warp-touched warlord guide his armies in battle.* At the beginning of any turn (including that of the opposing player), the player controlling this Warlord may choose to influence any one Reserves roll made that turn. That affected roll may be changed to either succeed on a 2+ regardless of the current turn or any other modifiers, or to succeed on a 6+ regardless of the current turn or any other modifiers.
4	**Artisan of Death:** *In the subtle art of murder and the cold corpses of his foes, this warlord pays tribute to the fickle powers of the Warp.* If this Warlord is engaged in a close combat during its Initiative step, but not in base-to-base contact with an enemy model, then it may forfeit all of its normal attacks to inflict a single Str 3 AP 2 hit with the Poisoned (4+) special rule on any enemy model within 3" that is a part of the same combat.
5	**Blasphemous Iconoclast:** *With his loyalty now pledged to the dark gods of Chaos, this warlord seeks out every opportunity to topple the monuments of Imperial Faith.* Once per turn, during the controlling player's Shooting phase, nominate any one friendly unit within 12" of the Warlord (this may be the Warlord's unit). The chosen unit rolls an additional D6 when rolling on the Building Damage table and uses the highest single rolled D6 to decide the final result of the roll.
6	**Soul-scarred Terror:** *This warlord's broken soul is a wound in the fabric of reality, bleeding the tainted energy of the Warp into this existence and burning those around him.* In Initiative step 1 of any Fight sub-phase, roll a D6 for each enemy model in base-to-base contact with this Warlord. On the roll of a 6, that model suffers an automatic AP 2 wound. In addition, this Warlord gains the Fear special rule.



HQ

1+ Renegade Command Squad ..... 45 points

The demagogues which lead the armies of Xaphan are skilled in the manipulation of their minions, as well as being capable fighters. In the press of battle, it is their charismatic presence that keeps the often undisciplined mass of renegades from fleeing at the first sign of defeat.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Arch-Demagogue	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	*	5+
Disciple	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	*	5+
Disciple Heavy Weapons Team	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	*	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Arch-Demagogue
- 4 Disciples

Unit Type
- Arch-Demagogue: Infantry (Character)
- Disciples and Heavy Weapons Team: Infantry

Wargear (All)
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Flak armour

Wargear (Disciple)
- Autogun or lasgun or shotgun

Wargear (Arch-Demagogue)
- Autopistol or laspistol

Special Rules (All)
- Uncertain Worth
- Fanatic

Special Rules (Arch-Demagogue)
- Master of Renegades
- Independent Character

Transport
- If the unit numbers 12 models or less, it may select a Chimera as a Dedicated Transport choice.

Master of Renegades
If the Primary Detachment of an army includes an Arch-Demagogue as its Warlord, then certain additional units are available to the army based on which Chaos Covenant the player has selected:

No Chaos Covenant – The army may include 0-3 units of Renegade Marauders as Elites choices.

Covenant of Khorne – The army may include 0-1 unit of Blood Slaughterers as an Elites choice.

Covenant of Nurgle – The army may include 0-1 unit of Blight Drones as an Elites choice and Plague Zombie units as Troops choices.

Options
- The Arch-Demagogue may be upgraded to have the:
  - Chaos Covenant special rule ..... +10 points
- The unit may include up to:
  - 10 additional Disciples ..... +10 points per model
- The Arch-Demagogue may exchange their autopistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Autogun or lasgun or shotgun ..... Free
  - Bolt pistol ..... +2 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points
- The Arch-Demagogue may also be upgraded to have any of the following options:
  - Carapace armour ..... +5 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
  - Refractor field ..... +15 points
- One Disciple may carry one of the following:
  - Banner of the Apostate ..... +10 points
  - Banner of Hate ..... +25 points
- One other Disciple not already upgraded may carry a:
  - Command net vox ..... +5 points
- One other Disciple not already upgraded may replace their autogun with a:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points
  - Grenade launcher ..... +5 points
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points
- Replace two other Disciples with a Heavy Weapons Team armed with one of the following (only one Renegade Weapons Team may be taken in the unit):
  - Heavy stubber ..... +5 points
  - Mortar ..... +5 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +10 points
  - Autocannon ..... +10 points
  - Missile launcher (with frag and krak) ..... +15 points
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
- The entire squad may take krak grenades ..... + 5 points
- If the squad has a missile launcher, this may also have:
  - Flakk missiles ..... +10 points
- All Disciples in the squad may take:
  - Carapace armour ..... +20 points

HQ

0-1 Rogue Psykers Coven ..... 35 points each

As the fighting on Vraks became bloodier and more desperate, the renegade commanders began employing the self-destructive talents of rogue psykers as shock weapons, caring little for the eventual fate of these cursed individuals.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Rogue Psyker	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	8	-
Possessed	5	1	5	3	2	4	3	10	-

Unit Composition
- 1-5 Rogue Psykers (Rogue Psykers are bought as a single choice, but are deployed and act as separate units during play)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Close combat weapon

Special Rules (All)
- Independent Character
- Aura of the Witch
- Daemonic Possession

Special Rules (Rogue Psyker)
- Psyker (Mastery Level 1)

Daemonic Possession
If a model with this special rule takes a wound due to a Perils of the Warp attack, it is immediately replaced by a Possessed and removed from play. The Possessed enters play at full Wounds, regardless of how many the Rogue Psyker had remaining.

Powers of the Witch
A Rogue Psyker must randomly select one of the following psychic powers and may not select powers from any of the tables presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Use the table below to determine which power each Rogue Psyker in the coven has access to:

D6	Result
1-2	Creeping Terror
3-4	Warp Flux
5-6	Unnatural Vigour

Warp Flux.....Warp Charge 1
Driven by malevolent instinct and the half-heard whisperings of Daemons, the witch tears apart the barrier between realspace and the Warp, allowing a cascade of malefic energy to arc forth.

Warp Flux is a Witchfire power with the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Warp Flux	12"	7	-	Assault 1, Blast (3"), Haywire

Creeping Terror.....Warp Charge 1
Drawing on the hidden horrors that fester in the minds of all mortal creatures, the witch paralyses the target in abject terror for a brief moment, dulling reflexes and causing once-steady hands to shake in unfounded terror.

Creeping Terror is a Malediction power that targets a single enemy unit within 12". The target unit reduces its Initiative value to 1 and may only fire Snap Shots until the end of that unit's next turn. Units with the Fearless special rule are unaffected by this power, and units with the And They Shall Know No Fear special rule or Stubborn special rule may attempt a Leadership test, which if passed allows them to ignore the effects of this power.

Unnatural Vigour .....Warp Charge 1
Waves of putrid power spill from the transfixed form of the rogue psyker, granting a fevered burst of energy to those around him who have sold their souls to the powers of Chaos.

Unnatural Vigour is a Blessing power that may target any friendly unit within 12" of the Rogue Psyker. A unit affected by this power gains the Fleet and Crusader special rules for its duration.

HQ

0-1 Renegade Enforcers Cadre ..... 25 points each

The enforcers who served the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan kept the ill-disciplined hordes of his renegade army advancing on the enemy, and garnered the best of the weaponry and armour looted from Vrak's vast armouries.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Enforcer	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	*	5+

Unit Composition
- 1-5 Renegade Enforcers (Renegade Enforcers are bought as a single choice, but when units are deployed must be attached to a Renegade Infantry unit, Renegade Mutant Rabble or Renegade Veteran unit – they cannot then leave that unit during play and each unit may not have more than one Enforcer attached to it)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Close combat weapon
- Flak armour
- Laspistol, autopistol or stub gun

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth
- Baleful Judge

Options
- An Enforcer may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Lasgun, autogun or shotgun ..... Free
  - Bolt pistol ..... +5 points
  - Power weapon ..... +15 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +25 points
- An Enforcer may have any of the following:
  - Carapace armour ..... +5 points
  - Combat drugs injectors ..... +10 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points

Baleful Judge
Whilst part of a unit, a model with this special rule adds +1 to the unit's Leadership value (to a maximum of 10), and should the unit fail any Morale check or Leadership test, one other friendly model (chosen by the controlling player) must be removed from the unit as a casualty and the failed test/check re-rolled. Note that if the re-rolled test also fails then another model is not removed as a casualty, nor may the test be re-rolled again.

A model with this special rule may not become the army's Warlord.



ELITES

Renegade Chaos Spawn ..... 55 points

(May only be selected through the use of the Master of Renegades special rule)

During the last days of the Siege of Vraks, many of the Apostate Cardinal's deluded followers met their end as mewling Chaos Spawn. Put to use as sacrificial shock troops, these insane creatures fought on until they were literally hacked limb from limb.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Chaos Spawn	3	0	5	5	3	3	D6	10	-

Unit Composition
- 3 Renegade Chaos Spawn

Unit Type
- Beasts

Special Rules
- Fear
- Fearless
- Rage
- Very Bulky
- Random Attacks
- Mutated Beyond Reason

Random Attacks
At the beginning of each Fight sub-phase, roll a D6 for each friendly Chaos Spawn unit that is locked in combat. The result is the number of Attacks (before modifiers) that all Chaos Spawn in the unit have this turn.

Mutated Beyond Reason
At the beginning of each Fight sub-phase, before rolling for their Random Attacks, roll a D3 on the table below for each friendly Chaos Spawn unit that is locked in combat. The mutation affects every Chaos Spawn model in the unit and lasts for the rest of the turn.

D3	Mutation
1	**Subcutaneous Armour:** The Chaos Spawn unit gains an armour save of 4+.
2	**Grasping Pseudopods:** The Chaos Spawn unit rolls an additional D6 and picks the highest single dice to determine their Random Attacks for this turn.
3	**Toxic Haemorrhage:** The Chaos Spawn unit's Attacks gain the Poisoned (4+) special rule.



ELITES

Renegade Disciple Squad ..... 35 points

The core of Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's army were the fanatically loyal disciples recruited from amongst the frateris militia and other religious zealots that flocked to Vraks. Armed with the best of the weaponry looted from Vrak's arsenals, the Disciples were used to stiffen the resistance of lesser units wherever the Imperium's troops pressed their attacks.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Disciple Champion	4	4	3	3	1	3	2	*	5+
Disciple	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	*	5+
Disciple Heavy Weapons Team	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	*	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 Disciple Champion
- 4 Disciples

Unit Type
- Disciple Champion: Infantry (Character)
- Disciples and Heavy Weapons Team: Infantry

Wargear
- Autogun or lasgun or shotgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Flak armour

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth
- Fanatic

Transport
- The unit may select a Chimera as a Dedicated Transport choice.

Options
- The squad may include up to:
  - Five additional Disciples ..... +10 points per model
- The Disciple Champion may be upgraded to have the:
  - Chaos Covenant special rule ..... +10 points
- The Disciple Champion may exchange their autogun, lasgun or shotgun and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Autopistol, laspistol or stubgun ..... Free
  - Bolt pistol ..... +2 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +15 points
  - Power weapon ..... +15 points
  - Power fist ..... +25 points
- The Disciple Champion may also be upgraded to have any of the following options:
  - Carapace armour ..... +5 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
- One other Disciple not already upgraded may carry one of the following upgrades:
  - Vox-caster ..... +5 points
  - Chaos sigil ..... +10 points
- One other Disciple not already upgraded may replace their autogun with a:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points
  - Grenade launcher ..... +5 points
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points
- Replace two other Disciples with a Heavy Weapons Team armed with one of the following:
  - Heavy stubber ..... +5 points
  - Mortar ..... +5 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +10 points
  - Autocannon ..... +10 points
  - Missile launcher (with frag and krak) ..... +15 points
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
- The entire squad may take krak grenades ..... + 5 points
- If the squad has a missile launcher, this may also have:
  - Flakk missiles ..... +10 points
- All Disciples in the squad may take:
  - Carapace armour ..... +20 points

ELITES

Renegade Ogryn Brutes..... 60 points

Used as workers on many Imperial worlds where manual labour in extreme conditions is required, such as the construction yards of Vraks, Ogryns are creatures of ferocious power and strength, but limited intellect. Renegade armies are quick to force such creatures into their ranks, using crude surgical procedures, combat drugs and sorcerous rituals to control the beasts and set them upon their enemies in a drug-addled haze of rage.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Ogryn Brute	4	3	5	5	3	2	D6	6	-
Packmaster	4	3	5	5	3	2	D6	6	-
Chaos Hound	3	1	5	5	2	4	3	5	-

Unit Composition
- 1 Ogryn Brute

Unit Type
- Ogryn Brute: Infantry
- Packmaster: Infantry
- Chaos Hound: Infantry

Wargear (All)
- Close combat weapon

Wargear (Ogryn Brutes & Packmaster only)
- Frag grenades

Special Rules (All)
- Very Bulky
- Hammer of Wrath
- Fearless

Special Rules (Ogryn Brutes)
- Rampage

Special Rules (Chaos Hounds)
- Run Them Down

Special Rules (Packmaster)
- Packmaster

Options
- The unit may include up to:
  - Nine additional Ogryn Brutes ..... +60 points each
- One Ogryn Brute may be upgraded to a:
  - Packmaster ..... Free
- A unit of Ogryn Brutes that includes a Packmaster may take up to:
  - Six additional Chaos Hounds ..... +30 points each
- One Ogryn Brute per unit may be upgraded to have a:
  - Lascutter or power drill ..... +15 points
- All Ogryn Brutes in the unit may be given one of the following upgrades:
  - Flak armour ..... +10 points
  - Carapace armour ..... +25 points
- All Ogryn Brutes in the unit may be dedicated to one of the Chaos powers:
  - Dedicated to Khorne ..... +25 points
  - Dedicated to Nurgle ..... +35 points

Run Them Down: When making any rolls for a Sweeping Advance, a unit with at least one model with this special rule may roll one additional D6 and discard the dice which scored lowest before deciding the result.

