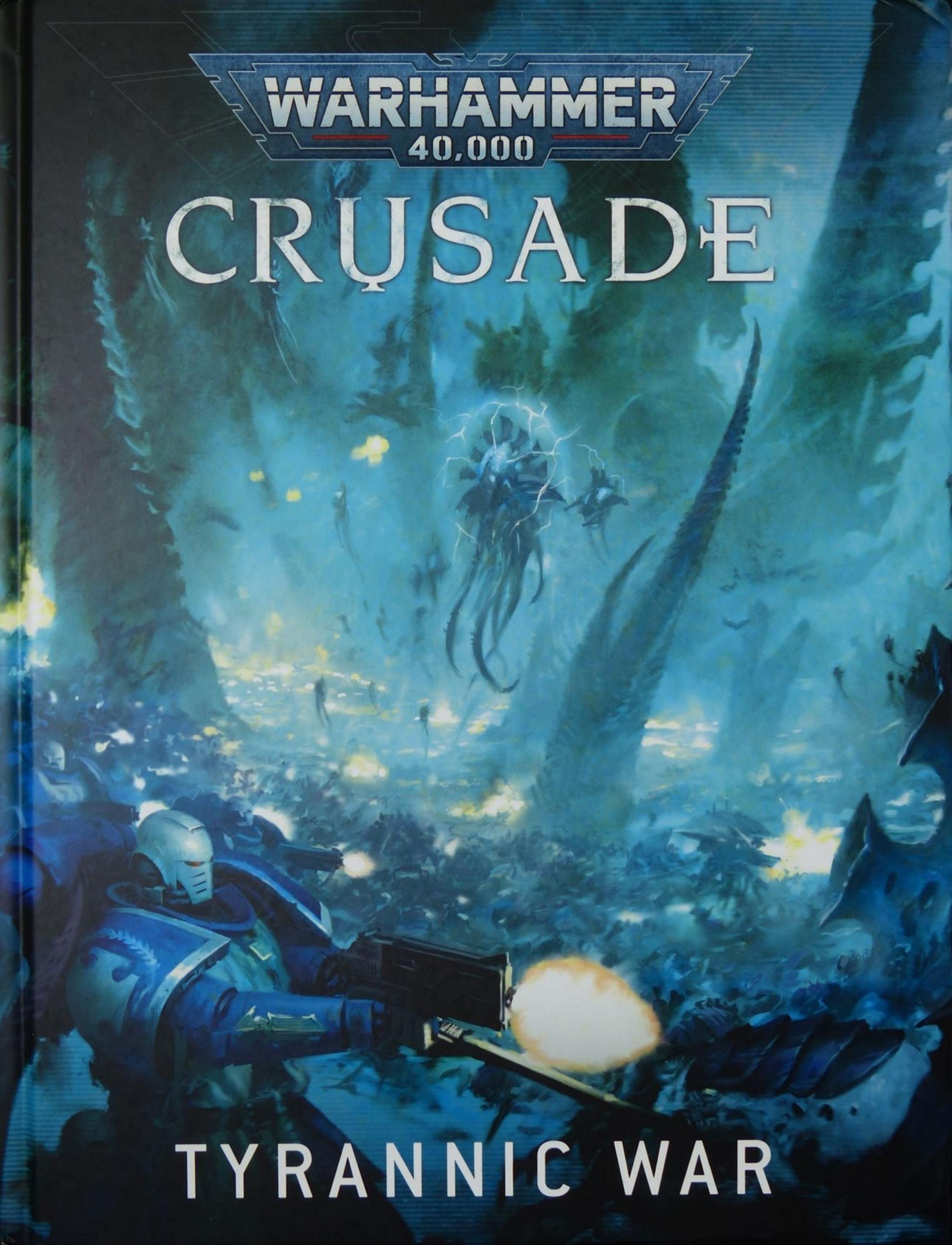
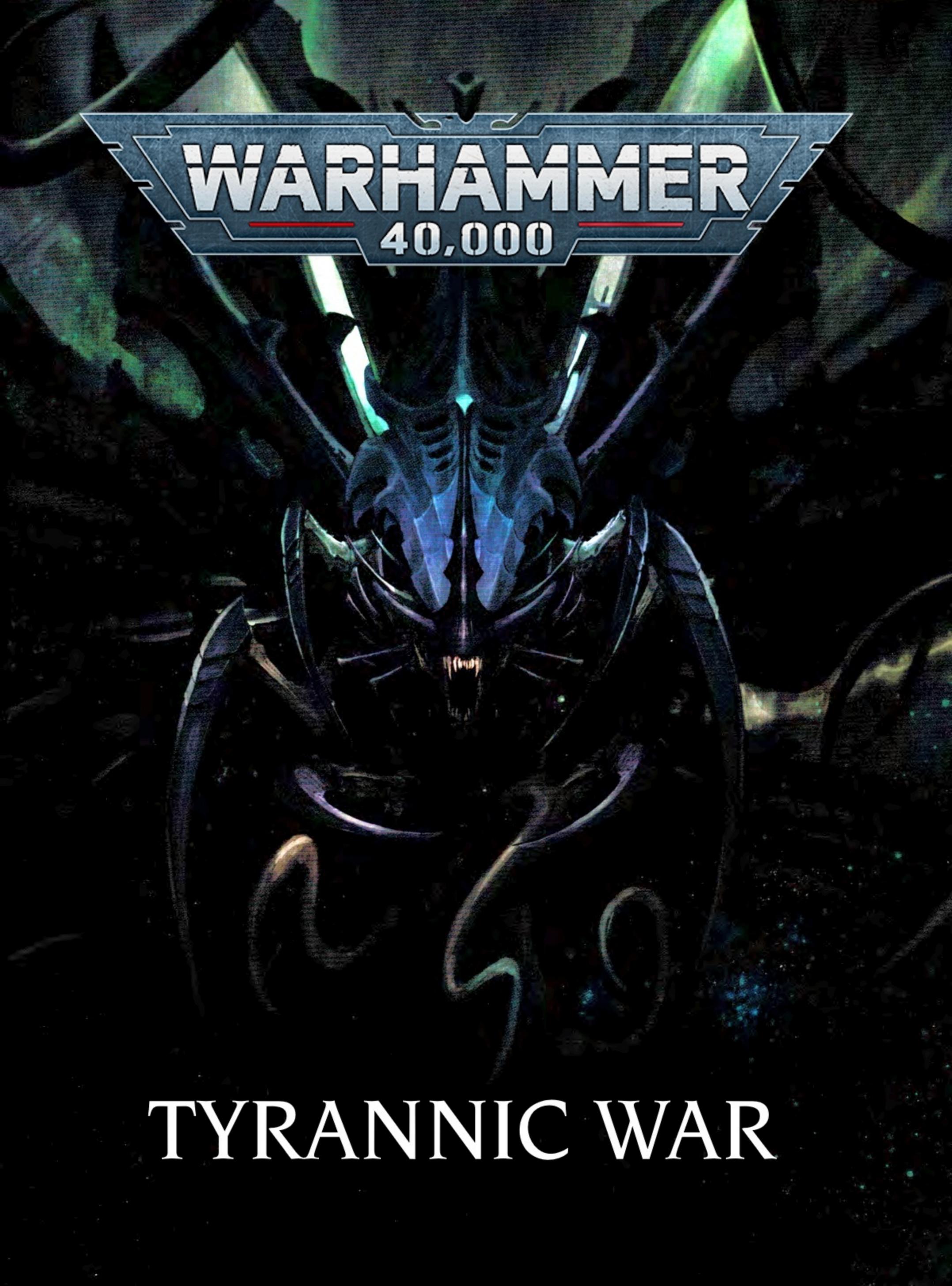


WARHAMMER
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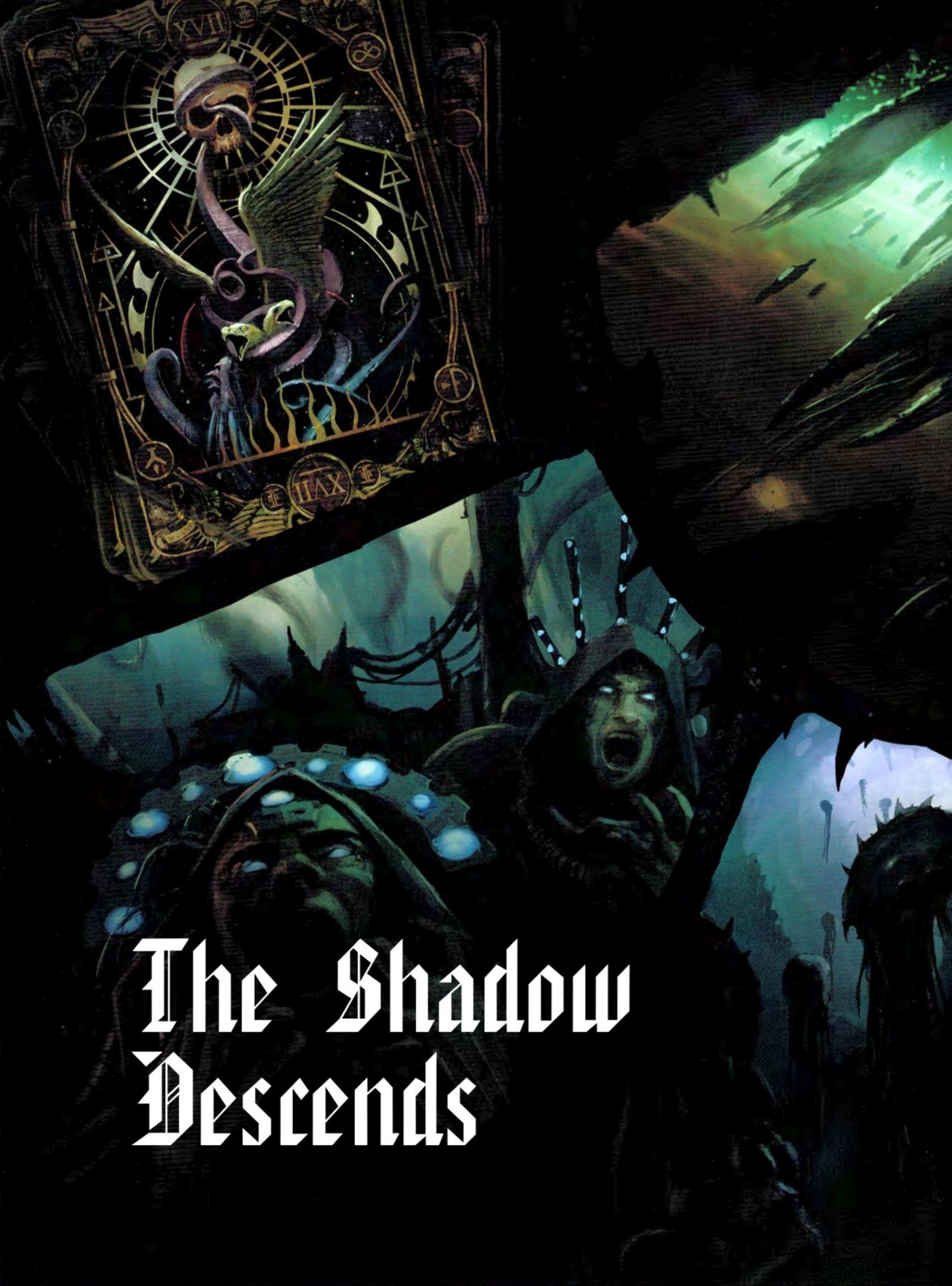
TYRANNIC WAR



WARHAMMER

40,000

TYRANNIC WAR



The Shadow Descends





Judge Hermann Krantz of the *Adeptus Arbites* stood upon the bridge of the Punisher-class cruiser, *Black Reckoning*. He was troubled and angry. The Egrans System had not paid its tithes this standard year. No communications had come from its worlds at all in that time, not even from local Arbitrators. They might be dead. Worse, they might have turned against the Emperor. The *Adeptus Arbites* were a stern and devout breed, the law-keepers of the Imperium, but they were still Human. Ill discipline could become disloyalty, disloyalty heresy. The thought disgusted Krantz, made him want to take his shock maul and bludgeon something.

The ship's bridge was alive with quiet, professional activity. Everything was ordered and clean, down to the neatly pressed creases of the crew's black uniforms. The crew had clean-shaven scalps, and the athletic bodies of those committed to physical robustness. On either side of the bridge's entrance stood an Arbitrator, each holding a shotgun against their chest. A dozen more were stationed throughout the bridge. Though each was motionless, Krantz knew they were ceaselessly scrutinising their surroundings. He knew because he had once been one of them, and even now, years later, the habits remained ingrained.

Though the crew were disciplined enough not to show it, Krantz could tell they were afraid of him. He cut an intimidating figure. He was tall, muscular and broad, and half of his head was a complex bionic with a piercing red lens where his left eye had once been. A long purity seal hung from his right shoulder, upon which were written the names of twenty-three worlds, each of which he, as a Judge, had subjected to the wrath of the Emperor's law. Soon he

expected to add the three populated worlds of the Egrans System to it.

The *Black Reckoning* was not his only resource in this task. The Punisher-class cruisers *Iron Justice*, *Righteous Revanche* and *Authoritas Supremus* joined it. All were heavily armed and armoured, and were transporting sufficient Arbitrators to bring the Egrans System to heel.

'Navigator Arkimeena reports we are close, Judge,' said one of the ship's officers. 'She notes some form of anomalous disturbance in the warp, but that such phenomena are not uncommon in this age. It is nothing she cannot adjust for.'

'Very good, ensign,' said Krantz. 'Not uncommon indeed.'

These are dark days, requiring strong people, thought Krantz. That was why the Emperor had forged the *Adeptus Arbites*. Unfortunately, some Humans chose not to abhor the shadows but instead to revel in the darkness of their times. It was the task of the Arbitrators to root them out and expose them to the searing light of Imperial justice.

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'Warp translation in three... two... one... complete...' Navigator Arkimeena's voice echoed from the bridge's vox-speakers. Then she screamed, the inhuman howl of an animal in pain magnified by her psychic talents and the remorseless clarity of the ship's systems. Even the well-drilled crew of the *Black Reckoning* grimaced at the sudden, awful sound. Some clutched their heads. Krantz fought the urge to do the same. His head pounded and his eardrums felt as if they could tear at any moment. Looking around, he saw the ship's long-range augur displays were going haywire.

'Report!' he demanded through gritted teeth. 'What is this?'

'Unknown, sir,' gasped an officer, blood gushing from her nostrils.

'Open the warp transit shutters! I need to see what's going on out there!' Krantz demanded.

The bridge's metal view screens slid up with a motorised hum.

'Holy Emperor...' breathed Krantz.

There were monsters everywhere. Krantz recognised them immediately from the Derandar Evacuation – Tyranids. His skin crawled as nightmares long-repressed sought to resurface. Panic threatened to close his throat and choke him. Krantz remembered the screams, the alien howls, and the sight of entire rescue barques swallowed by things with cavernous maws and nests of writhing tentacles. Now, without warning, he found his ship surrounded by thousands of the xenos' hideous bio-ships.

The *Black Reckoning's* augur-officer pressed his rune-keys rapidly, repeating soothing incantations intended to pacify a troubled machine spirit. He looked up helplessly, and Krantz saw panic welling behind the man's eyes.

'There is no error, sir. Auspex returns are... they're utterly overwhelmed.'

There were so many bioforms the augur screen had filled entirely with their green contact runes. Its bilious glare was so bright it hurt Krantz's eyes. Though it was impossible to determine the heading or speed of any individual contact amidst the blizzard of returns, Krantz was quite certain some of the swarm was descending on his ships even now.





The Judge felt the desire to escape clawing at his mind. Around him, the bridge crew stared in horrified paralysis at the bio-fleet, or staggered back from their stations with cries of denial.

'So many...' croaked one man, then louder as he turned in mindless flight. 'There's so many!'

An Arbitrator's shotgun barked. Blood splattered Krantz's cheek. He wiped it away without so much as a glance at the ruined body of the deserter.

'Hold your stations,' Krantz shouted, though he could feel his heart pounding with fear. The rest of the crew obeyed, but he could practically feel their panic like a greasy sheen on his skin. Krantz reminded himself sternly of his duty and took several steadying breaths. There was no victory to be gained here, that much was clear. All the same, he had a duty to send a warning no matter the cost. Setting his jaw, Krantz moved to loom over the ship's vox-officer.

'Put me through to the entire flotilla, all-channels address, anyone who might hear,' he ordered. The vox-officer was shaking so badly he almost dropped the handset as he handed it to Krantz.

Navigator Arkimeena was still screaming.

'Shut her off!' Krantz barked. The vox-speakers were silenced. He took another breath then spoke, firmly and steadily, into the vox.

'This is Judge Krantz. Remember your duty! Fear not the alien! Broadcast in every manner possible, to any system we can reach. Tyranid bio-fleet encountered in Egrans System, numbering thousands. All

shipmasters devote your focus to evasive manoeuvres. We must buy time for the messages to be sent.'

'Astropaths cannot send, sir,' called the vox-officer, sounding close to panic. 'They drown amidst the Shadow in the Warp.'

'Tell them to keep trying,' snapped Krantz.



The Tyranids were bearing down on them. Krantz could see the *Iron Justice* and *Authoritas Supremus* firing, blasting gory craters in the onrushing beasts. Yet in the space of a few minutes, the *Iron Justice* was pierced through with several mile-long chitinous spears and the *Authoritas Supremus* was swathed in fleshy sacs. They reminded Krantz of grox-tics, but he realised with revulsion that they were organic boarding craft. Confronted by the grotesque speed of the destruction, even Krantz faltered for a moment, paralysed by panic.

Disgusted by his own fear, the Judge bit his cheek until blood squirted over his tongue. The pain brought focus. Krantz spat crimson.

'Evade!' he roared, prowling the bridge as the ship shook with impacts. 'Fight! Every second we buy is more time in which we can send our warning!'

Despite the efforts of the ship's crew, the *Black Reckoning* took hit after hit, writhing and groaning as if in terrible pain. Damage hymnals filled the air with their keening notes. Multiple decks were venting atmosphere and on-board casualty reports spiralled by the second. The huge Tyranid bio-ships closed in from all sides. Krantz saw alien maws opening wide, revealing dark, toothed pits where only death lay. Just as reports came through of the *Righteous Revanche's* destruction, Krantz heard the words he had prayed for. A report from his ship's astropathic sanctum suggested that a message might have got through, though the sobbing aide reported Astropath Jesera had ruptured every blood vessel in his body in the attempt.

So be it, thought Krantz. The Astropath had done his duty. Now he would finish doing his.

'Prepare auto-martyr sequence!' he ordered. 'Make course direct for the nearest bio-ships. Sail into their midst. To our last we will show the enemy our hatred. You are a credit to the Emperor's Adeptus Arbites, all of you. May He be with you unto your last faithful breath.'

As the bio-ship grew larger in the bridge's vid-screens, Krantz gripped a console and offered a silent prayer to the God-Emperor, that their deaths would have meaning and value...





A DARKNESS IN THE WEST

Something was coming, driving through the inky blackness of the interplanetary void with predatory determination. Inexorably, patiently, it pierced the wild reaches of the Segmentum Pacificus. There it would find prey not remotely prepared for it, prey that would soon find themselves caught in a nightmare worse than anything any of them had ever imagined.

++ AN ALIEN MIND CANNOT ACCEPT THE EMPEROR'S BLESSING ++

It began in absence and in silence. Deep-void servitor satellites that had faithfully transmitted data for centuries suddenly ceased operation. Astropathic beacons – dotted across the rimward fringes of the Asmodiox and Morpheum Sectors in the Segmentum Pacificus – winked out one after another. Their disappearances were incremental, as though dark ink were spreading slowly across the map of the void to occlude one glimmering psychic light after another.

At first, the phenomena were missed even by the Asmodiox and Morpheum Sector Commands. There were countless reasons why augur stations and fringe colonies might drop out of communication, ranging from mundane equipment malfunction to solar storms. The Imperial bureaucracy was a vast and creaking edifice. It prized protocol far above individual initiative, while its response times ranged from lumbering to glacial. There had been no distress calls, no word of pirates, heretic uprisings or marauding xenos, or indeed any of countless other threats that might beset an Imperial world. No word of a threat meant there was no threat to respond to. The gathering silence went unremarked.

For the myriad adepts toiling in vast scriptorium halls of neighbouring sub-sectors, no news from outlying planetary systems meant only that their mountainous and monotonous workloads became fractionally less. Amidst the endlessly clattering keys, the scratch of quills and the thump of auto-stampers, there was neither time

nor desire for rumination on cause or effect. The Asmodiox Sector was already dealing with an Ork Waaagh! wreaking havoc through its Polidara, Byroth and Shaele Sub-sectors, not to mention a migration of Knydd interrupting shipping between Ammonius and Neverdarke. Twelve systems in the Morpheum Sector, meanwhile, had been swallowed by the suddenly manifesting tides of Warp Storm Gogmagor. The resultant wars and disruption had captured the full attention of every officer, dignitary and stratego from one end of the sector to the other. So it was that, amidst the sheer enormity of space and the endlessly multiplying travails of Humanity, the slow spread of the dark zones went unnoticed for far longer than it should have.

THE NIGHTMARE REVEALED

When revelation came, it did so amidst a cascade of horrors even the most obtuse Senior Autopedant could not ignore. The threat had now drawn nigh to major systems and the signs of its onset were inescapable.

Half of Morpheum Sector Command were slain after High Astropath Guideoth received a flood of delayed astropathic distress calls that overloaded his mind. Awash with terror and pain, the vision-sendings manifested as a slithering mass of tendrils, talons and screaming faces that burst from him like a flitwing from its cocoon. The construct wrought butchery amongst the assembled worthies and Munitorum personnel before it was finally banished.

Astra Militarum officers in the Byroth Sub-sector reported a sudden cessation of greenskin assaults against their beleaguered defences. It was, according to one relieved general, as though the Orks had simply run out of reinforcements to throw into the fight. The cause of this respite became clear soon enough. Relief turned to horror as, one by one, those same worlds spared the scourge of the greenskins were instead overrun by the Tyranids that had devoured them.

The factory system of Tectos and the Trinary Reach Cluster both came under ferocious attack, the former by a loose alliance of renegade warbands and the latter by a Leagues of Votann fleet looking to appropriate food, fuel and raw materials. Imperial reinforcements were mustered in neighbouring systems. Before they could take to the warp, however, word came that the aggressors had pushed westward. They left seemingly victorious defenders in their wake. Yet the triumphant missives from those systems faltered and fell silent soon after, as the Shadow in the Warp settled over them.

The mining stations of the Haratus Stars; the ten gilded worlds of the Mytolian Belt; the macro void-docks of Templum II and Gethsemanax – all reported growing tides of refugees spilling from warp space aboard overcrowded and badly damaged vessels. Some ships broke apart during translation from the warp. Some showed signs of catastrophic damage apparently caused by acids or the crushing grip of vast tentacles and claws. Others were quarantined by system defence monitors after long-range bio-augury revealed xenos infestations rampaging through their decks. These latter were invariably fired upon and destroyed, typically after increasingly hysterical vox exchanges with the interdiction craft. Even this was not enough to prevent hardy xenofoms and Tyranid spores from penetrating the atmospheres of Uncolos, Metrophia, Philladan Prime and a half-dozen other Imperial worlds. Xenocult infestation and bloody alien uprisings followed.

For every shipload of incoherent victims, there came another Imperial vessel whose occupants retained the discipline and sanity to report what they had seen. These survivors spoke of colossal Tyranid fleets that poured from the interstellar void like the crop-bane swarms of arable agri worlds. Rogue Traders and Imperial Navy officers described Tyranid macro-swarms sweeping across worlds like chitinous tidal waves and devouring everything before them. They spoke in haunted tones of the warp-deadening phenomenon that rolled like a storm cloud before the xenos onslaught. Paranoia and

panic bred like vermin beneath that spiritual shadow, while vital pyskers such as Astropaths and Navigators went insane or suffered catastrophic mental and physical collapse within hours of its onset.

Gradually a picture emerged that instilled dread in those Imperial command personnel highly placed enough to see it. Two colossal new tendrils of Hive Fleet Leviathan had invaded Imperial space, their onslaughts apparently coordinated. One – the tendril even now uncoiling across a swathe of the Asmodiox Sector and pushing towards the western edge of the Vynor Sector – had descended from above the galactic plane. This tendril was given the code name Nautilon. The other, which had ripped open the underbelly of the Morpheum Sector and was even now making inroads into the neighbouring Cassidor Gulf, was christened Promethor. It became ever more inescapably clear that both of these vast Tyranid macro-shoals, having burrowed their way into the galactic plane, had now altered their headings and were advancing on roughly parallel courses towards the galactic east. It was a route that, if not altered or halted, would see them push into the outskirts of the Segmentum Solar itself and eventually, in the worst possible case, bring them to the very threshold of Holy Terra itself.

So went the conjecture, at least. The distances between settled Human systems; the wholly alien and ineffable nature of the Tyranids; the difficulty of garnering and compiling reliable information from worlds overrun by the rapacious aliens and silenced by their smothering psychic signal; all combined to render certainty a sparse commodity during that first stage of the Tyranids' onslaught.

With few hard facts to rely upon, responses amongst the Imperial authorities were mixed. Some planetary governors stood their armies to high alert, commanding defences to be raised, trenches dug and reinforcements sent to bolster their lines. For every such stalwart, however, there was another who abandoned their worlds aboard gilded void barques, fleeing with their wealth and their households and leaving their people in panicked disarray. Some Imperial forces – most notably Space Marines and fleets of the Imperial Navy – sought to counter-attack the advancing Tyranids, grasping the true horror of their numerical disadvantage only after they had committed to battle. Others drew up their defence lines and held firm for as long as they could, attempting to give time for evacuations to be performed or precious relics and technologies to be saved. Thousands of tales of heroism and tragedy, cruelty, foolishness and

'...Team Koril of the Adeptus Astartes Raptors. Xenocultists on Kitzu VII more numerous than anticipated. They claim their rapture is coming soon; their activity is increasing. All routes of egress from their tunnel lairs now overrun. We are trapped.'

+++

'...they appear to be feeding it, Lord Inquisitor. I have no other words. It does not appear to be armed, but... Toka, what is happening? Something's extruding from the inside! Holy Emperor. It looks like it's spawning something, there's no other term for -[speaker gulps]- Lord Inquisitor, it's colossal, some manner of biohorror that... I cannot... Request permission to pull our Storm Troopers out now, Lord. It's too late for us to do anything here but die.'

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'...they attacked from above, soaring on leathery wings, so we went below. There it was worse. They were there. Sneaking, leaping, claws and talons. They coiled up in the smallest crevices, the tightest nooks. You could sweep a room for hours and be attacked as you turned your back to leave.'



DEADLY SPLINTERS

The Nautilon and Promethor tendrils were not the first Tyranid threats to Humanity's heartlands. The Red Wolves Chapter had been driven from their home world of Bloodfall in the Segmentum Solar by a Tyranid splinter fleet, and had only defeated the onslaught with the aid of Ultima Founding Chapters. Tendrils of two minor hive fleets, Scylla and Charybdis, had both been reported advancing steadily through systems within the Segmentum Solar, and ongoing battles continued to rage against those infestations. Most unsettling of all, and known only to a handful of privileged Imperial dignitaries, a Genestealer Cult cell had been discovered beneath an arcology cluster on Holy Terra itself. It was declared purged, but doubts about its extermination persisted.

selfless bravery played out through the systems that found themselves in the Tyranids' paths. Few of them would be recorded or remembered, for all vanished beneath the slowly spreading shadow of the Tyranid attack. Yet there were those Imperial agents with the breadth of perspective to fully grasp the nature of the threat, and the power to do something about it.

VOICES FROM THE DARKNESS

The Adeptus Custodes are the Imperium's greatest warriors. Based within the Emperor's Palace on Holy Terra, it is their duty to protect the Throneworld and the Master of Mankind himself. Every Custodian is utterly devoted to this goal, committing their every thought and deed to it even after the passage of centuries begins to incrementally atrophy their superhuman abilities. On the day when one of the Adeptus Custodes discovers their skills have degraded to anything less than absolute perfection, they choose voluntary exile and exchange one form of vigilance for another. Swathing themselves in cloaks of shadow, vanishing into the myriad spaceways of the Imperium, they become Eyes of the Emperor. They are ever watchful for developing threats.

Some Eyes of the Emperor maintain contact with one another, exchanging periodic missives. Others develop networks of faithful agents who extend the boundaries of their sight. Some remain within the systems of the Segmentum Solar while others forge ever further from the Throneworld, seeking for dangers that – if unchecked – might grow to threaten the heartlands of the Imperium. It was from these latter that a coherent warning first reached not just the Segmentum Solar, but Terra itself.

A frigate of the Imperial Navy named the *Pinion* hove into Terran orbital space. Ignoring the established space lanes, it swept down towards the Lion's Gate spaceport and was swiftly challenged by more than a score of orbital defence platforms and battleships. In response, the *Pinion* broadcast ident codes with a clearance level so astronomically high that all those who processed them were later lobotomised and repurposed as servitors in order to keep them secret. Resistance to the *Pinion's* advance vanished at once. An emergency corridor was cleared through the dense orbital traffic by defence monitors who primed their lance batteries to make clear the penalty that came with obstructing the *Pinion's* passage.

Just three passengers disembarked from the frigate, whose captain had pushed his engines to breaking point and worked many of his crew

to death in his haste to reach Terra. All three were Eyes of the Emperor. They cared nothing for the lives spent to speed them back to the Throneworld. All that mattered to them was securing an immediate audience with Captain-General Trajann Valoris, the master of the Adeptus Custodes and the only one to whom they would deliver their warning.

Valoris maintained his own networks of informants. He had quiet arrangements with more than one agent of the Inquisitorial Ordos, and access to some of the most accomplished seers and Astropaths in the Imperium. Already he had heard hints of this new darkness spreading from the west. What his returned comrades told him now of tendrils Nautilon and Promethor confirmed his darkest suppositions.

As the foremost Custodian, Valoris' word carried much weight with the other High Lords who ruled the Imperium alongside him in the Emperor's name. He wasted no time petitioning that august body for an appropriate and immediate response. At first Valoris faced politicking and cynicism. They demanded to know what guarantees were there that the threat was as severe as was being made out. Why hadn't clear astropathic warnings reached Terra via the proper channels, but instead only these three messengers? What did Valoris expect the High Lords to do, when such vast forces had already been committed to Lord Guilliman's crusade? Some of the questions stemmed from obstinacy or fear, others from a desire to secure political advantage. The Captain-General rebuffed some, quashed others, and soon had enough of the Imperium's ruling body convinced of the threat that his entreaties gained traction.

So the vast cogs of the Imperial bureaucracy ground into motion, driving forward in turn the ponderous might of Humanity's titanic war machine. Orders for mustering and redeployment flickered out into the void in a flurry of astropathic activity. Vast strategical bastions stirred to wakefulness, armies of servitors and Tech-Priests breathing life into ancient command sanctums and cogitator fanes that soon swarmed with command personnel and Munitorum facilitators of every rank. Gradually the colossal mobilisations of troops and materiel began, that would be essential to waging this latest Tyrannic War. Yet this would not only be a battle of defence and attrition. Valoris, and others like him, were not content to sit behind battlements and wait for the darkness to reach their walls.



++ HE WHO ALLOWS THE ALIEN TO LIVE SHARES ITS CRIME OF EXISTENCE ++

'First they came from the east, and Ultramar halted them. Now they come from the west. We are told this is dire news. I say otherwise. Ultramar has put fear into them, so they attempt to avoid us. Let them know this: wherever they go, we will follow.'

- Ultramarines First Captain Agemman

AGGRESSIVE DEFENCE

Vast numbers of Astra Militarum regiments formed the bulk of Mankind's response to Leviathan's onslaught, but marshalling them took time. Many regiments had to be extracted from existing war zones. These needed resupply and reinforcement before being declared combat-capable. Others had to be mustered from scratch and given at least the basic training their soldiers would need to prove effective. Logistical support convoys converged from multiple sub-sectors. Their vessels suffered the perils of the turbulent warp and rapacious void-pirates en route, and every loss necessitated further requisitions and more time for them to mobilise. All the while, Nautilon and Promethor crept closer.

Other, elite Imperial forces could react more promptly, however, and wasted no time in doing so. Strike forces of the Adeptus Astartes, missions of the Adepta Sororitas, questing lances of the Knightly houses, the personal retinues of highly-placed tech-magi from the Adeptus Mechanicus – these forces and others like them had the capacity to launch counter-attacks against the advancing Tyranids rather than wait to be trapped in purely defensive wars of survival.

Some individuals set out in isolation to pursue their own agendas, most notably from amongst the Adeptus Mechanicus' secretive and acquisitive priesthood. The majority, though, were organised into small rapid-response fleets that were named Solblades and often numbered no more than two or three warships apiece. These were to be swords drawn in Humanity's defence, placed in the hands of heroes and wielded against the monstrous tendrils of Hive Fleet Leviathan.

Due to the paucity of information about the Tyranids' dispositions and goals, the Solblades were given huge strategic autonomy. Beyond being assigned one or other of the tendrils to assail, they were otherwise trusted to gauge the situation on the front lines and react accordingly. It was hoped that their comparatively low manpower, high mobility and specialist warriors would enable them to move swiftly and conduct a hit-and-run war against the massed Tyranids where larger but more unwieldy military formations might become entangled amidst the swarming masses.

Many Solblades were commanded by, and largely comprised, Space Marines. Captains, Lieutenants, Librarians, Chaplains and – in a few rare cases – even ancient Dreadnoughts from numerous Chapters led Solblades into the darkness. Some were already renowned across entire segmentums, individuals such as



LORD SOLAR LEONTUS

Arcadian Leontus is high commander of all Astra Militarum forces in the Segmentum Solar. His rank, Lord Commander Solar, is a supreme honour afforded only to those capable of bearing the burdens that came with it. Leontus is such an exemplar, a polyhistor, martial tactician and war scholar of breathtaking ability. He possesses a formidable intellect and strategic brilliance that has seen him thrive in both martial and political theatres for many decades.

For all his talents, the Lord Solar sought to atone for what he perceived as his own unforgivable lapse. When a vast host of Khornate daemons had assailed Terra during the emergence of the Great Rift, Leontus had been off-world on campaign. By the time he had returned to the Throneworld, that peril had been vanquished with no aid from him. Humanity's core systems now faced a new threat, and this time Leontus vowed he would be pivotal in its defeat. Even as others organised the Solblades, Leontus was tireless in his own efforts to muster the ponderous might of the Astra Militarum. Accompanied by a veritable army of strategos, priests, adepts and aides, he seemed to be everywhere at once. He bargained, charmed, threatened and once even duelled to expedite the Solar muster to the best of his abilities.

Ultramarines First Captain Agemman, Chapter Master Kayvaan Shrike of the Raven Guard, and the famed alien-hunter and battle-psyker Epistolary Drakht of the Necropolis Hawks. Others had yet to forge such magnificent personal legends, but would have all too many opportunities to do so in the battles to come. These Solblades typically centred around a strike cruiser or squadron of frigates hailing from their commander's Chapter, carrying a potent complement of battle-brothers and war engines. Some were accompanied by skilled allies such as the alien-hunting warriors of the Deathwatch, or the battle-scarred shock troops of the Militarum Tempestus. Others sailed the void in company with Space Marines from brother Chapters with whom they shared bonds of martial honour.

Other Solblades set out led by the high Nobles of Knight houses or the Canonesses of Adepta Sororitas Orders. Mars' own Knightly house, House Taranis, contributed no less than a score of its Barons and Baronesses to lead compact war fleets, each bringing at least a lance of their house's towering war engines to the crusade. Not to be outdone, the Convent Prioris on Terra supplied numerous Canonesses and Palatines from the Orders of the Ebon Chalice, Argent Shroud, Sacred Rose and others to lead Solblades of their own. These forces were the most zealous of all the response fleets and typically the most numerous, for – along with the warships of the Battle Sisters, Black Templars and other elite warriors of the faith – they were often trailed by shiploads of fanatics and flagellants who wished to purge the alien threat and refused to be dissuaded.

Even Trajann Valoris and a number of his fellow Custodians took command of Solblades of their own. Their remit was the defence of the God-Emperor's Golden Throne, and they judged that in this dark hour they could fulfil their duties best at the bleeding edge of battle.

Amidst great pomp and ceremony, one wave of Solblades after another set out from the core systems around Terra. They plunged into the warp full of determination to complete their missions, and fuelled by the fires of their unquenchable loathing for the aliens that threatened the Emperor's realm. They emerged into a chaotic nightmare that by now spread across a half-dozen sectors of Segmentum Pacificus space, and had already consumed dozens of Imperial worlds. Undaunted by the grotesque biological horrors and scenes of appalling catastrophe that confronted them, the Solblades sounded their battle cries and surged into the fight.

THE ANCHOR WORLDS

All hoped that the Solblades would carve apart the Tyranid onslaught, the cream of Humanity's finest forces slaying the monstrous wyrms like heroes from legend. Outwardly, Lord Solar Leontus and his advisers were as bellicose as any in this respect. Behind closed doors, however, they counseled pragmatism before hope. They welcomed whatever victories the Solblades might win, but in the event that Tyranid splinter fleets endured to push towards the heart of the Segmentum Solar they felt a backup plan had to be in place.

Though intelligence was vague, Leontus and his staff had working hypotheses of the rough locations and projected paths of Nautilon and Promethor. Working from these, they identified multiple regions of Imperial space that straddled the nominal border between the Segmentums Pacificus and Solar, and through which the Tyranid tendrils were most likely to push if they were not halted. Next, their army of adepts and scribes analysed mountains of tithe reports, Navis Nobilite void-charts, Inquisitorial assessments and strategic omens. One by one, Lord Solar Leontus designated his Anchor Worlds.

Each planet lay on a major warp transit route which – as best as could be determined – remained a swift and relatively stable route towards the galactic west. Such channels were of no importance to the Tyranids, but they would be crucial routes of manoeuvre and resupply for the Imperial armies charged with halting the xenos advance.

Each world occupied not only a planetary system, but also an entire sub-sector notable for its stable Imperial military and logistical network. Each would serve as an indomitable stronghold from which to support the Solblades and funnel the might of the Astra Militarum into the ongoing fight. In short, they would anchor the Imperial efforts in what was now being described as Humanity's Fourth Tyrannic War. Worlds that met every criteria were vanishingly rare. They took a great deal of finding, and by the time they had been designated, the first immense wave of Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy forces was ready to set forth. Constellations of Imperial warships dove into the maelstrom of the warp, led by the colossal Imperial Fists battle station *Phalanx*. This mobile void-fastness transported the Lord Solar and his vast array of command staff, as well as a sizeable force of Space Marines, through the empyrean towards the most formidable Anchor World of them all – the planet of Sanctum, in the Bastior Sub-sector.

'...If anyone can hear this, if anyone receives this message, know that we did all we could. We fought to the last soldier, the last las-pack, and our faith in the God-Emperor never wavered. They are breaking in, and we will fight them one last time. Commend our souls to the Master of-'

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'...swear to you, I know what I damn well saw! Xenos, aboard flying vessels, snatching up Tyranids in barbed nets as though they were game...'

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'...sailing through out-system space, some manner of xenos worldship, pale as bone and fleeing before the swarm...'

THE SOLBLADES STRIKE

REPORT: 8795536.003
LATORA RELIEVED

Imperial Fists Solblade Maxym has reached the Taimari System, which is currently suffering 60% assimilation by Tyranids of Promethor tendrils. Chaplain Maxym's force relieved the besiegement of capital world Latora, aiding existing Imperial assets in repelling Tyranid vanguard swarms and cleansing/refortifying established defences. Fighting on Latora continues, but now turns in the favour of the faithful.

REPORT: 8795536.009
ARTEMIA ENGAGEMENT

Datasermonal choristry facilitated a short-ranged distress summons to escape the Shadow in the Warp around the forge world Artemia Majoris. Solblade Euclysto responded on the orders of Captain Euclysto of the Sons of Medusa. Tyranid presence determined too widespread and advanced for conventional military aid to prove efficacious. Instead, key relics and senior tech-magi evacuated from Artemia Majoris aboard the strike cruiser *Warcog*.

REPORT: 8795536.024
'LARDER' WORLD

After aiding local Imperial forces in stabilising the Iahgo System, Solblade Drakht followed trail of projected Tyranid advance from neighbouring Othlor System. There they encountered substantial Tyranid presence centred around a world exhibiting colossal biological readings. Augur probes detected a membrane-like structure apparently enfolding much of the planet - identified as the hive world of Shakar - and hinted at vast quantities of non-Tyranid life signs held in biostasis beneath it. Major

capillary tower architecture noted at north and south poles, and rising from equator. Numerous hive ships observed suckling. Further investigation rendered impossible due to massive Tyranid counter-attack that forced Solblade Drakht's retreat. Epistolary Drakht currently rallying with Solblades Pormannon and Chesna before return to Othlor System.

