

WARHAMMER
40,000



ANGEL'S BLADE





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BY THE BLOOD OF SANGUINIUS

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BLOOD OF SANGUINIUS

The Blood Angels are amongst the noblest heroes of the Imperium, selfless defenders of the Emperor's realm. Even amongst the Space Marines, the strength and courage of this Chapter is the stuff of legend. From the feral border worlds of the Arnax Cluster to the towering shrine-spires of Glorium, there are tales told of the Blood Angels, how they came from the skies and saved the Emperor's servants with their terrible wrath.

Not for the Blood Angels the calculated casualty ratios of the Iron Hands, or the secretive agendas of the Dark Angels. To these glorious golden warriors, no Imperial life is expendable. The honour rolls of their Chapter are replete with tales of Blood Angels who sacrificed themselves in order that evil might be punished or others saved in their stead. To the wider Imperium, the Blood Angels are saintly, if fearsome, figures – the embodiment of everything the Adeptus Astartes were created to be.

The truth is not so simple. There is a darkness that drives the Blood Angels onward, a tragic secret bound into their gene-seed that lends sorrow to their selflessness. This spiritual malaise stems from the last days of the Horus Heresy, the terrible civil war during which the Imperium nearly tore itself apart. Led by the traitorous Warmaster Horus, fully half the Emperor's Space Marine Legions turned against their master and clove a road of ruin through the nascent Imperium to lay siege to Terra, the birthplace of Mankind.

That monstrous conflict was defined by the actions of the Primarchs, the demigods of war who were the gene-sires of each Space Marine Legion. Though Horus was the mightiest of their number, the angel-winged Sanguinius, Primarch of the Blood Angels, was near the equal of his dark brother. During the last desperate battle for the Emperor's Palace, the Blood Angels' Primarch was everywhere at once, a beautiful, terrible avatar of war whose deeds of heroism beggared belief. He shielded his sons from the Warp-spawned witchcraft of the foe. He duelled the towering Bloodthirster Ka'Bandha in the shadow of the palace walls and – though sorely wounded – rose up and broke the vast Daemon over his knee. When, at last, the Emperor launched a desperate boarding action against the Warmaster's Battle Barge, Sanguinius was there at his gene-father's side. It was in that last fight that Sanguinius fell, hacked down by Horus before the Emperor slew the Warmaster in turn.

The Blood Angels were closer to their beloved Primarch than any other Legion, and the psychic shock wave of his death unlocked something terrible within them. A curse fell upon the sons of the Angel that day, and it has lasted ever since. A red thirst lurks within their souls, a frenzied battle lust that they must hold at bay

every waking moment of every day. It is a testament to the Blood Angels' nobility that they succeed in doing so, only giving in to their wrathful urges in the most extreme of situations.

Worse is the Black Rage. Where the Red Thirst is a physical defect, the rage is a spiritual darkness lodged like a splinter in the Chapter's soul. Should a Blood Angel give in to this shadow, he is driven irrevocably mad. He falls into raving hallucinations of the final battle for the Emperor's palace, or else believes himself Sanguinius, fighting amidst the horrors of the Warmaster's tainted Battle Barge.

It is possible that eventually the entire Blood Angels Chapter and all of their successors will fall to the curse that haunts them. Certainly, their numbers have dwindled over the millennia, and their ranks become ever harder to replenish. Yet this only drives Sanguinius' Sons on to greater deeds of heroism, for they reason that if they must face such an end then they will depart this galaxy in a blaze of glory and excellence, not beneath a pall of shame.

So do the Blood Angels hurl themselves into the Imperium's greatest and most terrible wars, fighting with a dynamism and determination that leaves even their brother Space Marines in awe. Of late, they have found themselves stretched thinner than ever, fighting simultaneously in the 3rd Armageddon War, in actions around the Eye of Terror, and against the onrushing horror of Hive Fleet Leviathan.

It was on the Shield Worlds of Cryptus that Commander Dante and many of his finest battle-brothers faced the horrors of the Cryptoid Tendril. This splinter fleet of Leviathan was headed straight for the Blood Angels' home world of Baal, and its advance had to be stopped. The Blood Angels prevailed against their xenos foes, yet Baal was still at risk. Dante's forces made all speed through the Warp to return and bolster the defences of the Chapter planet, but they were still many weeks distant when word reached them from High Chaplain Astorath the Grim.

A new threat had emerged in the Diamor System, an invasion by the armies of Chaos that could undermine the defences of the Cadian Gate if it were allowed to succeed. Already the Chaplain was en route at the head of the Blood Angels' 5th Company, but greater strength would be required to defeat the traitorous foe.

With a heavy heart, Commander Dante diverted much of his own force, knowing that every warrior sent away was another who could not defend Baal. Yet they were the Blood Angels. They could do no less. Dante pressed on towards Baal with little more than an honour guard at his side, while the rest of his warriors turned their craft and made Warp for the Diamor System.



+++AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG+++

+++SEGMENT ENGAGE 001110000100+++

+++OMNISSIAHREGNUMPERPETUARI+++

ASC 000: CHAOS DOMINANCE OF DIAMOR SYSTEM MILITARY/
LOGISTICAL ASSETS STAND AT 36% [SUB-REF: PERIDOS BLOCKADE]
[SUB-REF: IOLINE ATROCITY] [SUB-REF: 'BLACK LEGION']. TRAITOR
FORCE LED BY BLACK LEGION SORCERER LORD XORPHAS [SUB-REF:
PROTEGE OF YGETHMOR]. [SUB-REF: CHOSEN OF ABADDON]

ASC 001: CHAOS INVASION OF PLANET AMETHAL COMMENCES -
MULTIPLE ENGAGEMENTS BEYOND ATMOSPHERIC ENVELOPE WITH
RENEGADE ADVANCE-GUARD [SUB-REF: CRIMSON SLAUGHTER] [SUB-
REF: LEGIO EXCRUCIATUS]. AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG
COMMENCES COUNT

ASC 001-010: METALICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE MOBILISES TO
RESIST/REPEL ENEMY PLANETARY DROP-OFFENSIVE. ASSET BREAKDOWN
SKITARII 53% CULT MECHANICUS 26 % HOUSE RAVEN 11% LEGIO
METALICA 10%

ASC 011-028: MAJOR TRAITOR FORCE DEPLOYMENT CONFIRMED AT KEY
EXCAVATION HUBS ACROSS AMETHAL - NORTH AND SOUTH CONTINENTAL
LANDMASSSES. ESCALATING MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS AT ALL SITES.
DANGER TO IVASNOPHON EXPEDITION OBJECTIVES INCREASED BEYOND
UNACCEPTABLE RISK PARAMETERS.