Packmaster: During any close combat, the Packmaster must be placed in base contact with one or more Chaos Hounds (if any remain in play), but as long as a Chaos Hound he is in base contact with is in base contact with an enemy model, the Packmaster counts as being in contact with the same enemy model.

Lascutter/power Drill

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Lascutter/ power drill	-	9	2	Melee, Unwieldy, Cumbersome

Cumbersome: A model using a close combat weapon with this special rule can only ever make a single attack at WS 1 in an Assault phase, regardless of their profile or any bonus or other special rule.

Dedicated to Chaos

Dedicated to Khorne: A unit of Ogryn Brutes dedicated to Khorne may re-roll the dice rolled to determine the number of attacks the unit will receive in close combat.

Dedicated to Nurgle: A unit of Ogryn Brutes dedicated to Nurgle gains the Feel No Pain (5+) special rule.

ELITES

Renegade Blood Slaughterers ..... 130 points each

(May only be selected through the use of the Master of Renegades special rule)

These daemon engines are often sighted among those blood-mad hordes of renegades that have dedicated themselves to the worship of Khorne.

An army whose Warlord has taken a Chaos Covenant of Khorne may include 0-1 units of Renegade Blood Slaughterers.

				Armour					
	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Blood Slaughterer	5	1	6	13	12	10	4	3	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Blood Slaughterers

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Walker)

Wargear
- Two Dreadnought close combat weapons

Special Rules
- Daemon of Khorne
- Daemonic Resilience
- Deep Strike
- Fleet
- Fury of Khorne
- Rampage
- Blind Fury

Options
- Any Blood Slaughterer may replace one of its Dreadnought close combat weapons with an:
  - Impaler ..... +5 points

Fury of Khorne: Consumed by battle lust, a Blood Slaughterer is a whirling frenzy of death, smashing into enemy lines. When charging into an assault, a Blood Slaughterer gains an additional +D3 attacks instead of the usual +1 (in addition to any gained from the Rampage special rule).

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Impaler	12"	8	3	Assault 1, Impaler

Impaler: Using the Impaler counts as a shooting attack, which hits on a 4+. If the target model is a vehicle, and the attack successfully penetrates the target's armour, or if it is a Monstrous Creature and the attack scores an unsaved wound, then the target model is immediately moved 2D6" directly towards the Blood Slaughterer. If the target model is moved into base contact with the Blood Slaughterer that made the attack, then the Blood Slaughterer is counted as having charged the target model.

Note that models struck by the Impaler may not be dragged through impassable terrain, other Monstrous Creatures or vehicles, or gaps between such items that they cannot fit through – in these cases the model stops moving 1" away from the obstruction. Other terrain factors and infantry, Beasts or Cavalry models are ignored.

Infantry models can be repositioned if needs be, once the target model has finished moving, by their controlling player in order to make room for the target model, with the proviso that units which are already locked in combat must remain locked in combat.

Buildings, Super-heavy vehicles, Flyers and Gargantuan Creatures cannot be dragged by the Impaler.

Blind Fury: In the controlling player's Movement phase, the Blood Slaughterer must always move as far as possible towards the closest visible enemy model, and must consolidate the maximum allowed distance towards the nearest enemy model after an assault. In the Shooting phase, the controlling player may choose whether or not to Run with a Blood Slaughterer, but if the controlling player chooses to have the model Run, it must move as far as possible towards the closest visible enemy model. If no enemy models are visible to a Blood Slaughterer unit, then these restrictions do not apply and it may move freely as per the standard rules.

Daemonic Resilience: A vehicle with this special rule ignores Crew Shaken and Crew Stunned vehicle damage results on a 2+.

Daemon of Khorne: Daemons of Khorne have the Daemon, Furious Charge and Hatred (Daemons of Slaanesh) special rules.

ELITES

Renegade Blight Drones..... 150 points each

(May only be selected through the use of the Master of Renegades special rule)

The bloated corpses and disease-wracked worlds left in the wake of a legion of Nurgle's followers provide the perfect feeding ground for these vile daemon engines, which then accompany Nurgle's armies to battle seeking further carrion.

An army whose Warlord has taken a Chaos Covenant of Nurgle may include 0-1 units of Renegade Blight Drones.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Blight Drone	2	12	11	10	2

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Blight Drones

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Flyer, Hover)

Wargear
- One mawcannon
- One reaper autocannon

Special Rules
- Daemon of Nurgle
- Daemonic Resilience
- Deep Strike
- Explosion of Pus

Explosion of Pus: When a Blight Drone is destroyed, it invariably detonates in a shower of bile and pus. When the Blight Drone loses its last Hull Point, it always explodes as per the Explodes! Vehicle Damage table result rather than becoming Wrecked.

Mawcannon

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Mawcannon				
- Vomit	Template	6	4	Assault 1
- Phlegm	36"	8	3	Assault 1, Large Blast (5")

Daemonic Resilience: A vehicle with this special rule ignores Crew Shaken and Crew Stunned vehicle damage results on a 2+.

Daemon of Nurgle: Daemons of Nurgle have the Daemon, Hatred (Daemons of Tzeentch), Shrouded and Slow and Purposeful special rules. In addition, units composed entirely of models with this special rule are treated as having defensive grenades.



TROOPS

Renegade Infantry Platoon .....(Total Cost of Units)

The foot soldiers of the Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's army were drawn from the ranks of the planetary militia as well as being simple workers and misguided fanatics with stolen weaponry. Few of these once-loyal men were the equal of the Imperium's battle-hardened Astra Militarum regiments, but the Apostate Cardinal's generals spent their lives with abandon to hold back the Imperial counterattack.

Renegade Infantry Platoons are made up of 3-5 Renegade Infantry Squads, one of which must be designated as the platoon's Command Squad for no additional cost. The Platoon Command Squad may replace its Renegade Champion for a Demagogue for free, and any vox-caster included in the squad may be exchanged for a command net vox for free. Each Renegade Infantry Platoon counts as a single Troops choice on the Force Organisation chart and is rolled for collectively when rolling for Reserves.

Renegade Infantry Squad ..... 30 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Demagogue	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	*	-
Renegade Champion	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	*	-
Renegade	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	*	-
Renegade Weapon Team	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	*	-

Unit Composition
- 10 Renegades

Unit Type
- Renegade Champion & Demagogue: Infantry (Character)
- Renegades & Renegade Weapon Teams: Infantry

Wargear
- Autopistol, laspistol or stub gun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth

Transport
- If the unit numbers 12 models or less, it may select a Chimera as a Dedicated Transport choice.

Options
- The unit may include up to:
  - Ten additional Renegades ..... +3 points per model
- Any one Renegade may be upgraded to a:
  - Renegade Champion ..... +5 points
- For every five models in the unit, one Renegade may be upgraded to have one of the following†:
  - Flamer ..... +5 points
  - Grenade launcher ..... +5 points
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points
  - Vox-caster ..... +5 points
  - Chaos sigil ..... +5 points

  †*No single model may have more than one of the upgrades listed above.*
- For every ten models in the unit, two Renegades may be exchanged for a single Renegade Weapons Team, which must select one of the following options:
  - Heavy stubber ..... +5 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +10 points
  - Autocannon ..... +10 points
  - Missile launcher (frag & krak missiles) ..... +15 points
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
- Any Renegade or Renegade Champion may exchange their autopistol, laspistol or stub gun for one of the following:
  - Lasgun, autogun or shotgun ..... Free
- The entire squad may take one of the following upgrades:
  - Sub-flak armour ..... +5 points
  - Militia Training (+1 WS & +1 BS for all Renegades and Renegade Weapon Teams in the unit) ..... +10 points
  - Krak grenades ..... +10 points
- The Renegade Champion may have any of the following:
  - Carapace armour ..... +10 points
  - Chaos Covenant ..... +20 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
  - Power weapon ..... +15 points
  - Power fist ..... +25 points
  - Bolt pistol ..... +5 points

TROOPS

Renegade Infantry Veterans ..... 35 points

Gathered from amongst the masses of conscripted workers and Vraks militia, those citizens and pilgrims with military training and a talent for killing were formed into separate units, intended to stiffen the resolve of the untrained and poorly led masses of the Apostate Cardinal's army. Many of these units were also inducted into the worship of those powers Xaphan had come to serve, and quickly fell into debased and ruinous practices.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Veteran Champion	4	3	3	3	1	3	2	*	5+
Renegade Veteran	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	*	5+

Unit Composition
- 5 Renegade Veterans

Unit Type
- Veteran Champion: Infantry (Character)
- Renegade Veterans: Infantry

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth

Wargear
- Autopistol, laspistol or stub gun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Flak armour

Transport
- The unit may select a Chimera as a Dedicated Transport choice.

Options
- The unit may include up to:
  - Five additional Renegade Veterans... +10 points per model
- Any one Renegade may be upgraded to a:
  - Renegade Champion .....+5 points
- For every five models in the unit, one Renegade Veteran may be upgraded to have one of the following*:
  - Flamer .....+5 points
  - Grenade launcher .....+5 points
  - Meltagun .....+10 points
  - Plasma gun.....+15 points
  - Vox-caster .....+5 points
  - Chaos sigil.....+5 points

  **No single model may have more than one of the upgrades listed above.*
- Any Renegade Veteran or Veteran Champion may exchange his autopistol, laspistol or stub gun for one of the following:
  - Lasgun, autogun or shotgun.....Free
- The entire squad may take one of the following upgrades:
  - Carapace armour.....+20 points
  - Scout special rule.....+15 points
  - Furious Charge special rule .....+25 points
  - Deep Strike special rule.....+15 points
  - Tank Hunters special rule .....+25 points
- The Veteran Champion may have any of the following:
  - Chaos Covenant.....+10 points
  - Melta bombs .....+5 points
  - Power weapon .....+15 points
  - Power fist .....+25 points
  - Bolt pistol .....+5 points

TROOPS

Renegade Mutant Rabble..... 30 points

As the war on Vraks turned against the Apostate Cardinal, his followers scoured the besieged world for any warriors they could find to cast into battle. Dwelling in the depths of Vrak's mine workings and the most inhospitable portions of the wasteland, outcast mutants, once hunted and persecuted by the Imperial overlords of Vraks, were forced to take up arms for Xaphan.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Mutant Champion	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	*	-
Mutant	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	*	-

Unit Composition
- 10 Mutants

Unit Type
- Mutant Champion: Infantry (Character)
- Mutants: Infantry

Wargear
- Autopistol, laspistol or stub gun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth
- Curse of Mutation

Options
- The unit may include up to:
  - 40 additional Mutants ..... +3 points per model
- Any one Mutant may be upgraded to a:
  - Mutant Champion ..... +5 points
- Any Mutant or Mutant Champion may exchange their autopistol, laspistol or stub gun for one of the following:
  - Lasgun, autogun or shotgun ..... Free
- The entire squad may take one of the following upgrades:
  - Sub-flak armour ..... +10 points
- The Mutant Champion may have any of the following:
  - Chaos Covenant ..... +15 points
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
  - Power weapon ..... +15 points

TROOPS

Plague Zombie Mob ..... 30 points

(May only be selected through the use of the Master of Renegades special rule)

With the crater-blasted wastelands of Vraks saturated with the chem-poisons of forbidden weapons dredged up from the depths of the Vraksian armouries and the ministrations of the followers of Nurgle, the dead began to rise and stalk the battlefields at the whim of those who pledged themselves to the service of Father Nurgle.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Plague Zombie	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	-	-

Unit Composition
- 10 Plague Zombies

Unit Type
- Infantry

Wargear
- Close combat weapon

Special Rules
- Fearless
- Feel No Pain (4+)
- Slow and Purposeful
- Warp Plague

Options
- The unit may include up to:
  - 40 additional Plague Zombies ..... +3 points per model

Warp Plague
Every bite and scratch inflicted by plague zombies carries the Warp Plague, and can quickly infect and overcome even the most resilient warrior, ravaging his body and remaking him as one of the living dead.