REPORT: 8795536.026
ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Solblade Vander of House Terryn and Solblade Artemir of Silver Skulls Chapter were operating in concert to purge outlying worlds of the Arkeiso Cluster. Operation intended to dissuade advance of splinter of Nautilon tendrils through region. Ground forces ambushed by sudden and overwhelming subterranean Tyranid swarms while sweeping ruins of Vale of Saint Irindor. Unlikely aid rendered by Aeldari identified as belonging to Ulthwé and Iybraesil craftworlds, arriving through portals of unknown nature and entering battle alongside the loyalist forces. Situation remains volatile and, due to proper degree of loathing for the nature of the xenos exhibited by Solblade forces, conflict is now three-way in nature.

REPORT: 8795536.043
SAMPLE ACQUISITION

Following findings on [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], new supplementary strategic advisory cascaded through Solblades from [REDACTED], classified vermilion. All biogian-trained combat personnel to attempt sample collection from Tyranid leader organisms and [quote] 'unusual' organic structures encountered during operations. Further strategic updates pending from [REDACTED].

REPORT: 8795536.055
WAR WISDOM

Faced with impossible Tyranid numbers along the central-advance passage of Promethor tendrils, Solblades centred around Raven Guard and Catachan Jungle Fighter formations have switched tactics. Instead of direct confrontation, they are instead imparting to local Imperial forces as much training in guerrilla warfare - both surface-based and naval - as possible. The Solblades then move on. Each time they leave small corps of volunteers to aid in guerrilla ops. Successful resistance to xenos encroachment measured at 23% increased efficacy across seven (7) worlds to date.

REPORT: 8795536.099
DIGGING IN

Auto-requiem servitor units intercepted crossing the Osmol Strait towards Sector Command in Petramar Stars. Ident link to Jo-shen Solblade. Final report indicates all Solblade void-capable assets lost in battle, and surviving warriors bolstering fortifications at the Cathedrum Veracitor on Ghen. Commend their spirits to the God-Emperor.

REPORT: 8795536.218
PURGING FLAME

Thackatar Solblade prosecuted successful purgation operation on Castinov II. Inquisitor Thackatar led drop insertion in person, commanded force of 12,400 Tempestus Scions and their drop craft. Geocore reactor machine spirits goaded to insanity, planetary core meltdown initiated. Inquisitor Thackatar and 216 Scions extracted. Castinov splinter fleet suffered estimated 47% purgation following planetary thermo-nova.

REPORT: 8795536.222
RED RUIN

The Kurtzen Solblade reached the world of Mostar's Landing to discover civil war raging between xenocultists and a local - and seemingly widespread - heretic blood-cult. Deeming the world beyond salvation, they marked it for Exterminatus then moved on.

REPORT: 8795536.263
A FIEND VANQUISHED

After a combined effort by five Solblades, a Nautilon tendril splinter fleet was broken upon the anvil of the fortified Ptakha System. During the fighting, the warlord-class organism [classification: Swarmlord] was slain by Shield-Captain Laertesian Amandar Vasselaine Hekathartes.

REPORT: 8795536.280
STARVATION PROTOCOL

Strategic augury received that a splinter of the Promethor tendril was approaching the Ork-held Asteroid Belt 876-6. Veritum, Ahlweh and Nakazura Solblades enacted a war of eradication against the greenskins, eliminating their presence at great cost before retreating to leave the Tyranids without live quarry to devour.

REPORT: 8795536.303
GENEVault 18

Imperial Fists Solblade Landyrus effected an emergency combat landing on the Tyranid-infested world of Rasport. In a series of armoured strikes they opened a route to the Fortress of Gold, thence to secure vaults beneath that blazing structure. They are understood to have safely recovered a substantial reserve of gene-seed, though it is unclear which Chapter it belongs to.



INTO THE MAW

The Fourth Tyrannic War was now raging across multiple sectors of the Segmentum Pacificus. Lives beyond count had already been lost, and untold destruction wrought before the Solblades even reached the front lines. Yet in truth, the greatest danger of all had not yet been revealed. That was about to change.

SANCTUM

A place of towering mountains, verdant plains and nomadic techno-barbarian tribes, Sanctum was the home world of the White Templars Chapter. The Space Marines had acceded to Sanctum being deemed an Anchor World, and to great swathes of its unspoiled wilds being ripped up and transformed into city-sized redoubts, spaceports and supply depots. The White Templars' only regret was that almost their entire Chapter strength was currently either fighting amidst the Indomitus fleets or believed to be crusading deep within the Imperium Nihilus. As such, they were able to provide only a smattering of novitiate and veteran battle-brothers – as well as their Chapter's sizeable host of helots and servitors – to supplement the growing Imperial garrison.

Deploying into the paths of the Promethor and Nautilon tendrils, the Solblades found themselves facing colossal concentrations of Tyranid forces advancing across wide, multi-system frontages. Continent-sized xenos swarms swept across entire worlds like undulating chitinous floods. Hive ships and their smaller escort biovessels flowed through the void, thick as daggerflies above a corpse pit. Planets, void docks, space stations – any site of permanent settlement or fortification that could not flee the Tyranid advance was either besieged or overrun.

The tendrils did not move swiftly, however. Each comprised scores of smaller splinter fleets that intertwined and broke apart as new prey presented itself. Sometimes they doubled back to strike at enclaves of Human or alien life that had endured the initial Tyranid attack and now lay behind the tendrils' lines of advance. They took their time stripping worlds down to the last molecules of organic life, cracking open the deepest cores of fortified void stations to root out the flesh-bounty within, or scouring settled asteroid fields and the like for hidden pockets of survivors. The bio-fleets' advance was inexorable and their predation nigh-inescapable. They could, however, be outpaced and outmanoeuvred.

Though many Solblades suffered terrible casualties in their ongoing battles against the Tyranids, their compact and fast-moving natures proved every bit as advantageous as had been hoped. The elite Imperial formations swept into battle with thrusters and guns blazing, often catching the Tyranids unawares or striking where their swarms and bio-fleets thinned. Time and again they hit vital targets, effected rapid evacuations, or launched punishing combat drops that saw synaptic leader-beasts slain, hive ships reduced to ruptured meat, and entire swarms recoil in pained confusion. Those Imperial forces that did not pull out again quickly enough were ensnared and devoured. Casualties mounted swiftly. Still, the relentless pace of the Solblades' attacks and the strategic cunning with which they fought saw them prevail on countless battlefields.

Splinter fleets pursued their Human tormentors into the interstellar darkness, only for the

Solblades to outdistance the Shadow in the Warp and escape to the empyrean, leaving their pursuers' jaws snapping on empty void. Some Solblades garrisoned and reinforced the most defensible fortifications that lay in the Tyranids' paths, then dug in for the inevitable onslaught. Such besieged citadels soon vanished beneath the Shadow in the Warp and their defenders were rarely heard from again. However, each such selfless campaign slowed the advance of another bio-fleet or hive swarm. Each bought time for fresh evacuations to take place or the next line of defences to be further reinforced. Gradually, the assault of the Nautilon and Promethor tendrils stalled and began to fragment. Under constant attack from not only Human but also other alien aggressors, the Tyranid swarms started to look as though they might be defeated altogether. Yet more often than not, hope is a dangerous lie in the Era Indomitus.

GRENDYLLUS RISING

The Tyranids' third – and previously undetected – tendril speared up through the galactic plane, into space considered well behind the lines of the Solblades' advance. The Shadow in the Warp billowed thick and dark before it, swallowing distress cries that might otherwise have alerted Imperial authorities to the peril. Amidst the confusion, the mass migrations and widespread conflicts already triggered by Promethor and Nautilon, warning signs and reports of hostilities were lost or misattributed. The Motzarch Cluster; the Rendhor Belt; Stather's Reach and the Leagues of Votann enclaves of the Unnhârt Stars – all were devoured but went unmarked.

It was a battle group from Indomitus Crusade Fleet Sextus that finally raised the alarm. The Anchor World of Sanctum lay in the Formidyre System, which was itself the linchpin of the Bastior Sub-sector. Since Lord Solar Leontus had embedded his vast command staff on Sanctum, and no less a vessel than the *Phalanx* settled into its orbit, efforts had been redoubled to ensure the Anchor World's security. No threat could be countenanced to such high-profile Imperial heroes or military assets, and so Battle Group Faustus had been charged with sweeping the sub-sector's outer systems. Broken into more

than a dozen task forces, the battle group was ordered to purge any pirates, heretics or xenos they came across. Their groupmaster, Tysen Yacobe, expected a series of swift and easy purgation campaigns, more exterminations than true battles. He was well aware that deploying an entire battle group for such a mission was overkill. It was a gesture of exaggerated caution by Sector Command, intended to honour the Lord Solar and perhaps garner his favour.

Then, without warning, two of Yacobe's task forces vanished. The last reported position of Task Force III had been the far-flung Stanghalde System, while Task Force IV was believed to have been concluding operations against heretic cults in the Irontower System. Both fell suddenly silent. Task Forces II and XI rerouted from their own objectives to investigate, only to vanish in turn. Growing increasingly disquieted, Groupmaster Yacobe sent word of the disappearances to both Sector Command and to Leontus' command spire on Sanctum, before summoning his remaining task forces to regroup in the Circeyl System. It was during this muster that a ragged handful of ships from Task Forces III and XI erupted from the warp on the fringe of the Circeyl System. Every vessel was terribly damaged, many trailing flames and tumbling wreckage as they dragged themselves from the empyrean. Those that could blared warnings to all who might hear. The Tyranids were coming, they cried, not those of the Nautilon or Promethor tendrils but another infestation rising up from below.

The survivors' reports were garbled and – in some cases – tainted by madness. Their vidlogs and augur exloads did not lie, however. These made clear that Tyranid bio-ships had completely overrun the outermost systems of the Bastior Sub-sector in numbers fit to blot out the star fields behind them. This new onslaught was swiftly dubbed the Grendyllus tendril and prospectively classified as a vermilion-alpha threat. The true extent of the danger could not yet be assessed, but Groupmaster Yacobe knew it was his duty to assume the worst. The security of Lord Solar Leontus, and of the Sanctum Anchor World could not be risked. Even now Yacobe's Astropaths were complaining of chittering and scrabbling in their minds, and a deadening pressure upon their psychic senses. The groupmaster sent swift messenger ships to deliver his updated warnings, both to Sanctum and to the rest of the systems in the Bastior Sub-sector. Then he gathered his warships and prepared to reconnoitre – and if possible slow or even halt – the Tyranids' advancing swarms. Yacobe's choice was a courageous one, but also tremendously dangerous.



BEFORE THE SWARM

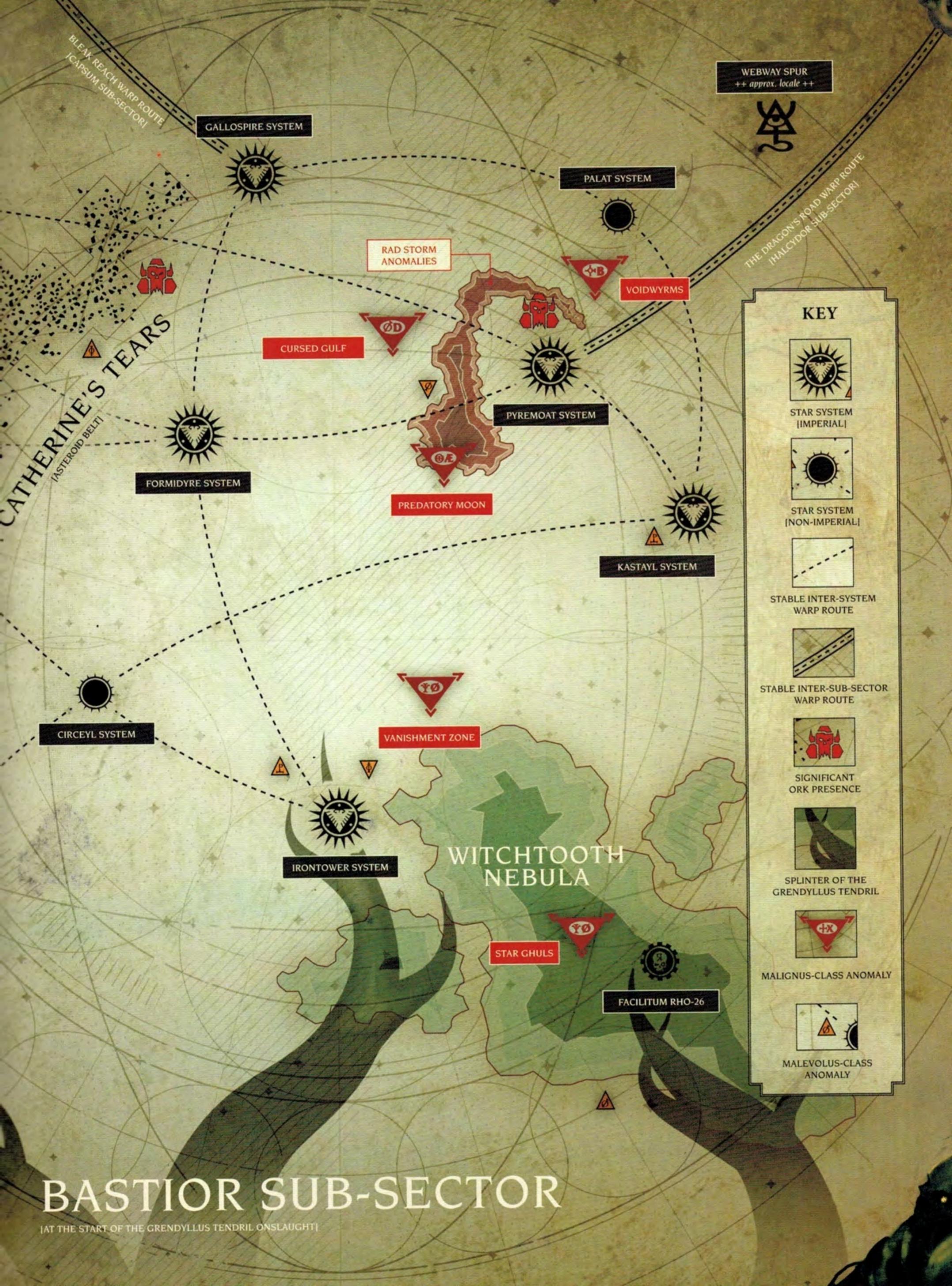
Groupmaster Yacobe's warnings leapt between the sub-sector's worlds like chain lightning. They prompted a flurry of differing reactions: panic-spawned rioting on Lethnor and Gainer's Hope; zealous jubilation on the fortress world of Unspake, where the cult of Saint Vance the Martyr held sway; widespread denial – even derision – amongst the clergy and planetary governors of the Gallospire System. How could base xenos have outmanoeuvred the might of Mankind, these latter asked. Why would the God-Emperor allow it? The dissenting voices of Gallospire became more vehement until High Frater Niyellus decreed it heresy to even speak of the Grendyllus tendril, let alone prepare for its onslaught. His directive conflicted with that of the system's senior military officers to prepare for a full-scale xenos invasion. Torn between blind faith and the frightening realities of the situation, the defenders of the Gallospire System factionalised and tensions escalated rapidly. The first shots of what would come to be known as the War of Closed Eyes were fired soon afterwards.

Even as the Gallospire System descended into anarchy, the defenders of other worlds throughout the Bastior Sub-sector responded to the Tyranid threat with swift determination. From the barter-spires of far Welm to the sprawling aerodromes of Aggrandia and the dust-marsh nomad caravans of Tzeng-Raan, all who could took up arms and prepared to fight for the God-Emperor. Regiments of Astra Militarum soldiery adopted defensive positions behind high battlements or deployed to fortified checkpoints through city streets, agri-sprawls and macro-templum complexes. Vast concentrations of armoured vehicles and artillery dug in around vital spaceports and fortresses, or rolled out to patrol stretches of wilderness and macro-highways. Colossal subterranean generatorums thrummed to life, powering up defence lasers and void shields, while combat aircraft were moved to high alert and void ships departed their docks. In the Reydabt, Kastayl, Pyremoat and Formidyre Systems, the augmented might of the Imperial war machine growled to life and girded itself for the Tyranids' onslaught.

As intelligence on the xenos advance filtered through to Sanctum, however, one thing became clear to Leontus and his command staff. All the

military might of the Bastior Sub-sector would not be enough to halt the Grendyllus tendrils. Whether by design, opportunistic instinct or simple dark chance, this third – and seemingly largest – Tyranid tendrils had bypassed the might of the Solblades. It was pushing into what should have been the Imperial rear lines in numbers even the most pessimistic strategos could not have predicted. Already the Shadow in the Warp had fallen across the Stanghalde and Irontower Systems, cutting them off from all but wildly reckless warp jumps and choking their defenders' calls for aid. The same phenomenon was gathering about the Reydabt System, communications from its Astropaths becoming strained and infrequent. With Gallospire's worlds locked in civil war, this left just three of the sub-sector's seven Imperial systems able to fight back on their own terms.

Lord Solar Leontus accordingly enacted what he called the Sanctuary Protocol. Powerful astropathic distress calls were sent echoing away through the empyrean, in the direction of the Segmentum Solar, towards the nearest Anchor World sub-sectors – neither of which was close – and to the last reported locations of countless Solblades. Urgent and considerable reinforcement would be required, Leontus knew, for the defenders to stand a chance of victory. In the meantime, any loyalist forces in the Bastior Sub-sector that could fall back to the Formidyre, Pyremoat or Kastayl Systems – now designated sanctuary systems – were to do so immediately. They were to salvage all the ammunition, fuel and useful manpower they could, but not at the risk of being trapped by the inexorable Tyranid advance. Any forces that could not retreat in this fashion, stranded by a lack of warp-capable craft, were instead ordered to dig in and hold out for as long as they could. They were commended for whatever time their courageous sacrifices would buy the three sanctuary systems. With luck, it would prove enough to allow fresh Imperial forces to arrive and tip the balance against the Tyranid menace.



WEBWAY SPUR
++ approx. locale ++



GALLOSPIRE SYSTEM

PALAT SYSTEM

RAD STORM ANOMALIES

VOIDWYRMS

CURSED GULF

PYREMOAT SYSTEM

PREDATORY MOON

FORMIDYRE SYSTEM

KASTAYL SYSTEM

CIRCEYL SYSTEM

VANISHMENT ZONE

IRONTOWER SYSTEM

WITCHTOOTH NEBULA

STAR GHULS

FACILITUM RHO-26

KEY



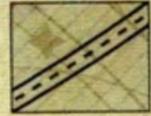
STAR SYSTEM [IMPERIAL]



STAR SYSTEM [NON-IMPERIAL]



STABLE INTER-SYSTEM WARP ROUTE



STABLE INTER-SUB-SECTOR WARP ROUTE



SIGNIFICANT ORK PRESENCE



SPLINTER OF THE GRENDELLUS TENDRIL



MALIGNUS-CLASS ANOMALY



MALEVOLUS-CLASS ANOMALY

BASTIOR SUB-SECTOR

[AT THE START OF THE GRENDELLUS TENDRIL ONSLAUGHT]

THE TALONS DIG DEEP

Ever more bio-fleets uncoiled from below the galactic plane to infest the Bastior Sub-sector. Where the Promethor and Nautilon tendrils spread over multiple sectors, the Grendyllus tendril instead seemed to be concentrating all its colossal might against a single sub-sector. Why this should be was unclear, though theories abounded. As with everything concerning the utterly ineffable Tyranids, Humanity was left fumbling for understanding. Even the best strategic minds and most learned Ordo Xenos Inquisitors could do little better than to guess at when, why or how the rapacious alien swarms would strike, let alone why this tendril's strength should be so concentrated.



Many Imperial commanders obeyed the Sanctuary Protocol. Void ships of all kinds arrived in the Kastayl, Pyremoat and Formidyre Systems, crammed with soldiers, war engines, logistical personnel and military materiel. Armies of overworked strategium adepts and sleep-deprived officers coordinated the influx. Ground forces were deployed to strengthen the worlds of the sanctuary systems, while all combat-capable void ships joined system monitor patrols and hastily scrambled reserve fleets. Hour by hour, the defences of the sanctuary systems grew ever more impregnable until it seemed that surely no enemy could overcome them. Certainly the initial Tyranid feelers that quested into the Kastayl and Formidyre Systems were swiftly annihilated in the void by overwhelming Imperial firepower.

All those who could not reach sanctuary now faced the full horror of the Tyranid onslaught. Some panicked and attempted to flee, or to hide in deep bunkers or remote caves. A scattering of vessels did escape Grendyllus' clutches. Many more were caught in the open void, ensnared in the tendrils of hive ships that disgorged swarms of warrior organisms to butcher all aboard. Those who hid lasted longer, but every day another remote enclave was predated, another bunker complex infiltrated by vanguard organisms and reduced to a gruesome abattoir.

Others in the outlying systems resigned themselves to their fates. The noble clans of Lethnor's high spires indulged in ever more debauched revels while Tyranids engulfed their world. Even as subterranean swarms bypassed their outer defences, and tides of warrior organisms flooded up through the levels of Lethnor's hives, the orgiastic parties continued. In the end it was the surviving Lethnoran soldiery who butchered the nobles, while in the process of requisitioning their palatial spires to serve as final redoubts against the all-consuming swarms.

For all those who lost their minds or their courage in the face of the Tyranid threat, there were many more who fought back. Some were motivated by their faith, or by the desire to defend their homes and all they held dear. Others dug in and held on out of sheer spite, be that directed towards the alien swarms coming to devour them, or towards those who had abandoned them to such a fate.

In the Irontower System, Captain Veshwalde of the Kordessan Light Infantry drew together a coalition of grim-faced Imperial survivors on the world of Donjorr. Veshwalde's survivors were trapped on a world whose oceans had become bubbling digestive acid, and whose horizons were darkened by capillary towers and nests of tentacles taller than mountains. Despite the sanity-blasting sights around them, and the apparently doomed nature of their campaign, the survivors fought on, held together by Veshwalde's singular will and charisma.

In the remote Reydabt System, initial Tyranid attacks against the agri world of Cornucog saw its orbital defences annihilated. Then, during the infamous Nine Days of Blood, its fortifications along the Mariavahl Line were reduced to corpse-choked ruins. Rather than lose heart, however, the Imperial forces trapped on Cornucog clung to their faith, embraced their hatred of the alien and fought on. Tyranid synapse-beasts led onslaughts into the Cornucog city-domes even as swarms of Haruspexes and

Psychophages assailed the planet's hydroponic chasms. In response, Cornucog's defenders launched a blistering series of armoured and airborne counter-attacks that halted the Tyranids in their tracks. Soon, the world was locked in a sprawling global stalemate that grew more savage by the day.

There were scores more stories of defiance against the odds, and as many of bloody tragedy. Most were lost beneath the smothering shroud of the Shadow in the Warp. The horrifying miasmal maelstrom unleashed by the toxic swarms of Pavlor IV; the suicidal charge of the 840th Vostroyan Rough Riders that at last saw the hated Wytherwurm slain; General Tahnlire's disastrous air-drop into the heavily infested Magran manufactorums; the last stand of the Gromdach Super-heavy Armoured; the War of Dragons, conducted in the endless skies of Nymir III; the dirgesong march of the Erzentak Saints – these and countless other conflicts saw the best and worst of the Human spirit pitted against the dead-eyed malevolence of the Tyranid swarms.

Alien, too, fought alien in this inter-system war of survival. Even as they prepared to set out from the Kheepgen System to invade neighbouring Formidyre, the Ork hordes of Warlord Orzgog were attacked by Tyranid swarms. Delighted to find an excellent fight on

their very doorstep, the Orks abandoned their invasion plans and hurled themselves at the Tyranids. Elsewhere, Kähls and Grimnyr of the Greater Thurian League and Kronus Hegemony rallied the Leagues of Votann forces scattered through the Saint Catherine's Tears asteroid belt. Forming their followers into Oathbands, they launched a determined fight back against the Tyranid infestation. Abandoned by their own leaders, many Humans joined the Votann alliance. Their aid was tolerated by the pragmatic clones, in the name of expediency.

Hrud, Mebrii, several Ghluthykk viro-combines, and even – according to unconfirmed reports – a Jokaero star-frame engaged in their own battles against, or flights from, the Tyranids. Meanwhile, the alien death toll in the Palat System skyrocketed by the day as Tyranids, Necrons, Asuryani and Drukhari engaged in a ferocious four-way war. Ancient super-weapons of unimaginable power were unleashed to annihilate entire bio-fleets. Warrior organisms spilled into the webway, triggering a separate and equally vicious conflict beyond the bounds of reality. Alien blood stained world after world, and still the fighting raged.

FIRST CAPTAIN SEVERUS AGEMMAN

The Ultramarines 1st Company Captain, Agemman, is a strategically gifted warrior lord. He most often marches to battle clad in an ancient and storied suit of Terminator armour. It is said of Agemman by his loyal warriors that he is as indomitable and mighty as great Ultramar itself. Agemman was conducting vengeance campaigns against Death Guard forces when word reached him of the incursions by the Promethor and Nautilon tendrils. A veteran of the First Tyrannic War, Agemman had seen the Tyranids ravage Macragge first-hand. Despite the demands of his Chapter's ongoing wars, he gathered a strike force and made for the Segmentum Solar in answer to the Throneworld's rallying cry.

First Captain Agemman was an obvious choice to lead a Solblade. He wielded his formation with poise and skill, seeking to stall the Tyranids' advance with hit-and-run assaults. He also fought to gather biosamples from his alien enemies, and inspired the masters of other Solblades to the same endeavour. Agemman had spoken on many occasions with Chaplain Ortan Cassius, his Chapter's greatest veteran of the First Tyrannic War and a long-time hero of the alien-hunting Deathwatch. During these debates, Cassius had impressed upon Agemman the importance of understanding this most alien of enemies, the better to slaughter it. Agemman hoped that by capturing all the Tyranid samples they could, the Solblades would advance that process.



OUTLIERS

For all the blood spilled, heroic sacrifices made and furious battles fought, the Tyranid advance continued. Where the defenders' warships, void platforms and ground forces were finite, the bio-ships and warrior organisms of the Grendyllus tendrils appeared numberless. They drifted from the interstellar void in waves. Each onslaught was greater and more terrible than the last, and while the defenders typically had hours or even days between one attack and the next, there was only so much they could do with that time. Damaged warships were repaired and wrecks salvaged, but with the Shadow in the Warp settling over the embattled systems there was no way to draft in reinforcements or replenish flotillas. Injured warriors were treated, weapons reloaded and battered fortifications shored up, but after every battle there were more dead to be heaped and burned, while stockpiles of ammunition and medical supplies only lessened. In Bastior's outlying systems, the defenders' numbers and morale grew ever more stretched even as the Tyranids' strength only seemed to increase.

It was the eleventh Tyranid attack that saw the last planetside defenders in the Stanghalde System overwhelmed. Until that point, garrison forces had held out on the worlds of Portent and Sigillus, supported by hit-and-run attacks from a ragtag fleet of Imperial Navy warships and Space Marine frigates. The eleventh onslaught was like nothing that had come before, however. Hundreds of bio-ships surged through the void, their numbers so great that the Imperial vessels could only fall back or be annihilated. Clustering around Portent and Sigillus, scores of hive ships vomited wave after wave of warrior organisms onto the planets' surfaces until every last spark of resistance was extinguished. A final, desperate vox-blurt reached the fleeing naval craft from the surface of Portent. It spoke of a towering Hive Tyrant leading the butchery, fighting with four crackling boneswords and displaying a terrifying strategic intellect. The shipmasters forced to abandon their comrades on the ground vowed to fight on in their honour. They would do all they could to hurt the colossal swarms now gathering to feed upon the system's slaughtered worlds.



The Reydabt System, too, faced one onslaught after another. Unlike Stanghalde, however, its defenders had time to prepare for the coming storm. On the worlds of Welm, Maur, Dzve and Rov, Imperial forces fought with the ferocity of cornered prey. By the nineteenth Tyranid attack wave, the majority of the system's warships and orbital defence platforms had been reduced to hollow husks drifting in the void. However, the Tyranids still had yet to gain a significant foothold on any settled worlds. The Reydabt System might not have been able to contribute to the wider sub-sector's war effort by this point, but neither was it about to collapse under the xenos offensive.

In the Gallospire System the War of Closed Eyes had seen countless Imperial lives lost to infighting. So entrenched had the position of the xeno-deniers become, that even the arrival of bio-ships into the system was not enough to end the fighting. Consumed by zeal, and with his hands too bloody to admit his mistakes, High Frater Niyellus instead accused the loyalists of everything from conjuring illusions by heretic witchery to releasing weaponised xenofauna. Some of the governors and officers who had followed him into rebellion wavered as Tyranid forces attacked renegades and loyalists alike. Others doubled down upon their increasingly fantastical convictions, in some cases continuing to accuse their enemies of lies and trickery even as xenos drop-spores darkened their worlds' skies. Divided by hatred and paranoia, the Imperial defenders of the Gallospire System suffered terribly beneath the Tyranids' talons.

THE ONSLAUGHT INTENSIFIES

As resistance lessened in the wider sub-sector, so a colossal bio-fleet massed and surged up to attack the Pyremoat System. The sanctuary's defenders had hoped that the raging belts of rad storms that partly encircled their system might damage the Tyranid attack waves. If this was the case, however, there was no evidence visible as bio-ships flowed from amidst the luridly glowing storms to attack. If anything, all this did was unleash swarms of irradiated Tyranids whose mere presence proved inimical to Human life.

Nor were the Tyranids the only aliens to assault Pyremoat's worlds. Thundering from the void aboard rad-saturated warships came a horde of mutated Orks led by the Monsta-Boss of Glowing Rokk. Though they had been massively reinforced, and had colossally fortified their worlds, still Pyremoat Command had not anticipated having to withstand two alien invasions at once. A series of punishing naval engagements followed, during which fourteen

deep-void watch stations were overrun and the industrial moon of Eleidee lost to a catastrophe, the precise nature of which was swiftly classified. Soon after, Admiral Ranjav was forced to fight both Tyranids and Orks at once during the chaotic Battle of Gaithaus Sound. She displayed strategic mastery in winnowing both attack waves, but it cost her dozens of Imperial craft along with her own Oberon-class flagship, the *Spirit Aflame*. Planetary invasions followed: the fortress world of Unspake beset by Tyranid vanguard and aerial swarms; the hive world of Trygg facing hordes of heavily mechanised greenskins under the Monsta-Boss himself; the scriptorium world of Blohtt assailed by Tyranids and Orks at the same time. The only saving grace for the defenders of the Pyremoat System was that the Orks and Tyranids slaughtered one another as willingly as they did their Human prey. Still, if the sanctuary systems were to hold out until the arrival of Imperial reinforcements, they could not afford to suffer such brutal losses at so ferocious a pace.

The Kastayl System was assailed shortly after hostilities commenced in the Pyremoat sanctuary. Here, Imperial defensive measures proved successful, at least to begin with. Seven successive waves of hive ships and escort drones broke against the armoured prows of the Navis Imperialis, Adeptus Mechanicus and Space Marine vessels without a single organism making planetfall. Inevitably, however, Imperial naval casualties mounted with each engagement. Worse, the Tyranids appeared to adapt to the ferocious resistance they faced. The eighth attack wave was not only several times larger than any that had come before it, but also amongst its seething masses came strange biovessels that did not match any existing Imperial recognition-scripture. Gangling things trailing masses of spindly black tendrils, the craft boasted pulsating cerebral nodes each as large as an Imperial frigate. Where the foul vessels went, so crippling paranoia, terrifying hallucinations and smothering psychostatic drove Human naval crews mad and shattered their morale. From these same ghastly vessels – swiftly dubbed Mindslayers – poured invasion waves composed almost entirely of warrior organisms adapted for psychic combat. Accompanied by heavily armoured crusher swarms and tides of expendable warrior-beasts, the Mindslayers' spawn soon secured footholds on the battery world of Rakhnor and the agri world of Rashlav. As fresh Imperial reserves moved up in response, and corps of battle-psykers stepped forth to engage the Mindslayers' spawn, so the conflict in the Kastayl System escalated into a nightmarish war of witches.

YACOBÉ'S WAR

Groupmaster Yacobe of Battle Group Faustus was a constant thorn in the side of the Tyranid advance. Initially he resisted the command to retreat to the sanctuary systems, instead dispatching reconnaissance ships to gather clearer intelligence on the Tyranids' strengths and dispositions. While those vessels strove to scout, and then to escape from, the oncoming Tyranid swarms, Yacobe conducted a determined naval campaign from forward bases amidst the eerie dead worlds of the Circeyl System. He kept up his efforts until mounting casualties and the spreading Shadow in the Warp threatened to cripple his battle group. Only then did Yacobe relent, splitting his remaining forces and commanding them to reinforce the sanctuary systems.



Captain Agemman fired his storm bolter, shredding a Termagant that was scuttling towards him. A mere drop in the ocean, reflected the Ultramarines First Captain.

Hundreds of warrior organisms surged between the trees of the dark world known as Obsidria. They scabbled over one another in their frenzy to sink talons and fangs into the Ultramarines facing them. The aliens' sheer weight of numbers heaved trees up by the roots and bore them to the ground where they vanished under the chitinous tide.

In the face of this onslaught, the warriors of Agemman's strike force were executing a disciplined fighting retreat. Several of their number had already fallen to bio-ammunition or stabbing talons. Still they maintained a hail of defensive fire as they paced backward towards their extraction site. Agemman felt stern pride for his warriors as he watched them fight. Not one footstep was hurried or misplaced. Not one shot was rushed. Each flanking dash by the Tyranids was spotted and swiftly countered with raging gouts of flame and hammering bolt fire. All this despite the fact that the Ultramarines battled a veritable avalanche of suicidally ferocious warrior organisms.

'The xenos' aggression remains hyper-actuated,' came Tyvus' voice through Agemman's vox-bead.

The First Captain gunned down several more Termagants and flicked his attention to his strategic augur before replying.

'Your theoretical regarding the importance of sample seventeen appears more practical by the moment, brother Apothecary.'

'Our acquisition of the node-beast's cerebral core certainly seems to have agitated

them,' said Tyvus, a wry note in his voice. *'I find myself the unwilling focus of their attention.'*

Agemman could see the truth of this. Tyvus fought at the heart of the Ultramarines' formation, shielded by his brothers' armoured forms as though ensconced behind ceramite ramparts. Still his wargear was gouged and stained from where xenos after xenos had ignored other threats in favour of firing upon or hurling themselves at him.

'Such monomania leaves the foe vulnerable, brother,' said Agemman, firing again and hearing the warning chime of a low ammo count from his weapon. *'They make no effort to seek cover from our shots, and assail us only as obstacles on their route to you.'*

'Gratifying that my heightened peril provides a tactical advantage, First Captain,' replied Tyvus, pausing to put a bolt round through the head of a bounding horror. *'Your optimistic disposition is inspirational.'*

'It has been remarked upon many times, brother,' replied Agemman, deadpan. He thumbed his feed-selector rune as a servo-skull bobbed in to extract his spent clip and slam a fresh one home. *'Defend the biosample, and we shall continue to defend you. Chrono reads three minutes to extraction.'*

'Courage and honour, First Captain,' said Tyvus by way of acknowledgement. Agemman repeated the words, muzzle flare strobing across his autosenes as he unloaded bolt shells into the onrushing foe.

Around him, the Terminators of Squad Decius withdrew in lockstep, firing in controlled bursts. Codicier Valius paced alongside them, the

runic wards of his armour glowing angrily. His features contorted with effort as he conjured blasts of psychic force despite the smothering presence of the Shadow in the Warp. Each manifestation hit the Tyranids like an invisible battering ram and sent broken carcasses tumbling.

'Squad Decius, fire-pattern Ajax-Meteor,' ordered Agemman. *'Squad Ulaxes, give them flame.'*

The Terminators adjusted their aim, focusing on the outlier organisms Agemman had spotted encircling the Ultramarines. Meanwhile, the Infernus Marines of Squad Ulaxes advanced through the gaps between the Terminators, pyreblasters levelled. They unleashed torrents of burning promethium. Focused upon reaching Apothecary Tyvus, more than a score of Tyranid organisms surged straight into the billowing firestorm. Agemman heard their flesh crisping and their organic armour plates cracking in the heat. Their dying screeches sounded flat to his ear, autonomic sounds with nothing recognisable as emotion or sentience in them.

Squad Ulaxes withdrew behind the Terminators again, the manoeuvre as smooth as the interlocking cogs of a finely tuned mechanism. Again, Agemman felt a swell of admiration for the battle-brothers under his command.

'Maintain retreat and fire patterns,' he barked over the vox. *'Less than one hundred yards to the clearing. Runic designators show Eagle of Macragge on final approach. Be ready for combat extraction.'*

Agemman heard the rushing roar of missiles firing in swift succession. He glanced to the far left of the line. There, Dreadnought Brother





Julianos was unleashing a salvo of frag warheads into the swarm. The missiles burst amidst the trees and filled the air with Tyranid ichor and jagged wooden shards.

'The flames drive the xenos into my sights,' voxed the interred pilot of the Ballistus Dreadnought. *'They seek to flank us. I am grateful. More foes to smite, to make pay for what their vile kin did to Macragge.'*

'Just so, brother, we—' began Agemman. He was interrupted by a piercing scream that climbed so swiftly in pitch and volume that the First Captain thought the eye-lenses of his helm might shatter. Instead they showed him a sphere of luminescent bioplasma swelling like a newborn star amidst the trees. Its fierce glare threw into stark illumination the hulking alien monster generating the deadly projectile within a caging bioelectric field.

'Screamer-killer!' shouted Terminator Sergeant Decius. Space Marines swung guns towards the huge Carnifex, but too slowly. The beast unleashed its bioplasmic bolt with a whip crack of displaced air. The glowing orb shot through the arboreal gloom and hit Dreadnought Brother Julianos directly on the front of his armoured sarcophagus. Plasteel and ceramite melted under the impact. Arcs of motive force leapt from ruined systems. Smoke billowed thick and black as the Dreadnought staggered and crunched shoulder-first into a tree trunk.

'Brother Julianos, report,' ordered Agemman. He received nothing but static in response. The ground shook as the Screamer-killer – amongst the most well known and loathed sub-species of Tyranid Carnifex – accelerated into a lumbering charge. Agemman felt grim resolve fill him

as he saw the siege-beast making straight for Brother Tyvus. Somehow he did not think it would balk at tearing through the Terminators of Squad Decius to reach its prey. If left unchecked the monster would gouge the heart from his strike force. This was something Agemman could not allow.

Gritting his teeth, the First Captain muttered a benediction of wrath to the machine spirit of his power sword and stepped into the charging beast's path.

Before the Carnifex could reach him, twin columns of laser energy stabbed through the gloom, scything through trunks and sending burning treetops crashing down onto the Tyranids. The blasts punched through one side of the Carnifex's head and out the other. Agemman distinctly saw the beast's gimlet eyes glow scarlet then burst as flames erupted from their sockets.

The Screamer-killer's legs tangled beneath it and it pitched onto its front, ploughing a deep trench in the loam.

'I... live... brother Captain...' replied the Dreadnought, lascannon barrels still glowing from his killing shot, artificial voice ragged with pain.

'And I offer my thanks for that exemplary shot, Brother Julianos,' said Agemman. 'Now fall back to the extraction point. You have sustained sore damage and I will not risk you or your legacy of wisdom.'

'As... you... command...' rasped Julianos. Step by ponderous step he retreated into the hazy pool of daylight that marked the clearing in the dark woods. The rest of the Ultramarines moved with the damaged Dreadnought, focusing on shielding the Apothecary in their

midst and maintaining defensive fire. Brother Calastus fell to a fleshborer grub through the eye-piece of his helm just as they reached clear daylight. Terminator brothers Agrista and Palatus made it several steps further before something huge and scuttling with a maw full of fangs and tentacles erupted from the gloom to tear them apart. Even as their vengeful brothers blasted the monster into ruptured ruin, the downdraught of the *Eagle of Macragge* caused the canopy to lash wildly.

'Gunship, we are ready for combat extraction and have sample seventeen secure,' voxed Agemman.