AID REQUESTED: BLOOD ANGELS FORCES ENTER BATTLE-SPHERE AT
ASC 028

+++SEGMENT CONCLUDES 00111100101+++

CHAPTER 1

VENGEANCE AND DEATH



THE STORM DESCENDS

The tides of the Warp are fickle. The warships of the Blood Angels' 1st and 2nd Companies made up considerable time on Astorath and his 5th Company warriors, translating into the Diamor System within minutes of their brothers, almost as though some other agency was wishing to see them burst simultaneously into realspace. The momentary delay proved crucial, for it was all that stood between Captain Karlaen's forces and sudden damnation.

'What in the Emperor's name is that?' Captain Karlaen's voice was tinged with horror. The cavernous bridge of the Strike

Cruiser *Sanguine Tear* was lit by flickering, dirty light that spilled from its main view screens. Its source was the unnatural storm of energies whirling around the ships of the 5th Company, *Angelic Blade* and *Flame of Baal* barely visible amongst writhing tendrils that glowed with the livid colours of a bad bruise.

'It is sorcery,' murmured Librarian Asmasael, who stood at Karlaen's side. 'Sorcery of the darkest kind.'

Captain Karlaen stared a moment longer at the storm-cloud energies that battered and shook his brothers' warships. It seemed as though the phenomena were slowly dissipating.

That only served to reveal sparking rents and structural damage spread across both craft, and Karlaen's concern deepened as he attended to the gilded cherubim hovering about his throne.

'Speak,' he gestured at the first of the creatures. The fluttering servitor's eyes flashed from red to green, and the voice of Methusalae, Karlaen's master of astrogration, issued from its mouth.

'Lord, auspex reports a single enemy battleship five hundred miles beyond the anomaly, currently retreating.'

'No doubt the authors of this attack,' scowled Karlaen.



'Should we pursue, Lord?' crackled the skull-faced cherub.

'No, Methusalee. First we must attend to the safety of our brothers. Pass the word to all shipmasters, I want a full defensive cordon around the ships of the 5th.'

The cherub's eyes flashed amber, and it winged away to relay Karlaen's message to the vox-pit. The First Captain looked to another of the drifting creatures, this one clutching a ceremonial missive.

'Vox,' said Karlaen, 'have we established contact with Astorath's ships? Are they answering our hails?'

The cherub's perfect features twitched and its jaw distended to uncover its speaker-grill.

'Aye lord, contact with the *Angelic Blade*. We have Death Company Chaplain Daenor. It sounds bad, my lord.'

'Give him a direct link,' the First Captain said gruffly. The cherub twitched and jerked, and then a new voice – gravelly and strained – issued from its maw. It was accompanied by screaming, bellowing voices and terrible crashing sounds.

'Captain Karlaen? Captain, do we have vox communion?'

'We do,' replied Karlaen. 'Speak.'

'Captain, we have been subjected to a severe psychic attack that has wrought havoc amongst our ranks. They struck at the curse.' Karlaen and Asmasael exchanged a frowning glance.

'We had only just entered the system when they hit us.' In the background, something exploded in a fuzz of static. Daenor continued with forced calm. 'It was Warp sorcery of some kind. It engulfed our ships like a storm, but worse were its effects upon the minds of all on board. The storm inflicted... visions... of the sort our brothers hope never to see.'

There was a moment's pause as Karlaen digested this terrible news. The Black Rage. All Blood Angels dreaded its touch, but to have it forced upon them by some artifice of the foe... it was a violation of the highest order.

'How many have fallen?' Karlaen's voice sounded hollow in his ears as he asked the question.

'Hard to be certain at this time, First Captain, but it appears to be almost the entirety of the 5th Company.' Karlaen closed his one organic eye as the Chaplain continued. 'Lord Astorath and I, the other Chaplains on board, our Librarians... those with training or psychic defences survived. The rest... Lord, it is bedlam aboard these ships. Battle-brothers have fallen by the dozen, and the crew helots have cloistered themselves in terror. Some have been slain.'

'We will send you our Chaplains,' responded Karlaen immediately, 'and the Sanguinary Guard. They will aid you in bringing our fallen under control, and restoring your ships to order.'

'Understood, First Captain, I will advise Lord Astorath. We will recover from this madness, you have my oath.'

'And then,' rumbled Captain Karlaen angrily as he watched the last of the Warp energies flicker out upon his ship's screens, 'then we will have vengeance.'



The Stormraven juddered as it punched down through Amethal's atmosphere. Death Company Chaplain Daenor pictured in his mind's eye the flames flickering across its black hull. They seemed somehow appropriate.

The red-lit interior of the craft was full of muttering, moaning voices, sudden bursts of vox-amplified shouting ringing over the roar of atmospheric re-entry, then subsiding again. Clad in their midnight-black armour, with their jump packs primed and ready, the brothers of the Death Company surrounded him.

The Chaplain felt a deep and abiding hatred towards the traitors as he looked around at the twitching, muttering warriors in their drop-restraint harnesses. Each was going to his final battle. Each was lost to the Chapter forever, his light smothered beneath madness and rage. All Blood Angels knew this could be their fate, and all strove against it. But to lose almost an entire company to the Black Rage in a single hour? And worse, to have it forced upon them through the Warpcraft of traitors? It was a violation. It was unthinkable.

'How long until drop?' He voxed the question to the gunship's pilot, sitting up ahead in the cockpit.

'Three minutes seventeen to Hub Beta-Secundus, Brother-Chaplain,' came the reply. 'Re-entry unchallenged, following flight path Chalice to drop site.'

'Good,' replied Daenor. 'And the enemy disposition?'

'Crimson Slaughter warbands present at all primary Mechanicus Hubs,' came the response, 'enemy forces heavily investing north and south hemispheres of Amethal as expected, concentrated around the dig sites. Word is they have Titans and other super-heavies on the ground, brother Chaplain.'

Daenor nodded at this.

'So I had heard, brother. But we have the might of the Angel. Against that, no engine or weapon of the traitor shall prevail.' Daenor believed every word he uttered, his conviction total,

his faith in his Chapter and its lineage unshakeable. But he knew this would be a hard fight, and as his craft swept on towards its designated drop site, he led his fallen brothers in a litany of battle.

Daenor's Stormraven was one of a small fleet of craft streaking towards Hub Beta-Secundus, Stormravens and Thunderhawk Landers all garbed in the sable armour of the Death Company. It was an abhorrently large deployment of the damned, a whole company's worth of fallen warriors complete with deranged Dreadnoughts and swiftly repainted armoured transports. Led by First Chaplain Astorath, accompanied by none other than the fallen hero Lemartes, this army was a weapon of unmerciful annihilation.