If a unit of Plague Zombies defeats a unit in close combat, either destroying it outright or forcing it to flee, it may add D3 new Plague Zombies to the unit after it has consolidated – this may bring the unit above its starting unit strength.

If no appropriate models are available to be placed on the table then no additional Plague Zombies are added to the unit.



FAST ATTACK

Renegade Hellhound Squadron

Operated by those of the planetary militia that sided with Xaphan, these vehicles formed the core of brigades used to block Imperial breakthroughs; their inferno cannon and other heavy weaponry ideal for saturating captured positions and forcing the Imperium's units into retreat.

A Renegade Hellhound Squadron is composed of 1-4 vehicles chosen from the following list in any combination:

Renegade Hellhound ..... **115 points each**
Renegade Devil Dog ..... **125 points each**
Renegade Bane Wolf ..... **120 points each**

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Renegade Hellhound	2	12	12	10	3
Renegade Devil Dog	2	12	12	10	3
Renegade Bane Wolf	2	12	12	10	3

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Fast)

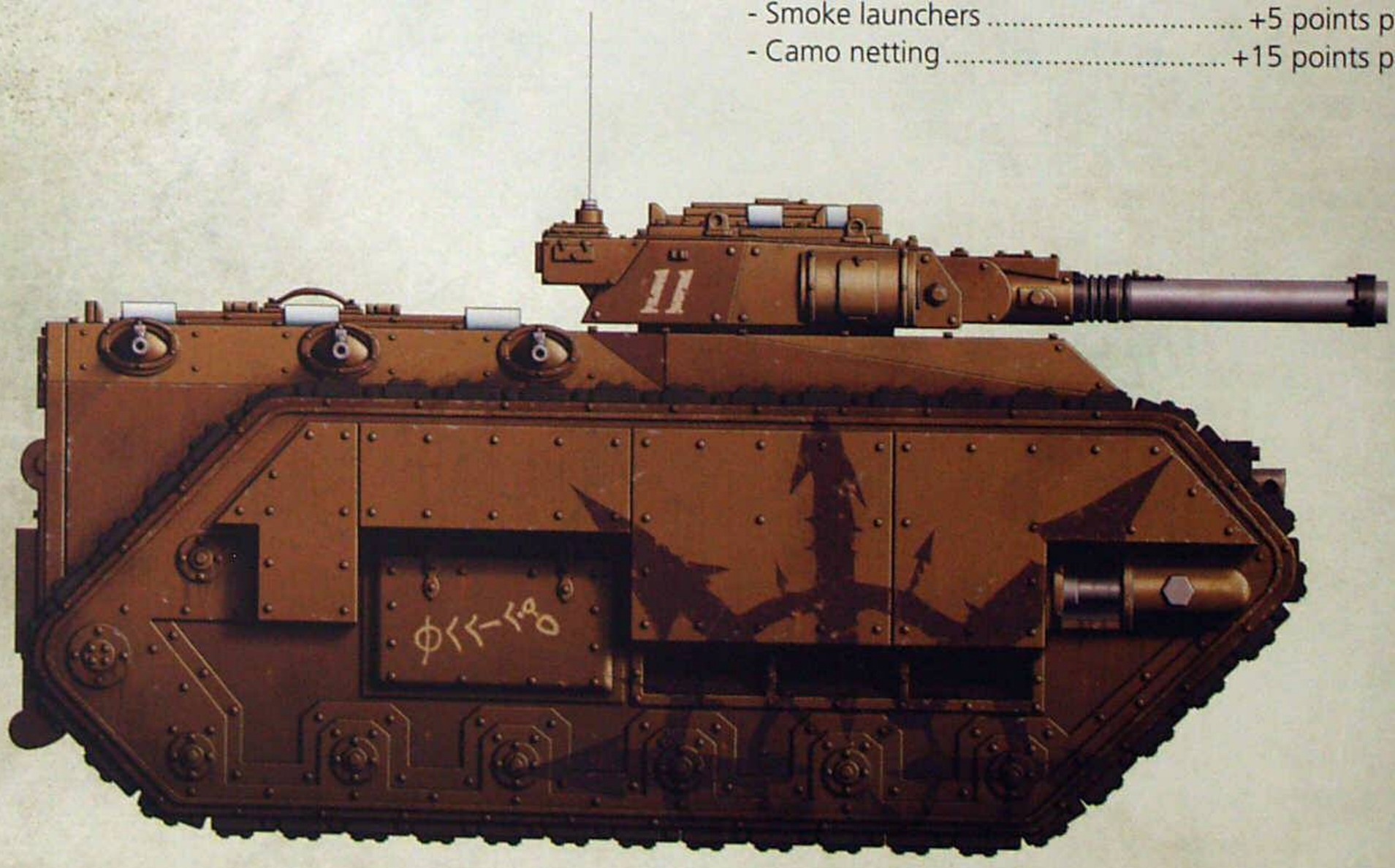
Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter

Wargear (Renegade Hellhound)
- Inferno cannon

Wargear (Renegade Devil Dog)
- Melta cannon

Wargear (Renegade Bane Wolf)
- Chem cannon

Options
- Any model may replace their heavy bolter with:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following upgrades:
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or Heavy stubber ..... +5 points per model
  - One hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Mine plough ..... +10 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- The entire squadron may take:
  - Militia Training (increase BS to 3) ..... +10 points per model
  - Smoke launchers ..... +5 points per model
  - Camo netting ..... +15 points per model



Chimera armoured transport of an unidentified rebel planetary militia unit. Tacticae analysis completed after the third assault on Communion Ridge (Phase Line 77-K) concluded that this vehicle was drawn from the sector reserves stored deep below the Vraks fortress and had taken part in several other uprisings across the region. It was destroyed by consecrated flame during the fall of the Citadel of Vraks.

FAST ATTACK

Renegade Sentinel Squadron ..... 60 points

Though many thousands of Sentinel walkers were recovered from the arsenals of Vraks, few among the Apostate Cardinal's followers were trained in their proper use. Instead, the renegade army employed these machines enmasse as the spearhead of infantry attacks.

				Armour					
	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Renegade Sentinel	2	2	5	10	10	10	3	1	2

Unit Composition
- 3 Renegade Sentinels

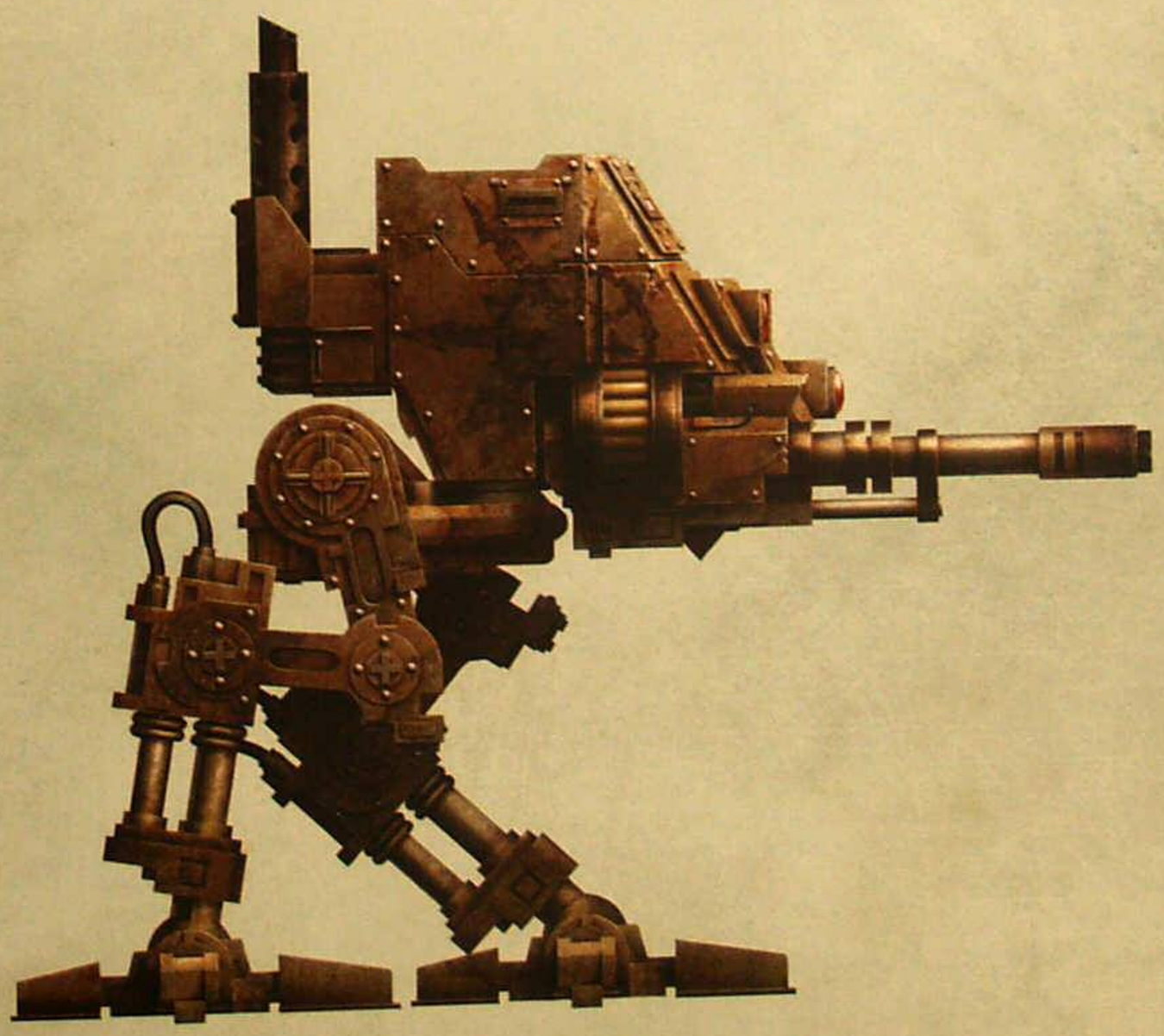
Unit Type
- Vehicle (Walker, Open-topped)

Wargear
- Multi-laser
- Searchlight

Special Rules
- Move Through Cover

Options
- The squadron may include up to:
  - Three additional Renegade Sentinels ..... +20 points per model
- Any Renegade Sentinel may replace its multi-laser with one of the following weapons:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Autocannon ..... +5 points each
  - Missile launcher (with frag and krak missiles) ..... +5 points each
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points each
  - Multiple rocket pod ..... +10 points each
- Any Renegade Sentinel may take any of the following:
  - One hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points each
- The entire squadron may take any of the following upgrades:
  - Militia Training (increase BS & WS to 3) ..... +40 points
  - Smoke launchers ..... +20 points
  - Camo netting ..... +50 points
  - Heavy Armour ..... +80 points

Heavy Armour: A unit of Renegade Sentinels with this upgrade loses the Move Through Cover special rule, but gains Extra Armour and increases its Front Armour to 12.



Armoured Sentinel, recovered from the Basatan Wastes over a thousand kilometres south-west of the Vraks primary war zone. The walker's mission, so far from the main focus of the siege, was never ascertained and it may be that the apostate forces were reconnoitring a route for a counter-attack or a second front that was never realised.

FAST ATTACK

Renegade Salamander Squadron ..... 45 points per model

Those Salamanders employed by Apostate Cardinal Xaphan's armies were most often pressed into a role as light attack vehicles, rather than the scouting role they were designed for, relying on their heavy flamers to decimate Imperial infantry formations.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Renegade Salamander	2	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Renegade Salamanders

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped, Fast)

Wargear
- Heavy flamer
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Special Rules
- Amphibious

Options
- Any Renegade Salamander may exchange its heavy flamer for one of the following:
  - Heavy bolter ..... Free
  - Autocannon ..... Free
- Any Renegade Salamander may take any of the following:
  - Militia Training (increase BS to 3) ..... +10 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted heavy stubber or storm bolter ..... +5 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozerblade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
  - Mine plough ..... +15 points per model



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Tank Squadron ..... See below for cost

The ubiquitous Leman Russ was another common vehicle of the Imperium stored by the hundreds in the armouries of Vraks. Though the renegade armies of Vraks suffered from no shortage of vehicles, they were lacking in skilled crew to man them, and most of those sent into battle were crewed by conscript soldiers with little knowledge of their use.