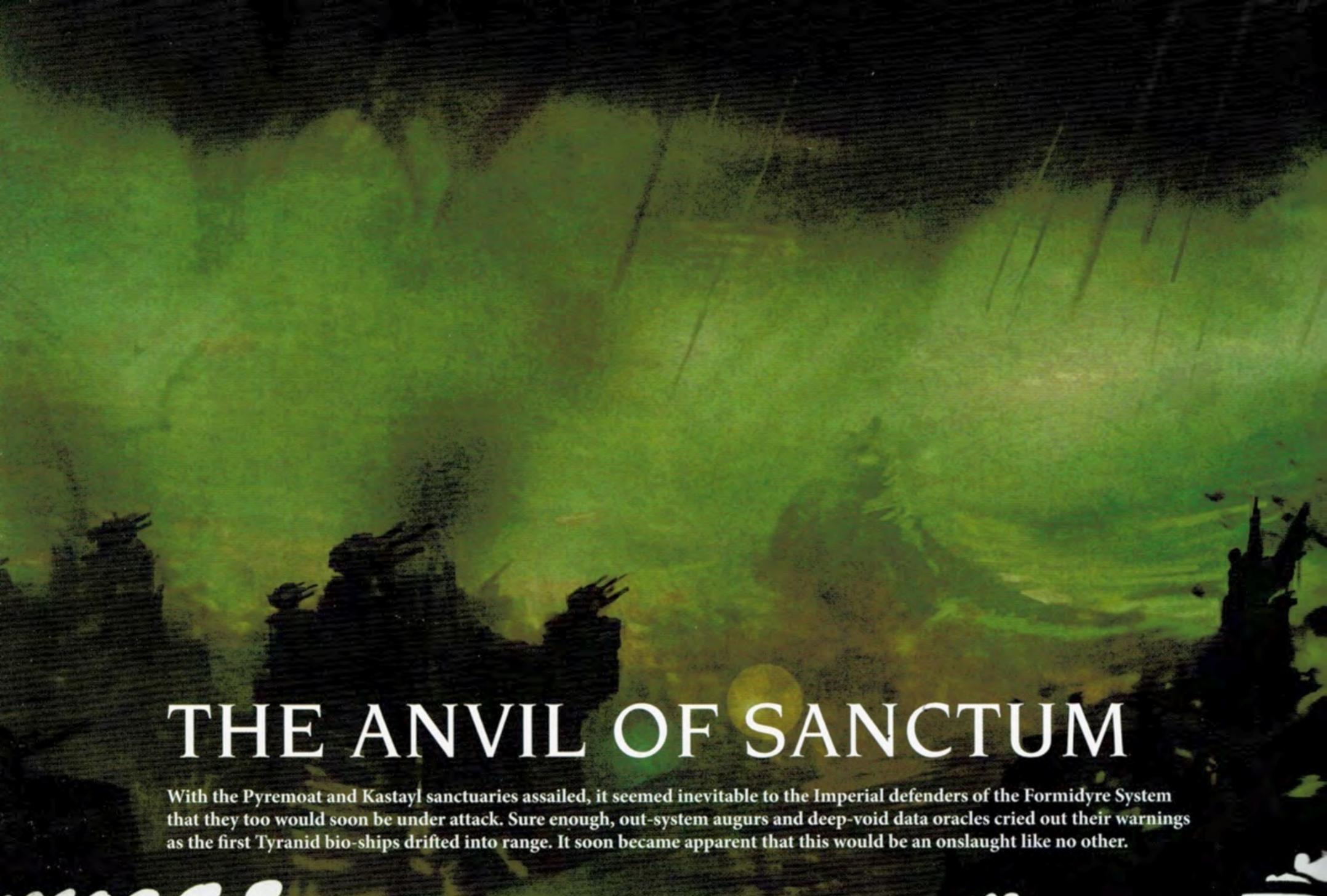
'Understood, lord,' replied the crew-helot pilot. *'Descending. Be advised, lord, there is urgent word from the Formidyre System. Lord Solar Leontus has commanded immediate recall of all Solblades.'*

The gunship landed with a violent scream of engines, its point defence guns hammering. Even though he had brought most of his battle-brothers safe through the aliens' onslaught, still First Captain Agemman's hard-won triumph was punctured by the crew-helot's words. As he backed, still shooting at the swarm, onto the embarkation ramp, Agemman's mind raced at the implications of what he had heard.

The ramp rose, sealing the boiling mass of Tyranids without. The gunship's engines bellowed as the craft dusted off and climbed rapidly into Obsidria's cobalt skies. Even before they had reached the edge of the troposphere, Agemman had made his way up to the gunship's cockpit, his helm mag-locked to his belt. The crew-helots turned to look at him, eyes solemn in faces pale with worry.

'Tell me everything,' Agemman commanded them.





THE ANVIL OF SANCTUM

With the Pyremoat and Kastayl sanctuaries assailed, it seemed inevitable to the Imperial defenders of the Formidyre System that they too would soon be under attack. Sure enough, out-system augurs and deep-void data oracles cried out their warnings as the first Tyranid bio-ships drifted into range. It soon became apparent that this would be an onslaught like no other.

Where the other two sanctuary systems were subjected to successive waves of Tyranid attacks, the invasion of the Formidyre System – once begun – was relentless. Unending rivers of bio-ships swarmed up through the ecliptic plane or encircled the star system like the tentacles of some predatory god. Hour by hour the Tyranid vessels increased in number and monstrous enormity. Imperial augur screens flooded with crimson warning runes until they seemed awash with gore. The Shadow in the Warp thickened to a choking psionic miasma that spread terror and despair through the system's defenders. So densely packed and numerous were the Tyranid vessels that they became visible even from the surfaces of the system's settled worlds as dark tendrils spreading across the star field.

It was in this moment, as dread fell heavy upon the defenders' hearts, that the experience and foresight of Lord Solar Leontus and his veteran command staff showed its worth. Knowing from bitter experience that unreasoning fear spread ahead of the Tyranid advance, and that astropathic communication would be swiftly choked off, they had prepared vid-recordings and audio sermons in which they delivered stirring speeches to bolster Imperial courage. These had been distributed through the system

well ahead of the Tyranids' arrival, with strict orders that they be played and replayed once the xenos assault began. A great strength of Ecclesiarchal priests had also been seeded through the ranks of even the smallest and most remote garrisons and ships' crews. Their bellowed hymns now rang out alongside the inspirational oratory of Leontus and his most trusted generals, issuing from laud hailers, vid-screens and vox emitters throughout the Formidyre System. It was not a perfect solution; the bark of Commissars' bolt pistols cut through the recorded oration in some fortifications and trench lines. However, many were the backs that straightened, the jaws that set firm and the hands whose tremors lessened as the servants of the God-Emperor were reminded of their duties.

So it was that, instead of panicking like cornered prey, the Imperial defenders stepped forth to meet the alien offensive on every front with as much determination and courage as they could muster. Ferocious void battles erupted around the industrial world of Phraktam, the laboratory world of Lembyq, and the hive world of Oghram. The defensive batteries of the fortress world of Resolution's Ire fired until their gun barrels glowed, yet invasion



swarms continued to pour from the darkened skies. Even the star-scorched mortuary world of Krematos saw fierce conflict as vanguard organisms infiltrated its subterranean catacomb cities and wrought bloody havoc. Meanwhile, wonder and terror engulfed the feudal world of Jovenghast as a xenocult erupted from amongst its downtrodden serf class, led by the tainted nobles of House Veilchayn. The uprising spread bloodshed and anarchy across the world's northern hemisphere as loyalist cavalry and archers met alien horrors and cultists armed with contraband firearms. Yet the tide was turned and the flames of war stoked higher as the towering Knights of Houses Terryn and Griffith marched out in support of the loyalist forces.

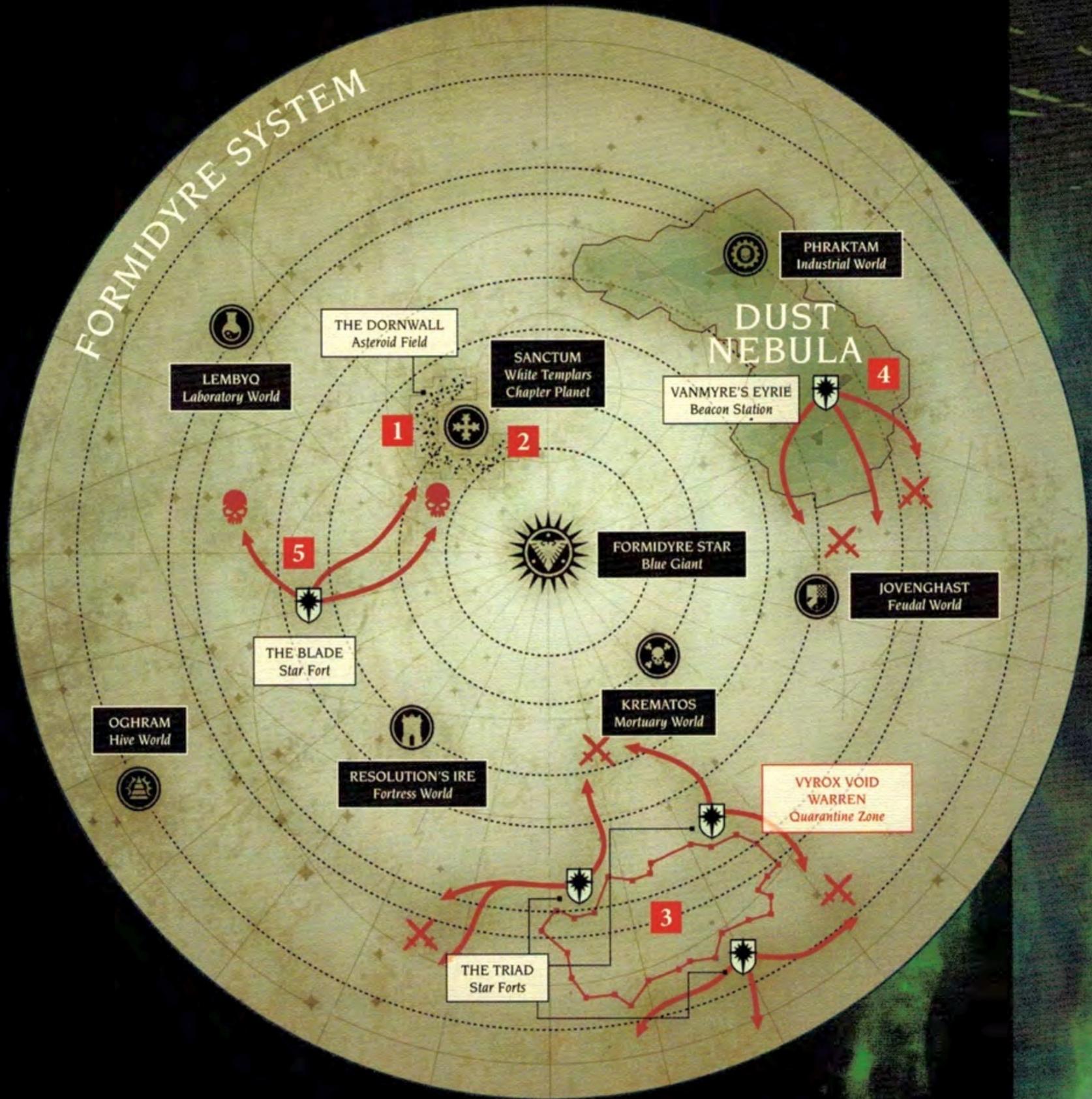
Though conflict raged across hundreds of separate fronts throughout the Formidyre System, and though the Imperial defences proved equal to the task of holding back the

Tyranids again and again, nothing could halt the apocalyptic bio-fleet that drove unerringly towards Sanctum. Fleets of the Imperial Navy, Adeptus Astartes and Adeptus Mechanicus all sought to blunt the advancing swarm. All took their toll upon the myriad hive ships, yet none could halt the swarm's advance. Always there were more and yet more living warships to fill the gaps left by the slain.

It soon became clear that war on Sanctum itself was inevitable. Dark whispers circulated amongst rank-and-file soldiery and command personnel alike that somehow, the Tyranids knew the strategic value of the Anchor World and were determined to see it fall at any cost. Whatever the truth of such grim speculation, the simple fact was that every defensive reserve was already committed, every Imperial soldier already at war throughout the system. Sanctum stood alone against the onrushing might of the swarm.

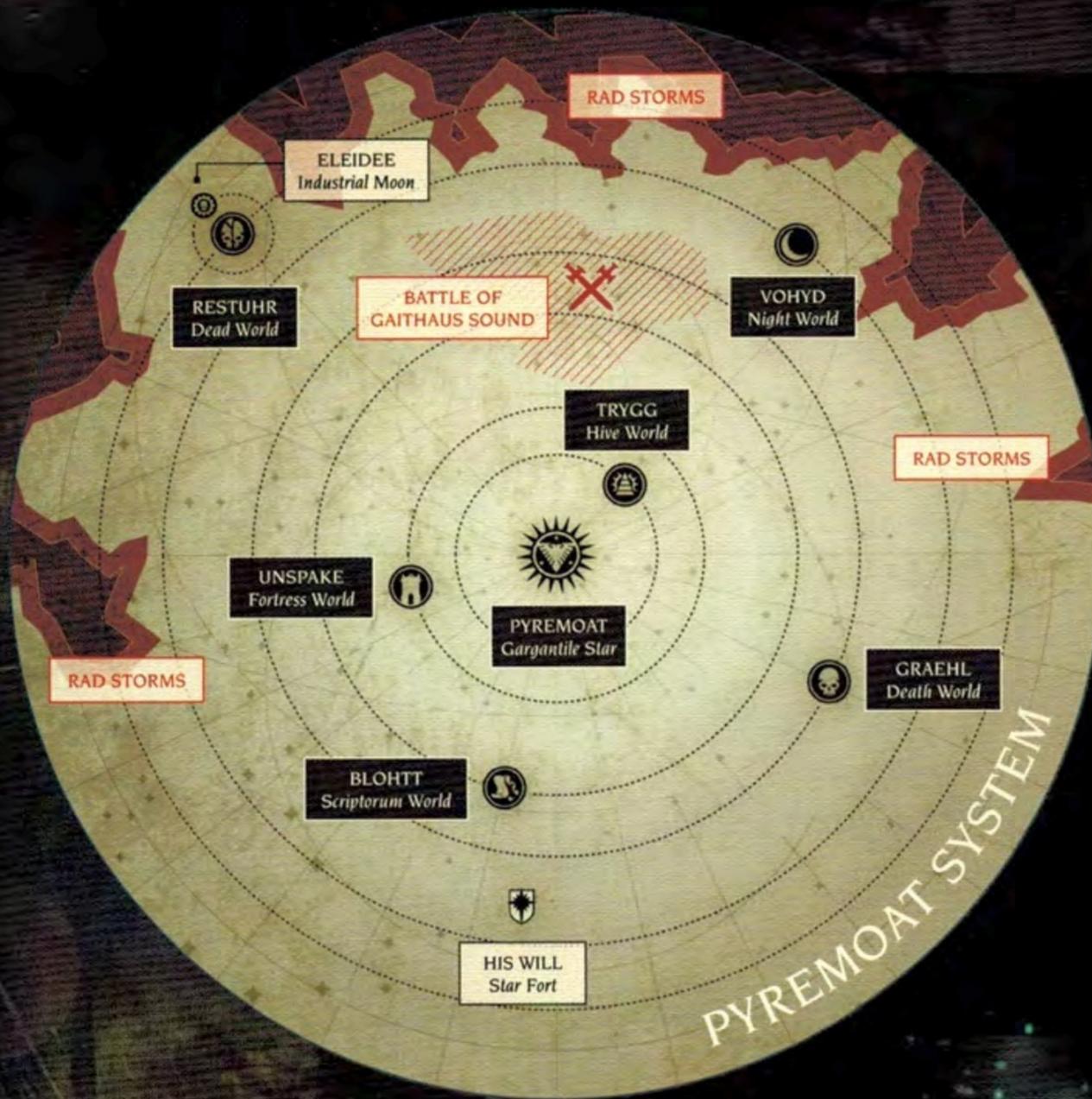
WAR ZONE: BASTIOR

The Grendyllus tendrils now infested every system within the Bastior Sub-sector. Its bio-fleets seethed through the darkened void like oceanic tides. All contact between the beleaguered systems had been lost, and all the defenders could do was hope that their comrades across the stars continued to hold out.



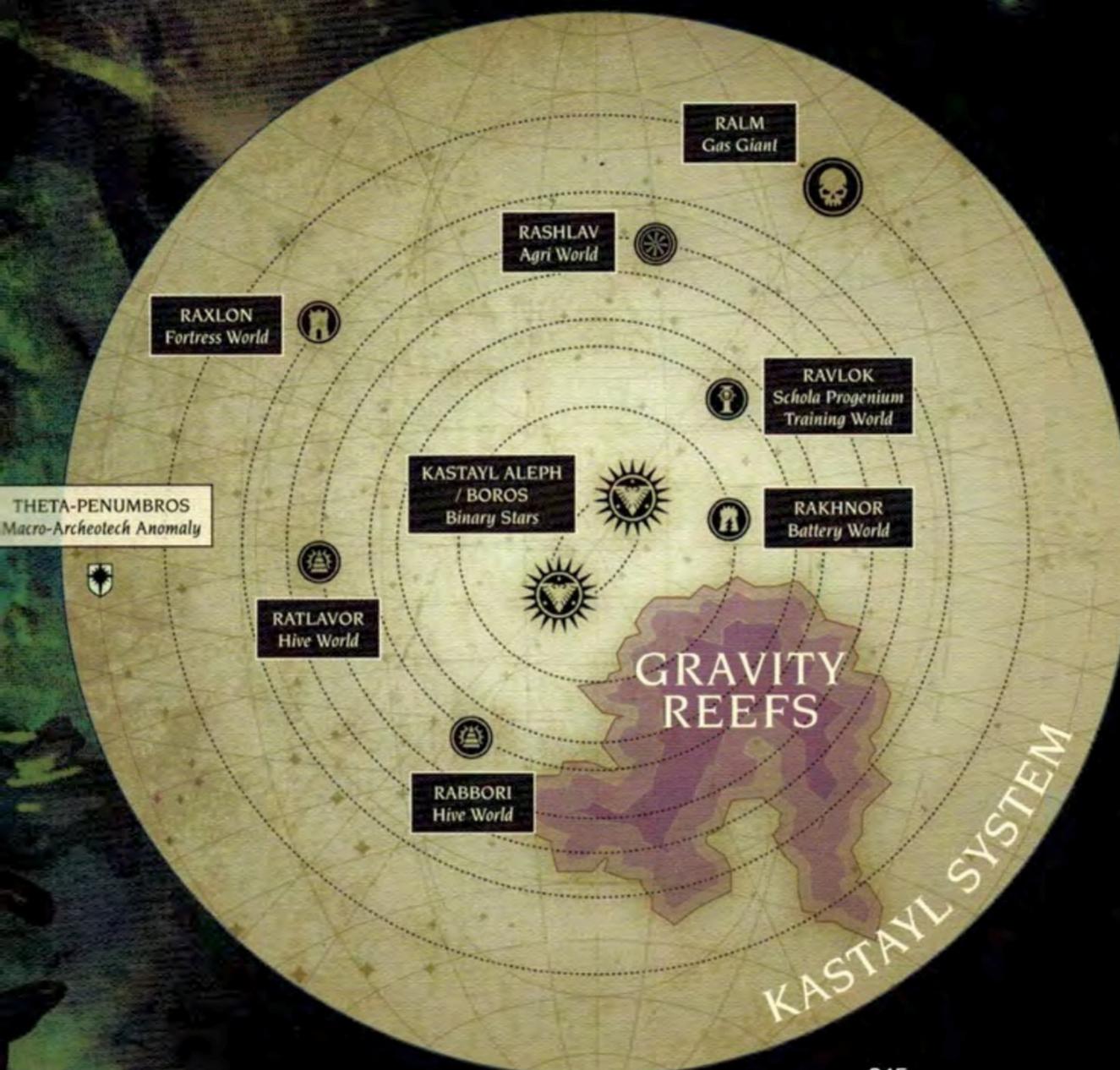
- 1** Servitor-manned gun-shrines and outer defence forts stand to high alert throughout the asteroid field known as the Dornwall.
- 2** Near Sanctum, the battlestation Phalanx forms the heart of a vast Imperial defence fleet whose duty will be to hold back the foe for as long as possible.
- 3** The star forts of the Triad launch all defence craft and fight furiously as alien swarms assail them from all sides.

- 4** Space Marine void squadrons from several Chapters wage hit-and-run war through the Dust Nebula to slow the Tyranid advance upon Vanmyre's Eyrie.
- 5** The Blade star fort attempts to send reinforcements to Sanctum, but all vessels are swiftly boarded by Tyranid organisms.



THE PYREMOAT SYSTEM

The situation grew more dire by the day in the Pyremoat sanctuary. Trygg lay entirely beneath the boot of the Monsta-Boss and his hordes, with Imperial resistance driven down into the planet's sumps, sewers and catacombs. Fully half of Unspake had been overrun, though the world's zealous defenders remained no less eager for blood and martyrdom despite their losses. Admiral Ranjav was missing somewhere on the surface of the death world of Graehl after a saviour-pod malfunction, while the renowned Princeps Ardox of the Legio Abjuro was believed slain during the hellish fighting on the night world of Vohyd. Yet perhaps the most disturbing developments were the grotesque tyrannofom structures growing upon the dead world of Restuhr, the malevolent purposes of which remained – thus far – a mystery to Imperial defenders.



THE KASTAYL SYSTEM

War spread like wildfire through the Kastayl sanctuary. Much of the fighting in this system still occurred in the void, with warships of Battle Group Faustus leading swift and vicious counter-attacks to drive Tyranid fleets back from the fortress world of Raxlon and the hive world of Rabbori. Where the Tyranids had made planetfall, however, the violence swiftly escalated to cataclysmic levels. A preponderance of nightmarish psionic war-beasts had been encountered not only on Rakhnor and Rashlav, but also now upon the heavily infested Schola Progenium training world of Ravlok. There, at least, the Tyranids' unnatural mind-powers were met by the unwavering grit and fanatical faith of a huge force of the Adepta Sororitas. Supported by elements of both the Deathwatch and Knightly House Taranis, the Battle Sisters drove the Tyranids back with merciless fury.

SANCTUM DEFIANT

The Grendyllus tendril surged towards Sanctum from all sides. Bio-ships flowed between the tumbling boulders of the Dornwall. In response, the asteroid belt came alive with blazing gun emplacements and missile batteries. Living warships shuddered and gouted ichor, or fought back with colossal barb spitters and lashing tendrils. The battle of Sanctum had begun.

'Few in number we may be, brothers, but our Emperor and our Primarch expect no less of us for that. We stand in defence of our home world! We protect the legacy and future of our Chapter! So shall we fight with the strength of our absent comrades, for duty bids us do no less. Each White Templar shall be worth ten Adeptus Astartes this day!'

- Chapter Master Kruxor Stavro, excerpt from Holdfast rallying speech

From the mighty Tower of Gerzelm at its southern pole to the Starsmelter orbital battery at its north, from the starport-cum-seaport of Cruxharbour to the continent-wall of the Mons Tsolomar, the defenders of Sanctum looked to the skies. They crouched in trenches criss-crossing the once-verdant equatorial steppes. They packed bunkers and strongholds amidst the rocky crags and coniferous forests of Voth's Reach. They garrisoned the mountain range known as the Heights of Artorus, through whose cyclopean peaks threaded the tunnels and chambers of the White Templars fortress monastery, the Holdfast.

It was within that titanic fortress that Lord Solar Leontus had established his command sanctum. Now, through the myriad vid-feeds and augurs at his command, the Lord Solar watched along with every Imperial Guardsman, Battle Sister, Knightly Noble, cyborg Skitarius, Titan Princeps and Space Marine on Sanctum as the sky bloomed with fire. There could be no mistaking the source of the detonations. The Tyranids had arrived en masse and the Imperial defence fleet had engaged them with everything it had.

BREACHING THE DORNWALL

The asteroids of the Dornwall hung thicker in some places, more widespread in others. Their sprawl formed a scattered shell that partially shielded Sanctum at a distance of approximately two-hundred thousand miles out. As a conscious effort towards fortification, many had been grav-tethered and drawn closer to one another using arcane Adeptus Mechanicus technologies dug into the very asteroids themselves. Within many of the larger rocky masses were void-sealed fortresses, gunnery stations, augur shrines and launch bases for space-capable fighter and bomber squadrons.

These garrisoned asteroids became the first battlefields of the invasion. Sanctum Command were under no illusions that the Tyranids' onslaught could be halted at the Dornwall, and so many of its defenders were penitents, penal troops, servitors and those who willingly swore themselves to a martyr's death. Redemptionist hymnals boomed through the claustrophobic confines of the asteroid bases as their garrisons fought and died. Their guns hammered until ammunition reliquaries ran dry, cracking the

chitinous shells and rupturing the innards of dozens of smaller Tyranid vessels. As void-born horrors enfolded the asteroids in nests of tentacles or landed upon them and stalked forward on stilt-like talons, still the defenders kept shooting, kept praying. Squadrons of Imperial void craft streaked through the gloom, raking colossal monsters with gatling cannons and rockets whose impacts flared silently in the icy vacuum.

One by one, the Tyranids cracked the asteroids open and butchered the prey within. Ship-sized abominations crushed Imperial fortifications in their vast talons or swallowed asteroids, installations and all. Barbed invasipositors hundreds of feet long punched through rock and plasteel to vomit warrior organisms into the hearts of fortified complexes. Swarms of Toxicrenes and Venomthropes filled strongholds with corrosive spores that ate through the thickest bulkheads and choked those defenders not hurled into the void by explosive decompression. As resistance throughout the Dornwall began to falter, heavier hive ships with thick chitinous prows ploughed forward to barge the remaining asteroids aside and clear ragged corridors through which lighter bio-ships could follow. Though enclaves of defiance held out across the asteroid belt, soon enough the main thrust of the Tyranid invasion pushed on towards the planet and the enormous fleet of warships hanging in its orbit.

So far, Imperial observers had characterised the Tyranid onslaught as steady, perhaps even surprisingly cautious. Hive Fleet Leviathan's reputation for malevolent cunning preceded it, however, and so the defenders were ready when the pace and direction of the attack suddenly shifted. With routes cleared through the Dornwall, other swarms of bio-ships that had so far hung back now surged towards Sanctum along clearer approach corridors through the open void. It seemed the Tyranids had waited until they could launch their assault on the planet from every direction at once. Now they struck with all the force and vehemence of a predator seeking to swiftly and decisively end its prey.

The orbital defenders had no intention of allowing such a killing strike. Squadron after

squadron of Imperial warships ignited their realspace drives and surged forth to meet the alien foe. In their midst came the *Phalanx*, the flanks of its mountainous bastions blazing as the battle station opened fire with everything it had. More than three hundred Imperial Fists battle-brothers rode aboard their mighty vessel, each oath-sworn to defend Sanctum with their lives if need be.

The opposing fleets met in a maelstrom of gnashing maws and flashing gun batteries, groaning metal hulls and flaring engines and miles-long barbed tendrils. Sparking wreckage and spurting boulders of torn flesh tumbled amidst duelling vessels, hurtling interceptors and vast shoals of boarding craft both biological and mechanical. Casualty figures rapidly spiralled beyond even the most talented logistor's capacity to tally. Groupmaster Yacobe led the fight over Sanctum's northern hemisphere, while Captain Tor Garadon masterminded the southern void theatre from the command sanctum of *Phalanx*. Their shared operational doctrine was simple and robust. In the first instance, priority was given to preventing Tyranid vessels from slipping through to drop invasion swarms onto the planet. Secondary priority was given to eliminating the largest hive ships, in the hopes that this would somehow disrupt whatever passed for a command-and-control architecture within the aliens' colossal fleet.

In the end, the Imperial warships were more successful in the second objective than the first. Amidst the ichor-drenched bedlam raging through the void, numerous macro-class hive ships were blown apart or reduced to burned and blistered ruin. However, it became increasingly clear that trying to prevent the Tyranids' planetfall was like attempting to hold back a flood with bare hands. Bio-ships braved enfilading torpedoes, raking lance fire and hammering volleys from Sanctum's orbital defence emplacements to skim the upper atmosphere and release clouds of invasion spores upon the world below. Many bio-ships paid the price for their boldness. Their shattered carcasses tumbled limply through Sanctum's low-orbital approaches venting slicks of ichor, or else were seized in gravity's acquisitive embrace and dragged down to a fiery end.

None of this prevented warrior organisms in their millions, then billions, from landing on Sanctum's surface. Again and again armoured counter-attacks and saturation-bombardment by Imperial artillery scoured the Tyranid

CAPTAIN-GENERAL TRAJANN VALORIS

The First of the Adeptus Custodes is an aggressive warrior who has always preferred a more proactive approach to defending the Emperor and the Sol System than standing guard on Terra. Thus, when he realised the danger posed by Hive Fleet Leviathan's onrushing tendrils, Valoris saw no conflict of duty in leaving the Throneworld to lead the Solblades into the darkness of the Segmentum Pacificus.

When the distress call came from the Bastior Sub-sector, Valoris was leading his Solblade in the Xykomarch System. As luck would have it, he and his warriors had but recently fought a sterling defence of the system's precious astropathic sanctum. Thus the Captain-General was swiftly apprised of the dire message, the agonising receipt of which had killed more Astropaths in an hour than had the eighteen days of Tyranid besiegement that came before. Grasping the desperate urgency of the situation, Valoris ordered the surviving Astropaths to relay the warning to neighbouring systems whatever the cost. More Solblades had to be recalled, but he had no time to oversee their muster in person. Returning to his potent archeotech flagship, the *Manifest Judgement*, Valoris ordered his Solblade to make all haste through the warp. He had to get back to the Bastior Sub-sector and help to halt the Grendyllus tendril's advance.





landing zones, yet even these measures could not hold the xenos back. First in isolated pockets, then spreading like the stigmata of some foul alien disease, their swarms darkened the landscape. Now came the ground war.

THE DEVOURING SWARM

The fighting on Sanctum's surface was fluid verging on chaotic. Tyranid swarms infested regions of remote wilderness where they could make planetfall relatively unscathed, growing in number with every rain of invasion spores before surging towards the nearest Imperial strongholds. These attacks were met wherever possible by armoured counter-offensives. Leontus and his strategic corps had issued standing orders for the defenders to retain mobility and avoid being fully besieged for as long as possible. Battles erupted across the planet's plains, mountain ranges, moors and forests as Imperial officers sought to obey these commands.

On the Kzarvin Steppes, over a dozen hard-pressed Astra Militarum regiments fought tirelessly to keep three Tyranid invasion swarms from melding into a single super-swarm that could threaten Cruxharbour from the south. As their fight became ever more desperate, Titans of the Legio Destructor marched out in support, only to be met by colossal Hierodule bio-titans and ground-shaking swarms of Tyrannofexes.

The forests of Voth's Reach blazed as Battle Sisters of several orders fought side by side to hold back the Tyranid swarms. The Adepta Sororitas raised their voices in soaring battle hymns as they plied their massed flame weapons, incinerating swathes of ancient woodland along with the Tyranids infesting them. Such tactics slowed the xenos, but could not entirely halt them. Mile by mile, the Battle Sisters and their columns of armoured transports were forced to fall back towards the fortresses in the higher crags.

Battling across the ichor-slicked glaciers around the Tower of Gerzelm; holding the beaches of the archipelago Disporum and the islands' vital airfields against swarms erupting from the deep ocean; fending off subterranean and airborne assault swarms around the desert fastnesses of the Oases of Fire – in these and many other locations across the planet, Humans met Tyranids and fought for control of vital territory. Again and again the combined might of the Adeptus Mechanicus, Space Marines, Battle Sisters, Knightly houses, Titan Legios and Astra Militarum prevailed. Yet still the wider strategic picture worsened as hours of conflict became days.

The Tyranids, too, won many victories, and where their prey possessed finite strength, the xenos appeared without number. As more and



more leader organisms survived planetfall, so their synaptic web expanded and grew more robust. As it did so, the strategies employed by the Tyranid swarms became increasingly cunning. The assaults of individual swarms began to interlock and provide mutual support. Tides of organisms expended themselves in sacrificial onslaughts in order to allow others to outflank or ambush Imperial forces. Worst of all, repeated reports emerged from the Pentacastes Plains that the Swarmlord had been sighted leading the attack there. It appeared the notorious monster had been spawned again by the Hive Mind to coordinate the onslaught in that sector. Its presence threatened the security of the Holdfast itself, which lay east of the plains. Lord Solar Leontus' supreme command sanctum was now imperilled.

TO THE WALLS

As the Tyranids overran ever more territory, so the Imperial defenders were forced to retreat to their fortresses and dig in. Some strongholds were rudimentary at best. There were many Astra Militarum regiments who, with their trenches overrun and their routes of retreat severed, pulled back to bunkers and flakboard redoubts in the knowledge they were making their last stands. Other strongholds were more formidable, be they the Shroudwall Forts around Cruxharbour, the colossal bastions of the Starsmiter orbital battery, or the vast and mountainous wall of the Mons Tsolomar. The garrison forces of the latter fell under the dual command of Canoness Persephona of the Order of the Ebon Chalice and High Magos Verbosmyre of Mars. Between them they maintained a masterful defence that saw seething oceans of Tyranids held back from half a continent's worth of territory.

Some besieged strongholds held firm, their artillery positions and wall guards raining fire down into the boiling moats of Tyranids building around their ramparts. Others sent out increasingly frantic distress calls as broods of Lictors or Von Ryan's Leapers infiltrated

their positions, rains of Tyrannocyte spores fell within their walls, and floods of warrior organisms poured through their breached redoubts. In the last hours of defiance at Saint's Spire, several void ships resorted to bombarding the site from space without targeting coordinates in an attempt to atomise the invading horrors. At Fort Luthiorn, a mass of psionic war-beasts drove the defenders into such a state of mindless terror that much of the garrison had butchered one another before the Tyranids even breached the perimeter. The entire Olvenbach Line fell in a day after a single soldier was infected by a Parasite of Mortrex then toppled through an open bunker hatch before the Rippers infesting his body had burst free. The last transmissions from that doomed fastness were described as 'naught but screams and chewing'.

Amidst all the horror and carnage, no greater invasion swarm was witnessed than that which assailed the Holdfast. From the west thundered the Swarmlord and its hordes, pouring heedless through the minefields and raking artillery barrages of the Pentacastes Plains to assault the foothills of the Heights of Artorus. At the same time a second, equally colossal swarm – whose presence had previously been mistaken for a collapsing tectonic fault thanks to its massed subterranean approach – struck from the east. Hundreds of Trygons and Mawlocs spearheaded this attack, some emerging on the mountains' slopes, others erupting into the catacombs of the Holdfast. Tides of warrior organisms burst from their tunnels, Tyranid Warriors and Primes marshalling countless Termagants, Hormagaunts and Barbagaunts. Tervigons lumbered amidst the masses, spawning yet more broods of beasts. Meanwhile, sinister Venomthropes drifted forward, seeking to spread their toxic spores through the Holdfast's chambers. Most terrifying of all, stalking ever closer came a trio of immense Norn Emissaries, their black gimlet eyes fixed unerringly upon the high peaks of the Holdfast, within which laboured Leontus and his command staff.



VOID SIEGE

Even as fighting raged across Sanctum, still the Imperial fleet battled on in orbit. Dozens of vessels hung lifeless, bound in cocoons of chitin and sinew or blackened and melted by bio-acids. Many more still fought on, refusing to abandon their posts while warriors remained on the planet's surface to defend. Foremost amongst these was the mighty *Phalanx*. The battle station's hull crawled with Tyranid organisms, and xenos had breached many decks and towers. Yet under the unwavering leadership of Tor Garadon, the Imperial Fists fought with iron-willed determination. Again and again they hurled the xenos invaders back. All the while *Phalanx's* gun decks continued firing, reducing one Tyranid bio-ship after another to mangled meat.

HOPE KINDLED

In the desperate orbital battle over Sanctum, few augur adepts had time to register the blooming of warp signatures beyond the Dornwall. The first real indication of the odds changing came from the surviving stations amidst the asteroid field – ragged vox blurts spoke of Imperial warships thundering in from the deep void with lance batteries blazing and turrets spitting fury. Ripples ran through the Tyranid void-swarms above Sanctum, and suddenly entire broods of bio-ships were peeling away to meet fresh, incoming threats. Seizing their chance, Groupmaster Yacobe and Captain Garadon rallied their badly mauled fleets and sought to consolidate their positions. None dared hope, for though they had wrought spectacular carnage amongst the Tyranid swarms, still barely a third of the Imperial warships remained to continue waging a war they had surely been mere hours from losing. Still, as fresh contact runes flickered on augur screens and the dark silhouettes of Imperial warships slid between the Dornwall's asteroids to engage the Tyranids, the truth became clear. Against all hope, loyalist reinforcements had arrived. There was yet a chance that the pivotal Anchor World could be saved.

HOLD FAST

The two Tyranid super-swarms closed upon the Heights of Artorus like the jaws of some colossal beast. Winged terrors beyond counting turned the skies pitch-black with their numbers. The very bedrock of the mountains shuddered with stampeding alien footfalls, while within the Holdfast lumen flickered and stonework cracked as massed bio-artillery pounded the stronghold seemingly from every angle. The Shadow in the Warp swirled thick and cloying through the souls of every Imperial defender. Dread settled over them like a smothering shroud.

It was in this moment that Leontus and Chapter Master Stavro earned again their status as celebrated heroes of the Imperium. The Lord Solar applied every iota of his skill as a strategist to the unfolding battle, even as he employed all his talents as orator, diplomat and unforgiving drill-master to upholding morale. When he wasn't standing over a stratego's holo-table directing troop movements and fire patterns, Leontus was touring the outer battlements and marshalling yards of the Holdfast astride his cyber-steed. He displayed contempt for the salvoes of living ordnance raining down upon the White Templars' stronghold, never even flinching as spore mines and raging spheres of bioplasma detonated against the void shields overhead. Wherever Leontus went he buoyed the spirits of Human and post-human alike, gauging whether each fresh band of soldiers needed a rousing speech, a stark reminder of duty or a humble and heartfelt expression of honour. Leontus moved with a half-mile-long trail of bodyguards, strategic advisers, senior command and communication staff, Tech-Priests, Ecclesiarchal preachers and psychosavants in tow. He was constantly hooked into the updated situation of the wider battle. He further monitored the war across Sanctum and beyond, and worked relentlessly to out-think and outmanoeuvre the leader-beasts of Hive Fleet Leviathan.

If Leontus was the heart and the mind of the Holdfast, Chapter Master Stavro was its blade-wielding fist. Where Mawlocs and Trygons broke into the Holdfast's depths, Stavro headed each punishing counter-attack to drive the Tyranids back and seal the breaches with blasting charges. Where massed siege-beasts or broods of pulsating Toxicrenes threatened to rout the defenders of the lower passes, Stavro led armoured spearheads and gunship-mounted strikes to hurl them back. He seemed tireless, endlessly wrathful, and – despite the acid burns and talon gouges marring his white power armour – as invincible as if he had been blessed by the Emperor himself.

Nor were such august individuals the only heroes of the Holdfast's defence. From the defence of Zeiglos Gate to the recapture of the Precipice Batteries, the last stand in the Bastrus Armorium to the purge of Henvaahl's Stair, enough acts of selfless courage and desperate determination took place to fill a library. Still it was not enough to halt the immense tide of warrior organisms breaking against the Heights of Artorus. The Narthund Pass fell after an avalanche of Hormagaunts overwhelmed the curtain wall, and the gun emplacements it shielded fell silent soon after. Spore-beasts tainted the lower catacombs of the Draxxen Peak Bastion so that only power-armoured warriors could survive within the tunnels. Even then they could only dash from one safe zone to another amidst poisoned murk and stalking monsters. Swarms of Harpies reduced the Gleivorn Peak missile silos to melted ruin before massed bio-artillery caved the entire structure in. The resultant collapse detonated the peak's ammunition reserves and left a gaping rent through which warrior organisms poured.

With the skies darkened, day and night had no meaning. The defenders fought on doggedly, yet their casualties mounted and the fortress they manned became ever more heavily damaged. All the while, the three Norn Emissaries stalked through the fighting with eerie alien grace, closing inexorably upon objectives only they knew. One of them struck on the eighth day of the siege, having compressed its mass into the seemingly impossible confines of a decommissioned turbolift shaft then crawled steadily upwards for untold hours. The towering monstrosity burst into the Erythrad Peak command sanctum, where it slaughtered hundreds of screaming strategos and command adepts and destroyed scores of irreplaceable cogitator banks. The beast would have escaped to strike again elsewhere, had it not been for an unnamed Chapter serf who selflessly sealed the blood-drenched sanctum and triggered the plasmic denial charges, reducing the entire peak to a glassy crater.

The second Emissary – whose distinctive scars identified it to Imperial strategos as the infamous Fiend of Hag Rift – surged from a Trygon tunnel to attack the White Templars' gene-seed vault. It was supported by swarms of lesser warrior organisms and a pair of Neurotyrants. In response, marching from the Chapter's Vaults of Repose came almost a score of White Templars Dreadnoughts who held back the Tyranids in an increasingly desperate and one-sided struggle. Almost all of the ancient warriors were slain – a dreadful loss for the Chapter – but their sacrifices bought time for

Colonel Uveda of the Ortegan Grenadiers to launch a massive counter-attack and drive the Tyranids back. When the vengeful Chapter Master Stavro arrived at the head of a White Templars strike force, the Fiend of Hag Rift was badly wounded and its swarm devastated. Yet the malevolent monster itself escaped to fight another day.

For all the butchery and horror wrought by its fellows, it was the third of the Norn Emissaries that struck at the most crucial target. Scaling the snow-whipped peak of the tallest mountain in the Heights of Artorus, the creature lurked in wait amidst rock and ice for its prey to emerge. Below lay the wide-open square of the Ascendorum, a great plaza wrought from a mountainous plateau, dotted with braziers, statuary, shield generatorums and flak batteries. In better times, the White Templars had mustered on this open space to perform rituals and bestow honours beneath the starry vaults of Sanctum's skies. Now, Lord Solar Leontus was crossing the open plaza astride Konstantin with his entourage about him. The Norn Emissary knew its prey's psionic spoor. Its black eyes followed him. Its ropes of muscle and tendon tensed, and then it leapt out into thin air. The Norn Emissary dropped towards the plaza, sword-like talons extended, angling its huge mass to slam down directly atop Leontus. From below came screams as someone spotted the danger and many amongst Leontus' entourage raised weapons. The Lord Solar himself looked up, registering his doom descending upon him too swiftly to be avoided.