Having brought their fallen brethren under control and established the wider strategic situation in the system, the Blood Angels had wasted no time in launching their attack. They could not do so quickly enough, for already it seemed as though the enemy's plans were well advanced.

Traitor warships harried the agri world of Peridos, pinning the Diamor System's navy in place with a cat-and-mouse battle to protect the system's food supply. The industrial world of Ioline had fallen to the traitors, its pan-polar manufactorums now churning out Daemon Engines to fuel the traitor war effort. And here,

on Amethal, the supposedly cursed jewel of the Diamor System, a massive force of the Crimson Slaughter had descended to attack the Adeptus Mechanicus excavation sites scattered across the globe. What the scions of Forge World Metalica sought on this planet, the Blood Angels did not know. Clearly, though, it was important.

Just as the Metalicans had deployed lines of prefab defences around their Hubs and set Skitarii, Knights, and even Titans to defend them, so the forces of Chaos had descended in great strength to seize the mysterious prize from them.

Captain Karlaen and Chaplain Astorath had determined that the bulk of their forces should deploy to reinforce the buckling Mechanicus lines before the traitors broke through and seized whatever it was they sought. To this end, the aircraft of Strike Force Astorath swept low over the nameless northern forests of Amethal. They crossed the terminator from night to day, skimming through the burning rays of a new dawn as they neared their target destination.

'Brothers,' came Astorath's sepulchral voice over the vox, 'one minute until deployment. Augury suggests that former Chapter Master Kranon leads the attackers in person at Beta-Secundus. Be advised, Mechanicus personnel on the ground are reporting some form of extreme malefic manifestation.'

'Daemons?' asked Daenor, gripping the haft of his crozius as he rose and moved to the drop ramp at the rear of the craft. His wards moved to stand with him, some shambling, some raving, but all following their Chaplain like Baalite dustwings around a dune lantern.

'Something else,' responded Astorath, static fuzzing his vox with a flurry of whispers. 'Information is confused, but it seems the renegades are manifesting exceptional physical and non-corporeal powers. Possession, perhaps.'

Daenor cast his death's-head gaze over the black-clad brothers at his back, each shuddering with the barely contained desire to kill every traitor in their path.

'They have nothing we cannot overcome, Lord Astorath.'

'Just so,' responded the High Chaplain. 'Go with the Angel's grace, brothers.'

The vox echoed for a moment with affirmations from the Chaplains who led the army of death. Then the channel dissolved into static-laden screams, and Daenor cut his link with a grimace.

'Ten seconds,' called the pilot from the cockpit, and with a whine of servos the Stormraven's rear ramp descended. The forest canopy was revealed barely twenty feet below, flashing by at speed. A hot wind blew in through the hatch, fluttering the oath papers that clung to the Blood Angels' armour.

'Ready drop, Angels descending,' came the pilot's voice as the forest gave way to blackened no-man's land and boiling smoke. Gunfire stuttered and leapt below, and blazing defensive structures flashed by.

'Now brothers! For redemption! For revenge! Attack!'

With those words, Death Company Chaplain Daenor launched himself from the back of the speeding Stormraven and into the maelstrom of war.

The Chaplain's jump pack flared, turning his plunge into a graceful, flame-winged descent. Behind Daenor, the brothers of the Death Company hurled themselves out into the sky, their own jump packs roaring. Below, a savage warscape was revealed, rushing quickly up to meet them.

Chaplain Daenor's enhanced senses took it all in, his post-human mind dissecting the whirl of information and assembling a detailed tactical map in a matter of heartbeats. He saw the yawning pit of the Mechanicus excavation site, Servitors and drilling rigs still labouring in its stygian depths. He saw the rings of defence lines, factorums and data-temples that surrounded it, many breached

and aflame. He saw the surviving Metalican forces, struggling to maintain their grip on the last few streets and buildings before the pit edge. And he saw the traitors, the Crimson Slaughter and their Daemon Engines, rampaging through the hellish scene.

Then Daenor's armoured feet slammed down upon the ferrocrete road surface, hard enough to spread spiderweb cracks across its surface. To his back,

the Metalican firing line, Skitarii and Electro-Priests huddled behind makeshift barricades. To his fore was a charging mass of Crimson Slaughter renegades, their warped flesh and buckled armour sure stigmata of daemonic possession. As his brothers landed around him, Daenor levelled his crozius and spoke a single word across the vox to unleash the fury of the Death Company.

'Charge!'





THE MAD AND THE MONSTROUS

At Hub Beta-Secundus, the Death Company army dropped in two waves. Chaplain Daenor and his brothers came down well within the Mechanicus complex, landing between the advance elements of the Crimson Slaughter and their prize. Meanwhile, Astorath and Lemartes led the main force of the Death Company against the outer edge of the dig site's defences, constricting in a ring of blades and blazing gunfire. The Crimson Slaughter suddenly found themselves trapped against the defence lines they had so recently overrun.

Bolt shells flew back and forth upon plumes of flame. They exploded against black armour and red. Warriors were punched from their feet, armour rent or limbs torn off in sprays of blood. Few stayed down, delusional mania and unnatural energies driving them on.

To the north, Chaplain Lemartes led his raving brothers in great jump-pack leaps. They slammed down amidst the Crimson Slaughter, and chainswords and power axes splashed blood into the streets as the Death Company went about their hideous business. To the south, Chaplain Astorath led the attack, ebony wings stark against the war-torn skies. The enemy were

every bit as empowered as he had been warned, many writhing and twisting in the throes of some form of possession. They tore power armour open with claws and fangs, or lifted and hurled tank wrecks as though they were krak grenades. Astorath's axe did its bloody work nevertheless, every swing bringing an end to the murderous rampage of another traitor.

Everywhere, there was carnage as the Crimson Slaughter met the fury of the Death Company. Cultists scurried from one ruin to the next, rattling volleys of autogun fire into their raging enemies. They were vermin, caught in a fight between apex predators, and they knew it. The Metalican troops did what they could to support the Blood Angels, coordinating volleys to knock out Daemon Engines and Helbrutes. All the same, it was the Adeptus Astartes who would decide this battle.

Upon the primary processional, at the head of the ramp-way that led down into the pit, Chaplain Daenor and his brothers fought a brutal hand-to-hand engagement. Black-armoured brethren were punched off their feet, armour cracking under the unholy strength that drove the traitors' fists. Chainswords howled through scaled flesh and warping bone, hewing off

limbs that writhed and screamed upon the bloody roadway. One hulking traitor emptied his boltgun's clip into Chaplain Daenor's chest, but each shot detonated harmlessly upon the holy warrior's armour or the power field of his rosarius. In return, Daenor boosted forwards and swung his crozius in a tight arc, smashing his assailant's head from his shoulders in a spray of blood. The Chaplain found himself battling for several moments more against the traitor's headless corpse, which burned up in a bonfire of emerald flames even as it tried to tear him limb from limb.