Renegade Leman Russ Battle Tank ..... **140 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Exterminator ..... **120 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Conqueror ..... **110 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Annihilator ..... **120 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Vanquisher ..... **125 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Eradicator ..... **110 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Punisher ..... **130 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Executioner ..... **145 points each**
Renegade Leman Russ Demolisher ..... **160 points each**

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Leman Russ Battle Tank	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Annihilator	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Conqueror	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Exterminator	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Vanquisher	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Eradicator	2	14	13	10	3
Leman Russ Demolisher	2	14	13	11	3
Leman Russ Punisher	2	14	13	11	3
Leman Russ Executioner	2	14	13	11	3

Unit Composition
- 1- 3 vehicles

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Heavy)
- Vehicle (Tank, Fast) (Leman Russ Conqueror only)

Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Wargear (Specific)
- Leman Russ Battle Tank: Battle cannon
- Leman Russ Annihilator: Twin-linked lascannon
- Leman Russ Conqueror: Conqueror cannon and co-axial storm bolter
- Leman Russ Exterminator: Exterminator autocannon
- Leman Russ Vanquisher: Vanquisher battle cannon
- Leman Russ Eradicator: Eradicator nova cannon
- Leman Russ Demolisher: Demolisher siege cannon
- Leman Russ Punisher: Punisher gatling cannon
- Leman Russ Executioner: Executioner plasma cannon

Options
- Any model may exchange its heavy bolter for:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take a pair of sponsons armed with:
  - Heavy bolters ..... +20 points per model
  - Heavy flamers ..... +10 points per model
  - Multi-meltas ..... +20 points per model
  - Plasma cannon ..... +30 points per model
- Any model in the squadron may take any of the following:
  - Pintle-mounted heavy stubber or storm bolter ....+5 points
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozerblade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- A Vanquisher's Vanquisher battle cannon may have a:
  - Co-axial storm bolter or heavy stubber .....+10 points
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Mine plough ..... +15 points per model
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points per model

Co-axial Weapons: A Vanquisher battle cannon equipped with a co-axial storm bolter or heavy stubber must always fire the co-axial weapon before the Vanquisher battle cannon. If the co-axial weapon hits and the Vanquisher battle cannon fires at the same target then the Vanquisher battle cannon gains the Twin-linked special rule for that attack only.

HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Artillery Battery

Artillery tanks such as the Basilisk and Medusa are prized by the commanders of the Apostate Cardinal's armies for their ability to support the assault of massed infantry with long ranged explosive death. Few of the renegade artillery commanders baulked from targeting areas dangerously close to their own comrades during the years of fighting on Vraks.

Renegade Basilisk ..... 115 points per model
Renegade Medusa ..... 105 points per model

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Renegade Basilisk	2	12	10	10	3
Renegade Medusa	2	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Artillery Pieces in any combination

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped)

Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

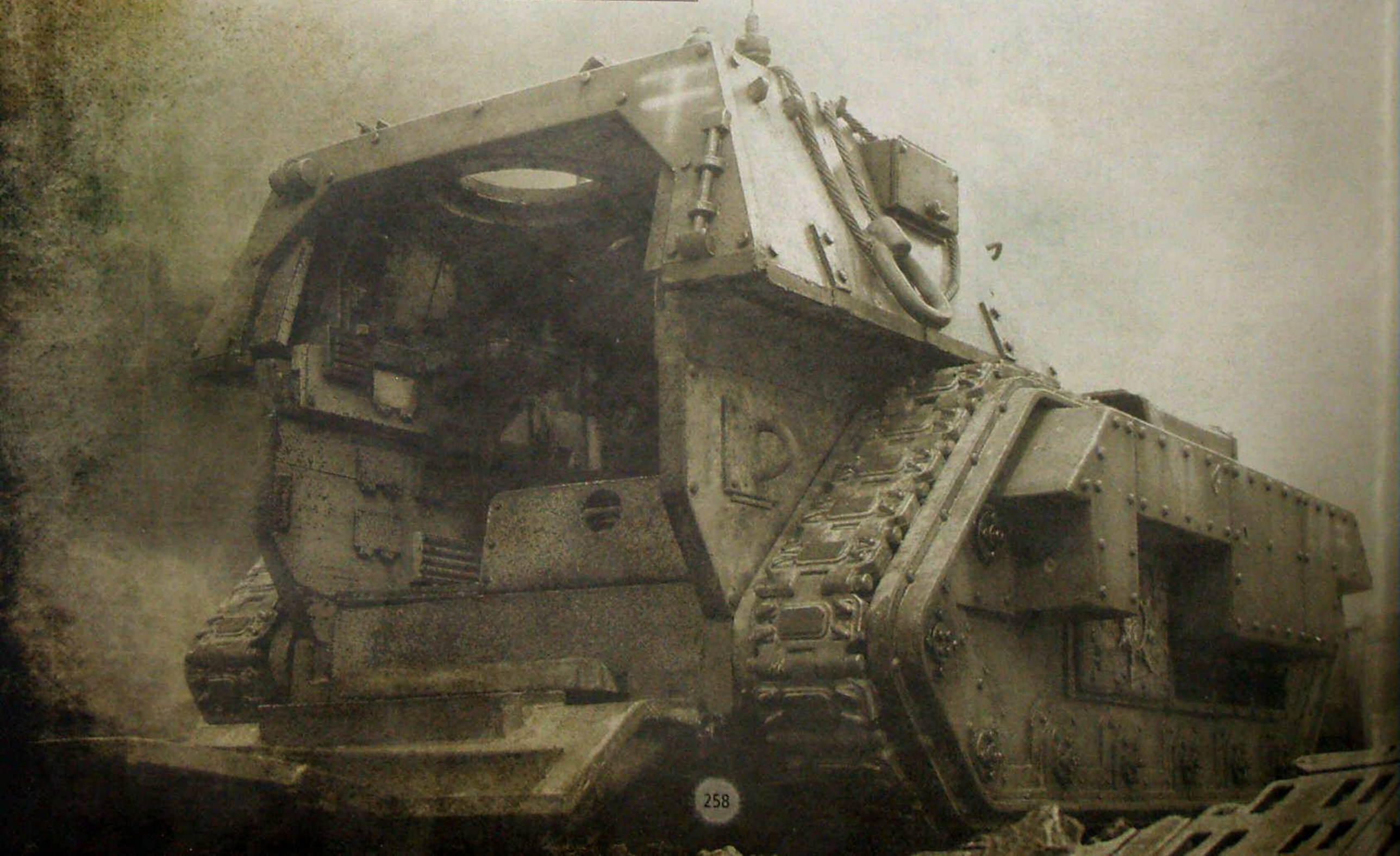
Wargear (Basilisk)
- Earthshaker cannon

Wargear (Medusa)
- Medusa siege cannon

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with a:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Enclosed crew compartment ..... +15 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +10 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- The entire squadron may take:
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points per model
- Any Medusa may take:
  - Bastion-breacher shells ..... +5 points per model

Breacher Shells

Range	**Str**	**AP**	**Type**
48"	10	1	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Armourbane



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Strike Battery

These more specialised artillery vehicles were often used for close support of renegade assaults, where the damage their weapons inflicted in tightly packed Imperial trenches was rightly feared. The inherent precision of ordnance such as the Griffon and Wyvern compensated for the often unskilled crews assigned to them, though maintenance of such complex war engines was often limited.

Renegade Griffon ..... **35 points per model**
Renegade Wyvern ..... **55 points per model**

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Renegade Griffon	2	12	10	10	3
Renegade Wyvern	2	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-5 artillery pieces in any combination

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped)

Wargear (All)
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Wargear (Griffon)
- Griffon heavy mortar

Wargear (Wyvern)
- Two twin-linked stormshard mortars

Special Rules (Griffon)
- Accurate Bombardment

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with a:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Enclosed crew compartment ..... +15 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +10 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra Armour ..... +10 points per model
- The entire squadron may take:
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points per model

Accurate Bombardment
When a Renegade Griffon fires its heavy mortar, the controlling player may re-roll the Scatter dice if they wish.



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Hydra Battery

As the mainstay of Imperial anti-aircraft batteries, many Hydra tanks were recovered by renegade forces from the armouries of Vraks. These vehicles were used for the same duties they performed for the Imperium, guarding the approaches to the Citadel of Vraks from the Imperial Navy's bomber squadrons.

Renegade Hydra ..... 60 points per model

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Renegade Hydra	2	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Renegade Hydra

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped)

Wargear
- Two twin-linked Hydra autocannon
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with a:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Enclosed crew compartment ..... +15 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +10 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
- The entire squadron may take:
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points per model



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Bombard Battery ..... 145 points per model

The deepest vaults of Vrak's arsenal contained detachments of many ancient vehicles and weapons of war long since forgotten and abandoned by the Imperium. The ancient Colossus bombard was one such weapon, with almost eighty of these vehicles recovered from the armoury's depths and put to use shelling the Imperium's trenches and fortifications.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Renegade Colossus	2	12	10	10	3

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Renegade Colossus forming a battery

Unit Type
- Vehicle (Tank, Open-topped)

Wargear
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Colossus siege mortar

Options
- Any model may replace its heavy bolter with a:
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Enclosed crew compartment ..... +15 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy stubber ..... +5 points per model
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points per model



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Heavy Ordnance Battery..... 55 points per model

Simpler and more easily manufactured than battle tanks and self-propelled artillery, carriage-mounted artillery retains all of its more complex counterpart's killing power. Such weapons saw extensive use along the defensive fortifications that barred the Imperium's approach to the Apostate Cardinal's fortress on Vraks.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Renegade Crew	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	*	-
Artillery Carriage	-	-	-	7	4	-	-	-	3+

Unit Composition
- 1- 3 Artillery Carriages, each with four Renegade Crew

Unit Type
- Artillery Carriages: Artillery
- Renegade Crew: Infantry

Wargear (Renegade Crew)
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Lasguns
- Flak armour

Wargear (Artillery Carriage)
- Earthshaker cannon

Special Rules (Renegade Crew)
- Uncertain Worth

Special Rules (Artillery Carriage)
- Gun Carriage
- Immobile Artillery

Options
- All Artillery Carriages in the unit may upgrade their Earthshaker cannon to:
  - Medusa siege guns..... +25 points per model
- An Artillery Carriage equipped with a medusa siege gun may be upgraded to use:
  - Breacher shells..... +5 points per model
- Any Artillery Carriage may have up to:
  - Four additional Renegade Crew..... +3 points each
- All Renegade crew may be upgraded to have:
  - Militia Training (+1 BS & +1 WS).....+10 points
  - Sub-flak armour .....+5 points

Immobile Artillery: An Immobile Artillery piece cannot be moved after it has been deployed, and ignores any effect which forces it to move. This only affects the platform and the crew are subject to all normal artillery rules. When called upon to Fall Back, the crew must leave their guns behind and Fall Back – the platforms are then removed as casualties.

Gun Carriage: This unit may be moved if attached to a vehicle capable of towing it. This is possible even if this unit has the Immobile Artillery or Automated Artillery special rules.

Breacher Shells: A Medusa upgraded to fire breacher shells uses the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Breacher shells	48"	10	1	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Armourbane

HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Support Squad..... 25 points

Though equipped from the vast reserves of Vrak's armouries, renegade support teams were often forced to operate with less technologically complex weapons due to their lack of training. Though such weapons were inferior to those used by the Imperium's regiments they faced, the renegade fighters compensated with sheer weight of numbers.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Renegade Weapons Team	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	*	-

Unit Composition
- 3 Renegade Weapons Teams

Unit Type
- Renegade Weapons Teams: Infantry

Wargear
- Heavy stubber
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

Special Rules
- Uncertain Worth

Options
- The unit may include up to an additional:
  - 3 Renegades Weapons Teams..... + 10 points per model
- Any Renegade Weapons Team may exchange its heavy stubber for one of the following options:
  - Heavy bolter .....+5 points
  - Autocannon .....+10 points
  - Missile launcher (frag & krak missiles) .....+10 points
  - Lascannon .....+15 points
  - Mortar.....+5 points
- The entire squad may take one of the following upgrades:
  - Sub-flak armour .....+5 points
  - Militia Training (+1 WS & +1 BS for all Renegade Weapons Teams in the unit) .....+10 points
  - Krak grenades .....+10 points
- The entire unit may take the:
  - Chaos Covenant special rule.....+20 points

  (Note that all models in the squad must take the same Covenant).



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Rapier Laser Destroyer Battery ..... 20 points per model

The few Rapier carriers recovered by the Apostate Cardinal's warriors from the underground arsenals were truly ancient weapons, many having languished beneath the armoury world for millennia. Despite their age and complexity, these weapons were highly valued by Xaphan's commanders for their ability to destroy the Imperium's armour from carefully prepared defensive positions.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Renegade Crew	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	*	-
Rapier	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+

Unit Composition
- 1-3 Rapiers, each with a single Renegade Crewman, forming a battery.