Missiles streaked in and struck the Norn Emissary in the flank when it was scant feet above Leontus' head. The impacts blossomed into concussive fireballs. Their force hurled the huge Tyranid aside even as their shock waves unhorsed the Lord Solar and threw him and many of his companions flat upon the flagstones. The Norn Emissary bucked in the air, ichor gouting from its wounded flank, and turned its tumble into a cat-like landing with a grace nothing so huge should possess. It hissed as the gilded gunship that had fired upon it streaked overhead, then banked sharply with a flare of engines and came in for another pass. The craft's rear ramp whined open as it flew closer, and hulking warriors clad in ornate auramite armour dropped from it one after another to slam down in the plaza with enough force to crack stone. The gunship's weapons blazed again. This time the Emissary was ready. Leaping and swinging huge talons in a scything arc, it tore the cockpit from the gunship and sent it spiralling down the mountainside in flames.

The Emissary wheeled and surged with serpentine speed towards Leontus, who was still staggering to his feet. Blood ran down his pale face from a bad scalp wound. Though he fumbled to draw his blade, the Norn Emissary's prey was in no condition to defend himself. The monster reared above him.

The newly arrived golden warriors moved with incredible speed and merciless focus. Those of the Lord Solar's retinue not swift enough to clear a path were smashed aside with bone-breaking force as Trajann Valoris and his Custodians raced to interpose themselves between Leontus and his would-be xenos assassin. The Norn Emissary was just paces from its victim when a hammering volley of bolt fire from the Custodians' guardian spears arrested its charge. The monster staggered then lunged with a shriek, snatching up the nearest Custodian and tearing one arm from his body before swinging him by the other and hurling him away.



Trajann Valoris stepped in and aimed a mighty stroke with the Watcher's Axe that shattered several of the Emissary's talons. The towering xeno-beast feinted back then sprang past Valoris and attempted to snatch up Leontus. The Lord Solar had, by now, recovered his wits, however, and hurled himself backward to evade the monster's grasp. Bodyguards and chanting priests pressed forward, raking the Norn Emissary with fire from lasguns, pistols and a handful of plasma weapons. The monster swatted its attackers aside like insects and sent broken bodies tumbling across the plaza.



'The Solblades! The Solblades have returned to us in our darkest hour of need! Even now the greatest warriors of the Imperium sweep down upon wings of fire to relieve us! Rejoice, warriors of the Emperor, and praise the Golden Throne, for the Solblades are come!'

- Colonel Aydon Shrak, 115th Thassian Marksmen, during the Relief of Cruxharbour

The next instant it reeled and screeched as several Custodians' blades hacked into its flesh. Eyes still fixed unerringly on the retreating Lord Solar, the Norn Emissary lashed about itself with blistering speed. A Custodian was borne aloft and ripped bodily in two. Another was kicked so hard that his head cleared the plaza and vanished over the precipice before his blood-spurting body had even toppled. Yet another was stomped into the flagstones, even his toughened bone structure and auramite armour not enough to prevent his death. The golden wall between the Norn Emissary and its prey was thinning.

All the while Leontus' defenders and the remaining Custodians were pouring fire into the colossal alien abomination. A scything blow of the Watcher's Axe slit the cable-like tendons of the beast's right ankle and set it limping. A plasma blast – either skilfully placed or incredibly lucky – melted the right side of the Emissary's face into a fused mass of cooked flesh. Bolt rounds fired by Custodians blasted chunks of chitin and showers of ichor from the creature's limbs and body.

Still the Norn Emissary fought on. Its whipping tail broke another Custodian's neck and sent his body clattering away across the plaza. A final,

desperate effort saw the beast hurl itself forward, jaws gaping to close upon Lord Solar Leontus like a trap slamming shut. Yet Valoris was there at the crucial moment, Watcher's Axe swinging in a meteoric arc to embed itself in the side of the Norn Emissary's skull and smash its head aside. The xenos monster crashed to the ground, crushing more than a score of Leontus' aides under its bulk, yet its last strike at the Lord Solar had been fended off by the Captain-General of the Emperor's own bodyguards. Valoris and his one surviving Custodian kept their weapons levelled at the monster as it twitched and heaved, but it did not try to rise again. Ichor flooded from its grievous wounds, steaming as it cooled and began to freeze upon the cracked flagstones of the plaza.

Lord Solar Leontus looked gravely around at the carnage, then up at the stern-faced demigod who had interceded to save his life. Expression sombre, Leontus raised his hands and wordlessly offered the Captain-General of the Adeptus Custodes the sign of the Aquila. Valoris returned the gesture, and then calmly set about checking his wargear and reloading the Eagle's Scream. The life of the Lord Solar had been saved at terrible cost, and the defenders of Sanctum had received reinforcements, but there was still a world's worth of war to be waged.

XENO-WAR

The timely arrival of reinforcements to Sanctum had prevented the Anchor World from losing both its orbital defence force and its strategic command centre. It had also ensured – by the barest of margins – the survival of one of the Imperium's great war-leaders. Yet the situation upon Sanctum and across the wider Bastior Sub-sector remained desperate.

Racing to respond to Sanctum's astropathic distress calls, Captain-General Valoris had gathered more Solblades to him each time his ships dropped out of the warp to reorient for their next jump. Other Imperial forces – both Solblades and crusading flotillas – had also heard the cry for aid. Following the few stable warp routes to converge upon the Bastior Sub-sector, these Imperial forces massed together as they neared their destination. Even as the war raged about the lower slopes of the Heights of Artorus and assault swarms hurled themselves at Cruxharbour and the Mons Tsolomar, Valoris was holding a hurried council of war with the shipmasters and Solblade leaders who had rallied to his banner. He even found himself addressing two battle groups from Indomitus Crusade Fleet Sextus, as well as a trio of ominous and unresponsive vessels that hailed from the mysterious Silent Seventh.

The plan for relieving the Bastior Sub-sector was basic and robust by necessity. Executing warp jumps into a region blighted by the Shadow in the Warp would be a dangerously inexact science, and there was no way to know what awaited beneath the Tyranids' psychostatic veil. Valoris had assigned roughly equal forces to jump to the Pyremoat, Kastayl and Formidyre Systems, and tasked smaller fleets with the security of the Reydabt and Gallospire Systems. The rest of the sub-sector would have to wait for further Imperial reinforcements. When they executed their final assault jumps, the Imperial ships did not attempt to follow approved Navis Nobilite charts, for such routes could not be relied upon beneath the Shadow in the Warp. They leapt into the void, prayers to the Emperor blaring from every vox-emitter, crews hoping their Navigators possessed the skill to bring them safely out of the warp again at their destinations.

Not all made it. Navigators fumbled the tenuous threads of the Astronomican's light, or simply went insane. Even once they had successfully torn through the veil and back into realspace, some warships found themselves adrift in the interstellar void, or else emerged directly into swarming masses of bio-ships. For all their hardships, however, the returned Solblades and their allies brought relief to Imperial defenders upon the verge of breaking. In the Kastayl System, the sieges of Ravlok and Rashlav were broken as warships of the Raven Guard, Blood Angels, Black Templars and others struck from the void. The Pyremoat sanctuary, too, felt the fury of the Adeptus Astartes as warriors of more than a dozen Chapters engaged

the Monsta-Boss on Trygg and reinforced the defenders of Unspake, Blohtt and Graehl.

The largest relief force had been routed to Formidyre and the aid of Sanctum, and was led by Valoris himself. It was this fleet that dove into the battles raging through the Dornwall, and above Resolution's Ire, Oghram and Phraktam. It was their vessels that tore into the Tyranid rearguard and slaughtered enough bio-ships to allow Sanctum's mauled defence fleet to rally. During the orbital bloodbath that followed, Valoris commanded immediate combat drops by fresh Custodes and Space Marine forces to relieve the worst-besieged strongholds. Not to be outdone, Tor Garadon had insisted the *Phalanx* contribute to this effort. So it was that, amongst the mighty attack wave of Drop Pods and gunships that burned down through the aerial swarms to relieve the Holdfast, there were many whose hulls bore the proud heraldry of the Imperial Fists.

The reinforcements turned several planetwide wars in the Imperium's favour and rescued others from the brink of catastrophe, but some conflicts were beyond saving. The battery world of Rakhnor, the laboratory world of Lembyq and the luckless night world of Vohyd had all been overrun. Imperial forces deployed to these war zones could do little but exact vengeance upon the alien monsters even now devouring the slaughtered worlds' biomass. More disturbing was the silence from the Stanghalde, Irontower and Gallospire Systems, to which only a handful of scout ships had been sent and from where none had yet returned. It remained unclear whether any Imperial resistance survived in those star systems.

The war for the Bastior Sub-sector had been rescued from complete collapse, but levels of Tyranid infestation remained terrifyingly high and the Tyranids firmly retained the upper hand. Fresh invasion swarms erupted from the void daily, while the Swarmlord was still at large upon beleaguered Sanctum and that world's fortresses remained besieged. The Imperial defenders prayed that more reinforcements must be en route, not least the many Solblades as yet unaccounted for. What none said but many feared, however, was that if enough Solblades had fallen back to reinforce Bastior then surely the Promethor and Nautilon tendrils would be freed to recommence their inexorable advance. This was a war that was only just beginning, and which looked set to escalate to nightmarish new heights of savagery across the Bastior Sub-sector and far beyond in the days to come.



Shadow Captain Sard Gaeron prowled along the passageway towards the junction where it intersected with his ship's primary processional. He moved with practised care, the low purr of his power armour's actuators muted, his footfalls almost silent against the deck. His lightning claws slumbered so that their harsh crackle would not alert the prey to his presence. *The Tyranids might have boarded the Pinion Blade, he thought, but they are still strangers here.* He and his Raven Guard remained the frigate's masters.

Sliding up to the corner, Gaeron pipped his vox-bead twice. He received a single vox-click in return, followed by a pause, then two more hard clicks.

+++
HOSTILE CONTACTS CONFIRMED.
MANAGEABLE NUMBERS.
+++

Behind the faceplate of his helm, the Shadow Captain's lips skinned back in a mirthless smile. For hours now he and his battle-brothers had been fighting a war of manoeuvre and evasion as they baited the Tyranids into ideal ambush positions. At last, it was time to strike back.

He keyed his vox to the ship-wide channel and repeated his vox-pip signal. One by one, confirmation runes turned green in the peripheral of his autosenses. Lieutenant Shardh in the Enginarium; Apothecary Rangelon on the fore arming deck; Sergeant Kayphar in the astropathic sanctum ante-chamber – the list continued as each of Gaeron's meticulously positioned forces signalled the same thing. They stood in readiness, and the alien invaders they faced were now so strung out that their destruction could be achieved.

He took in a slow breath. From beyond the corner he could hear his prey, their talons raking the deck plates, their chitinous bodies rasping together as they loped along on the hunt. Little did the xenos know that they had relinquished the role of predator.

Gaeron would enlighten them.

He released the breath in a voxed sub-vocalisation that slid like the faintest rustle of a corvid's plumage into the ears of his battle-brothers.

'Execute.'

Gaeron broke cover, activating his lightning claws as he did so. The weapons flared to life with a sound like ripping cloth as the Shadow Captain surged around the corner. Ahead of him he saw the Tyranids, three of the larger warrior forms accompanied by a pack of smaller Termagants. The aliens hissed as they saw him and their living firearms snapped up to fire. They moved with the horrifying, inhuman swiftness of their kind.

The Shadow Captain was swifter still.

Pounding across the corridor at a diagonal, he leapt aside as the hail of bio-ammunition whipped through the space he had occupied a split second before. Planting one clanging boot-step against the wall of the corridor, he pushed himself off and into a diving leap that carried him closer to the aliens. He heard the crack and splatter of fleshborer grubs hitting bare metal as their fire chased him, but Gaeron was already rolling, coming up into a weaving run that saw all but a few lucky shots fly wide.

The manoeuvre had carried him to within twenty feet of the aliens but now left him exposed in the

middle of the corridor. If the Shadow Captain had fought alone, this was the moment where his valiant charge would have become a tragic, if supposedly noble, death. The Raven Guard did not believe in such pyrrhic gestures, however, and they rarely hunted alone.

Sergeant Cavaar's Reivers erupted from cross-corridor three-seven-one even as a door hatch slid up behind the Tyranids and Sergeant Vycho's Hellblasters stepped out. The aliens, focused upon Gaeron, were too slow to react to the new threats. Bolt shells and blasts of plasma tore into them from the side and rear. Chitin shattered. Alien flesh ruptured and burned.

Normal foes would have panicked then, the Shadow Captain thought. Truly sentient beings would have reacted to the threat to their own mortality. These Tyranids struck him more as wholly organic servitors, beings slaved to some other will so completely that their own instincts of self-preservation – had they ever possessed any – were wholly suppressed. Thus the survivors reacted with insectile quickness, fighting back with no thought for their own survival. One of the warriors wheeled and drove a huge chitinous sword through the chest of a Reiver, slashing the pistol-hand from another battle-brother with its matching blade. Termagants whipped about to fire at the Hellblasters, or else maintained their fusillade of grubs towards Gaeron.

He took several solid hits to the chest plate, and was thankful that they all burst against his armour without penetrating. Then he was amidst the Tyranids with his talons flashing. Gaeron ripped the head from one of the smaller creatures with a single swing, then span and





eviscerated one of the warriors with a bladed uppercut.

The monster reeled but didn't fall. It reached for him with knife-like claws even as its innards splattered onto the deck. Disgusted by the alien perversity of his foe, Gaeron struck again and scissored its body at the waist. The Tyranid collapsed in two halves, thrashing and hissing until the life left it.

More gunshots, more slashing blows, more battle-brothers laid low by living weapons, then it was over. Gaeron became still, rendering his claws quiescent again as he took stock of the battle's aftermath. Five Raven Guard had fallen, though of these, two were only injured. He was about to vox his other assault teams, to determine the wider strategic picture, when a priority hail flashed on his autosenses. Noting Shipmaster Uvarin's rune appended to it, Gaeron accepted the request at once.

'Shadow Captain, I require your presence on the bridge,' said the shipmaster.

'I come,' replied Gaeron, setting off towards the nearest turbolift. Uvarin knew the Shadow Captain was coordinating the campaign to purge the last Tyranid invaders from the corridors of the *Pinion Blade*. For him to have sent such a hail meant that a matter had arisen of even greater urgency and weight.

'Appraisal?' asked Gaeron as he jogged. To his surprise, the veteran shipmaster sounded uncertain when he responded.

'I... it is best that you see for yourself, Shadow Captain. I have not the words.'

It took Gaeron less than ten minutes to cover the distance to his warship's bridge. As he went, he mentally

prepared himself for whatever anomalous occurrence could have so disturbed his shipmaster. At the same time he attended by vox to matters both strategic and logistical.

The *Pinion Blade* was amongst a handful of Imperial ships still waging a guerrilla war in the Stanghalde System against the swarms of biovessels passing through it. In the past weeks his Raven Guard had purged boarding organisms from their decks three times, and almost lost the ship on four more occasions besides. Yet they had slain an impressive tally of hive ships in that time, and had twice come to the aid of other Imperial vessels that would otherwise have been lost. Gaeron was quietly proud of his force's achievements. It was why he had not ordered Navigator Olgh roused from his healing coma yet and attempted to escape the system. There was still a valuable fight here, still prey to hunt and slay.

The moment Gaeron stepped onto the bridge, he sensed the strategic equation altering about him. The fight, and their part in it, had changed. He felt it in the tense quiet, saw it in the wide-eyed focus of bridge officers that failed to conceal the fear they were suppressing. The Shadow Captain did not yet know what had occurred, but he suspected that – by the time he did – he would be ordering Olgh awakened after all.

He halted beside Shipmaster Uvarin's throne. The man looked up at him, his bionic eye an ember glowing in the low light of the bridge.

'Report,' ordered Gaeron. By way of reply, Uvarin brought up a vid-feed.

The image was grainy, a deep-void capture direct from the acid-scorched prow of the *Pinion Blade*. Gaeron's

post-human cerebrum swiftly accounted for static warping and image degradation. He identified Stanghalde's distant star, several of its worlds – long overrun by rapacious xenos – and the dark clouds against the star field that were the nearest enemy fleet swarms. He became very still as he registered something else just off centre of the image, something that at first his mind had insisted on categorising as a visual artefact or feed error. It was surely too large to be a Tyranid biovessel, by an almost absurd degree. Yet there was no moon in that region of the void; Gaeron's eidetic memory assured him of that. He gazed at the colossal shape, and as he did so he began to discern details and hints of squirming biological motion that disturbed him on a primal level.

'That is not natural to this system,' he said.

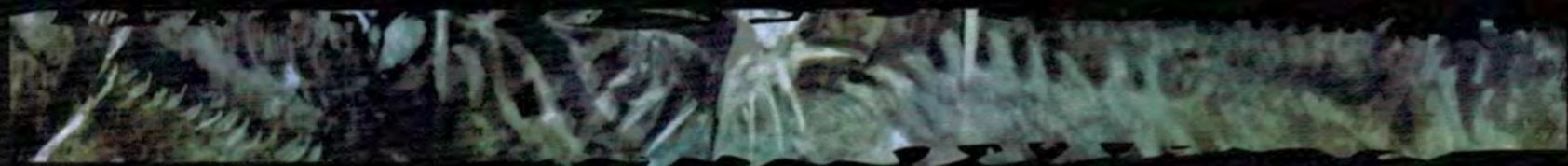
'It is not, Shadow Captain,' replied Uvarin, almost managing to keep the tremor from his voice. 'Nor is it anything even our most advanced augurs can make sense of. The machine spirits are driven close to madness by the mere sight of it. That it is Tyranid in nature is beyond doubt, my lord, but the sheer scale of the thing...'

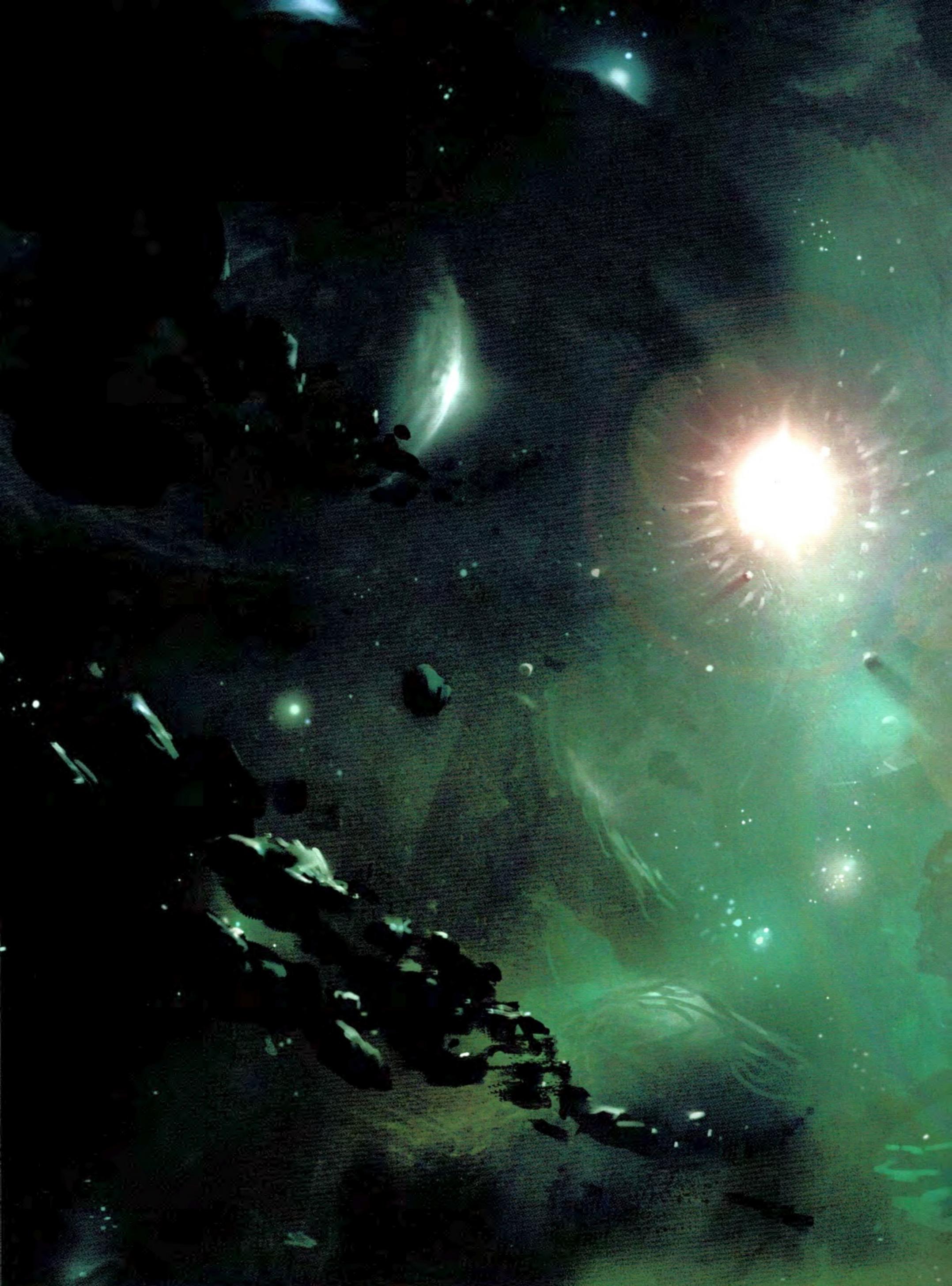
'Its heading?' asked Gaeron, already knowing the answer in his hearts.

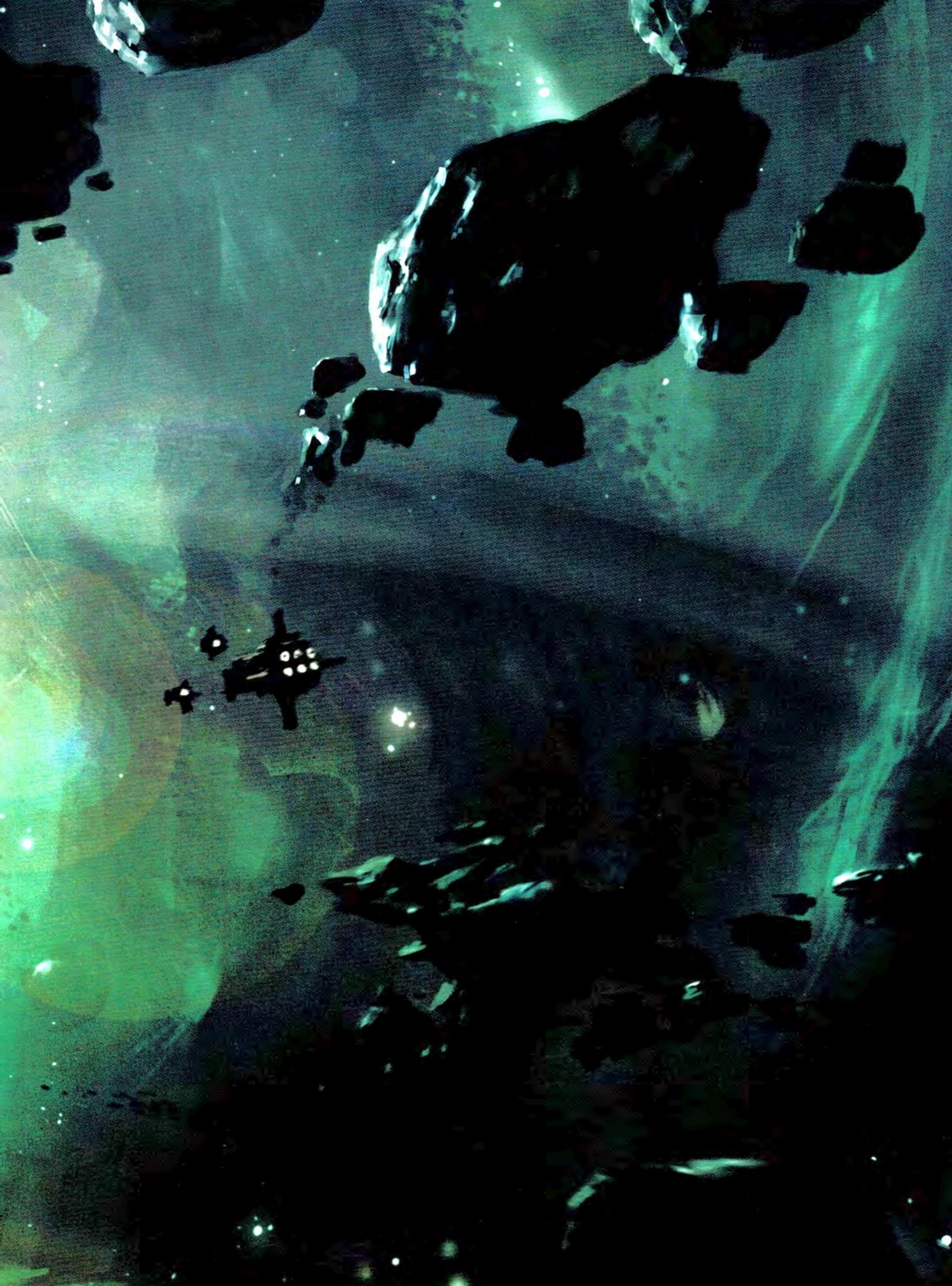
'Formidyre System, lord,' said Uvarin. 'Sanctum. The precogitators are certain.'

The Shadow Captain nodded to himself, then spoke.

'Wake the Navigator and make haste for the Mandeville point, shipmaster,' he ordered. 'We will risk warp translation. They must be warned.'







Showcase



World by world, system by system, the shadow of Hive Fleet Leviathan spread across the stars. Countless armies stood against the devouring swarm, from the elite Space Marines, zealous Battle Sisters and massed Imperial Guardsmen of the Imperium, to Orkish hordes, Aeldari warhosts, Kin Oathbands, Necron phalanxes and more. The wars they fought sprawled across every landscape imaginable, and wrought calamitous destruction across entire swathes of galactic space. Here you will find miniatures photography that gives snapshots of this sprawling and many-faceted conflict of predators and prey.





Neurogaunts



Termagants



Neurotyrant and Neuroloids

1 Upon the colony world of Ahbtospar's Folly, First Captain Agemman leads a combat drop of his Solblade's forces against the swarms of Hive Fleet Leviathan. They seek to hold the colony spaceport perimeter long enough for all priority personnel to make their escape into the void.



Ultramarines Terminator Sergeant with storm bolter and power weapon



Ultramarines Terminator with assault cannon and power fist



Ultramarines Terminators with storm bolters and power fists

1 A formidable strike force of Ultramarines launches a sudden counter-attack through the ruined walls of the Boneheart Bastion. So disciplined and strategically masterful is their offensive that it cuts the leading edge of the Tyranid swarm apart and drives the invading xenos back amidst a storm of ichor and flame.

2 As fighting rages across the surface of Sanctum, fresh Tyranid assault swarms breach the hull of the *Phalanx* high in orbit. The venerable battle station's corridors and chambers ring to alien shrieks and the thunder of bolt fire as the gene-sons of Dorn stride forth to purge the invaders from their voidborne fastness.



1



2





Captain-General Trajann Valoris

Vexilus Praetor with praesidium shield

Allarus Custodian with castellan axe and balistus grenade launcher

1 The half-digested ruins of Mydracor City 6 come alive with the sounds of battle as the warriors of the Adeptus Custodes drive deep into the Tyranids' lines. Their target is a brood of synaptic node beasts, but to reach them they must plunge into the very maw of the beast!

2 Somewhere amidst the bloody bedlam of the siege of the Holdfast, airborne warrior organisms lead a lightning-swift breakthrough. They are met by Lord Solar Leontus himself, commanding a combined host of the Astra Militarum and the Raven Guard to hurl the onslaught back.







1 Hull breached, bulkheads compromised and engineering an acid-ravaged ruin, the cruiser *Psychomantium* is overrun by scuttling Tyranid swarms. However, though they know there is no hope of survival, the Cadian soldiers garrisoning the warship fight to the last rather than giving in to despair.

2 Orbital Defence Platform Sigma-Theta-9 is all that remains between the Tyranid swarms and the overcrowded hive cities of Krench. Yet even as it appears the platform's defenders are on the verge of collapse, a host of grim-faced Ultramarines launches a strike onto the platform under the leadership of the indomitable Librarian Vandrus.

3 Deep within the embattled *Phalanx*, indefatigable Imperial Fists Terminators hold the line against the invasion swarm while precious gene-seed banks are evacuated by the brothers of the Apothecarion.



Sternguard Veteran Sergeant with bolt pistol and combi-melta

Sternguard Veteran with combi-plasma



Infernus Marine with pyreblaster



Infernus Sergeant with pyreblaster and bolt pistol



Psychophage



1 The streets of Cruxharbour run red as regiments of Astra Militarum soldiery try to hold back the Tyranid onslaught. Led by spearheads of Screamer-killers, the swarm drives the defenders back step by step.

2 The air crackles with psionic force as an Ultramarines Librarian clad in warded Terminator armour does battle with a hissing Neurotyrant. In this battle of wills there can be only one victor – the first to shatter the other's mental defences and ravage their opponent's psyche with deadly energies.



Screamer-killer



Librarian in Terminator armour with force weapon and storm bolter



Captain in Terminator armour with relic blade and storm bolter



Shock Trooper Sergeant with laspistol and chainsword



Shock Trooper with lasgun and vox-caster



Shock Troopers with lasguns



Shock Trooper with meltagun

1 On an isolated world far behind the lines of the Tyranid advance, cut-off Cadian soldiery fight valiantly on against overwhelming numbers. A vox transmission has reached them, telling them that a Solblade is even now entering orbit high above and preparing to disembark a host of vengeful Hawk Lords Space Marines directly into the fight. If they can but hold out a little longer, these men and women of Cadia may yet be delivered. Yet the Tyranids' numbers are great, their hunger terrible, and Space Marines, too, can be slain and devoured...





Von Ryan's Leapers







Tyrannic War



The attack of the Nautilon, Promethor and Grendyllus tendrils upon sectors within the Segmentum Pacificus triggered the largest and most ferocious war yet fought against the Tyranid menace. Conflict erupted between those fleeing the swarm, even as the defenders of world after world stood firm against the onslaught or collapsed into panic and dismay. Whether upon the myriad planets fought over by the Solblade fleets or amongst the beleaguered systems of the Bastior Sub-sector, countless tales of heroism and horror played out. Some commanders seized their opportunities to carve a swathe across the stars and rise to notoriety. Many others found themselves fighting furiously merely to survive.



INTRODUCTION

In this section you will find a number of new Battle Honours you can give to your warriors as they fight their way through the Tyrannic War, as well as a swathe of new missions and unique Crusade Blessings that can come into effect in your games.

BATTLE TRAITS (PG 297-299)

These rules cover all of the skills and new capabilities your forces can learn from fighting in this specific theatre of war as they gain experience and achieve new ranks.

CRUSADE RELICS (PG 300-301)

Many powerful artefacts, found within these pages, can be discovered hidden away amidst the worlds rent by this violent conflict.

MONSTERS AND THOSE WHO HUNT THEM (PG 302-305)

Terrifying monsters stride the battlefields of the Tyrannic War, causing mass destruction as the few brave enough to fight against them rise to the challenge. In this section you will find new ways to upgrade these units, with bespoke upgrade paths available to each.

PLAYING A CRUSADE MISSION (PG 306-309)

The rules presented on these pages outline the sequence to follow when playing a Crusade mission and walk you through all of the steps to get you up and running.

CRUSADE BLESSINGS (PG 310-311)

This section provides a range of new Crusade Blessings that can be used by an Underdog to get a leg-up on their more experienced opponent, ensuring every Crusade game provides a fair battle.

AGENDAS (PG 312-313)

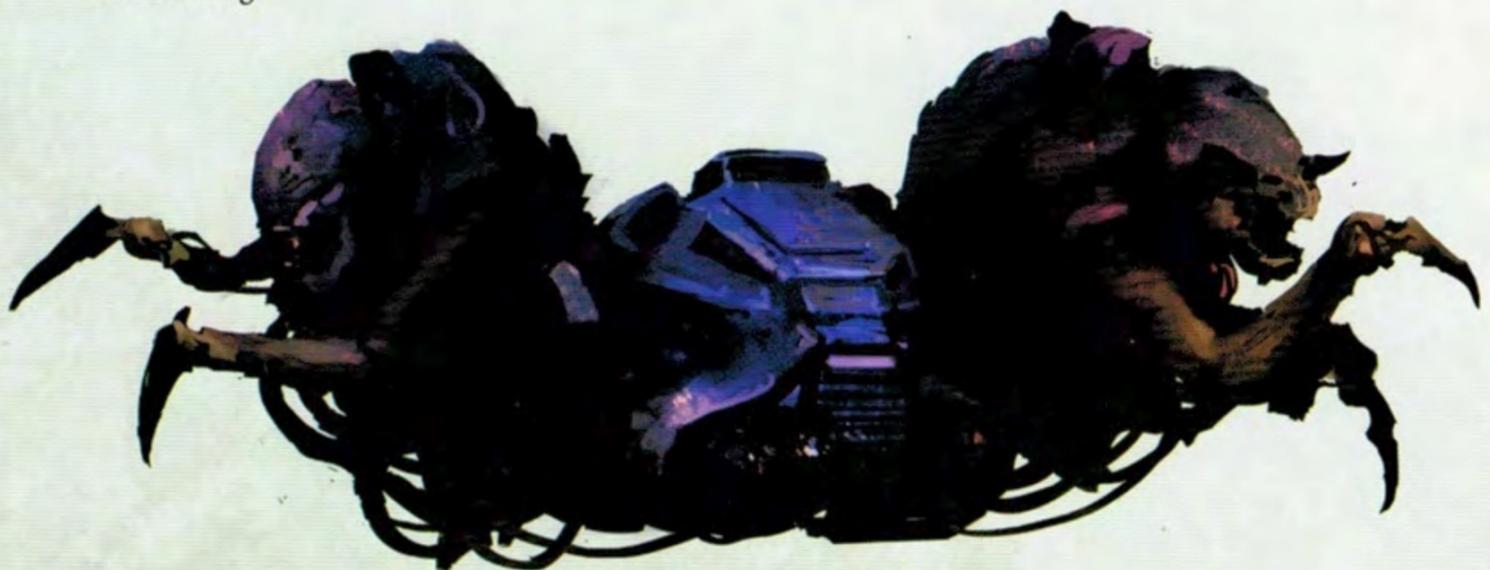
When playing one of the Crusade missions presented in this book, you can choose from these Agendas, which provide unique ways for your units to gain experience on the battlefield.

TYRANNIC WAR CAMPAIGN (PG 314-315)

These rules allow you and your friends to play through a combined Crusade experience across a campaign, working together in your alliances to take the fight to the enemy.

CRUSADE MISSIONS (PG 316-330)

This section includes a variety of missions of all game sizes, allowing you to replay many of the dramatic battles from the accompanying narrative.



BATTLE TRAITS

Battle Traits are skills or upgrades that units have acquired during their years of warfare, and help to give them a vital edge on the battlefield. Each time a unit gains a Battle Trait, either roll one D6 and consult the table below to randomly determine which Battle Trait the unit has gained, or choose the Battle Trait that you think tells the best narrative. A unit can have more than one Battle Trait, but it cannot have the same Battle Trait more than once (if a duplicate result is rolled, roll again until a different result is rolled).

CHARACTER UNITS

D6

(excluding **MONSTER** and **VEHICLE** units)

BORN HUNTER

Perhaps a survivor of a fallen Solblade force or the hyper-evolved remnant of a butchered brood, this warrior is terrifyingly swift and eager to engage the foe once more.



This unit has the Scouts 9" ability [Core Rules].

BIO-ACID BURNS

Even Tyranid ichor is a deadly threat; a survivor bearing the livid scars of its excoriating touch is an indomitable and enduring combatant indeed.



CHARACTER models in this unit have the Feel No Pain 5+ ability [Core Rules].

NATURAL LEADER

This warrior carries an authority and presence that inspires or dominates those around them.



Each time you take a Battle-shock or Leadership test for this unit, you can re-roll that test.

DEADLY COMBATANT

This violent champion has adopted the mantra that the only way to beat the xenos swarms is to fight talon and fang with blade and determination.



All melee weapons equipped by **CHARACTER** models in this unit have the **[SUSTAINED HITS 1]** ability [Core Rules].

SHADOW STALKER

This warrior has learned to move unseen, haunting its prey from dark ruins or through nests of xenos growths to evade detection.



This unit has the Stealth ability [Core Rules].

DEATH INCARNATE (AURA)

A palpable sense of dread swathes this red-handed killer like a shroud, their eyes carrying neither mercy nor pity, only the promise of death.



While an enemy unit is within 6" of this unit, worsen the Leadership characteristic of models in that enemy unit by 1.

VEHICLE UNITS

D6

(excluding **WALKER** units)

BLESSED HULL

The crew of this vehicle hold the unshakeable belief that the words of warding and sacred unguents with which it has been blessed offer them supernatural protection. In such a warp-saturated age, belief has a power all its own.



Models in this unit have a 5+ invulnerable save.

FOCUSED GUNNERS

Though hordes of monstrosities may swarm around them, this vehicle's gunners maintain a grim calm and blast away at any crawling over the hull.



Models in this unit do not suffer the penalty to Hit rolls for making ranged attacks while their unit is within Engagement Range of one or more enemy units.

REINFORCED SUPERSTRUCTURE

This vehicle's commander has ordered the strengthening of key elements of its armoured hide after learning valuable lessons in battle against the Tyranids.



Each time an attack with a Strength characteristic of 7 or less is allocated to a model in this unit, worsen the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

ELITE CREW

The crew of this vehicle are hardened veterans, their slick coordination forged through shared battlefield experience.



Each time a model in this unit makes an attack, re-roll a Hit roll of 1.

ARCHEOTECH POWER CELL

An arcane mechanism now boosts this vehicle's performance, as speed and mobility quickly became vital survival strategies against the Tyranids.



Add 2" to the Move characteristic of models in this unit.

AUTO-REPAIR NODES

This vehicle is fitted with advanced devices that counteract bio-acids, seal rents torn by talons, purge metallophagic growths and effect numerous other repairs.



At the start of your Command phase, one model in this unit regains 1 lost wound.

INFANTRY UNITS

D6

BATTLE-SCARRED RESISTANCE

With their tough skin mottled by scars and shielded by thickened carapace or reinforced armour, these warriors have survived hurricanes of firepower, taking numerous injuries but never giving in.

Models in this unit have the Feel No Pain 6+ ability (Core Rules).



VANGUARD ESPIONAGE

Granted greater autonomy to operate far ahead of the main battle lines, these veterans push forward through hellish conditions to probe the foe's defences.

This unit has the Scouts 9" ability (Core Rules).



OBDURATE OBEDIENCE

Warriors who put duty before their own lives or organisms exhibiting particularly rigid links to the Hive Mind are such reliable troops that they will secure their objectives regardless of any danger. Such troops are as much despised by the enemy as they are valued by their commanders.

Add 1 to the Objective Control characteristic of all models in this unit.



RESOLUTE VETERANS

The alien horror on countless worlds in the Segmentum Pacificus has driven many insane, but some refuse to yield, no longer fazed by the devastation.

Each time you take a Battle-shock, Leadership or Desperate Escape test for this unit, add 1 to that test.



ONLY THE SWIFT SURVIVE

On worlds preyed upon by the Tyranids, survival means moving fast and killing first. These warriors outpace their foes and instinctively drive their slashing blades or stabbing talons into the foe before they can even react.

Add 1 to Advance and Charge rolls made for this unit.



HEADHUNTERS

Whether by the inscrutable Hive Mind or the authority of high command, as opposing armies close on each other these dedicated executioners are assigned a priority target to kill at all costs.

At the start of the battle, select one enemy unit (regardless of how many units in your Crusade army have this Battle Trait). Until the end of the battle, each time a model in this unit makes an attack against that enemy unit, re-roll a Hit roll of 1 and re-roll a Wound roll of 1.



MOUNTED UNITS

D6

HUNTER'S CELERITY

When hunting down elusive prey or evading the taloned clutches of xenos horrors, these swift warriors unlock a reserve of unmatched speed.

Add 2" to the Move characteristic of models in this unit.



HIGH-SPEED GUNNERY

These swift dragoons have perfected the firing and reloading of their deadly weapons at high speed, always moving to avoid the hunting broods.

Each time this unit Advances, until the end of the turn all ranged weapons equipped by models in this unit have the **[ASSAULT]** ability (Core Rules).



PREDATORY URGE

These butchers revel in tearing their prey apart in gory chunks and eagerly surge forward at every opportunity to do so.

You can re-roll Charge rolls made for this unit.



MOUNTED GUERRILLAS

A key tactic of many Solblade forces was to strike hard and fast against the Tyranids, enable a rapid extraction, redeploy and engage again at the first chance.

This unit is eligible to declare a charge in a turn in which it Fell Back.



ENCIRCLING RAPTORS

These swift flanking troops are able to outmanoeuvre the surging xenos broods, encircling the swarms before striking from an unexpected quarter.

If this unit is in Strategic Reserves, it counts the battle round number as one higher than the current battle round number for the purpose of determining when and where it is set up.