Across the Hub, the Death Company fought on furiously, and the Crimson Slaughter met them with equal ferocity. The crystal-circuited corridors of the Ommissiah's Data-temple rang to the sound of crashes and screams as loyalist and traitor duelled through the sacred stacks. A trio of Daemon Engines tore through bunker complex Gamma-Hades-Gamma, only to be ambushed by Lemartes and his warriors. The cursed Chaplain landed atop the shoulders of a raging Maulerfiend, decapitating it with a titanic blow even as the thunder hammers and power fists of his warriors made short work of the Forgefiend and Defiler that had accompanied the beast.

Still the fighting raged on.



Kranon the Relentless bellowed, spectral flames leaping from his vox-grill. Wielding his sword unhandily, he wove the blade through a lightning-fast figure of eight, lopping both arms from his Death Company attacker. Blood jetted, and the warrior fell back. Then, impossibly, the Blood Angel hurtled himself forwards again, helmet cracking into Kranon's faceplate.

'I. Am. Sanguinius!' screamed the deranged Space Marine as Kranon staggered back, tasting blood. In response, the Chaos Lord raised one booted foot and kicked his foe square in the chest, propelling him backwards through a factorum wall like a cannonball. There was a rumbling crash as masonry and rubble thundered down.

'I think not,' growled Kranon, his voice doubling then trebling in his own ears. *'But I am Amethal, and I will be free.'*

Kranon shook his helmeted head, trying to clear his thoughts. He was not Amethal. But something that claimed to be was speaking through him. Whatever that entity was, it had poured its might into his followers, and used them as mouth-pieces to air its demands. Had he voxed the craft in orbit? Kranon thought he had, though he could not remember what he had said. Some

crucial message, an imperious demand to be passed on to Sorcerer Lord Xorphas of the Black Legion, the leader of this invasion.

Irrelevant now, thought Kranon as bolt shells rang from his armour. Spinning, he raised his plasma pistol and vaporised the chest of a charging Blood Angel at point-blank range. Borne by his own momentum, the warrior slammed into Kranon, and the Chaos Lord felt cold agony lance through his hip as the loyalist's power sword stabbed deep. Dropping his own blade, Kranon pistoned his fist into his assailant's unhelmeted face, pulping flesh and shattering bone. He hit the Death Company warrior again, then again, his armoured gauntlet crunching through cartilage, bursting eyeballs, shattering teeth. After the third blow his enemy slumped backwards, skull all but hollowed out into a gory crater.

The Chaos Lord wrenched the sword from his hip, growling in pain as green energies licked across the wound, sealing it shut. Whatever this thing calling itself Amethal was, it was powerful, he would give it that. But he and his warriors had spent long years in the grip of possession, and he knew its feel. Something daemonic lurked beneath this world, something that had found easy purchase upon the Crimson Slaughter's already Warp-touched souls. No matter how

much power it was foisting upon them, it was not welcome. Nor was it helping them win, for though his warriors had manifested incredible abilities since the fighting had begun, Kranon could hear from the vox that they were burning up and mutating with alarming speed.

'Draznicht,' snarled Kranon through his whisper-choked vox, *'this fight is lost.'* The reply came back moments later, his champion's voice shuddering with the effort of caging the unnatural might that flowed through him.

'It is, my lord. They are too many, and they just won't...' His words were punctuated by a savage grunt of exertion and hate. *'... Won't stay dead!'*

'Rally at the temple to the east,' ordered Kranon. *'The one with the Icarus arrays atop it. We will stage a break-out from that location.'*

'Yes lord,' came Draznicht's voice, *'and then we will be free.'* Kranon paused for a moment. Had those been his champion's words, or those of the Amethal thing? The sound of reaving chainswords and running feet told the Chaos Lord he had no time to worry now, and with a curse, he set off at a run through streets boiling with the flames of war.





The Crimson Slaughter attack had lost all momentum. It was fragmenting by the second, caught from both sides by Death Company and Mechanicus forces. A pack of renegade Warhound Titans loped in from the north, summoned to Kranon's aid, but they were intercepted before they could join the fight. Pennants fluttering, a lance of House Raven Knights barred their path. Rapid-fire battle cannons thundered, stripping away the Titans' void shields in quick succession, and Baron Dargetus di Raven led a charge to engage the enemy war engines at close range. Several red-armoured Knights were blown apart in the fight that followed, the ground shaking as

their massive metal forms crashed onto their backs. The warriors of House Raven pushed forwards despite their casualties, binary chants ringing out as they hewed at the larger war engines with roaring chainblades. One of the Warhounds was finally brought down, a direct thermal cannon blast sending it sprawling in ruins across the burning grasslands. Its packmate turned to flee, loping away with long strides, but a tight volley of fire riddled its left knee-joint and sent the scout Titan tumbling down to join its brother in death.

Meanwhile, the devastation wrought by the Death Company was breathtaking. The Crimson Slaughter were pushed

back on every front, forced to huddle amongst the wrecked defences on Beta-Secundus' outskirts. Many of the traitors were becoming slow and clumsy, burdened by uncontrollable mutation or shuddering with energies that were causing them to literally burst into flames.

'Such are the wages of heresy!' bellowed Chaplain Daenor, dropping another convulsing foe with a bolt shell to the head. 'Such is the touch of false gods! There is only the Emperor and the Angel!'

The Death Company warriors at his side roared incoherently. They had fought with magnificent strength and courage, reflected Daenor proudly, despite their terrible affliction. Though the enemy had thrown everything at them, from brass-sinewed Daemon Engines to disgusting Warpcraft, still Daenor's warriors had prevailed.

The Death Company were advancing along a wide ferrocrete processional lined with crackling pylons, blue lightning leaping from one to the next in rapid sequence. Behind them came Skitarii, both Vanguard and Rangers, the bionic warriors struggling to keep up with the swift jog of the Death Company. Daenor's auspex told him that the foe were concentrating their forces somewhere ahead, around the base of a forge-temple.

'Lord,' voxed Daenor to Astorath, 'I am moving up towards the temple, but my force is stretched thin. The Metalicans cannot keep pace.'

'Understood, Chaplain Daenor,' came Astorath's response a moment later. 'Lemartes reports his brothers have also become thinly spread. Dreadnought Lucien is at least a mile west of his current position.'

'Our attack will be staggered, Lord,' stated Daenor. 'Should we hold back?'

'No, brother,' replied Astorath, his voice cold and deadly as a blade's edge. 'These traitors shall not draw breath a second longer than they must. We attack as we arrive, do not give them a moment's respite. Kill them all.'