Unit Type
- Artillery

Wargear (Crew)
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Shotgun, autogun or lasgun

Wargear (Artillery)
- Laser destroyer array

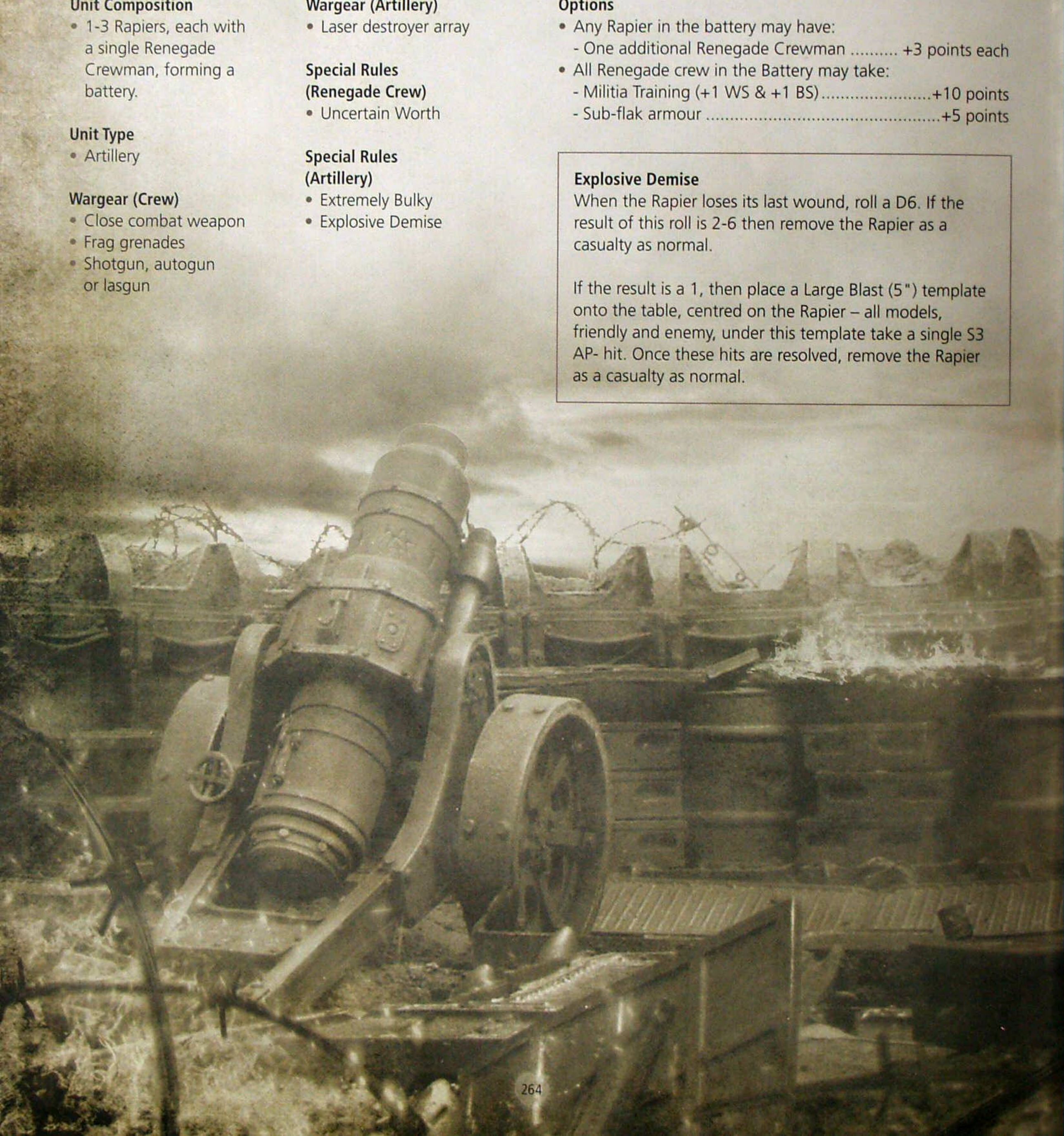
Special Rules (Renegade Crew)
- Uncertain Worth

Special Rules (Artillery)
- Extremely Bulky
- Explosive Demise

Options
- Any Rapier in the battery may have:
  - One additional Renegade Crewman ..... +3 points each
- All Renegade crew in the Battery may take:
  - Militia Training (+1 WS & +1 BS) .....+10 points
  - Sub-flak armour .....+5 points

Explosive Demise
When the Rapier loses its last wound, roll a D6. If the result of this roll is 2-6 then remove the Rapier as a casualty as normal.

If the result is a 1, then place a Large Blast (5") template onto the table, centred on the Rapier – all models, friendly and enemy, under this template take a single S3 AP- hit. Once these hits are resolved, remove the Rapier as a casualty as normal.



HEAVY SUPPORT

Renegade Field Artillery Battery ..... 30 points per model

Many thousands of light artillery pieces were put to use by the renegade armies on Vraks. These weapons were easily emplaced amongst the fortified defence lines that guarded the fortress of Vraks and were simple enough to be operated with a minimum of training, yet were capable of causing havoc among the tightly-packed Imperial infantry formations sent against them.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Renegade Crew	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	*	-
Heavy Quad Launcher	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+
Heavy Mortar	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	-	3+

Unit Composition
- 1-4 Heavy Quad Launchers or Heavy Mortars, each with three Renegade Crew, together forming a battery

Unit Type
- Artillery (Immobile)

Wargear (Crew)
- Lasgun
- Frag grenades
- Close combat weapon

Wargear (Artillery)
- Heavy Quad Launcher or Heavy Mortar

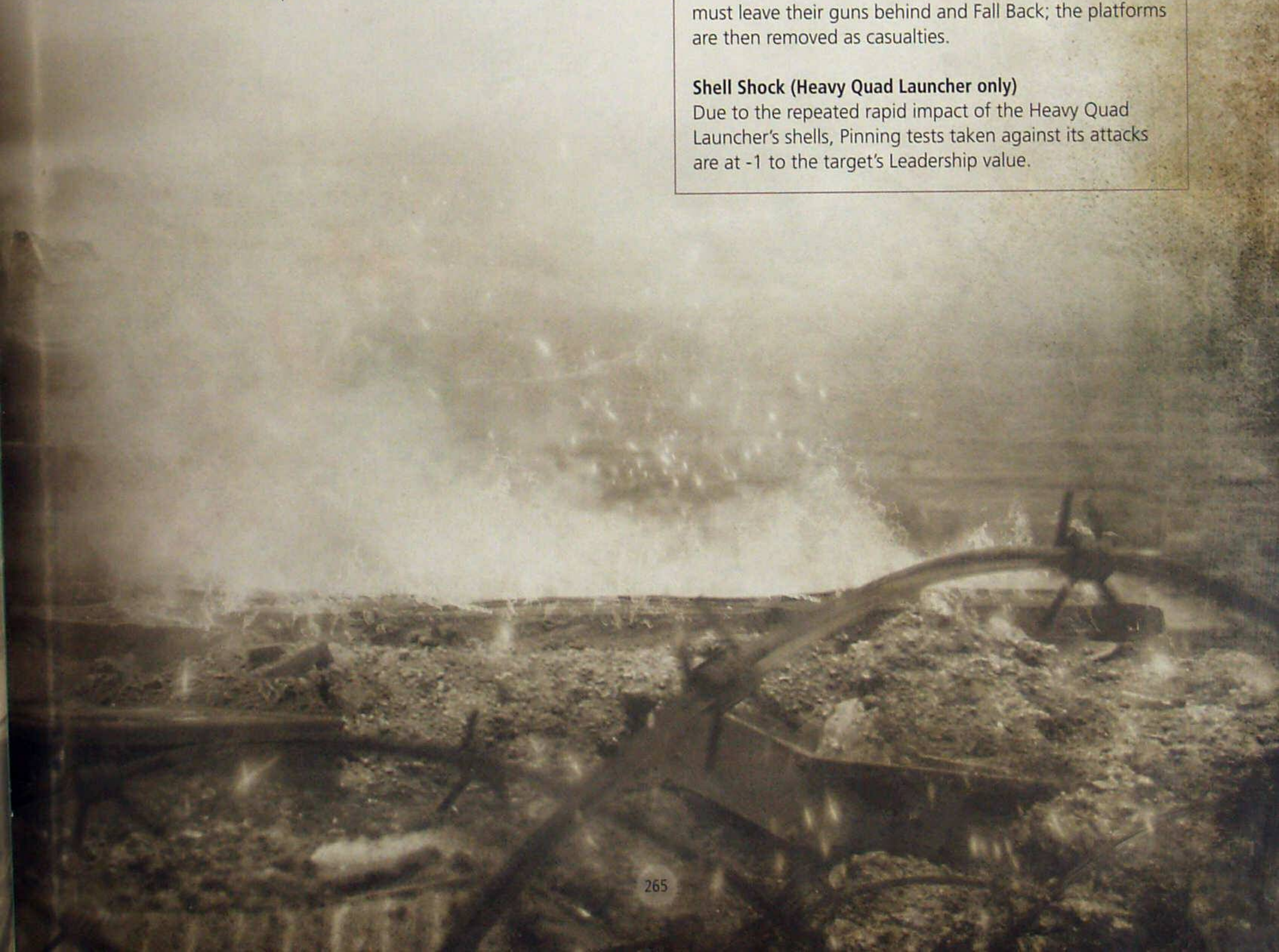
Special Rules (Renegade Crew)
- Uncertain Worth

Special Rules (Heavy Quad Launcher)
- Shell Shock

Options
- Any artillery piece may take up to:
  - Two additional Renegade Crewmen..... +3 points each
- All Renegade Crew in the Battery may take:
  - Militia Training (+1 WS & +1 BS).....+10 points
  - Sub-flak armour .....+5 points

Immobile
An Immobile Artillery piece cannot be moved after it has been deployed except by the use of a specialised vehicle, and ignores any effect which forces it to move. This only affects the platform; the crew are subject to all normal Artillery rules. When called upon to Fall Back, the crew must leave their guns behind and Fall Back; the platforms are then removed as casualties.

Shell Shock (Heavy Quad Launcher only)
Due to the repeated rapid impact of the Heavy Quad Launcher's shells, Pinning tests taken against its attacks are at -1 to the target's Leadership value.



LORDS OF WAR

Renegades of Vraks armies have access to a range of Lords of War choices – many of which can be found in other Imperial Armour books. The following is a complete list of all Lords of War choices available to a Renegades of Vraks army.

- **Khorne Lord of Skulls:** *Warhammer 40,000: Escalation*
- **Greater Brass Scorpion:** *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*
- **Daemon Lord Scabeiathrax the Bloated:** *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*
- **Daemon Lord An'ggrath the Unbound:** *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*
- **Giant Chaos Spawn:** *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*
- **Spined Chaos Beast:** *Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost and the Damned*
- **Macharius Heavy Tank:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Macharius Vanquisher:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Macharius Vulcan:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Macharius Omega:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*
- **Valdor Tank Hunter:** *Imperial Armour: Apocalypse*

LORDS OF WAR

Renegade Malcador Heavy Tank ..... 225 points per model

The Malcador is a formidable tank and its wide array of weapons, as well as the relative ease with which militia crews can operate it, make it a weapon of choice in the ranks of the enemies of Mankind. Conditions in the vehicle's interior are cramped, overheated and unpleasant, but insurgent warlords care little for the well-being of their followers.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Renegade Malcador	2	13	12	11	6

Unit Composition
- 1 Renegade Malcador

Unit Type
- Super-heavy vehicle

Wargear
- Turret-mounted battle cannon
- Hull-mounted heavy bolter
- Two sponsons, each with one heavy stubber
- Searchlight

Special Rules
- Obsolete Power Plant

Options
- The Malcador may take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy bolter ..... +10 points
  - Militia Training (+1 BS) ..... +10 points
- The Malcador may exchange its hull-mounted heavy bolter for one of the following:
  - Lascannon ..... +15 points
  - Autocannon ..... +5 points
- The Malcador may exchange its sponson weapons for:
  - Lascannon ..... +30 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +10 points
  - Autocannon ..... +20 points

Obsolete Power Plant
When moving at Combat Speed, a vehicle with this special rule rolls two D6 and selects the highest result – this is the maximum distance in inches that the vehicle may move. When moving at Cruising Speed, add +6" to the final result in order to determine the maximum distance that may be moved. Super-heavy vehicles are always treated as if moving at Cruising Speed.

LORDS OF WAR

Renegade Minotaur Artillery Tank..... 265 points per model

The Minotaur is used to support direct assaults against enemy positions, and has often been pressed into service by armies of renegades and heretics against Adeptus Arbites precinct-bastions and the fortified palaces of planetary governors. Both of these tend to attract the ire and hatred of a militia turned renegade or an invading mutant horde as they seek to tear down the most visible symbols of the Imperium's rule.

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Renegade Minotaur	2	13	12	14	6

Unit Composition
- 1 Renegade Minotaur

Unit Type
- Super-heavy vehicle (Open-topped)

Wargear
- Double earthshaker cannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Special Rules
- Indirect Fire
- Obsolete Power Plant (see page 266)

Options
- A Minotaur may take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile .....+10 points
  - Enclosed crew compartment.....+15 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy bolter.....+10 points
  - Militia Training (+1 BS).....+10 points

Thunderblitzing and Assaulting with the Minotaur
Models attacking the Minotaur in an assault strike its weakest Armour value (in this case the Side value of 12) to represent the vehicle's most vulnerable spots being hit.