TIRELESS RAIDERS

Aiming from vantage points high on the backs of rearing mounts or firing weapons shielded in armoured housings, these warriors eviscerate their foes at point-blank range as they weave through swarming horrors.

Models in this unit can make attacks with ranged weapons even when their unit is within Engagement Range of enemy units, but they can only make such attacks against enemy units that they are within Engagement Range of. In such circumstances, those models can target an enemy unit even if other friendly units are within Engagement Range of the same enemy unit.



STRIDING BEHEMOTH UNITS

D6

DESTRUCTIVE IMPULSE

This monstrous organism or mechanised colossus has a brutal reputation, and is driven by a relentless urge to dominate through destruction.

Each time a model in this unit destroys an enemy unit, add twice as many marks to its Tyrannic War Veteran tally (pg 302) as normal.



RAPID ADAPTATION

Singled out by the Hive Mind for an unnatural mutation or piloted by a master duellist, this martial goliath is adept at bringing down its huge battlefield rivals.

Select any one of the Battle Honours from the Monster Hunters upgrade path (pg 304) for this unit to gain, regardless of the ones it has already unlocked. The Battle Honour you select does not increase this unit's Crusade points total and does not count as an additional Battle Honour when determining the maximum number of Battle Honours this unit can have.



CRUSADE RELICS

When fighting in the Tyrannic War, units from your Crusade army can gain the following Crusade Relics.

ARTIFICER RELICS

CRIMSON MEDALLION OF BASTIOR

This elaborate decoration is the highest honour afforded to Imperial defenders of the Bastior Sub-sector. It comes in the form of a physical medal or, on occasion, a finely woven sash. It also doubles as a gene-coded command priority strategic uplink and coordination micro-cogitator whose worth could be measured in worlds.

At the start of your Command phase, if the bearer is within range of an objective marker that you control, roll one D6: on a 4+, you gain 1CP.

BIOSPLINT GLAND

This gem-sized fleshy sac is woven from a dense mass of bio-neural strands that quiver with empyric harmonies. Implanted in a warrior organism's chest, it is powered by energetic action. The pent-up energy is released like an arcane dynamo, the host's form appearing to fracture into abhorrent splinters, confusing and startling attackers who hack at fragmentary phantasms.

Each time the bearer's unit ends a Charge move, select one enemy unit within Engagement Range of the bearer. Until the end of the turn, each time a model in that enemy unit makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's Hit roll.

ARTIFICER WEAPON

It is as inappropriate and insulting to call such a sublime tool of destruction a mere weapon as it would be to compare a child's crude scrawl to an artistic masterpiece. Fashioned by artisans of unparalleled skill and imbued with supernaturally lethal energies, everything from this device's malevolent machine spirit to its magnificently wrought components is one of a kind.

Select one weapon that the bearer is equipped with (excluding a weapon that has been replaced by an Enhancement or upgraded via the Weapon Modifications Battle Trait). Make a note on the bearer's Crusade card of this weapon and give it a suitable name. That weapon is now a Crusade Relic and each time the bearer makes an attack with it, on a Critical Hit, the target suffers 1 mortal wound in addition to any normal damage.

MASTER-CRAFTED ARMOUR

Fashioned by an armourer of sublime skill, this armour is proof against the most deadly weapons and dread foes of the 41st Millennium.

Add 1 to armour saving throws made for the bearer.

ANTIQUITY RELICS

SIGIL OF SOL

Worn around the collar on gilded chains, worked into a metallic wreath, this icon is an explicit measure of the bearer's authority among the Solblades. Archopathic filaments within the sigil encase a powerful communications device, enabling the bearer to transmit their demands for strategic and tactical assets and manoeuvres alongside meta-echoes of command to ensure their calculated orders are carried out swiftly.

Once per battle round, if the bearer is on the battlefield when you use a Strategic Ploy Stratagem, you can use that Stratagem without spending any CP.

CRANIUM OBSCURA

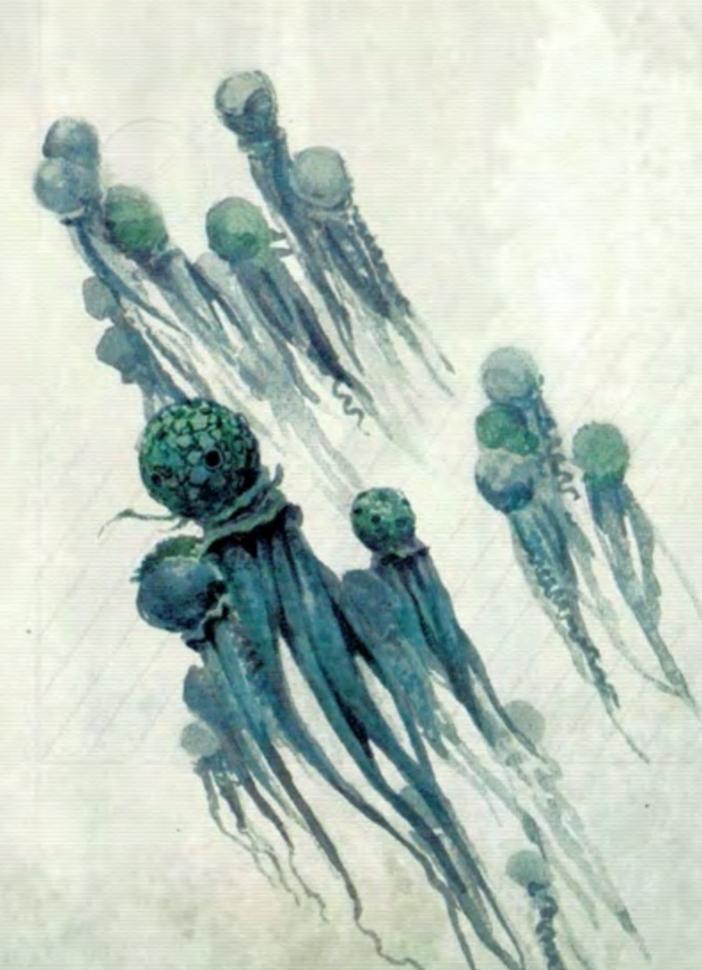
This heavily warded reliquary contains pulverised segments of cranial carapace harvested from Neurotyrants slain on the fortress world of Unspake. Suspended in a solution of martyr's blood, these charnel Tyranid remains dismay the mind-spirits of heathen sorcerers and ward away xenos and heretic perversity alike, for surely they are proof of Humanity's victory over even the foulest of the galaxy's many monsters.

Cannot be taken by **PSYKER** models. Each time a Psychic Attack targets the bearer's unit, subtract 1 from that attack's Hit roll.

SHADESPLINTER CLOAK

Seen limp and still, this multi-layered hooded cloak is a drab ash-grey in colour. Yet in motion it catches the light in strange ways. Oil-like prismatic hues flicker from its folds as little-understood technology woven into the fabric shrouds the wearer in darkness.

Unless the bearer is part of an Attached unit at the start of the battle, it has the Lone Operative ability (Core Rules).



LANTERN OF DETESTATION

This ancient archeobrazier was brought forth from the deepest vaults of the Holdfast itself in response to the looming xenos threat. It is a beacon of hatred, a blinding light of intolerance toward the alien that causes such inhuman beings to falter and recoil from its uncompromising glare.

At the start of your opponent's Movement phase, for each enemy unit (excluding **IMPERIUM** and **CHAOS** units) within Engagement Range of the bearer, roll one D6: on a 4+, until the end of the phase, that unit cannot be selected to Fall Back.

SHARD OF DYING LIGHT

Once the pride of the mortuary world of Krematos, this eerie crystal is said to have been so steeped in the energies of departed souls that it has become a bridge between the realms of the living and the dead. Whatever the truth, in the hands of a potent psyker, their otherworldly powers blaze more furiously.

PSYKER model only. Each time the bearer makes a Psychic Attack, add 1 to that attack's Wound roll.

ARCHEOTECH NANO-MED

This small casket of iron hails from the vaults of Lembyq. It is rimed in frost that obscures the strange carvings upon it, incisions said to echo an ancient sigil of the Rejuvenat Adepts. A single drop of blood into a macabre mouth-like aperture establishes a gene-locked connection with the casket's millions of microscopic automata. Should the bearer suffer catastrophic injury, they flood out from an irised opening in a silvery cloud, reknitting flesh and repairing bone before their limited power is expended.

INFANTRY model only. The first time the bearer is destroyed, you can choose to roll one D6 at the end of the phase instead of using any rules that are triggered when a model is destroyed. If you do, on a 4+, set the bearer back up on the battlefield as close as possible to where they were destroyed and more than 1" away from all enemy models, with D3 wounds remaining. If the bearer was part of an Attached unit when it was destroyed, and its Bodyguard unit is still on the battlefield when the bearer is set back up, it must be placed in Unit Coherency with that unit again to form an Attached unit. You do not need to take an Out of Action test for the bearer at the end of the battle unless it is destroyed again.

LEGENDARY RELICS

GHEIST PRISM FIELD

This ancient force field is believed to originate from xenos designs, and when activated it draws the wearer out of phase, allowing them to pass through them like a phantom. As they do, the ghostly reflections cast by the field reach out like scything claws, scoring fissures and cuts in the wearer's wake as if the phantom-like figure had thrown out vicious prismatic shards.

Each time the bearer makes a Normal, Advance or Fall Back move, until that move is finished, it can move horizontally through models and terrain features (it cannot finish a move on top of another model or its base). If doing so when making a Fall Back move, models in this unit do not need to take a Desperate Escape test. After it has finished moving, select one enemy unit it moved across (if any) and roll one D6: on a 2+, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.

VERTEBRAX OF VODUN

This twisted mass of chiasmic fibres and clusters of lobes, globular organelles and mucal sacs is said to have been torn from the Beast of Vodun. This creature was proudly named the last of a xenos race endemic to Vodun, but Solblade Genetors have noted worrying similarities to Tyrannic genera. The quivering brain matter creates a neural connection between the bearer and another, enabling a flood of thoughts and instinct to pass between them. Quite how this is achieved is unknown, for no emissions or warp anomalies have been detected around it.

At the start of your Command phase, select one friendly model on the battlefield (excluding the bearer) and then select one Aura ability that selected model has. Until the start of your next Command phase, the bearer has that Aura ability.

VORTEX GRENADE

Inside this heavy sphere is technology so arcane and dangerous that its deployment is rarely sanctioned. When detonated, it can crack the fabric of space and time to create a miniature warp rift that sucks anything nearby into the limitless empyrean. The vortex of warp energy is unpredictable and can swell or move, tearing, crushing and disintegrating anything in its path until it finally – hopefully – dissipates and vanishes.

The bearer is equipped with a vortex grenade that has the following profile:

VORTEX GRENADE [ASSAULT]

RANGE	A	BS	S	AP	D
6"	1	2+	*	*	*

Abilities: The bearer can only shoot with this weapon once per battle. When an attack is made with this weapon, if a hit is scored, roll one D6 for each unit within 6" of the target unit (excluding the target unit itself): on a 4+, the unit being rolled for suffers D3 mortal wounds. The target unit then suffers 3D3 mortal wounds.

NULL-FIELD DISRUPTOR

Short-ranged waves of energistic quietus pulsate from this small artefact, hobbling whatever esoteric defences the wearer's enemies possess. Under its enervating emissions, technological force fields splutter and die, arcane veils are blown aside and unnatural reflexes are deadened, leaving the foe vulnerable against any deadly strike.

Each time the bearer makes a melee attack, invulnerable saving throws cannot be made against that attack.

MONSTERS AND THOSE WHO HUNT THEM

Across the spread of the Tyrannic War massive battles are waged between armies on a terrible scale. But amongst these vast swathes of men and monsters a few notable warriors come to blows time and time again, their obsessions with one another growing as the scars build up and their hatreds deepen.

This Crusade mission pack offers several new ways for your units to gain skills on the battlefield as they stalk their chosen prey across the ruined wastelands and shattered hives of the enemy.

There are two upgrade paths presented, each dependent on the type of unit involved (see right). You can start a unit along one of these upgrade paths using the Tyrannic War Veteran Requisition (see below). Each of these paths has a number of new Battle Honours, called Tyrannic War Battle Honours. When a unit begins along one of these upgrade paths it will gain the starting Battle Honour specified in that upgrade path (remember to upgrade the unit's Crusade points accordingly when it gains one of these Battle Honours). Further Tyrannic War Battle Honours can be gained by earning Tyrannic War Veteran points (see below).

TYRANNIC WAR VETERAN 1RP

It is a victory to survive upon battlefields that shake beneath the tread of monstrous terrors and swarm with skilled and merciless hunters. Those who do learn many bloody lessons.

Select one unit from your Order of Battle of Blooded rank or higher and one of the Tyrannic War upgrade paths that it is eligible for. That unit gains the **TYRANNIC WAR VETERAN** keyword and:

- If you selected the Monster Hunters upgrade path, it gains the **MONSTER HUNTERS** keyword.
- If you selected the Striding Behemoths upgrade path, it gains the **STRIDING BEHEMOTHS** keyword.

That unit then gains the starting Tyrannic War Battle Honour for that upgrade path and you must start a Tyrannic War Veteran tally for that unit on its Crusade card. Tyrannic War Veteran points recorded on that unit's Tyrannic War Veteran tally can be used to gain further Tyrannic War Battle Honours (see right).

MONSTER HUNTERS

Beset by the terrifying biomass and fiendish mutations of the enemy, **INFANTRY** and **MOUNTED** units can become experts in hunting behemoths and bringing them down with a range of new skills focused on tackling large targets.

STRIDING BEHEMOTHS

MONSTERS and **WALKERS** can gain a large array of different abilities with these upgrades as they stride across the battlefield. Becoming able to smash through the thickest of opposition or weather the mightiest of blows, they will instil true terror in their foes.



UNLOCKING TYRANNIC WAR BATTLE HONOURS

Each time a **TYRANNIC WAR VETERAN** unit:

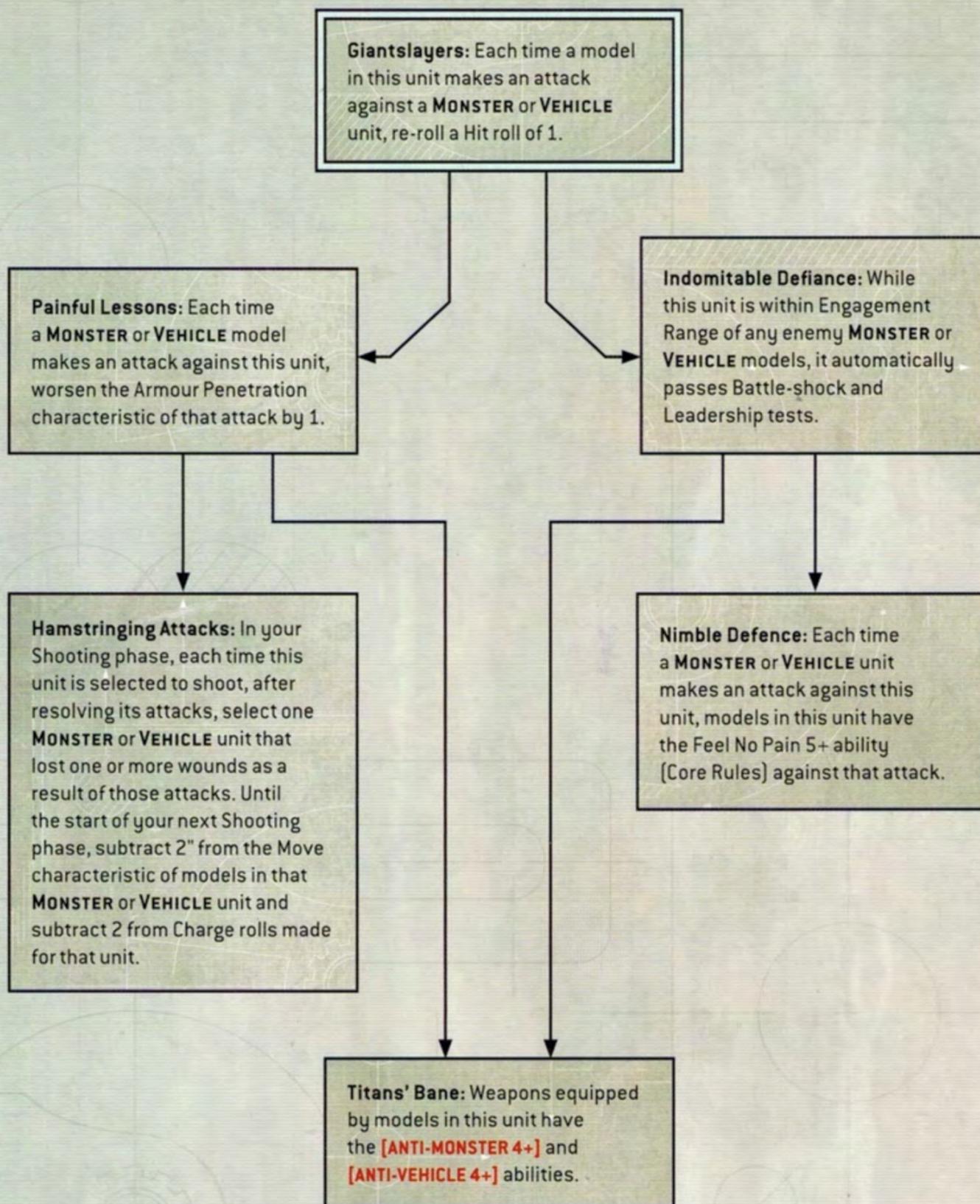
- Destroys an enemy unit, add 1 to the attacker's Tyrannic War Veteran tally.
- Destroys an enemy **STRIDING BEHEMOTHS** unit, add 3 to the attacker's Tyrannic War Veteran tally. If that enemy unit is **TITANIC**, add 6 to that tally instead.

When a unit's Tyrannic War Veteran tally reaches 10 or more, you can choose for it to progress along its upgrade path and gain a Battle Honour from its current upgrade path. Reset its Tyrannic War Veteran tally to 0 and select a new Battle Honour for it from the upgrade path it is on. When doing so, you can select any of the Battle Honours that are connected to the last Battle Honour that unit gained by following one of the paths indicated by the arrows.



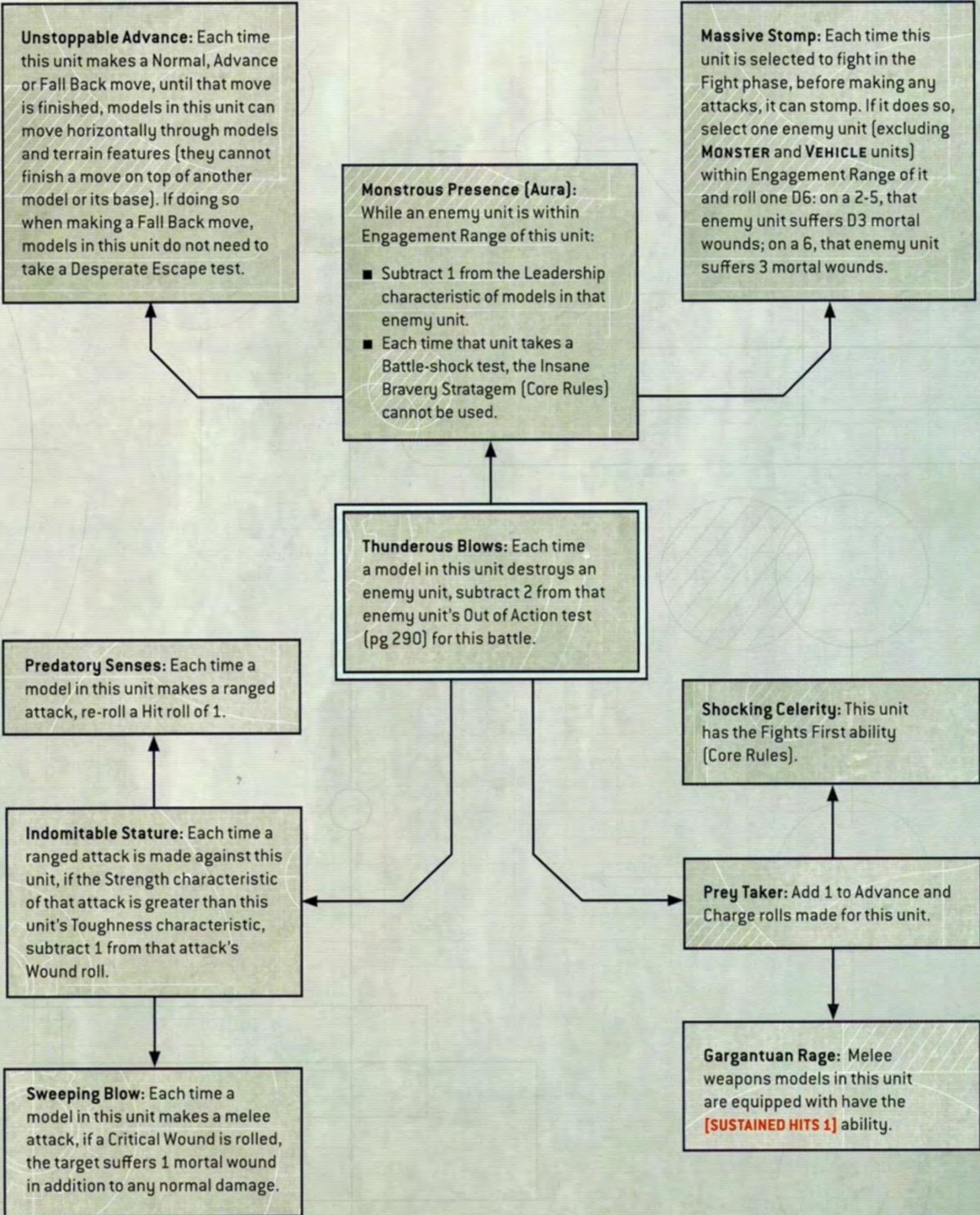
MONSTER HUNTERS

When a unit starts on this upgrade path, the starting Tyrannic War Battle Honour it gains is Giantslayers.



STRIDING BEHEMOTHS

When a unit starts on this upgrade path, the starting Tyrannic War Battle Honour it gains is Thunderous Blows.



PLAYING A CRUSADE MISSION

A Tyrannic War Crusade battle is waged by following the sequence below.

1 SELECT BATTLE SIZE

Players must first select the battle size they wish to play: Incursion, Strike Force or Onslaught. The table below gives a rough guide of how long each battle should take.

SELECT BATTLE SIZE		
BATTLE SIZE	POINTS PER ARMY	BATTLE DURATION
Incursion	1000	Up to 2 hours
Strike Force	2000	Up to 3 hours
Onslaught	3000	Up to 4 hours

2 MUSTER CRUSADE ARMIES

Each player must then muster a Crusade army (as detailed on pages 292-293) and provide a copy of their Army Roster for their opponent to read through.

3 DETERMINE MISSION

Next players determine which mission will be used for the battle; they can choose from the missions presented in the tables (see right) for their chosen battle size. This will determine the deployment map that is used, as well as the specific mission briefing. Players can either simply agree which they will use with their opponent, or they can roll a dice to randomly select a mission.

When rolling to determine an Incursion or Strike Force mission, first roll one D6 to determine which table to use: on a 1-3, use the Incursion/Strike Force A table; on a 4-6, use the Incursion/Strike Force B table. Then roll one D6 to determine which mission to play. For Onslaught missions, roll one D6 to determine which mission to play on the Onslaught table.

INCURSION/STRIKE FORCE A

D6 MISSION

-  Rotting Biomass (pg 316)
-  Secure the Tunnels (pg 317)
-  Screaming into the Void (pg 318)
-  Bio-sample Acquisition (pg 319)
-  Spawning Ground (pg 320)
-  Kicking the Nest (pg 321)

INCURSION/STRIKE FORCE B

D6 MISSION

-  Empty the Vaults (pg 322)
-  Against the Swarm (pg 323)
-  Scattered Supplies (pg 324)
-  Insurgency (pg 325)
-  The Gathering Shroud (pg 326)
-  Routed Prey (pg 327)

ONSLAUGHT

D6 MISSION

-   Fire from the Skies (pg 328)
-   Myths and Monsters (pg 329)
-   Planetary Evacuation (pg 330)

4 DETERMINE ATTACKER AND DEFENDER

Players roll off and the winner decides who will be the Attacker and who will be the Defender.

5 READ MISSION

Each mission has a mission briefing that will detail the aims of the battle. Each mission will also list one or more additional mission rules that will apply for the duration of the battle and a series of objectives, which may be different for the Attacker and the Defender. Players should read and familiarise themselves with these before proceeding.

6 PLACE OBJECTIVE MARKERS

Players now set objective markers up on the battlefield. Each mission's deployment map will show the players how many to set up and where each should be placed.

7 CREATE THE BATTLEFIELD

Next players create the battlefield and set up terrain features. The size of the battlefield depends on the battle size selected, as shown in the table below (the table shows the minimum size of battlefields).

BATTLEFIELDS

BATTLE SIZE	MINIMUM BATTLEFIELD SIZE
Incursion/Strike Force	44"x 60"
Onslaught	44"x 90"

Unless otherwise stated, when setting up terrain features, use the guidelines detailed in the Core Rules. Players must use the rules presented in the Core Rules for terrain features.

Terrain features should not be set up with any impassable sections (such as the walls of a ruin) within 1" of any objective markers.

8 PURCHASE REQUISITIONS

If you have access to any Requisitions that are used before a battle, you can spend RP to use them now. If any of these upgrade one or more of your units for the coming battle, make a note of that upgrade on your Army Roster.

9 SELECT AGENDAS

Each player then secretly selects two Agendas for the battle and writes them down. Each can award Experience points to certain units in that player's Crusade army, as described on the Agenda itself. The Agendas that players can choose from can be found on pages 312-313. Once both players have selected their Agendas, they reveal their selections to their opponent.

10 SELECT CRUSADE BLESSINGS

When two Crusade armies battle each other, it is likely that one or the other will be more experienced. To determine this, both players should compare the combined Crusade points total of all the units that are on their Army Rosters.

If there is a difference of at least 5 between the players' Crusade points totals, the player whose Army Roster has the lower total number of Crusade points is the Underdog and gains a number of Crusade Blessings to use in that battle, depending on the difference. This represents high command funneling additional resources to the Underdog to help them combat a more experienced foe.

The Crusade Blessings available depend on the war zone the battle is being fought in – if the battle is being fought in the Tyrannic War (or if you are playing in a war zone that does not list Crusade Blessings) use those printed on pages 310-311.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

During the battle, players can gain Victory points (VP) by achieving mission objectives. Mission objectives can either be 'Progressive' or 'End Game'. Progressive mission objectives are scored during the battle (exactly when is detailed on the mission objective itself), and can be achieved, and hence award Victory points, several times. End Game mission objectives are scored at the end of the battle.

Some Progressive objectives will award Victory points 'each time' an enemy model or unit is destroyed. A model or unit can, if it is resurrected for any reason (i.e. it was destroyed and subsequently returned to the battlefield), potentially contribute several Victory points due to these types of mission objectives (assuming it is resurrected and subsequently destroyed several times over).



11

DECLARE BATTLE FORMATIONS

In the order stated below, both players now secretly note down:

- Which of their Leader units will start the battle attached (they must specify which Leader unit is attached to which Bodyguard unit).
- Which of their units will start the battle embarked within **TRANSPORT** models (they must specify which units are embarked on which models)
- Which of their units will start in Reserves (including Strategic Reserves).

When both players have done so, they declare their selections to their opponent.

In Tyrannic War Crusade missions, Reserves units cannot arrive during the first battle round, and any Strategic Reserves or Reserves unit that has not arrived on the battlefield by the end of the third battle round counts as having been destroyed, as do any units embarked within them (this does not apply to units that are placed into Strategic Reserves after the first battle round has started).

12

DEPLOY CRUSADE ARMIES

Players now alternate setting up their remaining units one at a time, starting with the Defender. A player's units must be set up wholly within their deployment zone – the Attacker's and the Defender's deployment zones are shown on the deployment map of each mission. If one player finishes deploying all their units, their opponent then deploys the remainder of their units.

13

DETERMINE FIRST TURN

Unless the mission briefing says otherwise, players roll off and the winner takes the first turn.

14

RESOLVE PRE-BATTLE RULES

Players alternate resolving any pre-battle rules units from their army may have, starting with the player who will take the first turn.

15

BEGIN THE BATTLE

The first battle round begins. Players continue to resolve battle rounds until the battle ends.



16

END THE BATTLE

The battle ends after five battle rounds have been completed. If one player has no models remaining in their Crusade army at the start of their turn, the other player may continue to play out their turns until the battle ends.

17

DETERMINE VICTOR

At the end of the battle, the player with the most Victory points is the winner. If players are tied, the battle is a draw.

If every model in a player's Crusade army is painted to a Battle Ready standard, that player is awarded a bonus 10 Victory points. This gives the players a maximum total score out of 100 Victory points.

The victor of a mission can then claim the Victor bonus listed on that mission. If the game is a draw, neither player can claim the bonus.

18

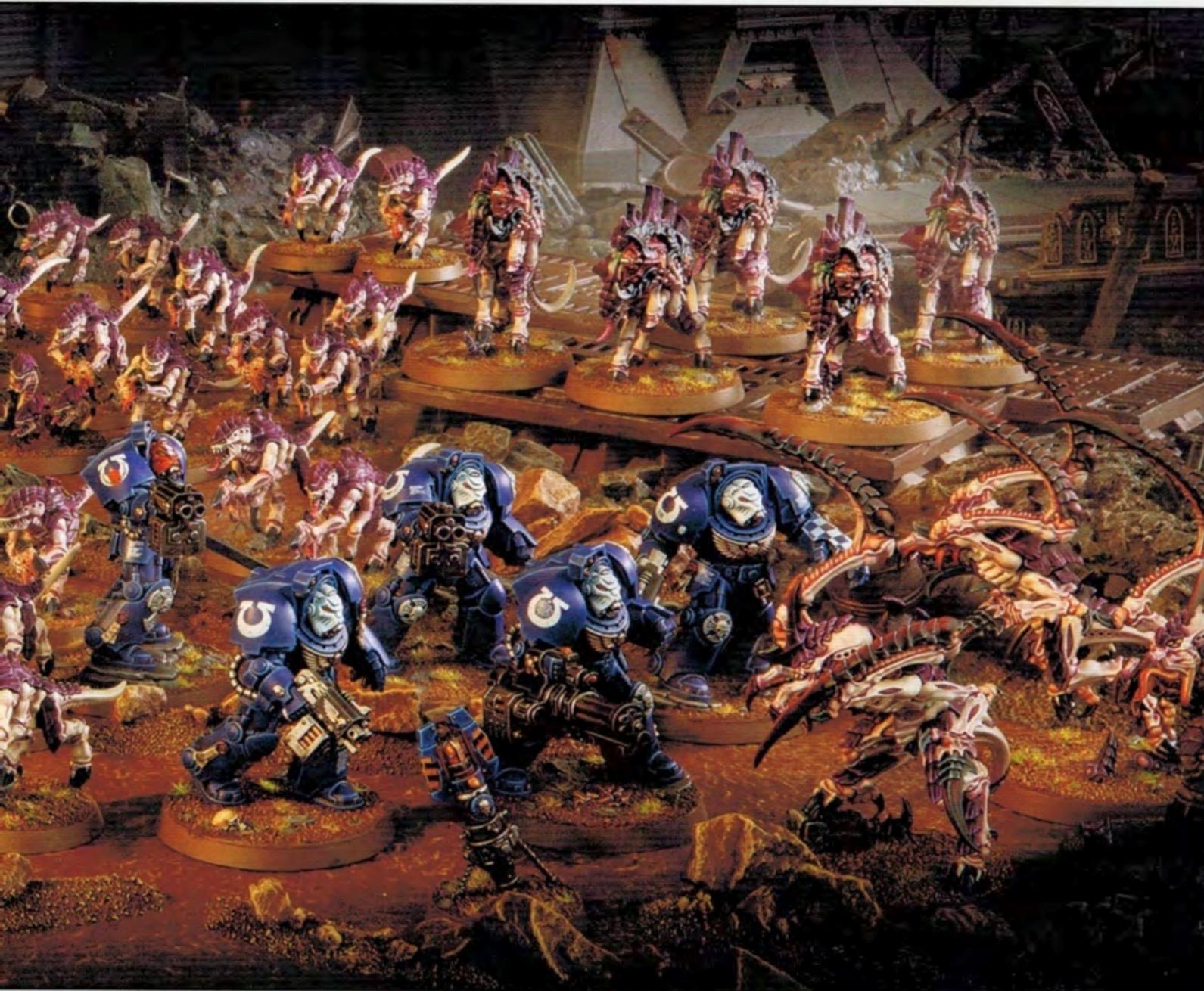
UPDATE CRUSADE CARDS

The players must now update their Crusade cards for all the units they used in the battle by taking Out of Action tests (pg 290) for any that were destroyed, and selecting a unit to be Marked for Greatness (pg 281). If this results in any units gaining a rank, before the next battle they can gain Battle Honours as described on page 287.

19

UPDATE ORDER OF BATTLE

Increase your Battle tally and Requisition points by 1, and make any notes that you wish to record following your battle. If you wish to add any units to your Order of Battle or spend any Requisition points, do so and update your Order of Battle accordingly before your next battle.



CRUSADE BLESSINGS

An Underdog in a Tyrannic War battle can select one or more Crusade Blessings from those presented here. The number they can select depends on the difference in Crusade points between the armies, as shown in the table below. The same Crusade Blessing cannot be selected more than once.

CRUSADE BLESSINGS	
DIFFERENCE IN CRUSADE POINTS	NUMBER OF BLESSINGS
0-4	0
5-9	1
10-19	2
20+	4

PREPARED POSITIONS

Be it entrenched Imperial defence networks or extrusions of chitinous barricades, the warring forces throughout the Bastior Sub-sector have access to many fixed fortifications.

Until the start of the second battle round, each time a ranged attack is made against one of your units, if that unit is wholly within your deployment zone, it receives the Benefit of Cover against that attack.

HIGH STRATEGY

A larger army's monolithic manoeuvres, chattering streams of vox traffic or the disturbance made to the warp by its deployment gifts a more compact force enough advance warning to lay their plans against them.

You start the battle with 2CP.

SECRET ORDERS

Last-minute information of a highly sensitive nature has been received, offering greater opportunities for the commander with the strength of will to seize them.

You can select one additional Agenda this battle.

WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU...

Warriors who face elite foes and survive will emerge from battle with a wealth of hard-won experience.

At the end of the battle, every unit from your army that is not destroyed gains 1XP.



CRITICAL STRIKE

Luring the enemy into an ambush long planned, or spurred by a sudden surge of predatory vigour, rampaging assaults are lent greater impetus.

Once per battle, at the start of your Charge phase, you can use this Crusade Blessing. If you do, until the end of the phase, add 1 to Charge rolls made for units from your Crusade army.

OUTMANOEUVRE

Many who survived the first bloody battles in the Bastior Sub-sector swiftly learned to stay mobile, stealing a march on enemies in the race for vital ground, drawing the foe into range of vanguard elements or closing in on their prey with insatiable hunger.

At the start of the first battle round, select up to three units from your Crusade army. Each of those units has the Scouts 6" ability (Core Rules) for this battle.

DEDICATION TO THE CAUSE

Those who defend the Bastior Sub-sector and its many worlds know they are fighting for a pivotal warp route that must be held at all costs. Such knowledge breeds fanatical devotion and selfless courage. The creatures that prey upon them, meanwhile, know no will but that which drives them on to ever greater slaughter with no thought for their own survival.

Once per turn, you can re-roll one Battle-shock test taken for a unit from your Crusade army.

MASS DEVOURING

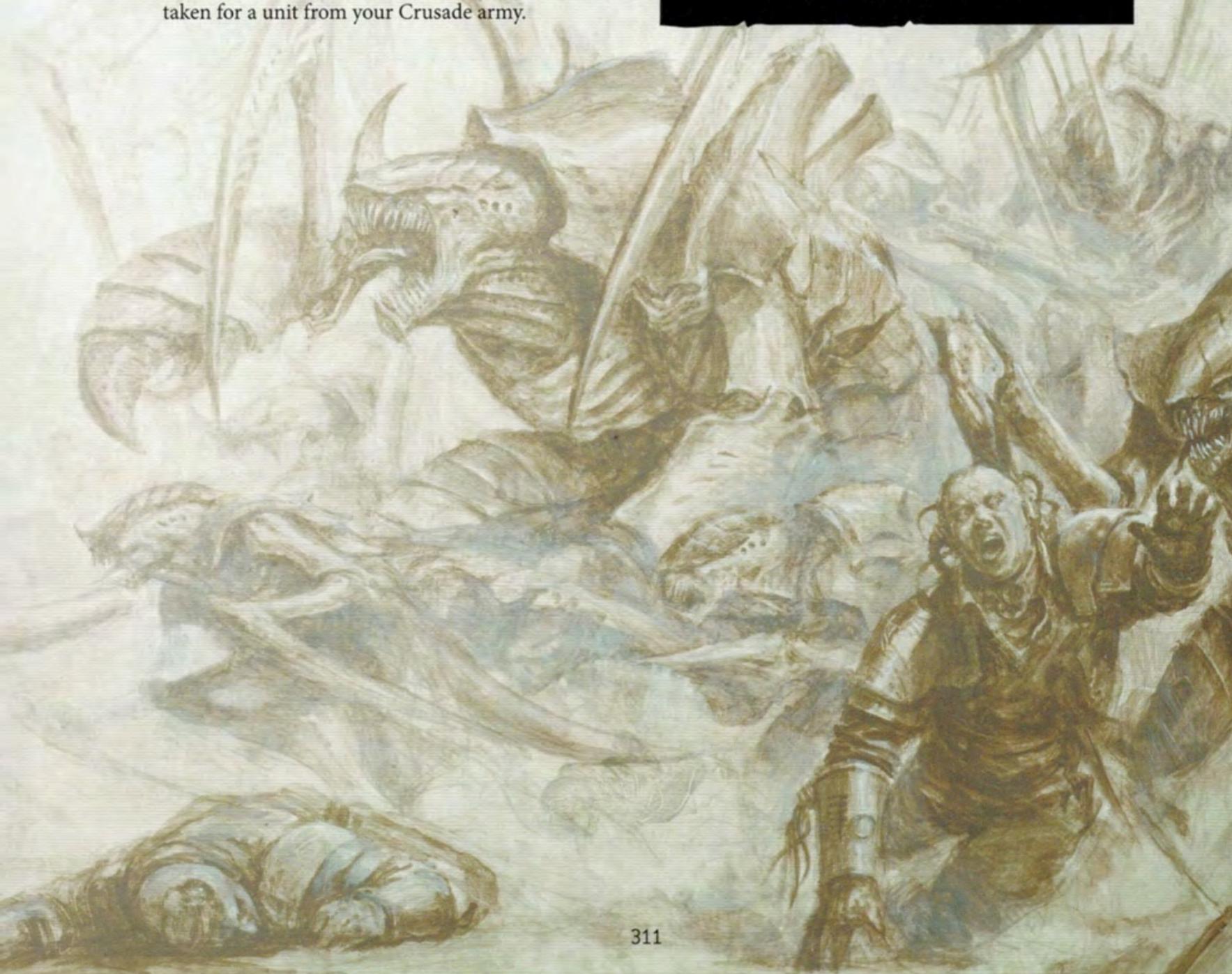
The ravenous broods of Hive Fleet Leviathan exist only to feed the Hive Mind's need for biomass. Yet this is a hunger that cannot be sated, a cycle of feasting as eternal and indifferent as the void itself.

You can only select this Crusade Blessing if your army contains one or more **TYRANIDS** units. At the end of the battle, if at least half of your opponent's units are destroyed or Below Half-strength, your Crusade force gains 1RP. If all of your opponent's units are destroyed or Below Half-strength, your Crusade force gains 3RP instead.

HELLFIRE SHELLS

Mankind, and many other races in the Tyranids' relentless path, draw in increasing desperation on esoteric technologies to drive the xenos back. From the mutagenic acids of hellfire shells to arcing bolts of star matter and devices that weaponise fundamental energies, all are brought forth to slay Leviathan's monstrosities.

You can only select this Crusade Blessing if your army does not contain any **TYRANIDS** units. Select one unit from your Crusade army. Until the end of the battle, each time a model in that unit makes an attack against a **MONSTER** or **VEHICLE** unit, you can re-roll the Wound roll.



AGENDAS

Agendas offer unique and exciting ways for your units to gain additional Experience points in a Crusade battle. From assassinating key enemy leaders to going on guerrilla recon missions, there are a whole range of different Agendas you can choose from to best suit your Crusade force's narrative. When playing a Tyrannic War Crusade mission you can select from the following Agendas.

Some Agendas will award experience points or tally marks 'each time' an enemy model or unit is destroyed. A model or unit can, if it is resurrected for any reason (i.e. it was destroyed and subsequently returned to the battlefield), potentially contribute several Experience points or tally marks to these types of Agendas (assuming it is resurrected and subsequently destroyed several times over).

BATTLEFIELD SURVIVORS

For those who make war against the Tyranid swarms, the mere act of surviving their onslaught is an instructive victory in its own right.