'As you will it, Lord Executioner,' responded Daenor, switching vox channels as he primed his jump pack for action.

'Skitarii leader, come in,' he barked, and received an immediate response.

'Death Company Chaplain, this is Vanguard Alpha Decimus-rho, please go ahead.'

Daenor's jump pack roared to life, propelling him up in a long leap that his warriors followed without hesitation. Factorum facades rushed by on either side. Up ahead, his visual display picked out enemy silhouettes amongst the rubble.

'Decimus-rho, by the Angel's grace we are launching our attack. Move to support as quickly as you are able.' The Skitarii response crackled back over Daenor's vox even as enemy bolt shells started to whoosh and boom around him.

'Understood, Death Company Chaplain. Cogitate one point two four minutes decreasing to effective fire range. Go with the Ommissiah's blessing.'

Daenor leapt again, a lucky round striking his armoured shin and exploding. The Chaplain flew on through the blast, raising his voice once more in the litanies of battle as he plunged down into the enemy's midst. Then all was the crunch and slam of close combat between power-armoured giants. Daenor's first swing caught a renegade under the chin, ripping his helm loose in a spray of ichor. The Chaplain's bolt pistol roared, three shells striking another foe and blasting his breastplate open. The wounded renegade howled and lurched forwards, only to be pulped into the floor by a descending thunder hammer as one of Daenor's Death Company crashed down into the fight.

A traitor whose arms had become flame-wreathed chitinous talons lunged at Daenor, eyes bulging all across his armour. The Chaplain tore away one of the abomination's limbs with a blow from his crozius, staggering as the other pincered in and cracked the armour over his chest. Two more Death Company brothers landed hard alongside him,

hurling themselves at the mutated heretic with chainswords screaming. Blood sprayed and armour sundered, and the hacked remains of Daenor's attacker splattered to the ground.

Looking around, Daenor could see that his warriors were overwhelming their twisted foes. Few of these renegades could even wield a blade, they were so deformed. The thought caught in his mind, and the Chaplain cursed as he saw his foe's plan.

'These freaks are but a diversion,' he voxed, 'they're trying to slow us down. Decimus-rho, we're pushing ahead, mop up behind us.'

Daenor received a vox-pip of acknowledgement, the first radium rounds punching into heretic flesh and armour as the Death Company triggered their jump packs once more.

Soaring along the roadway, Chaplain Daenor now saw ahead the paved courtyard before the temple. There, Crimson Slaughter warriors were piling into revving tanks while Daemon Engines mustered around them. They were preparing to break out and escape their fate.

'No,' gritted the Chaplain as he plunged down for another landing. 'No traitor leaves this place alive!'





Chaplain Daenor's warriors were the first to reach the square before the temple, and they were met by a storm of firepower. Blood-spattered traitor Land Raiders blasted away with lascannos and heavy bolters, churning the ferrocrete into dust and rubble. Centauroid Forgefiends wheeled and vomited great gouts of ectoplasm into the Death Company's midst, vaporising several warriors. Still Daenor and his brothers came on, tank-busting weaponry ready in their armoured fists. Hurling himself forwards, one Death Company brother grabbed the churning track of a traitor Rhino and crushed a great section of it, forcing the packed transport to slew to a halt. Another landed next to one of the enemy Land Raiders and swung his thunder hammer straight at its rumbling power plant. The resultant fireball blew the Blood Angel off his feet and flipped the traitor tank onto its roof with a deafening crash. The tank's side hatches slammed open and warriors of the Crimson Slaughter scrambled groggily out, straight into the waiting blades of the Death Company.

The enemy's numbers were great, however, and the Death Company's

small. Though they crippled several transports and neutralised two Daemon Engines, Daenor's warriors were punished for their efforts. In under a minute, more than half of his warriors were dead, with the rest looking sure to meet the same fate.

'All Death Company brothers,' voxed Daenor, ducking the monstrous swing of a Helbrute's fist, 'if you are close, we need your aid.'

No sooner had the words left Daenor's lips than a nearby factorum facade crashed outwards, and a trio of Death Company Dreadnoughts stormed through the rubble. Meltaguns hissed, boring glowing holes in the Helbrute's torso and sending it crashing onto its back. Seconds later, the dread figure of High Chaplain Astorath leapt from a side street, another mass of Death Company at his back. Black Rhinos roared in with them, one hammering headlong into a fleeing Crimson Slaughter tank and smashing it over onto its side.

'Let none escape,' boomed Astorath, his amplified voice rolling like thunder across the square. 'Teach them that the price of heresy is death.'

Daenor leapt over the fallen Helbrute and ran on. He threw himself aside as a Heldrake swept low overhead, jets screaming and jaws spewing warpflame. Black-armoured warriors pressed on, still fighting despite being wreathed head to toe in unholy fires, and Daenor saluted their sacrifice. As the Heldrake banked up and away from the fight a sudden cloud of warheads streaked up to engulf it, tearing its hellish body apart and hurling the wreckage away into the ruins. Daenor glanced back to see Decimus-rho's Skitarii spilling into the square, smoke still drifting from the Icarus array of their lead Duncrawler.

'On brothers, on,' exhorted Daenor. 'Wipe them out!'

A traitor Rhino ground to a halt before him, and the Chaplain boosted onto its roof. As the tank's top hatch burst open, he hammered his crozius arcanum into the face of the first renegade to emerge, hurling him back into his accursed comrades. Daenor primed a krak grenade and sent it after the maimed traitor, leaping away upon the blazing wings of his jump pack just before the tank exploded.

Sanguinius spread his wings wide, leaping high with a great shout. He soared through the smoke of battle, seeing his enemies scatter in fear as his shadow fell across them. They could not escape his vengeance, for he was the Angel of Baal, and to the traitor, he was death. Sanguinius plunged down into the Square of Contemplation, landing in the shadow of the Ironstar Bastion. Around him, his children fought furiously against the vile Sons of Horus. Turncoats. Betrayers. The very thought made fury surge through him, and with a bellowed war cry, he swung his blade in a great arc that lopped the head from the nearest foe. Others turned their bolters towards him, daring to fire upon the Angel. He grimaced as their rounds struck home, surely causing more pain than any Primarch should feel. Some artifice of the enemy, he realised. Some curse or Warpcraft that lent power to their weapons. He shrugged off his hurts, ignoring the blood that spilled from rents in his black armour.

Another sword-stroke, and another traitor fell, cloven in twain. A parry, a spin, a thrust and a third victim was spitted. Sanguinius was brought up short as his next opponent came at him, clad in crimson armour he could not identify and burning with green fire. What trickery was this? The moment's hesitation almost cost the Primarch his head as the traitor swung a crackling axe at him. Sanguinius pulled his head back, the weapon nicking his helm's faceplate and crazing one lens.