Thunderblitz and Ram impacts by the Renegade Minotaur are resolved against its Rear Armour value, as are Death or Glory attacks made against it.

Indirect Fire
The vehicle's double earthshakers cannot be levelled for direct fire, and may only engage targets using the Barrage rules at a minimum range of 24".

	Range	**Str**	**AP**	**Type**
Double earthshaker	24"-240"	9	3	Primary Weapon 1, Massive Blast (7"), Pinning, Twin-linked

LORDS OF WAR

Renegade Malcador Defender..... 275 points per model

The Malcador Defender is armed with banks of heavy bolters, making it a fearsome tank indeed when employed against large numbers of lightly armed and equipped foes. Such is often the case when a heretic uprising is first launched, the callous rebels turning upon their fellows and gunning down their own kind in a brutal and irrevocable display of their casting off of their oaths to the God-Emperor of Mankind.

		Armour			
	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Renegade Malcador Defender	2	13	12	11	6

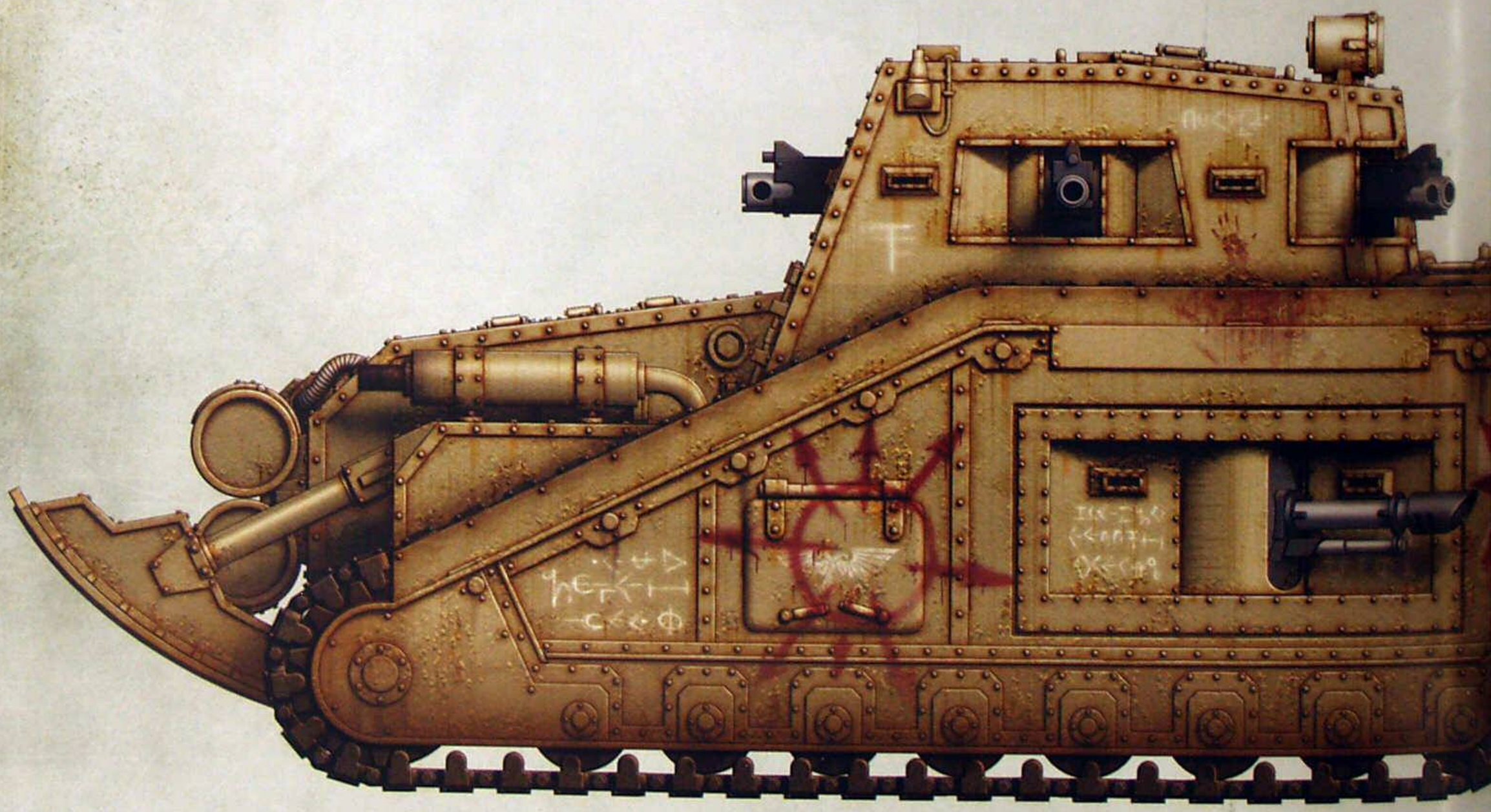
Unit Composition
- 1 Renegade Malcador Defender

Unit Type
- Super-heavy vehicle

Wargear
- Five turret-mounted heavy bolters
- Hull-mounted demolisher siege cannon
- Two sponsons, each with one heavy bolter
- Searchlight

Special Rules
- Obsolete Power Plant (see page 266)

Options
- The Malcador Defender may take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile .....+10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy bolter.....+10 points
  - Militia Training (+1 BS).....+10 points
- The Malcador Defender may exchange its sponson weapons for one of the following:
  - Lascannon .....+30 points
  - Heavy stubber .....Free
  - Autocannon .....+20 points



Malcador Defender Heavy Tank. By its markings, it is likely that this vehicle was captured from Death Korps forces, its original devotional and tactical icons deliberately defaced by its new crew. Note cultic runes, which Imperial forces were forbidden, under pain of death, from reading.

LORDS OF WAR

Renegade Baneblade Super-heavy Tank..... 490 points per model

The Baneblade is one of a class of super-heavy tanks that represent the epitome of the fighting vehicles of the Astra Militarum. It is rare indeed for a renegade army to gain access to the more specialised variants, but they might find themselves in possession of the most common. Even a single Baneblade in the ranks of renegade forces can tip the balance in a planetary uprising, for few loyal planetary militia have weapons powerful enough to threaten it.

		Armour			
	BS	**Front**	**Side**	**Rear**	**HP**
Renegade Baneblade	2	14	13	12	9

Unit Composition
- 1 Renegade Baneblade

Unit Type
- Super-heavy vehicle

Wargear
- Turret-mounted Baneblade cannon with co-axial autocannon
- Hull-mounted demolisher cannon
- Hull-mounted twin-linked heavy bolters
- Two sponsons, each with a lascannon and twin-linked heavy bolters
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

Special Rules
- Blasphemous Icon

Options
- A Renegade Baneblade may take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile .....+10 points
  - Pintle-mounted storm bolter or heavy bolter.... +10 points
  - Militia Training (+1 BS)..... +10 points
- A Renegade Baneblade may take one of the following:
  - Replace its two side sponsons with extra armour plates, increasing its Side Armour value to 14 .....Free
  - Take two additional side sponsons, each armed with lascannon and twin-linked heavy bolters..... +100 points

Baneblade Cannon with Co-axial Autocannon
The Baneblade's autocannon must be fired at the same target as the Baneblade cannon, and any damage result that affects the main weapon affects it as well. If the co-axial weapon is fired before the main weapon and scores at least one hit on the target unit, the main weapon's To Hit roll may be re-rolled.

Blasphemous Icon
When a mortal army of the Ruinous Powers goes to war with a Baneblade at its head, the air is filled with roars of adoration, for this mighty engine of war serves not just as a super-heavy tank, but as the apex of all the renegades stand for. Some bear fell runes upon their flanks, daubed in the blood of the renegades' foes. Some mount great icons of metal that cause the eyes of the faithful to bleed and their souls to wither. Some serve as altars to which the most terrible of offerings are made, while others have the still-living bodies of enemy leaders – planetary governors, Adeptus Arbites marshals, Administratum high adepts – skewered high atop their turrets, forcing the victim to witness the downfall of all they hold dear.

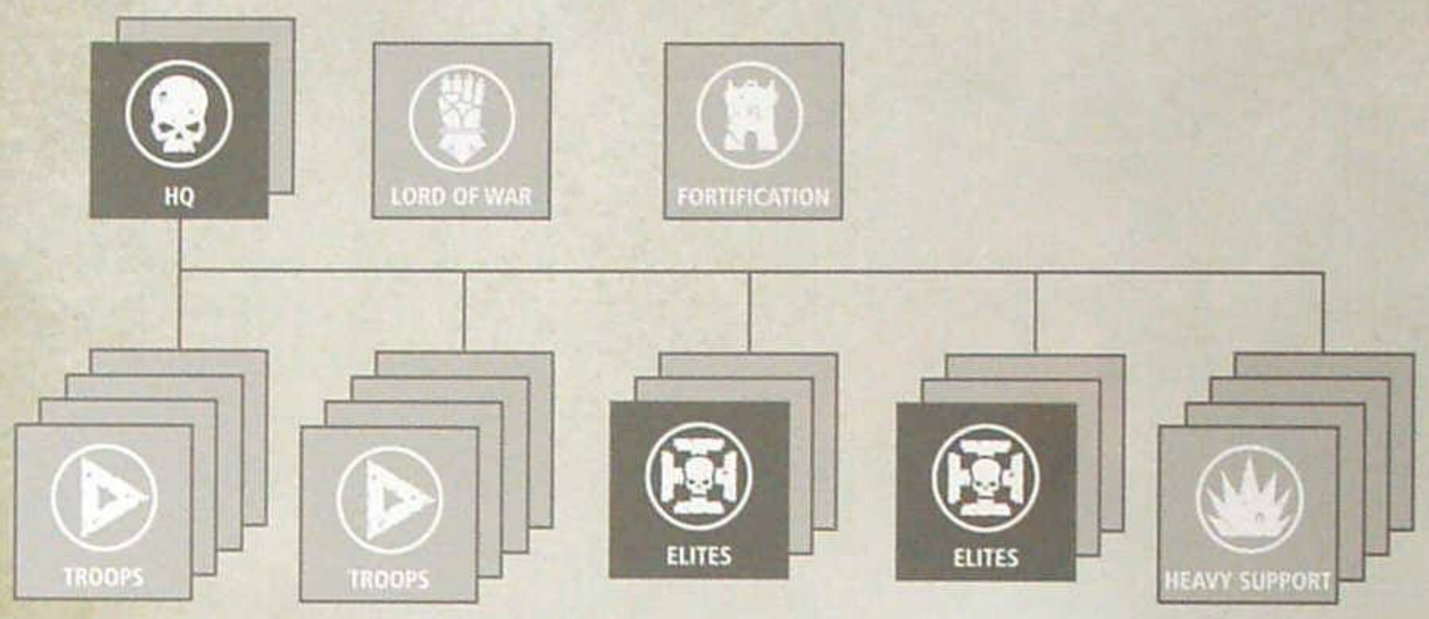
All Renegade units with the Uncertain Worth special rule within 12" of the Baneblade when making their first Leadership test have the Fanatic special rule if they do not have it already. In addition, all Renegade units within 12" have the Zealot special rule.



THE PURGE – BATTLE-FORGED DETACHMENT

Of the many Nurgle-aligned warbands that operated on the poisoned surface of Vraks, the Purge were the most dreaded by the mortal soldiers of the Imperium, who were but fodder for their dark celebrations of the Chaos god Nurgle and the pestilence he personified.

The following rules present a unique Detachment for use in Battle-forged armies using the Renegades of Vraks or Chaos Space Marines army lists, and follow all of the rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.



Compulsory
- 1 HQ
- 2 Elites

Optional
- 1 HQ
- 8 Troops
- 4 Elites
- 4 Heavy Support
- 1 Fortification
- 1 Lords of War

RESTRICTIONS

Slaves to Darkness: All units in this Detachment (except Fortifications) must have the Chaos Renegades or Chaos Space Marine Faction.

Pledged to Nurgle: No models in this Detachment may take a Chaos Mark or Devotion other than a Mark or Devotion of Nurgle.

COMMAND BENEFITS

Salt the Earth: When a model from this Detachment fires a Barrage weapon with the Blast type, leave the template in place after resolving all damage from the attack until the beginning of the controlling player's next turn. The area under the template is considered dangerous terrain by all models.

Forbidden Munitions: Any friendly unit in the army equipped with flamers or heavy flamers may be upgraded to be equipped with chemical flamers for free, and any model equipped with a missile launcher may take chemical rockets as a free upgrade.