You can only select this Agenda if your Crusade army does not contain any **TYRANIDS** units. At the start of the battle, you can select up to three units from your Crusade army that are on the battlefield. For each of those units, at the end of the battle:

- If that unit has not been destroyed, it gains 2XP.
- If that unit is not Below Half-strength, it gains 1 additional Experience point.

SWARM THE PLANET

The Tyranid swarms are concerned only with the absolute infestation and consumption of each new prey-world they assail, funnelling all their reserves of biomass in creating organisms that can swiftly achieve these aims.

You can only select this Agenda if your Crusade army contains one or more **TYRANIDS** units. At the end of the battle, for each table quarter, if there are more units from your Crusade army wholly within that table quarter than there are units from your opponent's Crusade army wholly within it, you can select one of those units from your Crusade army. Each of those selected units gains 2XP.

HEADHUNTERS

Whether destroying nodal organisms or steely-eyed officers, eliminating the enemy's command structure is a sure way to advance your cause.

Each time a model from your Crusade army destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** unit, that model's unit gains 2XP. If the destroyed unit contained your opponent's **WARLORD**, that model's unit gains 4XP instead.

MONSTROUS TARGETS

The bigger and more terrifying the foe, the greater the rewards and renown to those who lay it low.

Each time a model from your Crusade army destroys an enemy **MONSTER** or **VEHICLE** unit (excluding **DEDICATED TRANSPORTS**), that model's unit gains 2XP. If the destroyed unit was **TITANIC**, that model's unit gains 4XP instead.

ERADICATE THE SWARM

When faced with overwhelming numbers, a sound strategy is to thin the enemy ranks as swiftly as possible. Those who excel in this task soon become deadly reapers of foes.

Each time a unit from your Crusade army is selected to shoot or fight, if while resolving those attacks six or more enemy models are destroyed, that unit gains 1XP.

CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

Be it desperately needed supply crates, strategically vital communication uplinks, or pulsating organic hive-structures of monstrous function, capturing from the foe that which they consider vital may prove the key to victory.

At the start of the battle, your opponent must select two different objective markers. At the end of the battle, select one of those objective markers. If you control that objective marker, you can select up to three units from your Crusade army that are within range of that objective marker. Each of those units gains 2XP.

DRIVE HOME THE BLADE

Few missions are as dangerous as being charged with breaking through the enemy's lines in the face of ferocious opposition. Yet for those who survive and prevail, there are bloody lessons to be learned.

At the end of the battle, you can select up to three units from your Crusade army (excluding **AIRCRAFT**) that are wholly within 6" of your opponent's battlefield edge. If your opponent does not have a battlefield edge in the mission being played, you can select up to three units from your Crusade army (excluding **AIRCRAFT**) that are wholly within your opponent's deployment zone instead. Each of those units gains 3XP.

CLEANSE INFESTATION

Whether scouring away creeping bio-infestations or rapidly scouring regions of viable biomass, it is vital that your forces sweep and cleanse this region swiftly before pressing on.

At the start of the battle, all objective markers on the battlefield are infested and will remain so until cleansed.

At the start of your Shooting phase, you can select one unit from your Crusade army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked to cleanse an objective marker and until the end of your turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of that turn, if that unit is in range of an infested objective marker that you control, that objective marker is cleansed and that unit gains 2XP.

FORWARD OBSERVERS

Those forces able to slip behind their enemies' lines can swiftly gather valuable intelligence, whether it be the oncoming patterns of attack swarms or the hastily digested contents of some unfortunate strategist's brain pan.

At the start of your Shooting phase, you can select one unit from your army that is not Battle-shocked, that Remained Stationary this turn, and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked to perform reconnaissance and until the end of your turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of your opponent's next turn, or at the end of the battle (whichever comes first) if that unit is wholly within your opponent's deployment zone, that unit gains 2XP and you gain 1CP.

RECOVER MISSION ARCHIVES

Snatching up vital data-repositories or seizing the foe's strategic coordinators from amidst the madness of the battlefield can yield valuable results.

At the start of your Shooting phase, you can select one **INFANTRY** or **MOUNTED** unit from your army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked to recover mission archives and until the end of your turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of your turn, if that unit is within range of an objective marker that you control that is not in your deployment zone, roll one D6: on a 4-5, that unit gains 1XP; on a 6, that unit gains 2XP and you gain 1CP.

MALEFIC HUNTER

War between the Tyranids and their prey takes place upon mental battlefields awash with smothering psychostatic as well as across the realm of the physical. Eliminating those foes able to fight on both planes at once is an especially valuable achievement.

Each time a model from your Crusade army destroys an enemy **PSYKER** or **SYNAPSE** unit, that model's unit gains 1XP. If the destroyed unit is a **CHARACTER** unit, that model's unit gains 1 additional Experience point.





TYRANNIC WAR CAMPAIGN

Crusade offers a fantastic narrative experience to the Warhammer 40,000 player, letting you take your collection on its own unique journey. But you might also want to share that journey with other players, weaving combined tales of heroism and victory as you fight both with and against each other in a multi-game campaign. The rules on the following pages provide a framework that you can use to take your Crusade forces on just such a path, scaling the experience to whatever duration you and your friends desire.

INTRODUCTION

A Tyrannic War campaign allows a group of players to get together, form alliances and play a series of games. It is split into three campaign phases, each of which consists of numerous battles between the factions. At the end of each campaign phase, the alliance with the most Campaign points in that phase will achieve victory, earning them Strategic points that count towards the campaign's final winners. As the campaign phases progress, each is worth more and more Strategic points, ensuring that the ultimate victors are not decided right up until the end of the campaign.

CAMPAIGN BADGES

At the end of any Tyrannic War campaign battle, every unit that was part of your Crusade army for that battle that does not already have it gains the Tyrannic War campaign badge.

As the unit fights in other campaigns, it can gain additional campaign badges. As well as being a visual record of a unit's fighting history, various Battle Honours are only available to units with particular campaign badges. Note that a unit keeps its campaign badges – and therefore – any associated Battle Honours, for future battles, even if those battles take part in a different campaign.

CAMPAIGN MASTER

A Tyrannic War campaign is best run with a Campaign Master. They will take on the mobilisation and organisation of the campaign so that the other players can focus on playing games. A Campaign Master can indeed play in the campaign, but their primary role is to facilitate a smooth and enjoyable experience for all players involved.

FORMING ALLIANCES

Once a Campaign Master has stepped forward, their first task is to gather the players and sort them into

alliances. The system can support anything from just two players, up to dozens of players. The campaign works particularly well with a small group of like-minded and enthusiastic players who can meet on a regular basis.

Alliances should be organised as evenly as possible and, when feasible, based on the Factions being played. Once players are assigned to an alliance, their Crusade force is committed to that cause. For this reason, players should play the same Faction throughout the campaign. If they wish to change their Faction, they can do so at the Campaign Master's discretion. The alliances are as follows.

THE DEFENDERS

The worlds of the Bastior Sub-sector fall under Imperial jurisdiction. Any army loyal to the Imperium of Man is best suited to this alliance.

THE INVADERS

The Tyranid Hive Mind is devouring everything in its way. Tyranid armies and any opportunistic warbands of Chaos or xenos forces seeking to take advantage of the situation are best suited to this alliance.

THE RAIDERS

Whether it is the Asuryani striking at both sides in order to stem the flood of biomass being absorbed by the Tyranid menace, or the Necrons seeing it as an opportunity to reassert dominion over their lost territory, this alliance suits any of the factions that do not fit into either of the above alternatives.

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

ALLIES OF CONVENIENCE

Note that the opposite are guidelines on how to organise players into an alliance, rather than a requirement. If it suits the group better to organise the alliances differently, the Campaign Master should feel free to do so.

For example, if many of the players in the group have Crusade forces associated with a single alliance, to make the alliances more evenly numbered some of them may have to fight for a different alliance than what we have recommended. You could always create some interesting narrative to explain why one side fights for another.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

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

A campaign can be a long and expansive experience where each campaign phase takes place over a month, with many battles fought and mighty heroes lost to the fires of war. Equally, it can be a short and focused campaign played over a weekend, with each campaign phase consisting of just one battle representing the key moments of the conflict.

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

- **Length of Time:** 2 weeks
- **Total Number of Games:** Equal to the number of players

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

CAMPAIGN PHASES

Over a campaign phase, players from opposing alliances will battle each other to gain Campaign points for their alliance. The Campaign Master has a few options concerning how players are matched up for games. They can leave players to arrange

games themselves, with challenges thrown down and honour at stake. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to introduce more structure to the match ups. For example, a game schedule will ensure that everyone gets an equal amount of games, or, in campaigns with a large number of players, each alliance can be broken down into smaller subgroups that are then matched against each other to make arranging games even simpler.

CAMPAIGN POINTS

Each time you play a game, your alliance gains a number of Campaign points based on the size of the game and what the outcome was, as shown in the table below.

Example: If you play an Incursion sized game and win, your alliance gains a total of 3 Campaign points. This is then reported to the Campaign Master, who keeps a record of each alliance's total Campaign points.

Once the campaign phase comes to an end, the victor of that phase is the alliance with the most Campaign points. If any alliances are tied for the most Campaign points, the alliance that won the most battles in that campaign phase is the victor of that phase. If there is still a tie, there is no victor of that phase. The victorious alliance of a campaign phase will gain a number of Strategic points (see below).

When the next campaign phase begins, each alliance's Campaign points are reset to 0, putting alliances on an equal footing for the next phase of the campaign.

CAMPAIGN POINTS EARNED

	LOSE	DRAW	WIN
Incursion	1	2	3
Strike Force	1	3	4
Onslaught	1	4	5

STRATEGIC POINTS

At the end of each campaign phase, the victorious alliance gains the number of Strategic points shown in the table below, based on which phase of the campaign they won.

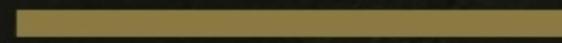
At the end of the campaign, the alliance with the most Strategic points wins the campaign and its players are declared the victors!

STRATEGIC POINTS EARNED

CAMPAIGN PHASES WON	STRATEGIC POINTS
Phase 1	1
Phase 2	2
Phase 3	3



Missions





ROTTING BIOMASS

Operating in infested space, Solblades were forced to resupply by scavenging worlds that had fallen to the Tyranids. This meant braving charnel landscapes of slain organic matter waiting in mountainous heaps to be consumed.

MISSION RULES

Biohazard: At the start of the turn, for each unit within 3" of one or more objective markers, roll one D6: if the result is higher than that unit's Toughness characteristic, until the end of the turn, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, the controlling player cannot re-roll the Hit roll and cannot re-roll the Wound roll.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor increases their Crusade force's Supply Limit by 200 points.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

CONTROL THE BATTLEFIELD

Progressive Objective

The largest carcasses or most promising piles of biomass are categorised as vital targets that must be held at all costs for their potential to turn the course of the war.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

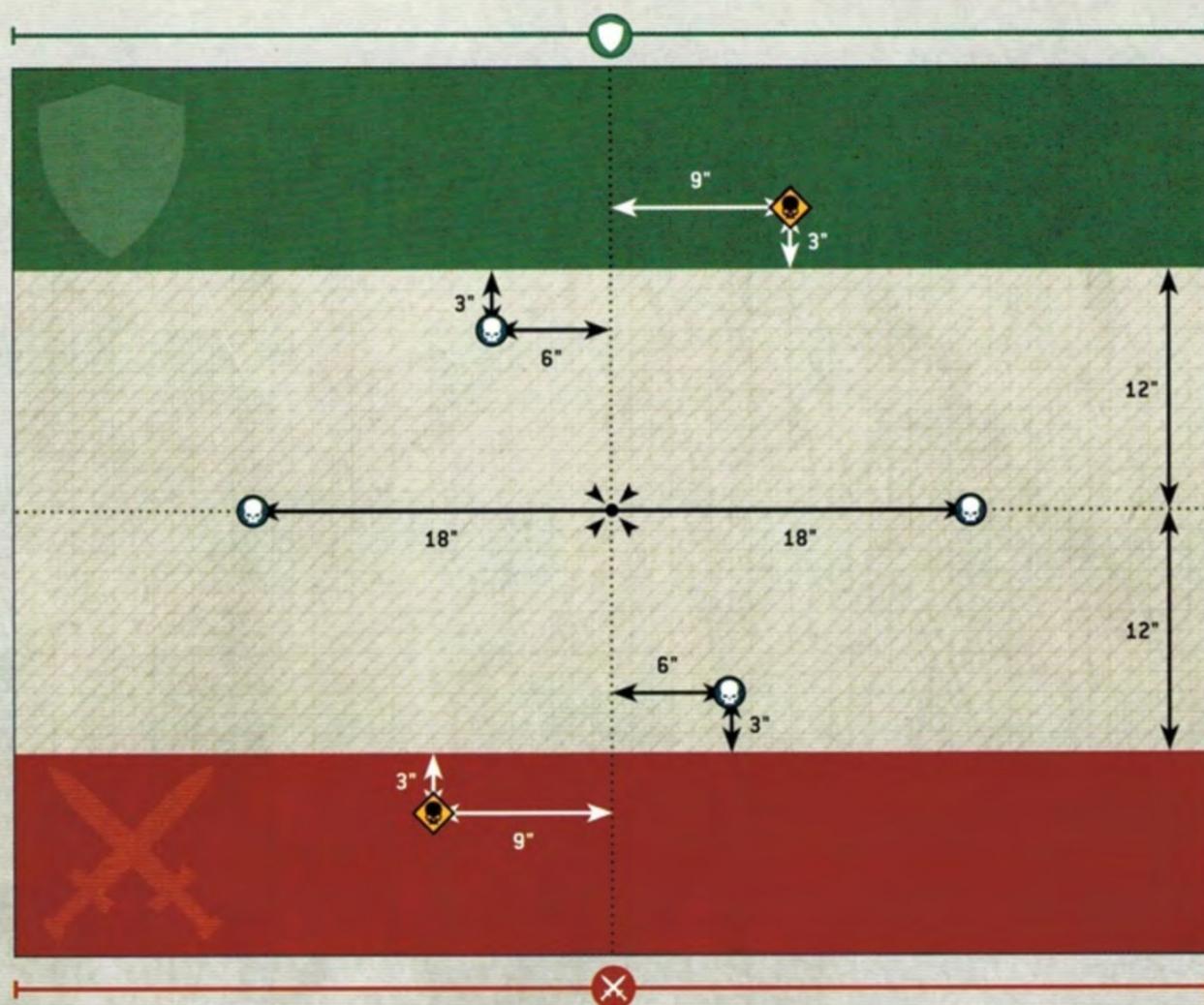
- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.

CUT OFF THE HEAD

End Game Objective

The enemy's cohesion can be fractured with the stroke of a single blade across the right throat; eliminate the foe's commander or leader-beast.

At the end of the battle, each player scores 15VP if their opponent's **WARLORD** is destroyed.



Objective Marker
Only used in Strike
Force games

SECURE THE TUNNELS

On many worlds in the Bastior Sub-sector, burrowing organisms dug subterranean networks of assault tunnels. Imperial commanders ordered their entrances secured and then flooded with promethium or collapsed with charges.

MISSION RULES

Locate Entrance: From the second battle round onwards, at the start of the battle round, each player rolls one D6 for each objective marker they control that has not had an entrance located at it: on a 5+, an entrance is located at that objective marker.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select one additional unit from their Crusade army to be Marked for Greatness (pg 281), but at the end of the battle that unit must have been within range of an objective marker that had an entrance located at it.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

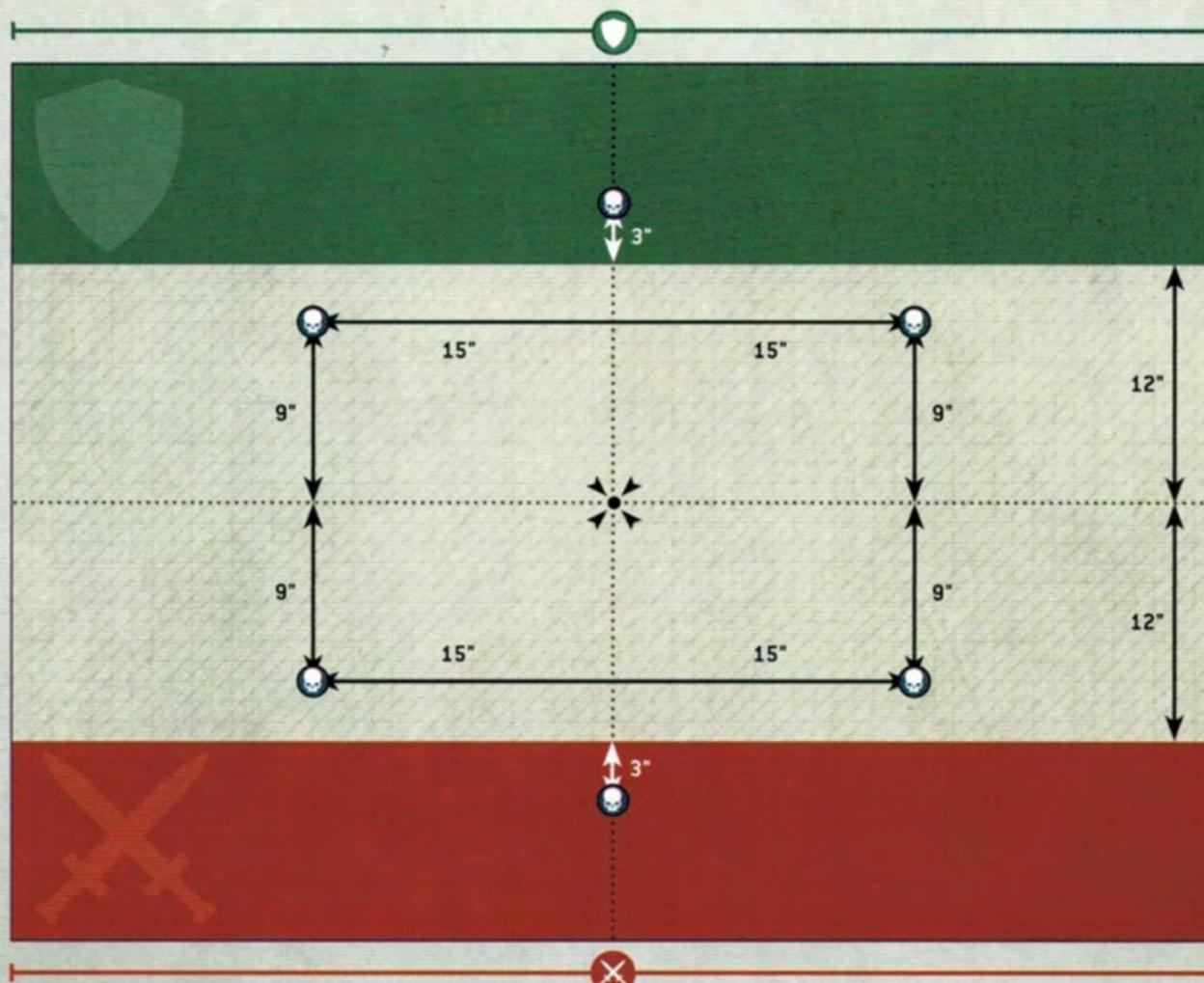
SECURE THE AREA

Progressive Objective

Whether in the name of sealing up dangerous xenos slitherways, or to prevent prey organisms from compromising the network of strategically vital assault burrows, the entrances to the tunnels below must be taken and held.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.
- They control one or more objective markers that have had an entrance located at them.
- They control more objective markers that have had entrances located at them than their opponent.



SCREAMING INTO THE VOID

As the Grendyllus tendril surged into the outer systems of the Bastior Sub-sector, desperate attempts were made to send out warnings or cries for aid before the Shadow in the Warp smothered all.

MISSION RULES

Driving Attack: The Attacker has the first turn.

Send the Signal: At the start of each of the Attacker's Shooting phases, the Attacker can select one unit from their army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked to send the signal and until the end of the Attacker's turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of the Defender's next turn, if that unit is within range of an objective marker the Attacker controls, the signal has been sent.

VICTOR BONUS

IF THE ATTACKER IS THE VICTOR



The unit from their Crusade army that sent the signal gains D3+3XP.

IF THE DEFENDER IS THE VICTOR



They can select two units from their Crusade army to be Marked for Greatness (pg 281) after the battle.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

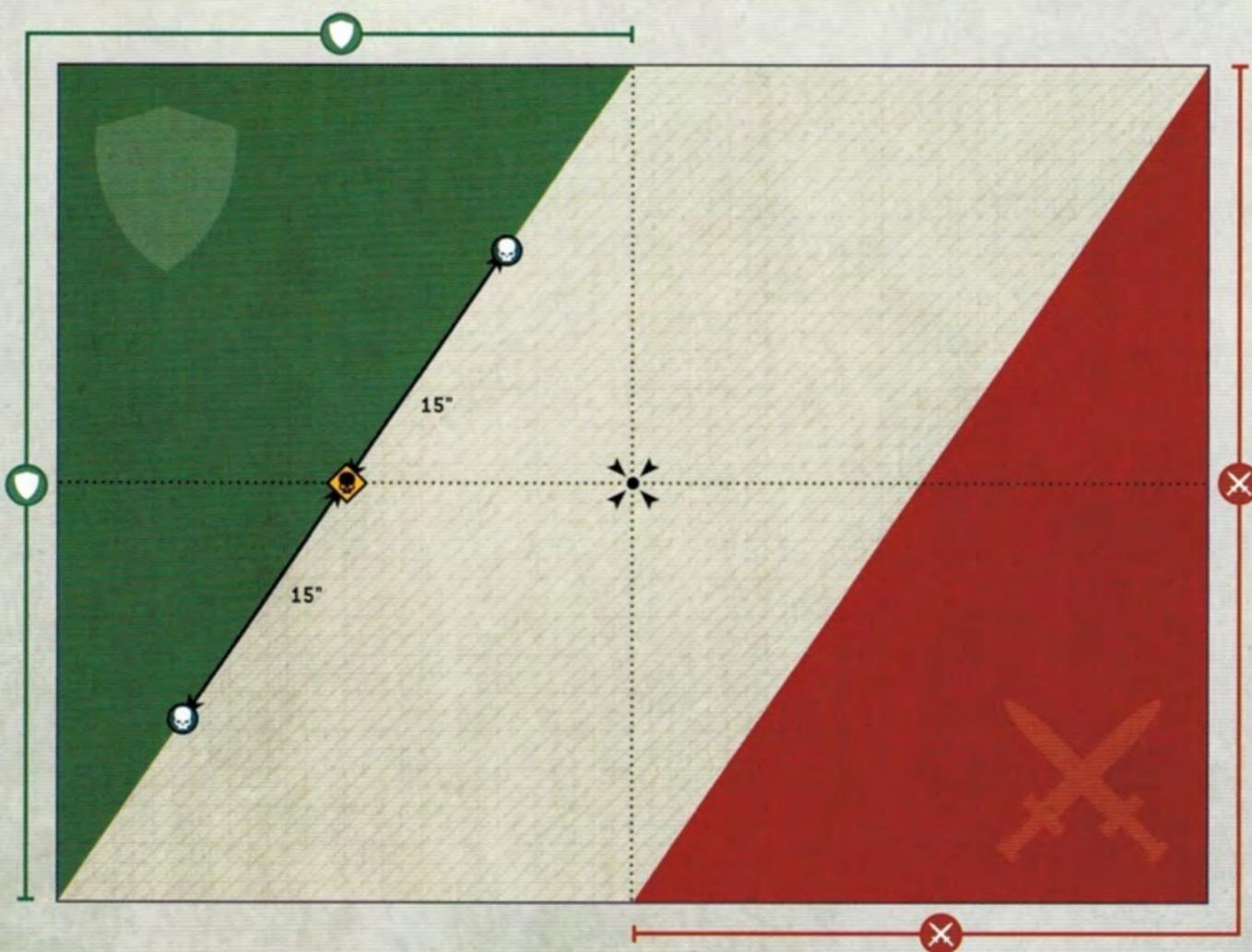
RAISE THE ALARM

End Game Objective

With larger swarms of Tyranids poised to descend and consume this world, it is imperative that a signal is punched through the falling Shadow before it is too late.

At the end of the battle, each player scores the number of VP shown in the table below depending on which battle round the Attacker sent the signal in.

BATTLE ROUND SIGNAL WAS SENT	⚔ VP	🛡 VP
1-2	90	0
3	75	15
4	60	30
5	50	40
Never	0	90



Objective Marker
Only used in Strike
Force games

BIO-SAMPLE ACQUISITION

Biologists amongst the Imperial ranks sought to harvest samples from fallen Tyrannids in the hopes of gaining insight into their foes. Disturbingly, some leader organisms appeared to reciprocate this ghoulish curiosity.

MISSION RULES

Extract Sample: At the start of the battle, each objective marker on the battlefield contains one bio-sample, which remains until extracted.

At the start of each player's Shooting phase, the player whose turn it is can select one **CHARACTER** unit from their army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked with extracting a bio-sample from an objective marker, and until the end of that player's turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of that player's turn, if that unit is within range of an objective marker they control that contains a bio-sample, it extracts that bio-sample.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select up to three different units from their Crusade army that extracted one or more bio-samples from an objective marker during the battle. Each of these units gains 2XP.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

CONTAIN BIO-SAMPLE SITES

Progressive Objective

Having located sources of promising bio-samples, these must be aggressively laid claim to and attempts to pillage or taint them denied with lethal force.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

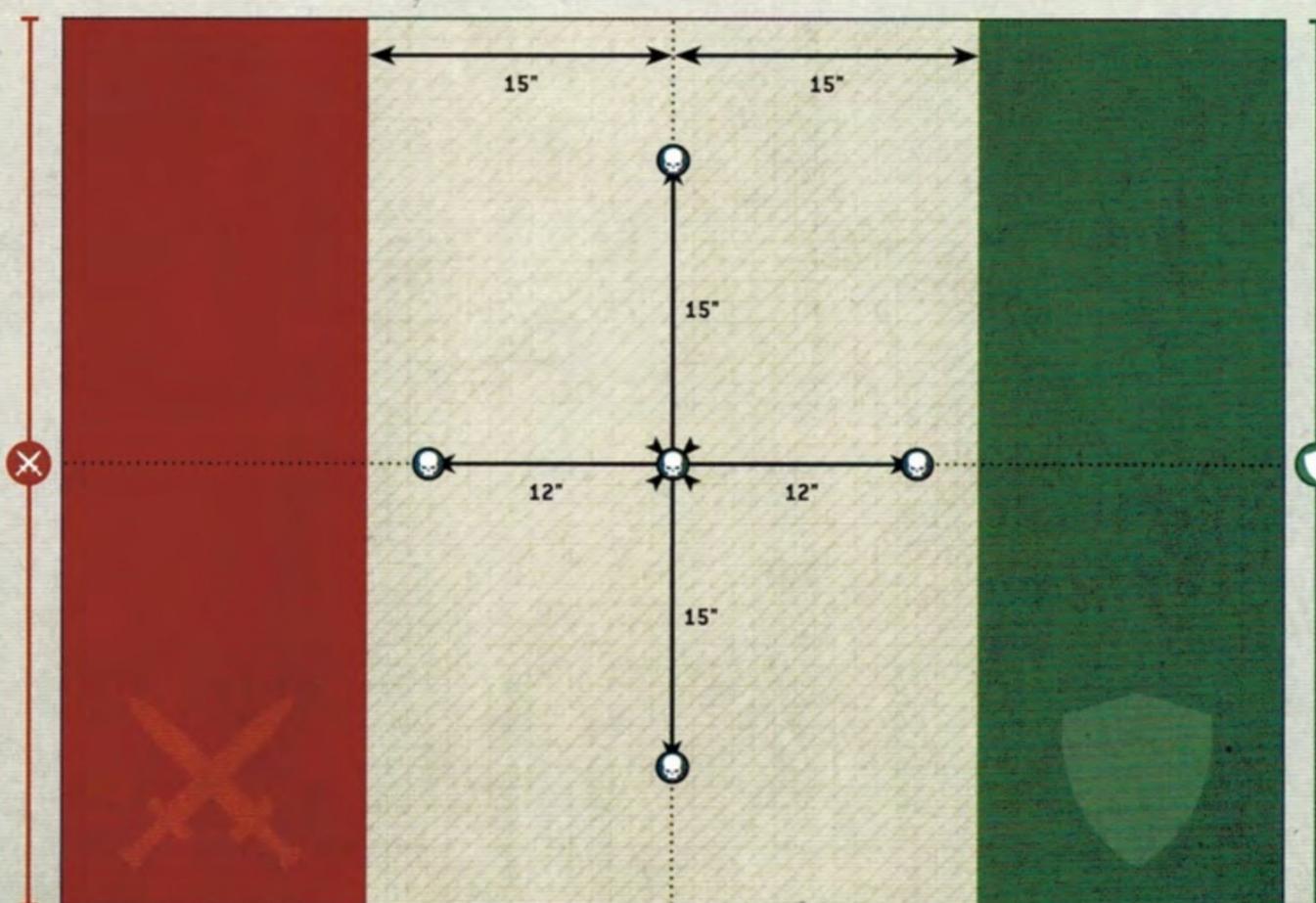
- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.

SAMPLE SECURED

Progressive Objective

Sealed in bio-stasis canisters, spirited away through pan-dimensional portals or digested in pulsating sacs, such bio-samples could prove the enemy's undoing.

During the battle, each time a unit from a player's Crusade army extracts a bio-sample from an objective marker, that player scores 10VP.



SPAWNING GROUND

On some infested worlds, Tyranid bio-structures sprouted pulsating sacs within which especially monstrous organisms gestated. Imperial forces sabotaged these sites wherever possible rather than face the nightmares they would spawn.

MISSION RULES

Driving Attack: The Attacker has the first turn.

Gestation Sacs: At the start of the battle, each objective marker has a Gestation tally of 0 and each starts under the Defender's control, and remains so until controlled by the Attacker.

At the start of each player's turn, for each objective marker under the Defender's control, add 1 to that objective marker's Gestation tally, and for each objective marker under the Attacker's control, subtract 1 from that objective marker's Gestation tally (to a minimum of 0).

Birthing a Terror: If at any point there are two or more objective markers with a Gestation tally of 6 or more each, the battle ends.

VICTOR BONUS

IF THE ATTACKER IS THE VICTOR



Each unit from their Crusade army that ends the battle within range of an objective marker gains 1XP.

IF THE DEFENDER IS THE VICTOR



The next time they add a unit to their Order of Battle, that unit starts with 6XP.

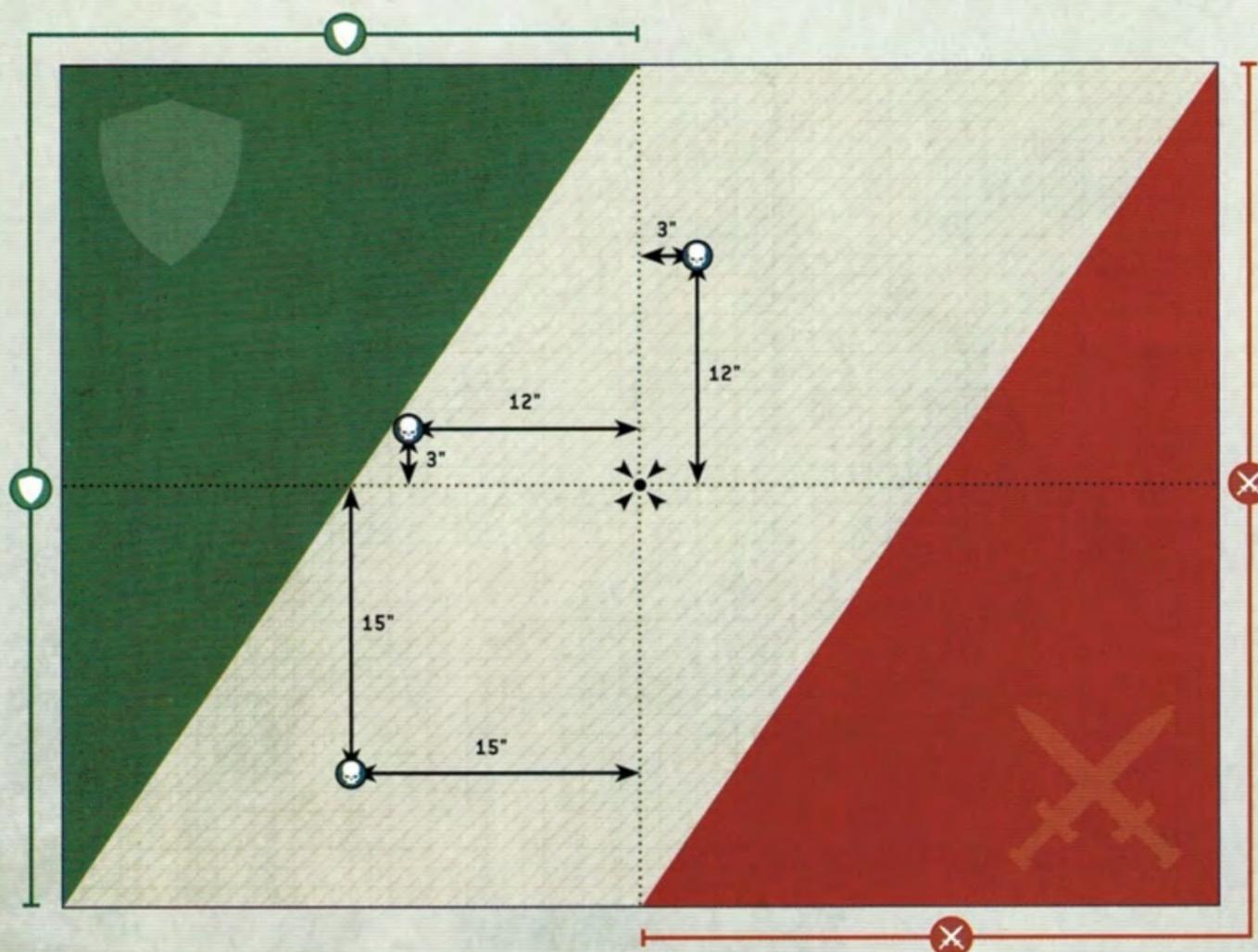
MISSION OBJECTIVES

A NEW THREAT

End Game Objective

The hulking monstrosity or multitudinous brood ready to burst out of these flesh sacs could mean this region's total consumption.

- If any objective markers had a Gestation tally of 6 or more, the Defender scores 90VP and the Attacker scores 0VP.
- If no objective markers had a Gestation tally of 6 or more, the Defender scores 0VP and the Attacker scores 90VP.



KICKING THE NEST

Elite Imperial forces struck at locations where the Tyranids were growing neuro-synaptic command nodes. Such attacks invariably triggered furious responses from all warrior organisms in the area.

MISSION RULES

Neuro-synaptic Nodes: While a unit with an Aura ability is within range of an objective marker that you control, the range of that Aura ability is increased by 6".

Sweep and Clear: If you control an objective marker at the end of your Command phase, it remains under your control, even if you have no models within range of it, unless your opponent controls it at the end of any subsequent Command phase.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor's Crusade Force gains 1 additional Requisition point.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

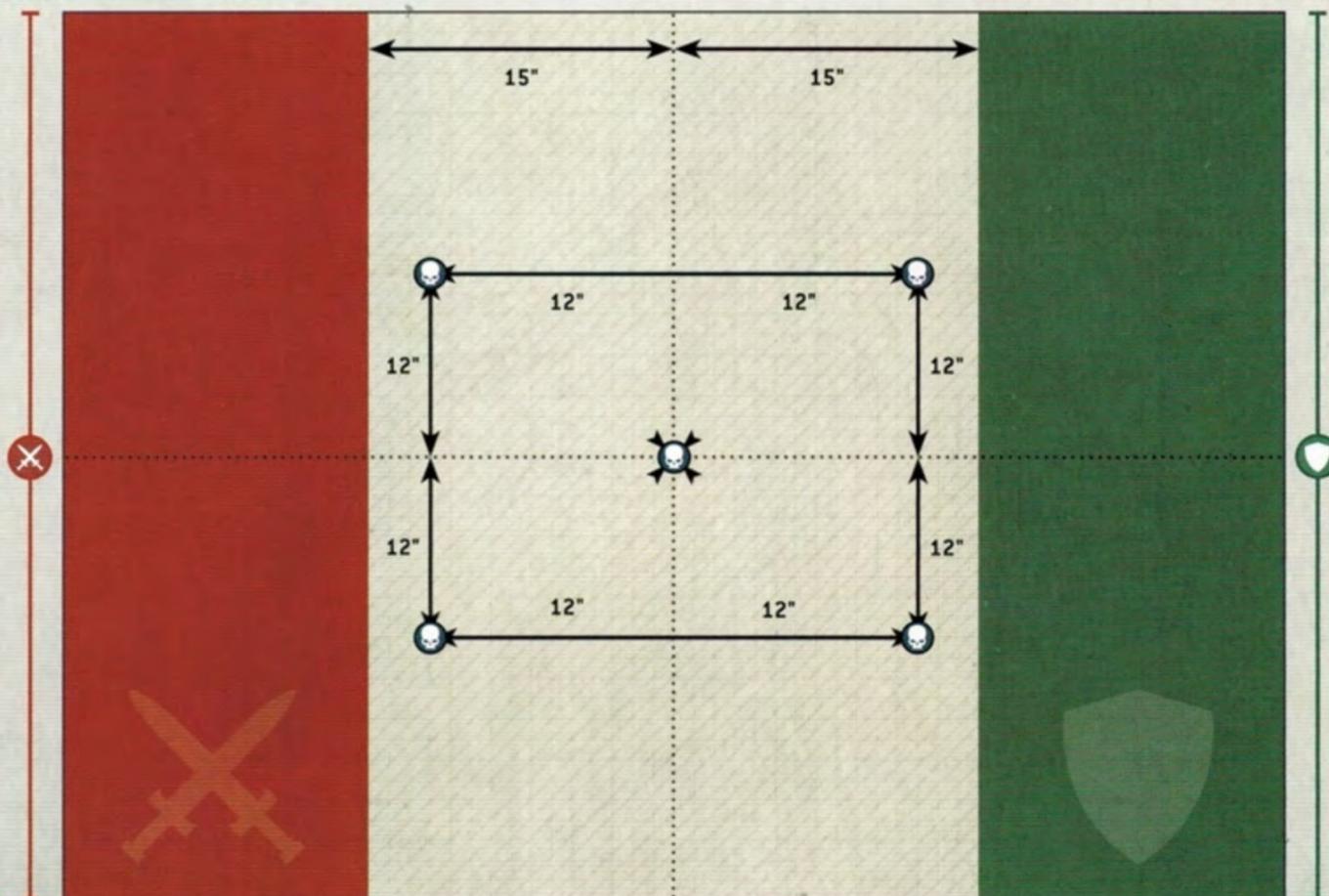
NEURO-SYNAPTIC CONNECTION

Progressive Objective

The crackling neuro-synaptic network infesting this war zone is seen by some as worthy of study and by others as deserving of swift destruction. Field commanders are directed to oversee the securing of these sites in person, ensuring the enemy are driven from the network while the work is completed.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.
- Their **WARLORD** is within range of an objective marker that they control.
- They control the objective marker in the centre of the battlefield.



EMPTY THE VAULTS

As Imperial forces fled the Tyranid advance, archeotech vaults and sacred sites were emptied, their contents evacuated. Others were looted, overrun or sealed shut by security protocols that trapped the greedy and unlucky within.