Angry, the Angel wrenched the ridiculous thing off of his head. What need had he for such a helm? Why was he even wearing it? Baring his fangs, the Angel swung the helmet with all his might, caving in his enemy's face with it before hurling the offending article away in disgust.

He turned again and froze for a moment as, all around him, reality seemed to churn. Where before had been bolt-riddled statues and trampled gardens, now there was the hellish interior of some vast chamber. Burning braziers that cast a baleful light hung from its vaulted ceiling, and marble steps led up to a monstrous throne crowned with an all-seeing eye. A figure stood before it. His brother. The Arch-traitor, Horus Lupercal. Sanguinius' rage surged once more as the power-bloated giant crooked one claw at him in mocking invitation. Raising his blade, Sanguinius charged. He rammed his sword through Horus' breastplate with all his might, blood splattering from his lips as he was impaled in turn upon the Warmaster's talon. As he tumbled slowly down the steps, his once-brilliant wings bloodied and broken, Sanguinius smiled, for with his death, he had struck the killing blow. The Warmaster was dead. The Imperium was saved.

With that last thought, brother Galleanus rolled onto his back amidst the traitors he had slain, a serene smile spreading across his features as he knew peace, at last, in death.

As he arced upwards, Chaplain Daenor could see that the jaws of the Death Company were closing upon the throat of the Crimson Slaughter host. Dozens of traitors had spilled from their wrecked transports, many stumbling a few paces before exploding messily or collapsing amid pyres of emerald fire. The rest fought like cornered beasts, hacking, bludgeoning and blasting the Death Company while screaming their hatred of the Emperor's servants. But with more Imperial forces arriving every minute, the balance of the battle had tipped. It could only be a matter of time before the last of the Crimson Slaughter were cut down.



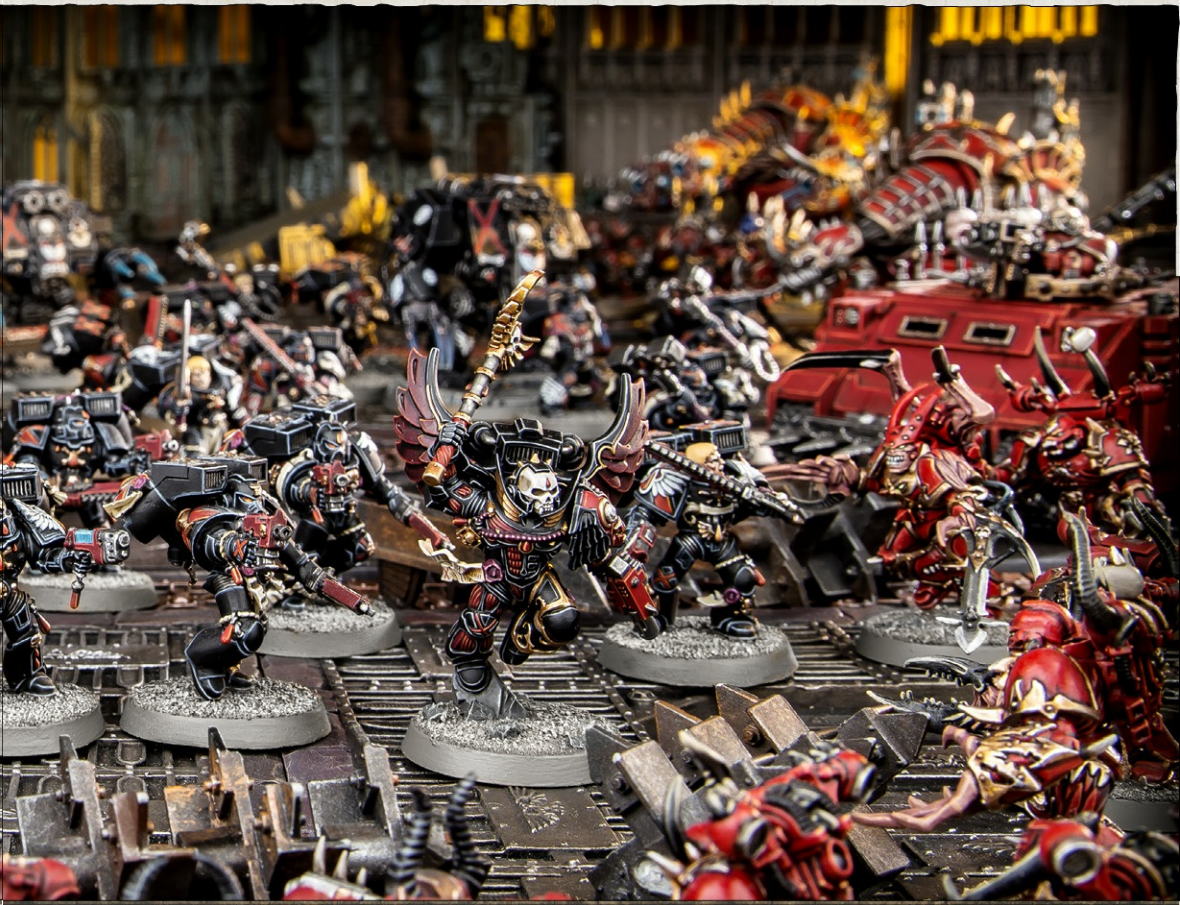
And then, as Daenor landed once more amid the bloodshed and mayhem of the battle, the western wall of the temple blew out with a mighty boom. Rubble spilled outwards in a great avalanche. Towering columns of armaglass and circuitry toppled, sparking, to shatter against the ferrocrete. Dust billowed out in a choking wave.

From amid the ruin surged a trio of Land Raiders, tracks churning furiously as they surged across the tumbled masonry and datastacks. A handful of Death Company Marines were caught in their path, still half buried in rubble, and the tanks' lascannons spat bright beams of killing energy at them as they surged past. Daenor cursed as he saw that these foes, at least, would make good their escape. The Blood Angels had nothing in the vicinity that could catch them.

'Let them go,' came Astorath's voice, a commanding note that cut through even the madness of the surviving Death Company. 'Chase them and we let more foes slip away. Finish this fight, and let the cowards flee.'







THE ARMY OF DEATH

It is rare for the Sons of Sanguinius to lose more than a handful of brothers to the Black Rage at a time, for only under the most extreme stress do the strong-willed Blood Angels fall. Yet that was what had happened in the Diamor System, when the traitor leader Xorphas' Warp-spawned storm sent almost the entire 5th Company into the clutches of the Flaw.