Chemical flamers and chemical rockets use the following profiles:

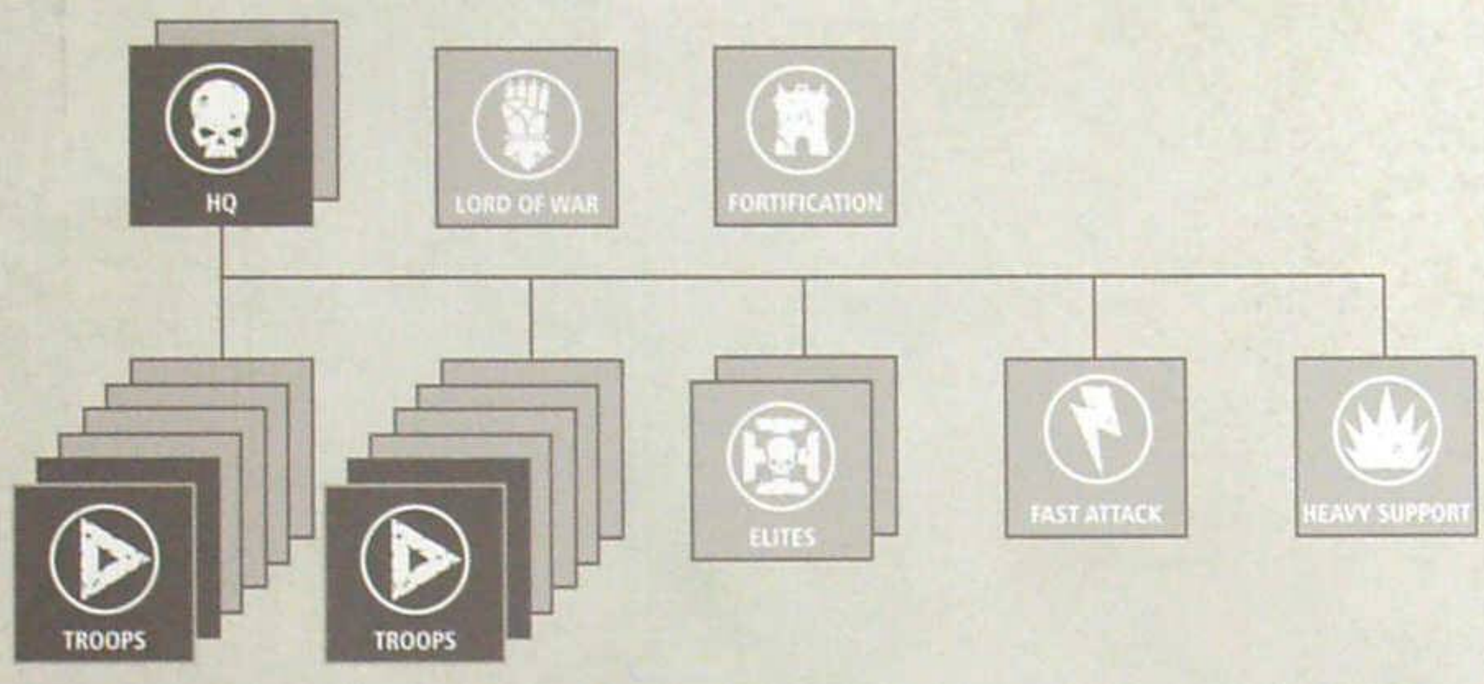
	Range	Str	AP	Type
Chemical flamer	Template	4	5	Assault 1, Shred, Gets Hot
Chemical rocket	48"	4	5	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Shred, Gets Hot



VRAKS RENEGADE UNENDING HOST – BATTLE-FORGED DETACHMENT

When pitted against the war-hardened veterans of Krieg, the only advantages held by the renegade legions of Apostate Cardinal Xaphan were their misplaced fervour and belief in the apostate hierarch, and the vast numbers in which they marched to war.

The following rules present a unique Detachment for use in Battle-forged armies using the Renegades of Vraks army list, and follow all of the rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.



Compulsory
- 1 HQ
- 4 Troops

Optional
- 1 HQ
- 8 Troops
- 2 Elites
- 1 Fast Attack
- 1 Heavy Support
- 1 Fortification
- 1 Lords of War

RESTRICTIONS

Slaves to Darkness: All units in this Detachment (except Fortifications) must have the Chaos Renegades Faction.

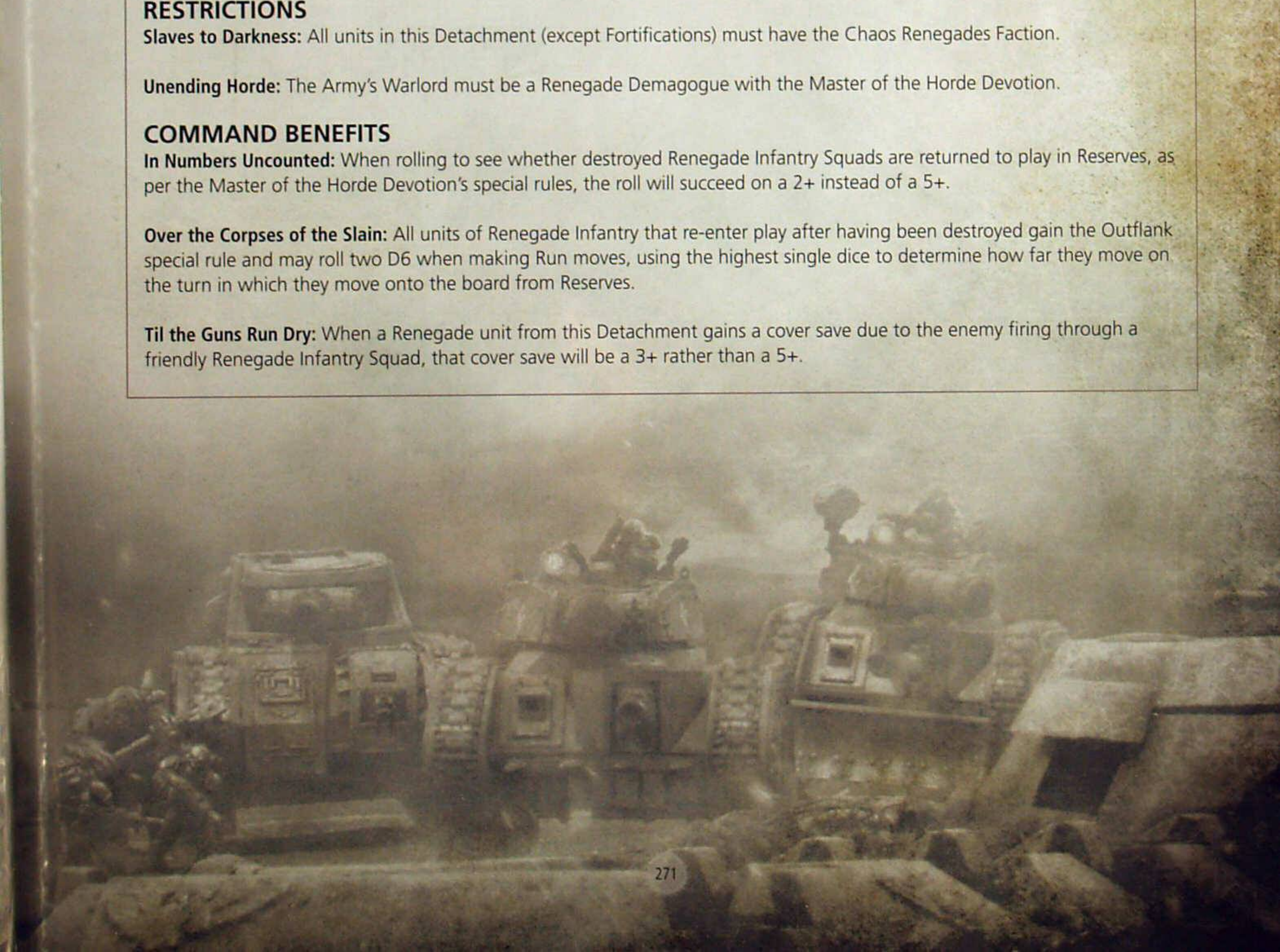
Unending Horde: The Army's Warlord must be a Renegade Demagogue with the Master of the Horde Devotion.

COMMAND BENEFITS

In Numbers Uncounted: When rolling to see whether destroyed Renegade Infantry Squads are returned to play in Reserves, as per the Master of the Horde Devotion's special rules, the roll will succeed on a 2+ instead of a 5+.

Over the Corpses of the Slain: All units of Renegade Infantry that re-enter play after having been destroyed gain the Outflank special rule and may roll two D6 when making Run moves, using the highest single dice to determine how far they move on the turn in which they move onto the board from Reserves.

Til the Guns Run Dry: When a Renegade unit from this Detachment gains a cover save due to the enemy firing through a friendly Renegade Infantry Squad, that cover save will be a 3+ rather than a 5+.



THE SIEGE OF VRAKS WEAPONS SUMMARY

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Autocannon	48"	7	4	Heavy 2
Autogun	24"	3	-	Rapid Fire
Autopistol	12"	3	-	Pistol
Baneblade cannon	72"	9	2	Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10")
Bastion-breacher shell	48"	10	1	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Armourbane
Battle cannon	72"	8	3	Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5")
Breacher charge	Special	8	2	Melee, One Use, Blast (3"), Wrecker
Chem cannon[1]	Template	1	3	Heavy 1, Poisoned (2+)
Colossus siege bombard[2]	24"-240"	8	3	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5"), Pinning, Ignores Cover
Conqueror battle cannon	48"	8	3	Heavy 1, Blast (3")
Demolisher siege cannon	24"	10	2	Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5")
Double Earthshaker[3]	24"-240"	9	3	Primary Weapon 1, Massive Blast (7"), Pinning, Twin-linked
Earthshaker cannon	36"-240"	9	3	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5")
Eradicator nova cannon[4]	36"	6	4	Heavy 1, Large Blast (5")
Executioner plasma cannon	36"	7	2	Heavy 3, Blast (3")
Exterminator autocannon	48"	7	4	Heavy 4, Twin-linked
Griffon heavy mortar	12"-48"	6	4	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5")
Heavy bolter	36"	5	4	Heavy 3
Heavy flamer	Template	5	4	Assault 1
Heavy mortar	12"-48"	6	4	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Pinning, Large Blast (5")
Heavy quad launcher	12"-60"	5	5	Heavy 4, Barrage, Blast (3"), Shell Shock[5]

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Heavy stubber	36"	4	-	Heavy 3
Hellstrike missile	72"	8	3	Ordnance 1
Hot-shot lasgun	18"	3	3	Rapid Fire
Hot-shot laspistol	6"	3	3	Pistol
Hot-shot volley gun	24"	4	3	Salvo 2/4
Hunter-killer missile	Unlimited	8	3	Heavy 1, One Use
Hydra autocannon	72"	7	4	Heavy 2, Skyfire, Auto targeting[6]
Impaler	12"	8	3	Assault 1, Impaler[7]
Inferno cannon	Template[8]	6	4	Heavy 1
Lascannon	48"	9	2	Heavy 1
Lascutter	-	9	2	Melee, Unwieldy, Cumbersome[9]
Lasgun	24"	3	-	Rapid Fire
Laspistol	12"	3	-	Pistol
Laser destroyer	36"	9	1	Ordnance 1, Twin-linked
Laser destroyer array	36"	9	2	Ordnance 1, Twin-linked
Mawcannon				
(Vomit)	Template	6	4	Assault 1
(Phlegm)	36"	8	3	Assault 1, Large Blast (5")
Medusa siege cannon	36"	10	2	Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5")
Melta cannon	24"	8	1	Heavy 1, Melta, Blast (3")
Melta-cutter drill	-	User	1	Melee, Shred, Armourbane
Missile launcher				
(Frag missile)	48"	4	6	Heavy 1, Blast (3")
(Krak missile)	48"	8	3	Heavy 1
(Flak missile)	48"	7	4	Heavy 1, Skyfire
Mole launcher	8"-24"	5	5	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Subterranean, Barrage, Strikedown
Mortar	48"	4	6	Heavy 1, Barrage, Blast (3")
Multi-laser	36"	6	6	Heavy 3
Multi-melta	24"	8	1	Heavy 1, Melta
Power drill	-	9	2	Melee, Unwieldy, Cumbersome[9]
Punisher gatling cannon	24"	5	-	Heavy 20
Shotgun	12"	3	-	Assault 2
Storm bolter	24"	4	5	Assault 2
Stub gun	12"	3	-	Pistol
Vanquisher battle cannon	72"	8	2	Heavy 1, Armourbane

[1]**Chem Cannon:** *Against targets with a Toughness value, hits from a chem cannon will always wound on a 2+.*

[2]**Colossus Siege Bombard:** *Must be fired using the Barrage rules, with a minimum range of 24" – this weapon can not be fired directly.*

[3]**Indirect Fire:** *A Double Earthshaker cannot be levelled for direct fire, and may only engage targets using the Barrage rules with a minimum range of 24".*

[4]**Eradicator Nova Cannon:** *Cover saves may not be taken against wounds caused by an Eradicator nova cannon.*

[5]**Shell Shock:** *Pinning tests taken because of the weapon's attacks are made at a -1 Leadership penalty.*

[6]**Auto Targeting:** *The Hydra's twin-linked autocannon ignore any cover saves or cover save bonuses provided by the Supersonic and Jink special rules, and prevent it from moving Flat Out.*

[7]**Impaler:** *This is a massive daemonically possessed barbed harpoon and chain designed to spear a large enemy and drag it into the Blood Slaughterer's reach. Using the Impaler counts as a shooting attack which hits on a 4+.*

If the harpoon strikes a successful Penetrating hit against a vehicle, or an unsaved wounding hit against a Monstrous Creature which survives its attack, then the daemonically empowered chain snaps back and the victim is abruptly dragged toward the Blood Slaughterer. Measure a straight line between the Blood Slaughterer and its target, and move the target model 2D6" towards the Blood Slaughterer. If the target model moves into base contact with the Blood Slaughterer, the Blood Slaughterer then counts as having charged it.