MISSION RULES

Auto-seal Protocols: At the start of each battle round, from the second battle round onwards, the Defender randomly selects one objective marker on the battlefield and removes it.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select one **CHARACTER** unit (excluding **EPIC HEROES**) from their Crusade army; that unit gains a Crusade Relic.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

PRECIOUS RELICS

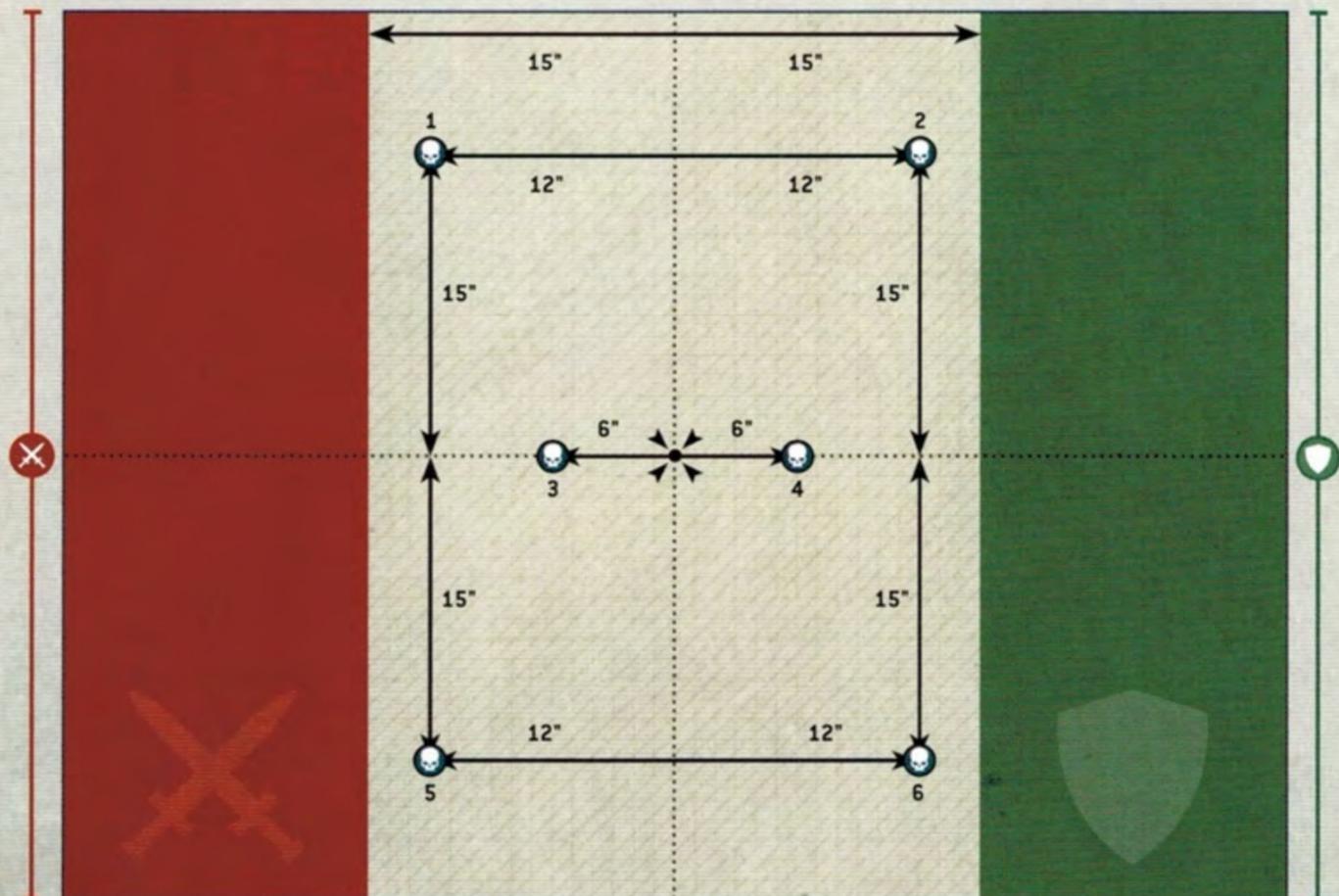
Progressive Objective

For some, the ancient contents of this site are worth any number of lives. To others, they represent black market riches, trophies to be crowed over or just another lure that draws prey into the jaws of a trap. Whatever the case, they must be secured or overrun with haste.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.

At the end of each battle round, the player who controls the most objective markers also scores an additional 10VP.



AGAINST THE SWARM

Those defenders unable to fall back to the sanctuary systems instead dug in, turning every weapon, technology and resource at their disposal to the single purpose of withstanding the Tyranid onslaught for as long as they could.

MISSION RULES

Sudden Assault: When the Attacker places units into Strategic Reserves, the points total of all of their units that they can place into Strategic Reserves can be up to half their Crusade army's points total.

Driving Attack: The Attacker has the first turn.

Esoteric Defences: When Reinforcement units from the Attacker's Crusade army arrive on the battlefield, they cannot be set up within 12" of any objective markers.

Destroy the Hard Points: At the start of each of the Attacker's Shooting phases, the Attacker can select one unit from their army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. That unit is tasked to destroy a hard point, and until the end of the Attacker's turn is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of the Attacker's turn, if that unit is within range of an objective marker they control, that objective marker is destroyed and removed from the battlefield.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor increases their Crusade force's Supply Limit by 200 points.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

CONTROL THE SKIES

End Game Objective

Holding back massed aerial assault is the only thing keeping this war zone from being overwhelmed.

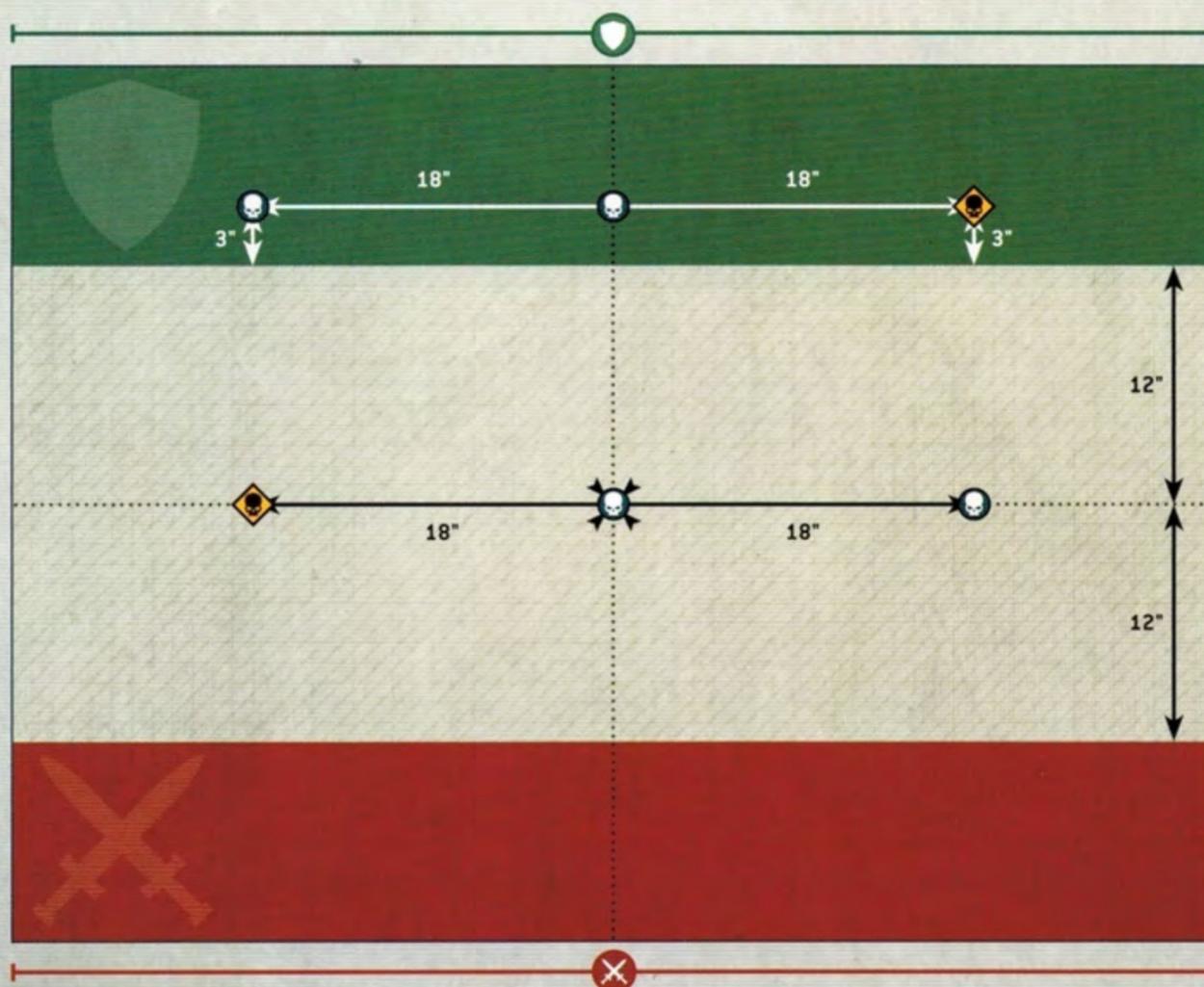
At the end of the battle, the Defender scores 20VP for each objective marker that remains on the battlefield, and the Attacker scores 15VP for each objective marker that was destroyed.

BREAKTHROUGH

End Game Objective

Destroy the defence points and secure a beachhead!

At the end of the battle, the Attacker scores 15VP if they have two or more units wholly within the Defender's deployment zone that are not Below Half-strength.



Objective Marker
Only used in Strike
Force games

SCATTERED SUPPLIES

As the fighting in the outer systems became ever more desperate, so supply lines frayed and warriors fell to scavenging whatever they could from amidst devastated regions and old battlefields crawling with predatory horrors.

MISSION RULES

Secure Supply Drops: At the end of each turn, units from both players' Crusade armies can pick up any objective markers that they control. To be able to pick up an objective marker, a unit must be within range of it. **AIRCRAFT, FORTIFICATIONS** and Battle-shocked units cannot pick up an objective marker. When a unit picks up an objective marker, remove that objective marker from the battlefield and make a note of which unit is carrying it. A unit cannot carry more than one objective marker. While a unit is carrying an objective marker, it cannot move more than 6" per turn (excluding when making a Charge move).

Opportunistic Acquisition: Each time a unit carrying an objective marker is destroyed, before removing the last model from that unit, place the objective marker it is carrying on the battlefield anywhere within 1" of that model. If this is not possible, place the objective marker as close as possible to that model. If the unit was destroyed as the result of a melee attack, the attacking unit can immediately pick up that objective marker and carry it if it wishes.

VICTOR BONUS

Each unit from the victor's Crusade army that is carrying an objective marker at the end of the battle gains 2XP. If one or more of those units carrying objective markers are wholly within the victor's deployment zone, the victor also gains 1RP.

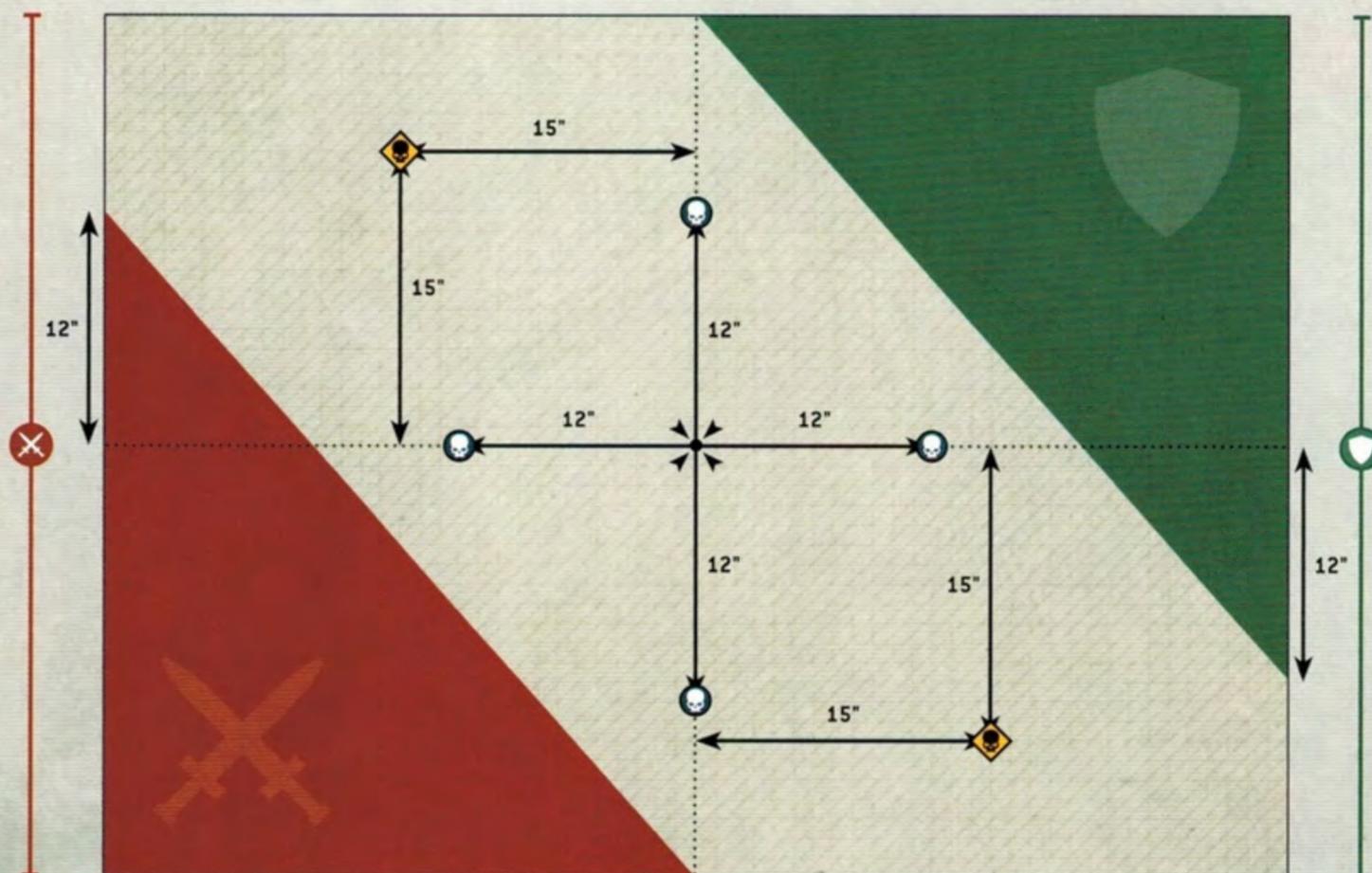
MISSION OBJECTIVES

ACQUIRED SUPPLIES

End Game Objective

The scattered resources and munitions must not only be secured, but marshalled from the enemy's reach and towards safer retrieval locations.

At the end of the battle, each player scores 15VP for each objective marker that units from their Crusade army are carrying, and an additional 5VP for each of those units that are wholly within that player's deployment zone.



Objective Marker
Only used in Strike
Force games

INSURGENCY

Whether xeno-tainted insurgents responding to the approach of the Tyranid fleets, heretical cults seizing their chance or insurgents in the Gallospire System, many saboteurs struck at seemingly secure Imperial fortifications.

MISSION RULES

Counter-assault Engagement: The Defender has the first turn.

Prime Explosives: At the start of the battle, all objective markers on the battlefield have unprimed explosives on them, and they remain so until primed.

At the start of each player's Shooting phase, the player whose turn it is can select one unit from their army that is not Battle-shocked and is eligible to shoot. If that unit is one of the Attacker's units, it is tasked with priming explosives; if that unit is one of the Defender's units, it is tasked with defusing explosives. In either case, until the end of the turn, the selected unit is not eligible to shoot or declare a charge.

At the end of the turn:

- If a unit tasked with priming explosives that turn is within range of an unprimed objective marker that the Attacker controls, that objective marker becomes primed.
- If a unit tasked with defusing explosives that turn is within range of a primed objective marker that the Defender controls, that objective marker becomes unprimed.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select one unit from their army that either primed or defused explosives during the battle. That unit is Marked for Greatness (pg 281).

MISSION OBJECTIVES

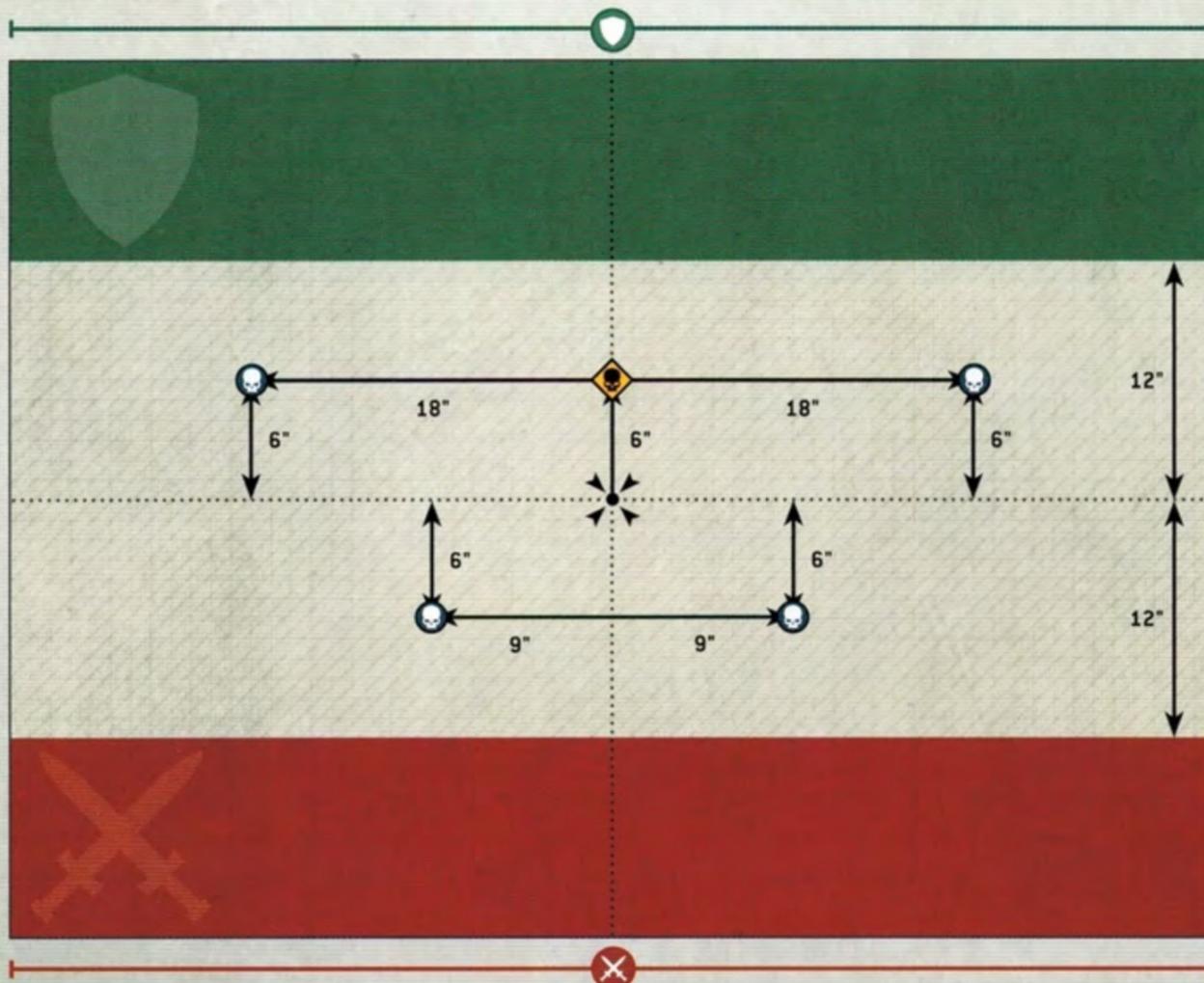
PRIMED INSTIGATION

End Game Objective

The fuse of sedition, once lit, is not easy to snuff out.

At the end of the battle:

- The Attacker scores 20VP for each primed objective marker on the battlefield.
- The Defender scores 15VP for each unprimed objective marker on the battlefield.



Objective Marker
Only used in Strike
Force games

THE GATHERING SHROUD

Many worlds reached by the Solblades were already vanishing beneath the Shadow in the Warp. Attempting to relieve the horrified defenders, the Solblade forces deployed onto battlefields drowning in rising psychostatic.

RISING SHADOW

LEVEL 0
EFFECT: None

LEVEL 1+
EFFECT: The Insane Bravery Stratagem cannot be used.

LEVEL 2+
EFFECT: Each time a unit takes a Battle-shock or Leadership test, subtract 1 from that test.

LEVEL 3+
EFFECT: The cost to use all Battle Tactic Stratagems is increased by 1CP.

LEVEL 4+
EFFECT: Subtract 1 from the Objective Control characteristic of every model (to a minimum of 1).

LEVEL 5+
EFFECT: The cost to use all Strategic Ploy and Epic Deed Stratagems is increased by 1CP.

MISSION RULES

Rising Shadow: At the start of the battle, the Rising Shadow level starts at 0. From the second battle round onwards, at the start of each battle round, the player who took the first turn rolls one D6: on a 2-5, add 1 to the Rising Shadow level; on a 6, add 2 to the Rising Shadow level. The effects of the Rising Shadow level can be seen in the table on the left.

VICTOR BONUS

Before the next battle, the victor can use the Rearm and Resupply Requisition up to two times without spending any Requisition points to do so.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

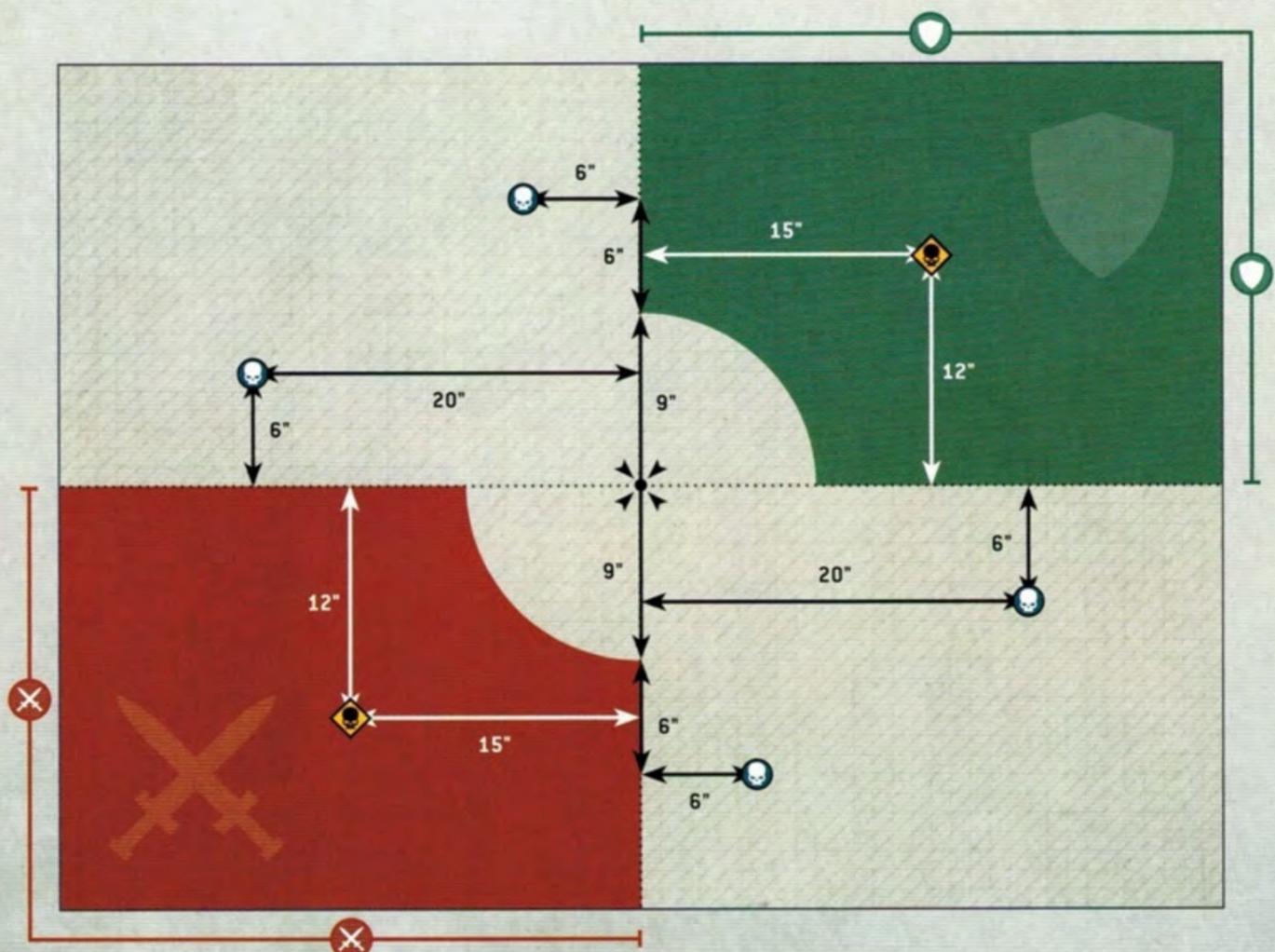
LOOT AND RIOT

Progressive Objective

Many who are trapped on worlds subjected to Tyranid invasion lose their nerve or minds, and fight wildly to seize whatever valuable resources they believe may help them survive for even a few more hours. Such supply caches must therefore be swiftly secured, or else infested and devoured.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.
- If playing a Strike Force battle, they control the objective marker within their opponent's deployment zone.



ROUTED PREY

On world after world, the onslaught of the Grendyllus tendril saw defence lines broken and prey species put to rout. At such times, the swarms sought to devour all in their paths while their victims thought only of survival.

MISSION RULES

The Coming Swarm: Any units in the Attacker's army that are not already set up in Reserves, start the battle set up in Strategic Reserves. When a Strategic Reserves unit from the Attacker's Crusade army is set up on the battlefield, it must be set up wholly within 6" of their battlefield edge.

Out of Time: The Defender cannot set up any units from their Crusade army in Reserves (including Strategic Reserves). Units from the Defender's Crusade army cannot end a move within the Danger Zone.

Counter-assault Engagement: The Defender has the first turn.

Covering Fire: Units in the Defender's Crusade army are eligible to shoot in a turn in which they Fell Back, but if they do, until the end of the turn, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, subtract 1 from that attack's Hit roll.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor can select one unit from their Crusade army that was not destroyed to gain a Battle Trait. This must be a unit that can gain a Battle Trait.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

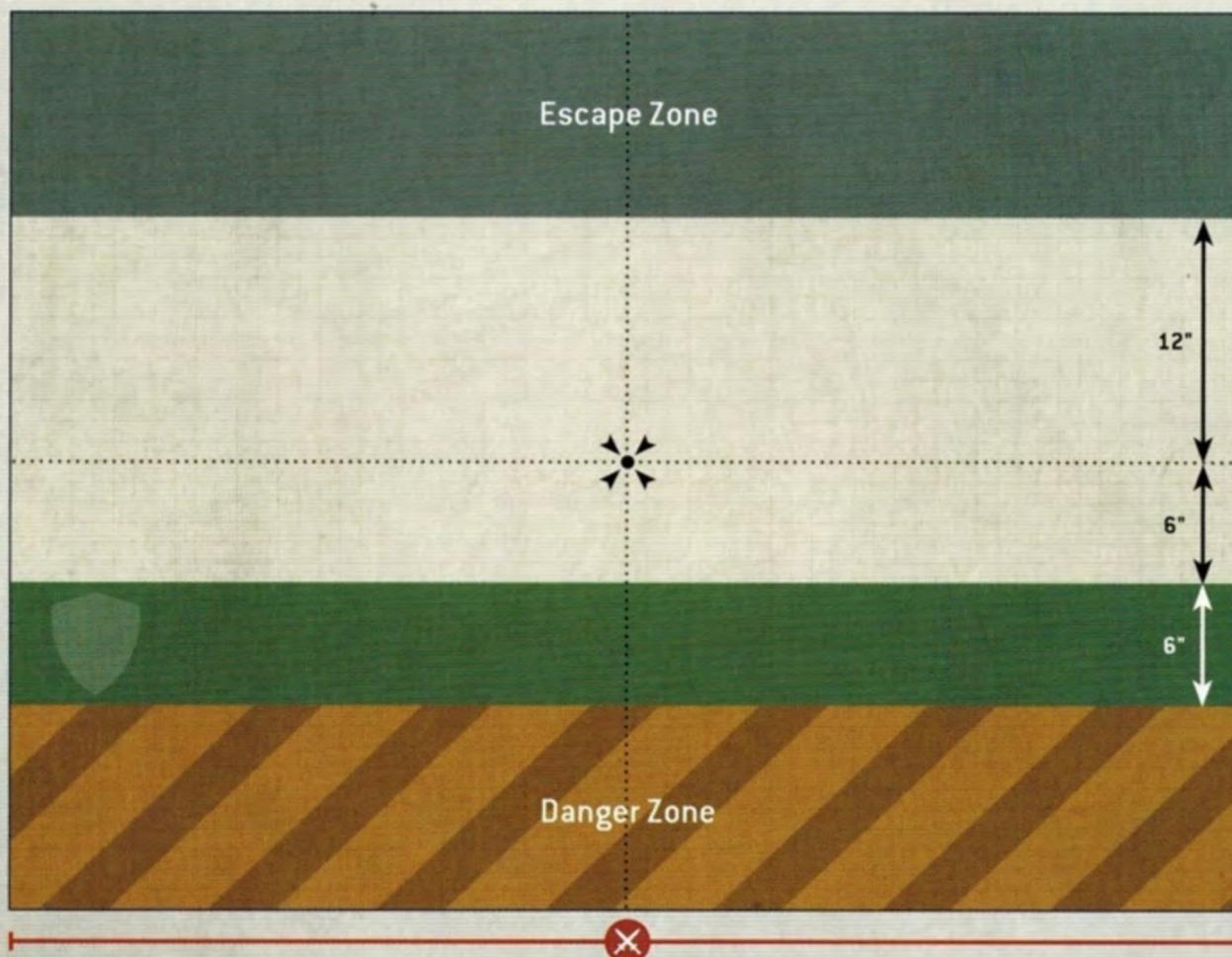
COUNTDOWN TO CONSUMPTION

End Game Objective

A final evacuation is the only option left, but is there enough time even for that?

At the end of the battle, add up the combined points total of units from the Defender's Crusade army that are not Below Half-strength and are wholly within the Escape Zone. Each player scores the number of VP shown in the table below based on this.

COMBINED POINTS TOTAL		✖ VP	🛡️ VP
INCURSION	STRIKE FORCE		
0-49	0-99	90	0
50-149	100-299	75	15
150-299	300-599	60	30
300-449	600-899	45	45
450-559	900-1199	30	60
600+	1200+	0	90



FIRE FROM THE SKIES

Both Humans and Tyranids employed orbital bombardment against fortified ground targets. Whether calling down barrage bombs or bio-plasmic beams, however, such indirect weapons required surface targeting to prove truly effective.

MISSION RULES

Driving Attack: The Attacker has the first turn.

Targeting Ritual: At the end of each of the Attacker's turns, they select one Alpha objective marker, one Beta objective marker and one Gamma objective marker. If, at the end of the Defender's next turn, the Attacker controls all three of these selected objective markers, the target's position is triangulated and the battle ends.

VICTOR BONUS

IF THE ATTACKER IS THE VICTOR



One unit that was controlling an Alpha, Beta or Gamma objective marker at the end of the battle gains D3+3XP.

IF THE DEFENDER IS THE VICTOR



They can select two units from their army to be Marked for Greatness (pg 281) after the battle.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

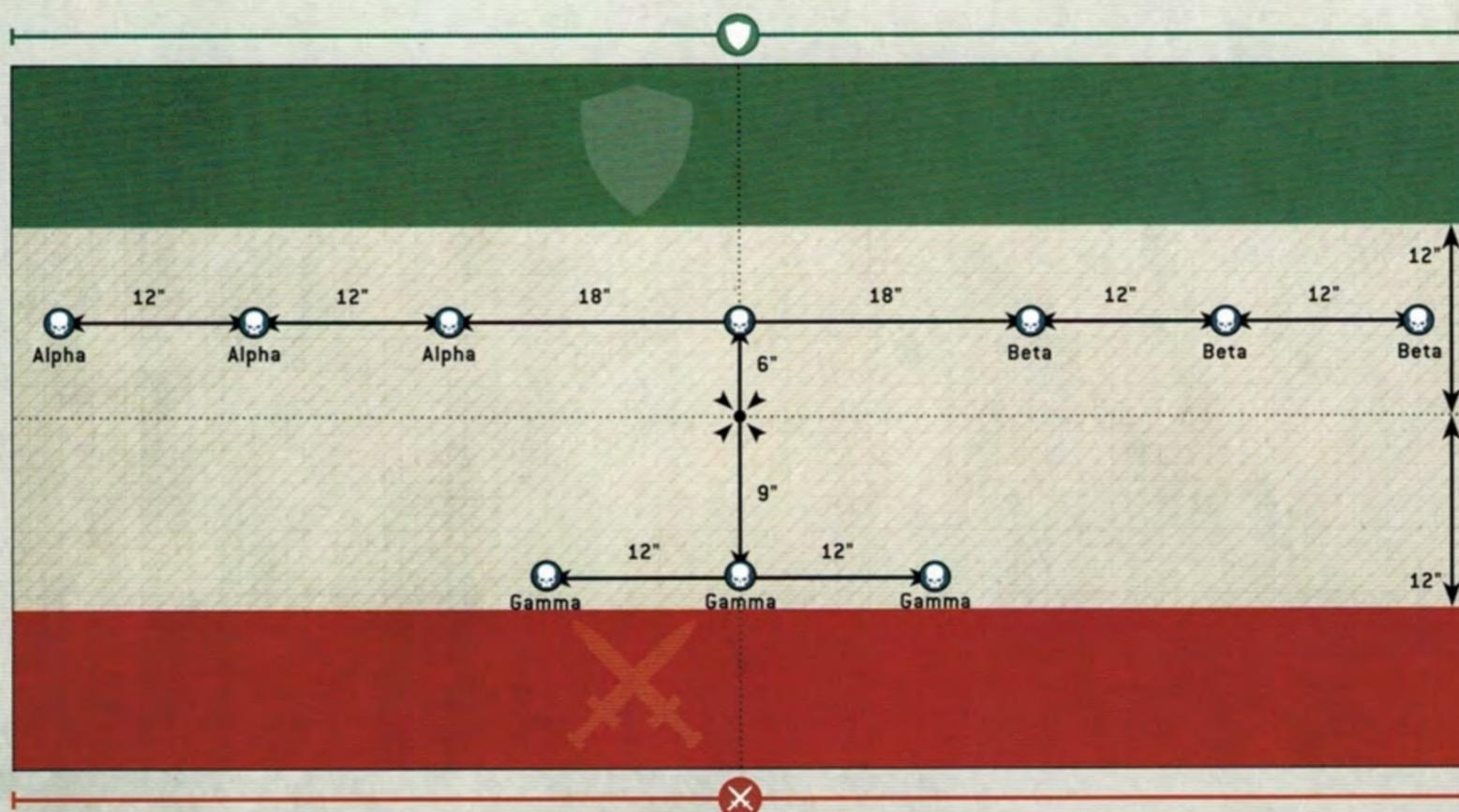
WRATH OF THE HEAVENS

End Game Objective

With the target triangulated and its defences mapped or neutralised, directed orbital bombardment is unleashed. The clouds glow with fury and boil away as titanic energy blasts spear down through them to annihilate the target completely.

At the end of the battle:

- If the target's position was triangulated, the Attacker scores 90VP and the Defender scores 0VP.
- If the target's position was not triangulated, the Attacker scores 0VP and the Defender scores 90VP.



MYTHS AND MONSTERS

The greatest battles of the Tyrannic War saw monstrous fiends and stalwart warriors clash amidst the flames like the subjects of some ancient fresco. Upon such a stage were legends written and nightmares spawned.

MISSION RULES

Battlefield Exemplars: At the start of the battle, each player selects one unit from their Crusade army that is within the Heart of the Battle (see below) to be their Heroic Champions unit. If a player does not have any units within the Heart of the Battle, they must select the unit from their Crusade army that is closest to the Heart of the Battle. At the end of each player's turn, if their Heroic Champions unit is not within the Heart of the Battle, it suffers D6 mortal wounds. At the end of the turn, for each player, if that player does not have an undestroyed Heroic Champions unit, they must select a new unit from their Crusade army (following the instructions above) to take on this mantle.

Designer's Note: When selecting a Heroic Champions unit, we recommend selecting something suitably imposing, like a large monster or a powerful character – any unit that would inspire fear in their enemies and hope in their compatriots.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor's Heroic Champions unit gains 1 Battle Honour.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

A LEGEND CUT SHORT

Progressive Objective

There is great value in annihilating the enemy's most inspirational or terrifying champions.

Each time a player's Heroic Champions unit is destroyed, their opponent scores 15VP.

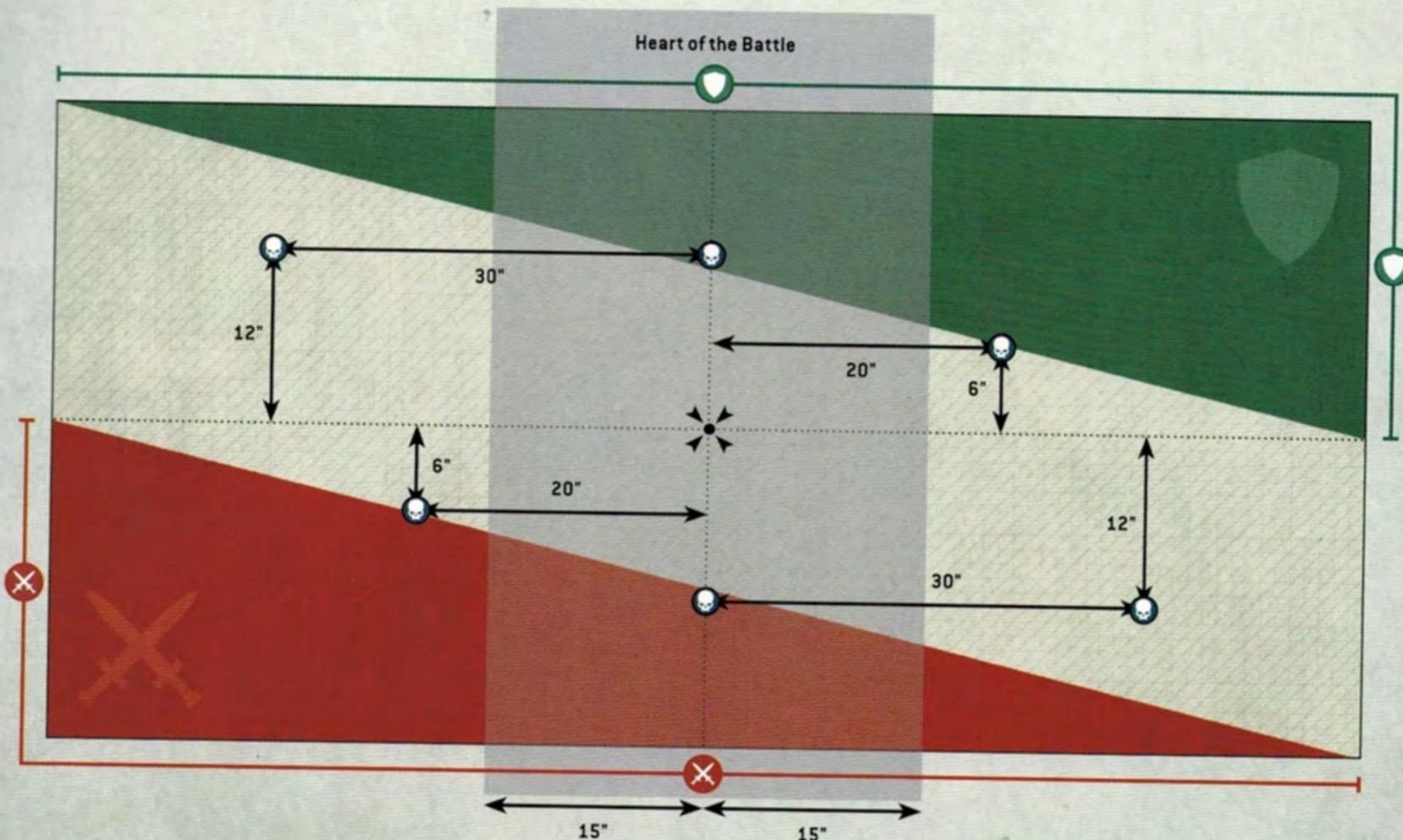
SECURE THE STAGE OF GREATNESS

Progressive Objective

Harder for your foes to fashion legends, and easier for your own forces to do so, if you control the field of war.

At the end of each battle round, each player scores 5VP for each of the following conditions they satisfy:

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent.



PLANETARY EVACUATION

Many worlds in the path of the Grendyllus tendril were hastily evacuated, the better to preserve resources and avoid feeding the swarms. Such operations were risky, however, and could be overrun by a swift Tyranid surge.

MISSION RULES

Driving Attack: The Attacker has the first turn.

VICTOR BONUS

The victor's Crusade Force gains D3 additional Requisition Points. If the victor scored more than twice as many Victory points as their opponent, they can re-roll this roll.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

SAFELY AWAY

Progressive Objective

The longer the evacuation site can be held and defended, the more craft will be able to boost skywards for the dubious safety of the void. Whether they will escape the gathering tendrils of the Tyranids after that is not your immediate concern...