For many months, the High Chaplain of the Blood Angels had been a driving force behind the ongoing fortification of Baal, directing his brothers and the arriving warriors of the Successor Chapters in shoring their world and its moons against the coming storm of Hive Fleet Leviathan. Yet when the cry for aid came from the Diamor System, Astorath the Grim felt a presentiment of terrible danger creep over him and knew that he must answer this summons. Astorath sensed something dreadful at work, something that would see all that his Chapter had laboured for turned to ash should they fail to stop it. Yet with a heavy heart, he heard also the Song of the Lost within his mind, and knew that this battle would cost many of his brothers their minds and souls. Such has always been the burden of Astorath the Grim, to sense the sorrow of his brothers' fall before even they know of it, and to bear it for them unto the bitter end.

Astorath gave no hint of his dire premonitions as he ordered his force assembled, drawing warriors from the fortress garrisons and picket lines of the Baal System and readying them to strike forth into the stars. His strike force was built around the battle-brothers of the 5th Company, supported by elements from the Chapter Armoury and the Scout brothers of the 10th. Those warriors embarked their twin Strike Cruisers full of noble determination to make war upon the Imperium's foes, and protect the servants of the Emperor from harm.

To a man, they were ready for any battle, no matter how terrible. All had witnessed the works of heretics, and knew how to destroy them. Yet for all their conviction, and for all Astorath's dread foreboding, none could have predicted the horrors that would befall the brothers of the 5th upon translating from the Warp into the Diamor System.



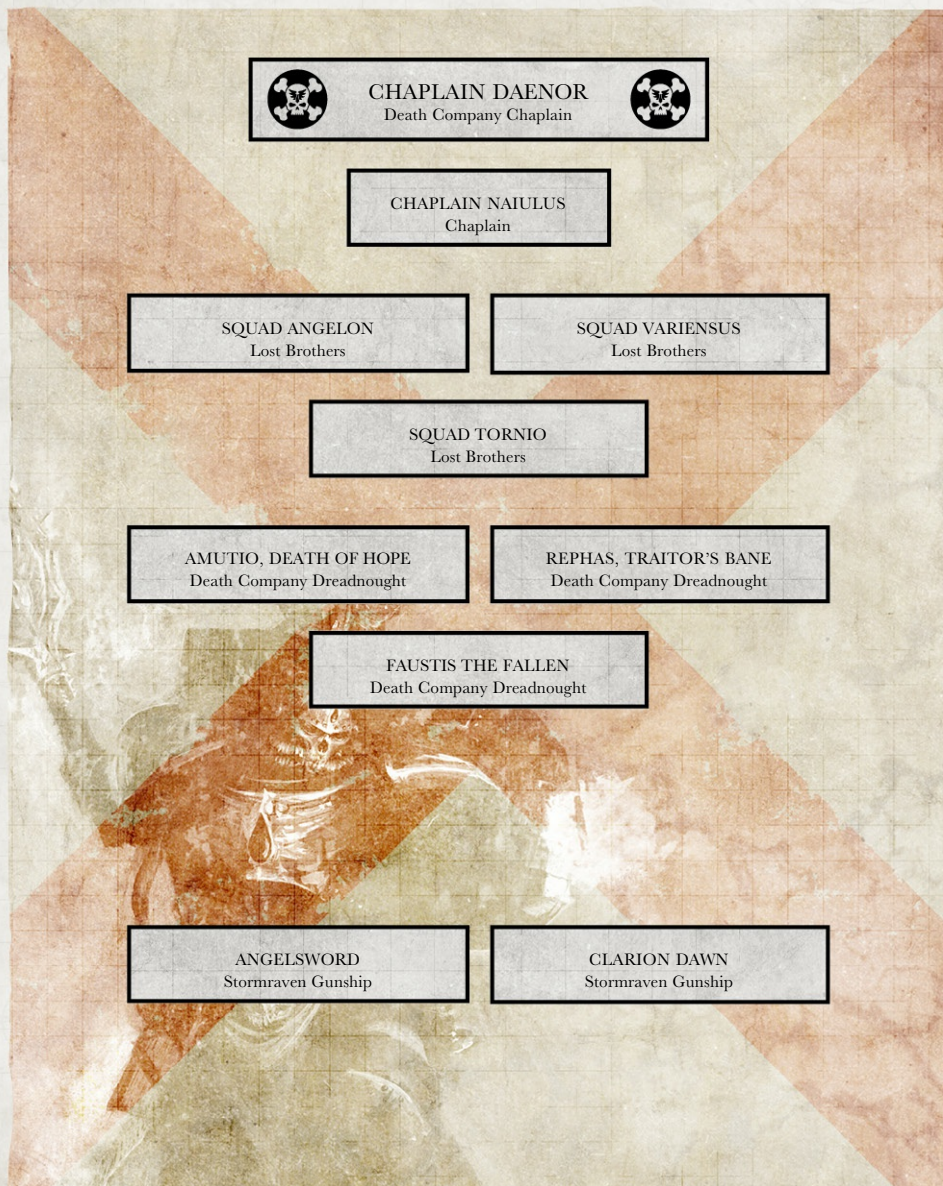
The Strike Cruisers had not even unshrouded their guns or woken the machine spirits of their augurs when the psychic storm engulfed them. The moment their Geller fields dropped, howling Warp energies flowed across their hulls and raced cackling down their corridors. Kaleidoscopic lightning danced over sparking hulls, while boiling clouds of ectoplasm formed leering faces in the void. Every Blood Angel aboard those craft was beset by horrific visions, perversions of the battle for the Emperor's palace in which fire rained from the skies and the Angel lay bloodied and broken amid the rubble. Madness raced through the ranks like wildfire, battle-brothers bellowing in sudden, uncontrollable fury or collapsing into fugue states in the corridors and cells of their ships. Some rampaged from chamber to chamber, convinced that they fought upon the Battle Barge of the Arch-traitor himself. Crew serfs and Servitors were torn apart by the lost brothers. Ship systems failed as the Blood Angels turned upon their own craft, and only the swift and courageous intervention of the Death Company Chaplains prevented disaster from becoming all-out slaughter.

Astorath and his Chaplains moved solemnly amongst the lost brothers, restraining their fury and gathering them together. Where words of solace and calm were required, they were given. Where lost brothers needed to be physically restrained, the Chaplains did their duty with strength and courage. It was clear that almost all of the 5th Company had fallen to the Flaw. So great was their sorrow that the survivors burned to rush straight to battle and tear their enemies limb from limb. Instead, they crushed down their rage and attended to their duties to the fallen. Power armour and transport vehicles were repainted in ashen black, daubed with the red crosses of the Lost. Oath papers were affixed, and final benedictions spoken over shaking, muttering warriors. Jump packs and close-combat weaponry were brought from storage with great ceremony and issued to the Lost for their final battle. By the time the Blood Angels loosed the fury of their fallen brethren upon Lord Xorphas' forces, they were no mere rabble of lunatics, but the Army of Death, a weapon forged in loss and fury that would tear the heart from their enemies before finally being destroyed in turn.