A note on dragging models: *Models may not be dragged though impassable terrain, Monstrous Creatures, vehicles or gaps they cannot fit through – in these cases the dragged target stops 1" away from the obstruction. Other terrain factors and infantry models in the way are ignored.*

Infantry models can be repositioned if needs be once the dragged target comes to rest by their controlling player to allow room for the Slaughterer, with the proviso that units which are already locked in combat must stay locked in combat.

Buildings, Super-heavy vehicles or Gargantuan Creatures cannot be dragged about by the Impaler!

[8]**Inferno Cannon:** *To fire the inferno cannon, place the template so that the narrow end is within 18" of the weapon and the wider end is no closer to the weapon than the narrow end. The inferno cannon is then treated like any other template weapon.*

[9]**Cumbersome:** *A model using a close combat weapon with this special rule can only ever make a single attack at WS 1 in an Assault phase, regardless of their profile or any bonus or other special rule.*



THE SIEGE OF VRAKS

HEROES & HERETICS

Inquisitor-Lord Hector Rex ..... 175 points

An Inquisitor-Lord with centuries of service, Hector Rex took command of the final stages of the war on Vraks when Inquisitorial auguries forewarned that there would be a daemonic incursion on the Shrine World. With the full might of the Imperium his to command, Rex brought about the end of the eighteen-year deadlock, culminating in his duel with the Daemon Lord An'ggrath.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Hector Rex	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	10	2+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Special Rules
- Independent Character
- Stubborn
- Psyker (Mastery Level 2)
- Adamantium Will

Wargear
- Artificer armour
- Bolt pistol
- Storm shield
- Arias
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Psyk-out grenades
- Psychic hood

Arias
This is an ancient relic which has the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Arias	-	User	3	Melee, Force, Slayer (Daemon & Daemon Lord)

Slayer: This rule is often presented as Slayer (X) where X identifies a specific type of foe. If the special rule does not specify a type of foe, then it gains the effects of Slayer against all enemies. A weapon or model with the Slayer special rule will wound any target of the type specified by the rule on a 2+, regardless of the model's Toughness value. If it hits them, the target takes any saves normally. If the target model has an Armour Value, then a weapon with the Slayer special rule gains the Armourbane special rule for that attack.

In this case, *Arias* automatically wounds models with the Daemon or Daemon Lord special rules on a 2+ or, if attacking a vehicle with the Daemon special rule, gains Armourbane and as it is a Melee weapon, can only do so in close combat.

Psychic Powers
Hector Rex gains the following powers:
- Force (see the Special Rules section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook)
- Banishment (Daemonology – Primaris Power)
- Hammerhand (Daemonology – Sanctic Power)
- Sanctuary (Daemonology – Sanctic Power)

Hector Rex is an HQ choice for a Codex: Inquisition army.

Necrosius ..... 160 points

Necrosius commanded one of the many Chaos Space Marines warbands drawn to the fighting on Vraks by Arkos' psychic summons. He and his fellow servants of Nurgle took great pleasure in corrupting the sky and soil of the once loyal Imperial world through the use of forbidden chemical weapons and foul sorcery, bringing many of Nurgle's daemonic children into the fray.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Necrosius	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	10	3+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Power armour
- Force sword
- Bolt pistol with plague bolts
- Krak grenades
- Frag grenades
- Blight grenades

Special Rules
- Independent Character
- Champion of Chaos
- Veterans of the Long War
- Fearless
- Feel No Pain
- Mark of Nurgle (Toughness bonus already included in profile)
- Master of the Dead
- Psyker (Mastery level 2)
- Warlord

Plague Bolts
Necrosius' bolt pistol uses the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Plague bolts	12"	4	5	Pistol, Poisoned (4+)

Psychic Powers
Necrosius has the following psychic powers from *Codex: Chaos Space Marines*: Nurgle's Rot and Gift of Contagion. He also knows the following power:

Wasting Disease ..... Warp Charge 1
This is a focussed witchfire power that does not require a To Hit roll and automatically hits the target. Damage from Wasting Disease is resolved with the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Wasting Disease	24"	3	2	Assault 1, Fleshbane

Master of the Dead
Whilst Necrosius is present on the battlefield, all Plague Zombie units gain the Furious Charge special rule.

Warlord
When Necrosius is used as the army's Warlord, he does not roll on the Warlord Traits table. Instead, he gains the following trait:

Lord of Plagues: An army that includes Necrosius as its Warlord may take Plague Zombie units as non-compulsory Troops choices.

Necrosius is an HQ choice for a Codex: Chaos Space Marines army.

Zhufor the Impaler, Lord of the Skulltakers ..... 165 points

Arriving on Vraks as one petty warlord among many, Zhufor's facade of berserk anger hid a cunning intellect. He quickly rose amongst the ranks of his peers, using a combination of brutal violence and canny politicking to bring all of the many Chaos warbands on the Shrine World under his dominion. Only Arkos the Faithless and his Alpha Legion brethren remained outside of his control, and even they stood aside as Zhufor deposed the false-Cardinal Xaphan and seized the throne of Vraks for himself. As Despot of Vraks, Zhufor presided over the final stages of the bloody conflict on the traitor planet, wringing every last drop of blood and precious trophy-skull from the Imperium's forces before abandoning his conquest when defeat became unavoidable.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Zhufor	7	5	5	4	3	5	4	10	2+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Terminator armour
- Skulltaker chainaxe*
- Claw of Demnos*

**Note that as Zhufor has more than one Melee weapon, he must choose which one to attack with when he comes to strike blows – Zhufor cannot mix and match the abilities of several different Melee weapons.*

Special Rules
- Independent Character
- Champion of Chaos
- Fearless
- Eternal Warrior
- Mark of Khorne
- Furious Charge
- Adamantium Will
- Warlord

Claw of Demnos

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Claw of Demnos (Close combat)	-	x2	2	Melee, Specialist Weapon, Unwieldy
(Ranged)	24"	4	5	Assault 3

Skulltaker chainaxe
The Skulltaker chainaxe uses the following profile. In any Assault phase in which Zhufor chooses to attack with the Skulltaker chainaxe, he gains +2 Attacks for that phase.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Skulltaker chainaxe	-	User	4	Melee, Two-handed

Skulltakers Bodyguard
Zhufor may be accompanied by a squad of Chaos Terminators. This squad is chosen as normal, except that it must take the Mark of Khorne. Both Zhufor and the Chaos Terminators count as a single HQ choice, and Zhufor must be deployed as part of the squad, though he may leave it after the game has begun as per the rules for Independent Characters.

Warlord
When Zhufor is used as an army's Warlord, he does not roll on the Warlord Traits table. Instead he gains the following trait:

Legendary Fighter: Gain +1 Victory point for each enemy character slain by Zhufor in a challenge.

Zhufor the Impaler is an HQ choice for a Codex: Chaos Space Marines army.

Arkos the Faithless, Scion of Alpharius ..... 130 points

Ever-ready to exploit any opening in the defences of the Imperium that he has battled against for millennia, Arkos was the first of his brethren to offer his services to Xaphan. Arkos' intent was always to betray the Apostate Cardinal, using the war as a means to bleed the armies of the Emperor and hone the fighting skills of his warband. When the time came, Arkos stepped aside and allowed Zhufor to drag Xaphan away to his fate, abandoning his ally as he had countless others. However, Arkos was brought low by the battle-brothers of the Angels of Absolution, cornered and captured as the various Chaos factions began to desert Vraks and its failing war. His final fate is unknown to any outside the Dark Angels and their Successor brethren.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Arkos	6	5	4	5	3	5	4	10	3+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Infantry (Character)

Wargear
- Power armour
- Combi-melta
- Dark Blade
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Aura of Dark Glory

Special Rules
- Independent Character
- Son of Alpharius
- Warlord
- Counter-attack
- Veterans of the Long War
- Champion of Chaos

Warlord
If Arkos the Faithless is your army's Warlord then he does not roll on the Warlord Traits table, but instead receives the following unique trait:

Devious Tactician
A player using Arkos the Faithless as his Warlord may choose to automatically win any rolls to determine which player selects a board edge as the player's home edge, but if this option is used, the controlling player will automatically lose any roll-off to determine which player will take the first turn. In addition, the controlling player may re-roll the dice when attempting to Seize the Initiative.

Son of Alpharius
Any squad joined by Arkos gains the Counter-attack special rule. If Arkos leaves the squad or is removed as a casualty then he no longer provides them with this benefit.

Dark Blade

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Dark Blade	-	+2	3	Melee, Rending

Arkos the Faithless is an HQ choice for a Codex: Chaos Space Marines army.

Mamon Incarnate, Daemon Prince of Nurgle ..... 220 points

A recent addition to the ranks of Papa Nurgle's favoured children, Mamon was a false priest of the Imperial Creed whose treachery and betrayal led to the bloody siege of the apostate world of Vraks and the deaths of many millions. Since his elevation to daemonhood, his tainted soul has fused with the dark essence of a Great Unclean One, and this former master spy and intriguer has become a reeking corpulent mass of flesh. Implanted with corrupt technology, he is now a living conduit for toxic filth and the foulest contaminations of the Warp, existing only to destroy and pollute any living creature he encounters, and leaving nothing but slime-drenched ruin and tainted earth in his wake. Since the final desperate battles for control of Vraks, during which the freshly-transfigured Mamon fought alongside the Nurgle-worshipping warband known as the Tainted, the foul rites to summon him have spread to several other Nurgle worshipping cults and warbands.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Mamon Incarnate	7	5	6	7	5	4	4	9	5+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Monstrous Creature (Character)

Wargear
- Contagion spray

Special Rules
- Daemon of Nurgle
- Deep Strike
- Feel No Pain (5+)
- Poisoned (2+)

Note that this character is different from the one presented in Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost & the Damned, and does not replace him.

Daemon of Nurgle
Daemons of Nurgle have the Daemon, Hatred (Daemons of Tzeentch), Shrouded and Slow and Purposeful special rules. In addition, units composed entirely of models with this special rule are treated as having defensive grenades.

Contagion Spray
A daemonic weapon fused to Mamon, the Contagion spray spews forth a tide of foulness and decay utterly lethal to all life it touches.

This weapon uses the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Contagion spray	Template	1	3	Heavy 1, Poisoned (2+)

Mamon Incarnate is an HQ choice in the Renegades of Vraks army list. He can only be taken in this army.

Warbound Uraka, Daemon Prince of Khorne..... 200 points

Once a barbarian warlord on an ancient and forgotten world, as a mortal man Uraka's excess of bloodshed and plunder drew the attention of his people's dark god of war. Khorne looked on, pleased at this favoured son's lifetime of pitiless massacres and savage martial victories; such that when he finally fell in battle, his forfeited soul was taken to the Citadel of Brass in Khorne's warp-realm where he fought for the right to do slaughter for all eternity. Now a Daemon Prince with a bloodlust unfettered by mortal constraints or sanity and with his own legion of hellspawn at his command, Uraka serves now as Khorne's headsman, slaughtering his god's foes and delivering his dark master's judgement on traitors and enemies alike.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Warbound Uraka	7	5	7	5	4	6	5	9	3+

Unit Composition
- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type
- Monstrous Creature (Character)

Wargear
- The Executioner's Axe

Special Rules
- Daemon of Khorne
- Deep Strike
- Collar of Khorne
- Rage
- Rampage

Note that this character is different from the one presented in Imperial Armour Volume Thirteen – War Machines of the Lost & the Damned, and does not replace him.

The Collar of Khorne
Uraka, and any unit he joins, gains +2 to all Deny the Witch rolls.

The Executioner's Axe
Uraka's ornate and massive axe has taken many tributes for the Throne of Skulls in its time, and sees particular service in beheading traitors to Khorne.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
The Executioner's Axe	-	User	2	Melee, Two-handed, Fleshbane, Decapitating Blow†

†Any To Wound rolls of 6 made with this weapon have the Instant Death special rule.

Warbound Uraka is an HQ choice in the Renegades of Vraks army list. He can only be taken in this army.