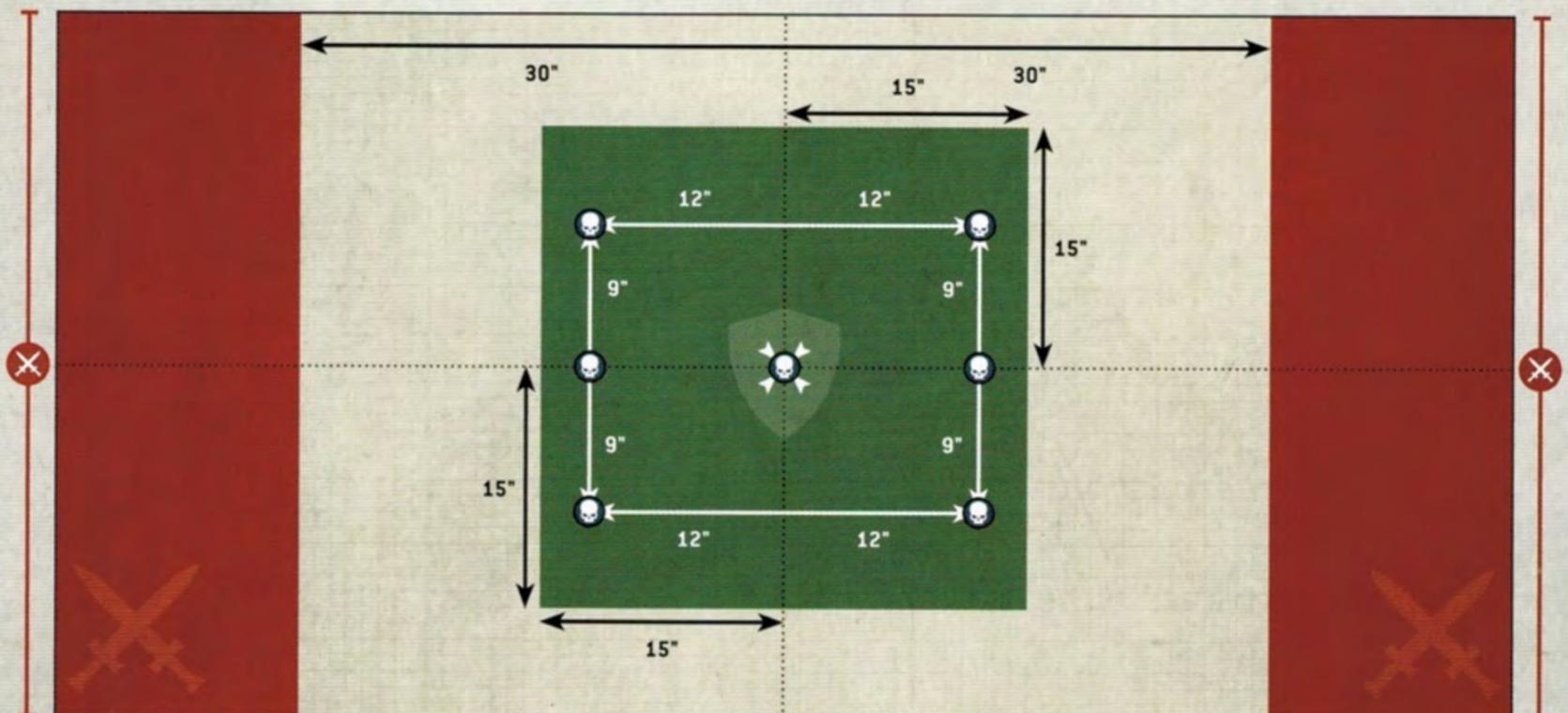
At the start of each of the Defender's Command phases, they score D6 VP for each objective marker they control.

SALVATION COMPROMISED

End Game Objective

The sooner the evacuation point is overrun, the more prey will remain trapped in the path of the swarm to be slain and then assimilated.

At the end of the battle, the Attacker scores 20VP for each objective marker they control.





Crusade Rules



In the war-torn future of Warhammer 40,000 there are hard-bitten groups of warriors who have battled side by side over countless campaigns. From the close-knit brotherhoods of the Adeptus Astartes to bonded Fire Warriors of the T'au Empire, such companies of fighters have fought together tirelessly, each new battle teaching the skills and knowledge to help them survive the nightmarish battlefields upon which they must wage war. This section explains how you can muster an army for use in your own campaign, and how the units within it can progress and develop between one battle and the next.



CRUSADE FORCES

A Crusade force is one that allows you to track the development of your units from the greenest of recruits to the most hard-bitten veterans over the course of many battles. The more you play with a Crusade force, the more its units will gain experience, abilities, acquire long-lost artefacts and gain scars. Crusade forces are designed to be used as part of a campaign where you grow your favourite collection from a fledgling force into a powerful army feared across the galaxy, earning new Battle Honours with every victory (or defeat). To play with a Crusade force, you will first need to create an Order of Battle.

ORDER OF BATTLE

An Order of Battle is a list of all the units that you have as part of your Crusade force. It will list each unit's name, its points value and its Crusade points total. It is also a place to tally notable victories, track vital resources you have acquired and list your Crusade force's current Supply Limit (see below).

Your Order of Battle can consist of any number of units, but you must have a Crusade card for each unit (pg 280). Once a unit has been added to your Order of Battle, the only way to change its equipped weapons and wargear is to use the Rearm and Resupply Requisition (pg 285), and the only way to add additional models to it is to use the Fresh Recruits Requisition (pg 285). Each time you select an army to play with, you will have to select units from your Order of Battle, so it is a good idea to include units with common Faction keywords that can be fielded together to muster an army (pg 292). You can add new units to your Order of Battle at any time, provided that doing so does not exceed your Crusade force's Supply Limit. You can also remove units from your Order of Battle at any time, but once you have removed a unit you cannot add it back into your Order of Battle – so any Battle Honours etc. they have acquired are lost. You can find out more about Battle Honours on page 287. Removing a unit from your Order of Battle does not affect your Crusade force's Supply Limit – therefore removing a unit can potentially leave you with the ability to add a new unit to your Order of Battle.

SUPPLY LIMIT, POINTS VALUES AND SUPPLY USED

The combined points values of all the units on your Order of Battle is called your Supply Used; this cannot exceed your Crusade force's current Supply Limit. When you first start a Crusade force, your Supply Limit is 1000 points. This can be increased by playing more battles, as explained later.

CRUSADE POINTS

A unit's Crusade points total is a measure of how many upgrades and bonuses it has gained as part

of your Crusade force – when first included in your Crusade force it will typically start at 0, but will increase as the unit gains experience in battle. Make a note of each unit's Crusade points total on your Order of Battle (see Crusade Blessings on page 310 to find out more about how Crusade points affect your battles).

BATTLE TALLY, REQUISITION POINTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Your Order of Battle also has a Battle tally for the number of battles you have played with it, as well as your current number of Requisition points (RP). When you first start a Crusade force, you will start with 5RP. You can find out more about Requisition points on page 284.

You can also include any other information you want on your Order of Battle, including notable victories or defeats, any vendettas or grudges you feel your Crusade force would have, or any additional background that you wish to add to your Crusade force or any of the units within it.

- **Order of Battle:** List of all the units that are part of this Crusade force, and other important information.
 - Can add or remove units from your Order of Battle at any time.
 - Each unit must have a Crusade card.
 - Units cannot be changed once added to your Order of Battle.
- **Supply Used:** The combined points value of all units in this Crusade force.
- **Supply Limit:** Starts at 1000 pts. Your Supply Used must not exceed this.
- **Battle Tally:** Number of battles you have played using this Crusade force.
- **Requisition Points:** Start at 5RP. Can be spent to use Requisitions.

SUMMONED AND REPLACEMENT UNITS

In Warhammer 40,000 there are some rules that are used during a battle to add new units to your Crusade army. These units are only added to your Crusade army for the duration of that battle – they are not added to your Order of Battle.

- **Summoned and Replacement Units:** Units that are added to your Crusade army during the battle, but are not permanently added to your Order of Battle.



1

Sons of Medusa
CRUSADE FORCE

2

4
BATTLE TALLY

2
VICTORIES

3
REQUISITION POINTS (RP)

4

1200
SUPPLY LIMIT

1060
SUPPLY USED

UNIT NAME	POINTS VALUE	CRUSADE POINTS	UNIT NAME	POINTS VALUE	CRUSADE POINTS
Iron Thane Vaylund Cal	80	1			
Captain Morn Graevarr	115				
Intercessor Squad Torvokh	100				
Infiltrator Squad Ghorrean	240	3			
Assault Intercessor Squad Acchus	95				
Maarkal Dourr	80				
Gladiator Lancer Medusa's Wrath	150				
Xeris the Unrelenting	200				

6

RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

++ FROM A SINGLE SEED OF DOUBT CAN GROW A WORLD OF HERESY ++

TRANSMISSION: 003321X | CLEARANCE: ALPHA-554100Z | SUBJECT: ORDER OF BATTLE | ++ REDACTED ++

You can find a blank Order of Battle that you can photocopy on page 277.



ORDER OF BATTLE

1. When you first create an Order of Battle, write the name of your Crusade force and your name here.
2. Record the number of battles you have played using this Crusade force (your Battle tally), and the number of victories it has secured.
3. Record the current number of Requisition points (RP) your Crusade force has available.
4. Record the current Supply Limit of your Crusade force, as well as the combined points value of all the units in your Crusade force (the Supply Used).
5. Your Order of Battle lists all the units in your Crusade force – for easy reference, record each unit's points value and Crusade points total.
6. There is space on an Order of Battle for all kinds of narrative information, such as personal goals, notable victories (or defeats), vendettas and more.

CRUSADE FORCE VS CRUSADE ARMY

A player's Crusade force is every model listed on their Order of Battle. A player's Crusade army is an army selected for use in a single battle from the units in that player's Crusade force. While, to begin with, a player's Crusade army may be their entire Crusade force, as that player's collection of miniatures and their Crusade force grows, this may no longer be the case. For example, if a player's entire Crusade force is a collection of units with a combined points value of 3000 points, each time that player mustered a Crusade army for a Strike Force battle, they would select 2000 points of units from their Crusade force.

- **Crusade Force:** All the units on a player's Order of Battle.
- **Crusade Army:** All the units selected from a player's Crusade force that will be used in a single battle.

CRUSADE CARDS

Each time you add a unit to your Order of Battle, that unit's details must be recorded on a Crusade card. Each unit's Crusade card details the following:

- A unique name for that unit.
- Which models and how many of each are in that unit.
- The wargear models in that unit are equipped with.
- Any Enhancements that unit has (see *Renowned Heroes*, page 285).
- The total points value of that unit. This includes the cost of all models, wargear, Enhancements and upgrades that unit has.
- Any selectable keywords that must be chosen when that unit is included in your Crusade force (e.g. <LEGION>, <CHAPTER>).
- Any rules that unit must or can select before the battle.
- Any upgrades that unit has purchased using Requisitions.
- Any Battle Honours or Battle Scars that unit has.
- That unit's current number of Experience points (XP) (when adding a unit to your Order of Battle, this will be 0).
- That unit's Combat tallies (when adding a unit to your Order of Battle, these will be 0). This includes a Units Destroyed tally, which is the number of enemy units destroyed by that unit across all games it is included in your Crusade army.
- That unit's total number of Crusade points (when adding a unit to your Order of Battle, this will be 0).

Once you have added a unit to your Order of Battle and created a Crusade card for it, you cannot change the number of models in that unit, the wargear its models are equipped with, or any of the other rules that must be selected when you first create its Crusade card.



EXPERIENCE POINTS

When you add a unit to your Order of Battle, it will start with 0 Experience points (XP). Units can gain Experience points as follows:

1. BATTLE EXPERIENCE 1XP

At the end of a battle, each unit with a Crusade card that was part of your Crusade army for that battle gains 1XP.

2. DEALERS OF DEATH 1XP

A unit gains 1XP for every third enemy unit it has destroyed. This can be determined by looking at the Units Destroyed tally on its Crusade card.

3. MARKED FOR GREATNESS 3XP

At the end of a battle, you can select one unit with a Crusade card that was part of your Crusade army for that battle; that unit gains 3XP.

There are many additional ways in which units can gain Experience points, as described in other publications. Keep track of a unit's current Experience points total on its Crusade card.

The units listed below never gain Experience points and can never gain Battle Honours. However, they automatically pass any Out of Action tests they are required to take, so never gain Battle Scars. You can find out more about Out of Action tests and Battle Scars on page 290. You can mark the Experience Points section of such units' Crusade card as 'N/A' to remind you.

- EPIC HEROES
- FORTIFICATIONS
- SWARMS
- Summoned and Replacement units (pg 276)

- **Experience Points:** Units start with 0XP, but gain them by taking part in battles.
- Some units never gain XP.

COMBAT TALLIES

A unit's Crusade card contains space to record all kinds of battle statistics. Each time a unit takes part in a battle, survives a battle or destroys an enemy unit, make a note on that unit's Crusade card. Units can gain Experience points from these tallies, as described above.

- **Combat Tallies:** Used to record battle statistics for units during games.



CRUSADE CARD

1. Each unit in your army should have a unique name.
2. A unit's equipment, upgrades and points value, along with other things you must select.
3. The number of Experience and Crusade points a unit has acquired.
4. Keep a tally of how many enemy units a unit has destroyed (and how).
5. When a unit acquires enough Experience points to be promoted, tick the appropriate box to denote its rank.
6. All Battle Honours and Battle Scars that a unit currently has.

1

Infiltrator Squad Ghorrean
UNIT NAME

240
POINTS COST

3
CRUSADE POINTS

Infiltrator Squad
UNIT TYPE

<Sons of Medusa>
SUB-FACTION KEYWORDS

Comms Array
EQUIPMENT

2

ENHANCEMENTS & UPGRADES

3

16
EXPERIENCE POINTS

COMBAT TALLIES

BATTLES PLAYED	BATTLES SURVIVED	ENEMY UNITS DESTROYED
4	2	3

CAMPAIN BADGES

5

Iron Thane Vaylund Cal
UNIT NAME

80
POINTS COST

1
CRUSADE POINTS

Primaris Techmarine
UNIT TYPE

<Sons of Medusa>
SUB-FACTION KEYWORDS

7
EXPERIENCE POINTS

EQUIPMENT

ENHANCEMENTS & UPGRADES

COMBAT TALLIES

BATTLES PLAYED	BATTLES SURVIVED	ENEMY UNITS DESTROYED
4	3	1

Deadly Combatant
BATTLE HONOURS

4

6

BATTLE SCARS

CAMPAIN BADGES

UNIT NAME		POINTS COST	CRUSADE POINTS
UNIT TYPE	SUB-FACTION KEYWORDS	EXPERIENCE POINTS	
EQUIPMENT	ENHANCEMENTS & UPGRADES		
CAMPAIGN BADGES			
COMBAT TALLIES			
BATTLES PLAYED	BATTLES SURVIVED	ENEMY UNITS DESTROYED	
BATTLE HONOURS			
BATTLE SCARS			

UNIT NAME		POINTS COST	CRUSADE POINTS
UNIT TYPE	SUB-FACTION KEYWORDS	EXPERIENCE POINTS	
EQUIPMENT	ENHANCEMENTS & UPGRADES		
CAMPAIGN BADGES			
COMBAT TALLIES			
BATTLES PLAYED	BATTLES SURVIVED	ENEMY UNITS DESTROYED	
BATTLE HONOURS			
BATTLE SCARS			

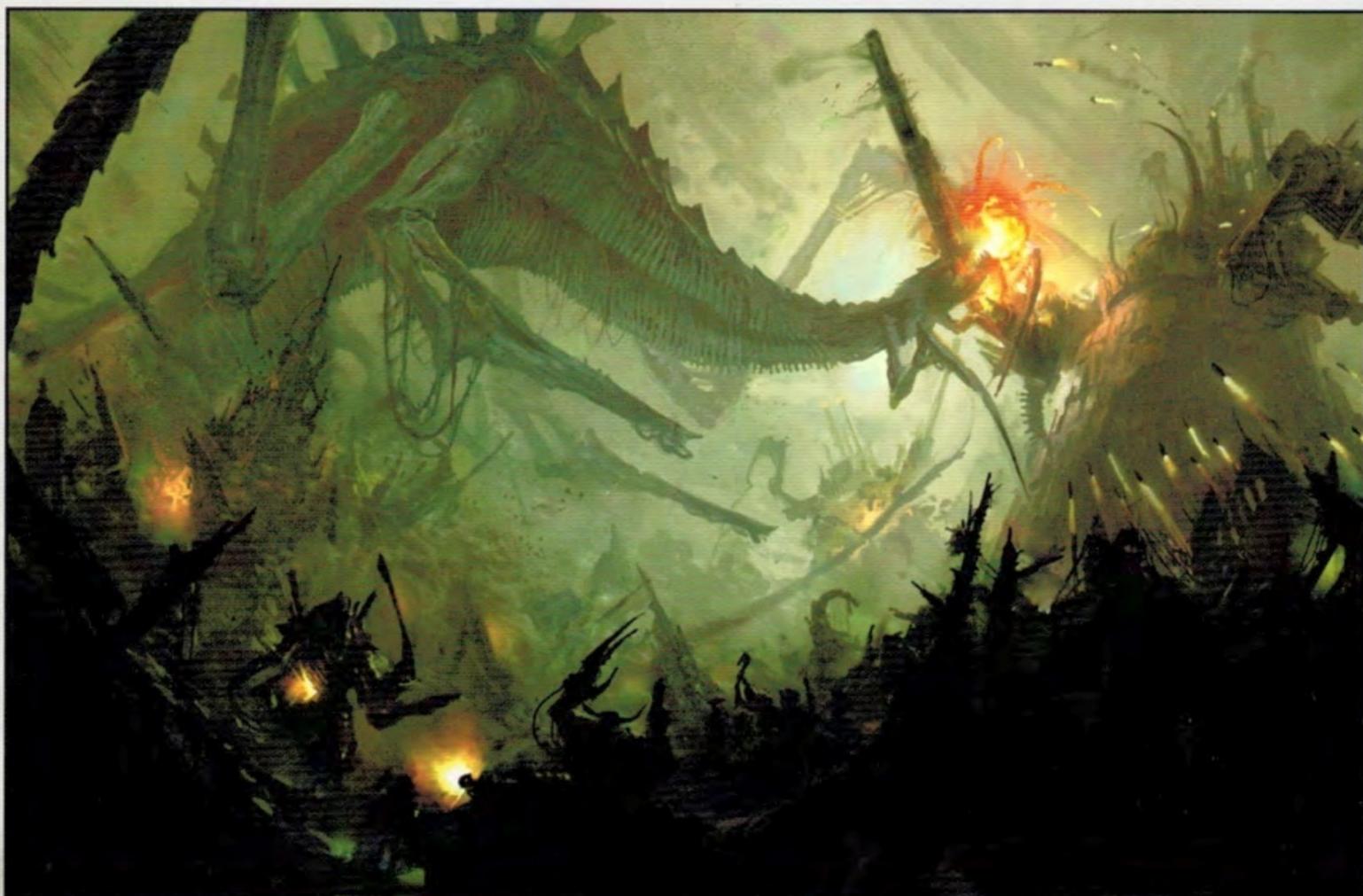
REQUISITIONS

Requisition points (RP) can be used to purchase Requisitions; these can upgrade individual units or your entire Crusade force. Each time you spend RP to purchase a Requisition, reduce your Requisition points total by the cost of the Requisition purchased. Any Requisition points you do not spend are saved and can be used later.

As you play more battles, you can gain additional Requisition points, but a Crusade force can never have more than 10 (any additional Requisition points acquired beyond this are lost). Each time you play a battle, you will gain 1RP after that battle has been completed, regardless of the result of the battle itself. Keep track of how many Requisition points you have on your Order of Battle.

Players can always use the Requisitions found opposite. Additional Requisitions can be found in other publications. Each Requisition will tell you when it can be purchased; they can never be purchased during a battle (i.e. between the Begin the Battle and End the Battle steps of the mission). So long as you have enough Requisition points, there is no limit on the number of Requisitions you can purchase, the number of times you can purchase each Requisition or the combination of Requisitions you can purchase. If you do not have enough Requisition points to purchase a Requisition, you cannot purchase it.

- Requisitions cost RP to purchase. You can never have more than 10RP.
- Each battle you play gains you 1RP (win, lose or draw).



INCREASE SUPPLY LIMIT

1RP

Information uncovered by your forces has revealed the growing importance of this war zone and the increasing threat posed by enemies. In response, high command has acceded to your urgent request for reinforcements.

Purchase this Requisition at any time. Increase your Crusade force's Supply Limit by 200 points.

RENOWNED HEROES

1-3RP

The greatest warriors, most cunning tacticians and seers lead their armies to war possessed of hard-won skills and powerful artefacts that mark them out as legendary commanders.

When you first start a Crusade force, you can purchase this Requisition the first time you add a **CHARACTER** unit to your Order of Battle. After that point, you can purchase this Requisition each time a unit from your Order of Battle gains a rank. In either case, you cannot select an **EPIC HERO** unit, a unit that already has an Enhancement, or a unit that has either the Disgraced or Mark of Shame Battle Scars (pg 291).

You can select one Enhancement that unit has access to (if using this Requisition when that unit gains a rank, this is instead of it gaining a Battle Honour). When doing so, that unit has access to any Enhancements described within any Detachment rules that it could use, even though you have not yet started to muster your army and so have not selected any Detachment rules yet.

If the selected Enhancement replaces a weapon that is a Crusade Relic or a weapon upgraded by Weapon Modifications (pg 288), that Crusade Relic or Weapon Modifications are lost. Recalculate the unit's points value as a result of gaining this Enhancement and update its Crusade card. You cannot make any changes that would cause you to exceed your Supply Limit.

This Requisition costs 1RP plus 1 additional RP for each other Enhancement that your Order of Battle contains (to a maximum of 3RP).

Example: If this Requisition was used to give a unit an Enhancement and one other unit in your Order of Battle already had an Enhancement, it would cost 2RP.

LEGENDARY VETERANS

3RP

Occasionally, a group of warriors will climb the ranks across a score of battles, forging a legendary reputation that is known by friend and foe. Such veterans possess skills and honours to rival those of the most glorified heroes.

Purchase this Requisition when a unit from your Order of Battle (excluding **CHARACTER** units) reaches 30XP. That unit's Experience points total is no longer limited to a maximum of 30 and it can now be promoted above the Battle-hardened rank. In addition, the maximum number of Battle Honours that unit can have is increased to 6.

REARM AND RESUPPLY

1RP

The changing nature of the war zone and the demands from high command necessitate the opening of arms caches and wargear vaults to ensure your warriors face the enemy with the most effective killing tools.

Purchase this Requisition before a battle. Select one unit from your Order of Battle. You can change any wargear options models in that unit are equipped with as described on that unit's datasheet. If you replace a weapon that is a Crusade Relic or a weapon upgraded by Weapon Modifications (pg 288), that Crusade Relic or any Weapon Modifications are lost. Recalculate the unit's points value as a result of any of these changes and update its Crusade card. You cannot make any changes that would cause you to exceed your Supply Limit.

REPAIR AND RECUPERATE

1-5RP

Amid gore-streaked medicae facilities and clamorous forge-shrines, the damage worked by the foe upon warriors and war engines is undone before they are discharged to seek vengeance.

Purchase this Requisition after a battle. Select one unit from your Order of Battle that has one or more Battle Scars. Select one of that unit's Battle Scars and remove it from its Crusade card (for each Battle Scar removed, that unit's Crusade points total will increase by 1).

This Requisition costs 1RP plus 1 additional RP for each Battle Honour that unit has (to a maximum of 5RP).

Example: If this Requisition was used to remove a Battle Scar from a unit with three Battle Honours, it would cost 4RP.

FRESH RECRUITS

1-4RP

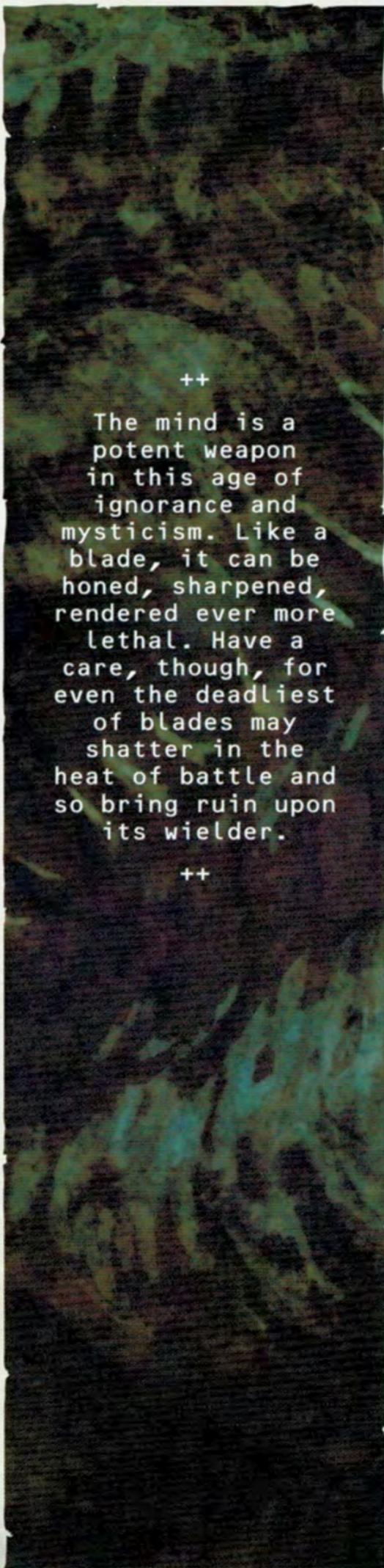
As wars grind on into deadlier phases, vital missions require larger numbers of troops. Embedding warriors into experienced formations is an intensive and costly exercise, but the victories that result speak for themselves.

Purchase this Requisition at any time. Select one unit from your Order of Battle. You can add additional models to that unit, up to the maximum listed on its datasheet. Recalculate the unit's points value as a result of any of these changes and update its Crusade card. You cannot make any changes that would cause you to exceed your Supply Limit.

This Requisition costs 1RP plus 1 additional RP for every 2 Battle Honours the unit has, rounding up (to a maximum of 4RP).

Example: If this Requisition was used to add additional models to a unit with three Battle Honours, it would cost 3RP.

RANKS AND BATTLE HONOURS



If a unit has gained enough Experience points, before its next battle it will earn a promotion and gain a rank (from Battle-ready to Blooded, for example). Each time a unit gains a rank, make a note of it on the unit's Crusade card.

Only **CHARACTER** units can gain the Heroic or Legendary ranks. Other units cannot be promoted above the Battle-hardened rank and the maximum number of Experience points they can gain is therefore 30 (any gained beyond this are lost). The Legendary Veterans Requisition (pg 285) is an exception to this rule, enabling a unit without the **CHARACTER** keyword to gain these ranks.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

RANK

0-5

Battle-ready

6-15



Blooded

16-30



Battle-hardened

31-50



Heroic

51+



Legendary

BATTLE TRAITS

Battle Traits are skills or upgrades that units have acquired during their years of warfare, and help to give them a vital edge on the battlefield. Each time a unit gains a Battle Trait, select a Battle Traits table for that unit and either roll one D6 to randomly determine which Battle Trait the unit has gained, or choose the Battle Trait that you think tells the best narrative. A unit can have more than one Battle Trait but it cannot have the same Battle Trait more than once (if a duplicate result is rolled, roll again until a different result is rolled).

Battle Traits can be found in many books, including this one (see Battle Traits, page 297), as well as in Codexes and other publications. Each time you give a unit a Battle Trait, make a note of it on its Crusade card and increase its Crusade points total accordingly.

BATTLE HONOURS

Each time a unit gains a rank, it can gain one Battle Honour. Units can also gain additional Battle Honours by other means (such as by winning certain missions, fulfilling certain Agendas, etc.). Each time a unit gains a Battle Honour, increase its Crusade points total by 1 (if the unit is **TITANIC**, increase its Crusade points total by 2 instead). Make a note of each Battle Honour a unit has on its Crusade card. A unit can never have more than three Battle Honours unless it is a **CHARACTER**, in which case it can have up to six Battle Honours. Once the maximum is reached, each time a unit gains a new Battle Honour it must first remove one of its existing Battle Honours.

There are several categories of Battle Honours that can be bestowed upon a unit, such as Battle Traits, Weapon Modifications and Crusade Relics. Other categories of Battle Honour may be found in other publications. Each time a unit gains a Battle Honour, you can select from any category.

- Once a unit gains enough XP it will gain a rank.
- Only **CHARACTER** units can gain the Heroic or Legendary ranks.
- Each time a unit gains a rank, it can gain a Battle Honour.
- There are several categories of Battle Honours, which include:
 - **Battle Traits:** New skills and abilities.
 - **Weapon Modifications:** Upgrade an item of wargear.
 - **Crusade Relic:** Gain a rare and powerful artefact.
- Each time a unit gains a Battle Honour, increase its Crusade points total by 1 (or by 2 if **TITANIC**).





WEAPON MODIFICATIONS

Weapon Modifications are upgrades made to a warrior's armaments that improve their lethality in combat. Each time a unit gains this Battle Honour, you must select one model in that unit (if the unit includes a **CHARACTER** model or Unit Champion, you must select that model), then you must select one weapon equipped by that model. You cannot select a weapon that has already been upgraded by this Battle Honour and you cannot select a weapon that has already been replaced by an Enhancement or a Crusade Relic – such artefacts cannot be modified.

Each time you select a weapon, roll two D6 and consult the table below to randomly determine which two Weapon Modifications it gains (if a duplicate result is rolled, roll both dice again until two different results are rolled), or choose the two different Weapon Modifications that you think tell the best narrative.

WEAPON MODIFICATION

D6

FINELY BALANCED

Perfectly weighted for the weapon's owner, this weapons feels to be an extension of their own limbs.

Improve this weapon's Ballistic Skill or Weapon Skill characteristic by 1.



BRUTAL

Enhanced with hyper-dense metalloids or empowered by advanced energies, this weapon can be wielded with meteoric force.

Add 1 to this weapon's Strength characteristic.



ARMOUR PIERCING

Honed to a razor-edged sharpness or invested with crackling energy fields, this weapon can crack the heaviest enemy battle plate.

Improve this weapon's Armour Penetration characteristic by 1.



MASTER-WORKED

Forged by master-smiths and hand-worked over generations by skilled artificers, this weapon's deadly killing power matches its martial elegance.

Add 1 to this weapon's Damage characteristic.



HEIRLOOM

Handed to worthy scions or claimed by ruthless victors, the greatest weapons are valued for their quality.

Add 1 to this weapon's Attacks characteristic.



PRECISE

Whether fitted with superior scopes or crafted by master duellists, this weapon has been modified with the sole purpose of executing enemy heroes and commanders.

Each time a Critical Wound is scored for an attack made with this weapon, that attack has the Precision ability [Core Rules].

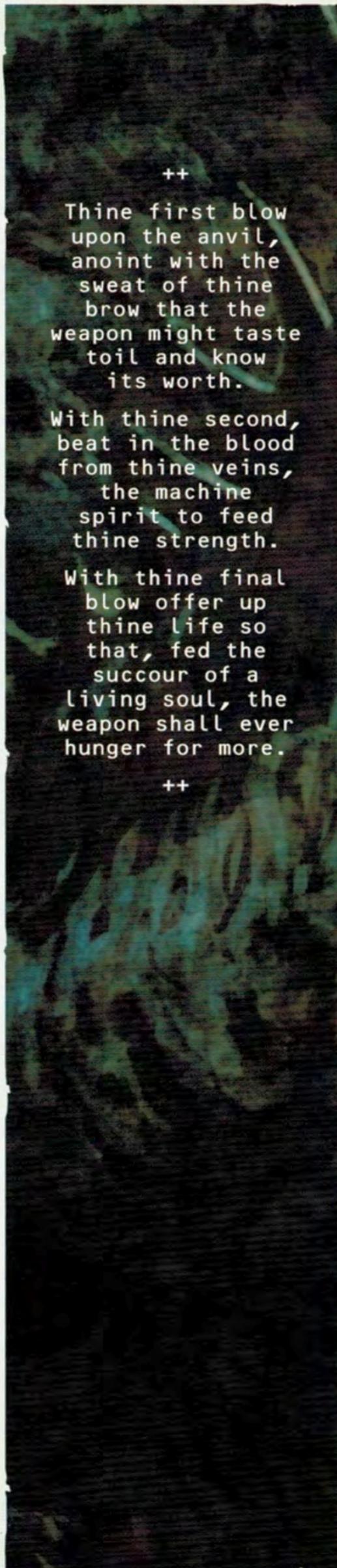


CRUSADE RELICS

Crusade Relics are rare items of power that your warriors discover as they quest across the galaxy. Only **CHARACTER** models can gain Crusade Relics. When a model gains a Crusade Relic, simply select the Crusade Relic that you want that model to have. A **CHARACTER** model can have any number of Crusade Relics, but the same Crusade Relic cannot be included in your Order of Battle more than once. Crusade Relics can be found in many books, including this one (see Crusade Relics, page 300).

There are three categories of Crusade Relics: Artificer Relics, Antiquity Relics and Legendary Relics. Some categories of Crusade Relic can only be given to **CHARACTER** models if their unit has achieved a particular rank, as shown in the table below. Unlike other Battle Honours, which increase a unit's Crusade points total by 1 (or 2 if the **CHARACTER** unit is **TITANIC**), each time you give a **CHARACTER** model a Crusade Relic, you must increase its unit's Crusade points total by the amount shown in the table below instead. Each time you give a **CHARACTER** model a Crusade Relic, make a note of it on its Crusade card.

CRUSADE RELICS		
RELIC CATEGORY	RANK REQUIRED	CRUSADE POINTS INCREASE
Artificer	Any	+1
Antiquity	Heroic or Legendary	+2
Legendary	Legendary	+3



++

Thine first blow
upon the anvil,
anoint with the
sweat of thine
brow that the
weapon might taste
toil and know
its worth.

With thine second,
beat in the blood
from thine veins,
the machine
spirit to feed
thine strength.

With thine final
blow offer up
thine life so
that, fed the
succour of a
living soul, the
weapon shall ever
hunger for more.

++



++
The lives of mortal beings are ephemeral embers whose worth dwindles swiftly. Yet adamantite and marble, ceramite and circuitry and varnished bone, these things endure, and by their longevity acquire a divinity all their own.
++

OUT OF ACTION

After a battle, all models from your Crusade army that are destroyed at the end of the battle are restored to your Order of Battle and all wounds they have lost are regained. This represents units replenishing their numbers, wounded warriors returning to the fray and battle tanks being recovered and repaired. The only lasting effects are any Battle Scars the unit acquires, as described below.

At the end of each Crusade battle, you must take an Out of Action test for each unit from your Crusade army that is destroyed. To do so, roll one D6. On a 2+, the test is passed and nothing happens. On a 1, the test is failed; you must now choose one of the following options for that unit.

1. DEVASTATING BLOW

You can only select this result for units that have one or more Battle Honours. Select one of that unit's Battle Honours and remove it. Update that unit's Crusade card and reduce its Crusade points total by 1 (or by 2 if that unit is **TITANIC**) to account for the lost Battle Honour.

2. BATTLE SCAR

That unit gains one Battle Scar (see below). This must be determined before your next battle and that unit's Crusade card must be updated to reflect any changes.

BATTLE SCARS

Each time a unit gains a Battle Scar, either roll one D6 and consult the table opposite to randomly determine which Battle Scar that unit has gained, or choose the Battle Scar that you think tells the best narrative. A unit can have more than one Battle Scar, but it cannot have the same Battle Scar more than once (if a duplicate result is rolled, roll again until a different result is rolled). A unit cannot have more than three Battle Scars; each time a unit with three Battle Scars fails an Out of Action test, you must select the Devastating Blow result for it. If the unit has no Battle Honours remaining, you must instead remove that unit from your Order of Battle – it is permanently destroyed or otherwise unable to fight any more. Make a note of each Battle Scar a unit has on its Crusade card and subtract 1 from its Crusade points total for each Battle Scar it currently has. Note that this can mean a unit has a negative Crusade points total.

- **Out of Action:** At the end of the battle, if a unit is destroyed, you must take an Out of Action test for it.
- **Roll one D6:** on a 1, that test is failed. Choose one of the following for that unit:
 - **Devastating Blow:** Lose one Battle Honour.
 - **Battle Scar:** Gain one Battle Scar. Subtract 1 from a unit's Crusade points total for each Battle Scar it currently has.

BATTLE SCAR

D6

CRIPPLING DAMAGE

Reduced to walking wounded, plagued by engine faults or hobbled by lacerations, the impaired still limp stoically into battle.

This unit cannot Advance and you must subtract 1" from the Move characteristic of models in this unit.



BATTLE-WEARY

Sapped of energy and impetus, fighting formations that endure extended tours can be psychologically crippled by constant attack.

Each time this unit takes a Battle-shock, Leadership, Desperate Escape or Out of Action test, subtract 1 from that test.



FATIGUED

These fighters have suffered heavily in war, indecision and disorganisation hampering their ability at effective battlefield cohesion.

Subtract 1 from the Objective Control characteristic of models in this unit and this unit never receives a Charge bonus.



DISGRACED

Having committed some gross failure in battle, these warriors are excluded from high strategies and tasked with unheroic actions.

You cannot use any Stratagems to affect this unit and this unit cannot be Marked for Greatness.



MARK OF SHAME

Humiliated, cursed or haunted by terrible injury, these fighters are shunned or avoided and few will acknowledge them even in war.

This unit cannot form an Attached unit, it is unaffected by the Aura abilities of friendly units, and it cannot be Marked for Greatness.



DEEP SCARS

Battle damage and grievous injuries can linger and fester, worsening until they severely hamper a unit's constitution.

Each time a Critical Hit is scored against this unit, that attack automatically wounds this unit.



ATTACHED UNITS

Leaders can merge together with Bodyguard units using the Leader ability (Core Rules). While a Bodyguard unit contains a Leader unit, it is known as an Attached unit and all Battle Honours and Battle Scars that the individual Leader and Bodyguard units have apply to that Attached unit. Rules that only apply if every model in the unit has that rule are an exception to this, and will only apply if both the Leader and Bodyguard units have the same rule. For example, the Infiltrators, Scouts, Deep Strike and Stealth abilities (Core Rules) are just some examples of rules that specify 'If every model in this unit has this ability...' and as such, they only apply if all the units in an Attached unit (i.e. all the Leader and Bodyguard units that make it up) have that same ability.

If an individual Leader or Bodyguard unit is destroyed at the end of the battle, you must make an individual Out of Action test (see opposite) for that separate unit.

Every individual unit that makes up an Attached unit gains IXP for Battle Experience after each battle as normal. Each time an Attached unit adds to any Combat tallies for units destroyed or Agendas achieved, and each time an Attached unit gains any bonus XP for any reason (such as for achieving an Agenda or being Marked for Greatness), those tallies and bonus XP can be marked on the Crusade card of, or awarded to either the Leader or the Bodyguard unit (your choice), but not both.



MUSTERING A CRUSADE ARMY

In order to play a Crusade game of Warhammer 40,000, you will need to muster a Crusade army. To do so, follow the sequence below.

1

SELECT BATTLE SIZE

Select one of the following battle sizes; this will determine the total number of points each player will have to spend to build their Crusade army and as a result, how long the battle will last. Note that you will have to select units from your Order of Battle when mustering your Crusade army, therefore it must contain sufficient units for the points specified for your selected battle size.

Points are a measure of a unit's power on the battlefield; the higher a unit's points value is, the more powerful that unit is. The points values for units are presented in other publications, such as Codexes and the Munitorum Field Manual. You will need to refer to these when building your army.

INCURSION

Points per Army **1000**
Duration Up to **2** hours

STRIKE FORCE

Points per Army **2000**
Duration Up to **3** hours

ONSLAUGHT

Points per Army **3000**
Duration Up to **4** hours

2

START YOUR ARMY ROSTER

The details of your Crusade army must be recorded on an Army Roster; this can be recorded on the Warhammer 40,000 app, a blank Army Roster or a piece of paper. Players must show their finished Army Roster to their opponent before battle commences.

You can download a blank Army Roster from warhammer-community.com.

3

SELECT ARMY FACTION

Note on your Army Roster one Faction keyword to be your Army faction.





4

SELECT DETACHMENT RULES

Note on your Army Roster one set of Detachment rules for your Crusade army. Some Detachment rules list units that you either must or cannot include in your Crusade army; you must conform to all such rules when building your Crusade army.

5

SELECT UNITS

Select all the units from your Order of Battle that you want to include in your Crusade army. Subtract each unit's points value from the total permitted for your battle size.

You can only include a unit in your Crusade army if:

- That unit has the Faction keyword you chose for your Crusade army in step 3.
- You have enough points remaining.
- Your Crusade army does not already contain three units with the same datasheet name as that unit – or six units with the same datasheet name as that unit if it is a **BATTLELINE** or **DEDICATED TRANSPORT*** unit.

Your Crusade army must include at least one **CHARACTER** unit. Your Crusade army cannot include the same **EPIC HERO** more than once.

*Every **DEDICATED TRANSPORT** unit in your Crusade army will need to start the battle with at least one unit embarked inside it, or it will not be able to be deployed for that battle and will instead count as having been destroyed during your first battle round.

6

SELECT WARLORD

Select one **CHARACTER** model from your Crusade army to be your Warlord – this will be the leader of your Crusade army – and make a note of this on your Army Roster. Your Warlord gains the **WARLORD** keyword.







THE GREAT DEVOURER UNLEASHED

From the dark depths of the Segmentum Pacificus a fresh alien threat stretches forth tendrils towards the very heartlands of Humanity. Seething Tyranid invasion swarms pour from the void in incalculable numbers and devour world after world in their slow but relentless advance towards the Segmentum Solar. If this peril is not countered, it may threaten the sanctity of the Sol System and Holy Terra itself! Resolved never to permit such horrors to come to pass, some of the Imperium's greatest war leaders rush to meet the xenos invasion with a devastating counter-offensive. Led by such storied warlords as Ultramarines First Captain Severus Agemman and Captain-General Trajann Valoris of the Adeptus Custodes, the Solblade Fleets sally forth to meet the foe head-on. Meanwhile, Lord Solar Leontus coordinates a colossal second line of defence should any enemy break through. Yet the Hive Mind is possessed of infinite cunning and terrible hunger, and its plans may yet undo those of Humanity altogether...

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