THE FALLEN AND THE LOST

When battle-brothers join the Death Company, they forsake previous squad organisation and loyalty. Instead, they are formed into ad-hoc brotherhoods by their Chaplains. These squads are named after any senior-ranking battle-brother amongst their number, as were the warriors who followed Daenor into battle on Amethal.



DEATH COMPANY CHAPLAIN DAENOR

From the bloody slaughter in the Akatrian Heights, to the hellish invasion of the Nightmare Well, Chaplain Daenor has battled his way through some of the most horrific battles in the Blood Angels' history. Never once has his composure failed him. Never once has he succumbed to the Flaw, and this alone is enough to have seen him elevated to the rank of Death Company Chaplain. No matter how dire the circumstances or dread the foe, Daenor's icy composure never cracks. Moreover, his deep spirituality and natural leadership qualities do much to steady the warriors around him. He is a light in the darkness, a beacon of hope and fortitude amongst the smoke-wreathed hell of the battlefield, and even the most lost of his brothers follow his lead without question. Daenor is far more than a figurehead, of course. His skill in close combat is prodigious; even wielding his bulky *crozius arcanum* in battle, Daenor strikes and parries as quickly as any expert swordsman. It is here, in the heat of battle, that the coldly composed Chaplain reveals his true zeal. Every strike is driven with the furious strength of utter conviction. Each thunderous blow that connects hurls another broken foe to the ground, their life smote from them in the name of the Angel and the Emperor.



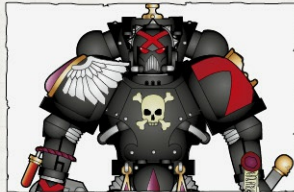
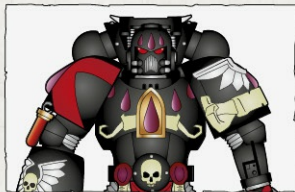
HERALDRY OF THE DEATH COMPANY



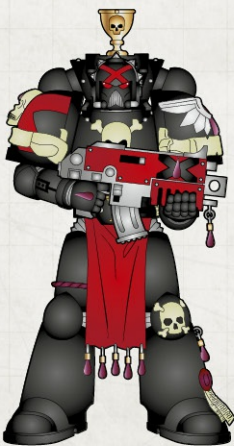
The battle-brothers of the Death Company fall under the purview of the Chapter Reclusiam. These doomed warriors are guided to war by Chaplains, whose duty it is to ensure their final sacrifice is a worthy one. To signify this new allegiance, to show a departure from their previous company, and to reflect the mournful nature of their plight, the lost brothers are clad all in black.



Crimson saltires decorate the armour and weapons of the Death Company, signifying the shed blood of Sanguinius.

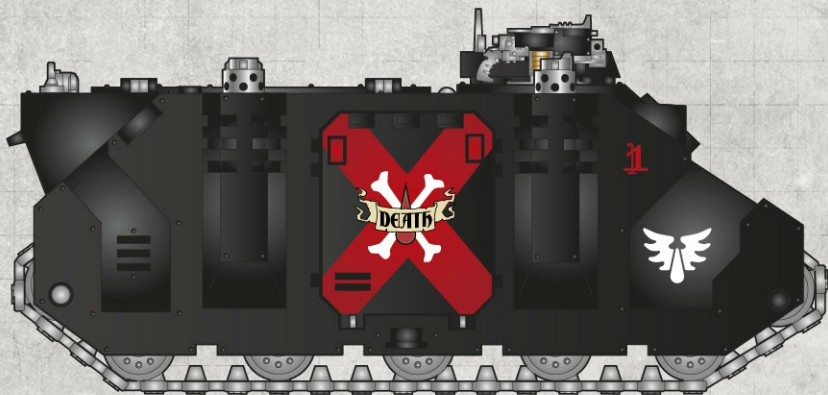


Death Company armour is no less ornate for its bearer's affliction, for his role in battle is as honoured as it is tragic. The skulls and bones symbolic of the Reclusiam feature heavily, as do the blood drops associated with the Chapter.



The weapon casings of the Death Company are blood red, as opposed to the stern black of those carried by the battle-brothers of the other companies.

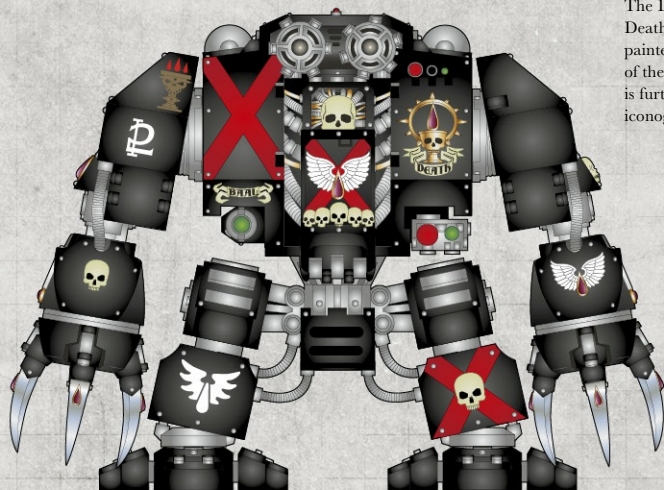
Engraved flayed musculature gives Chaplain Daenor a terrifying aspect.



Death Company transports bear no company or squad markings, for such information no longer has meaning to their passengers. However, the Chapter icon is still displayed, as are slogans and Death Company iconography.



Vehicle numerals can be displayed upon transports to aid commanders in identifying which Death Company battle-brothers are embarked within.



The Dreadnought brothers of the Death Company have their hulls painted black to match the armour of their living brothers. Their plating is further decorated with morbid iconography and saltires.



ASSAULT ON AMETHAL

>>> ASC 001-039

The Blood Angels made all speed for the Diamor System. On board their Strike Cruisers, they prepared to bring battle to the hated Black Legion. This enemy was the product of Horus' perfidy, and the sons of the Angel were ready to punish them for their treachery. Yet they were to emerge straight into the jaws of an insidious trap.

At the time of the Blood Angels' arrival, the Diamor System had already been plunged into a savage war. Its settled worlds burned, and many millions of Imperial servants lay dead at the hands of the worshippers of the Dark Gods.

It had begun with piratical attacks by Black Legion craft around the sixth planet in the Diamor System, the agri world of Peridos. Packs of Black Legion cruisers emerged from the dense asteroid field of the Zircon Sprawl and began striking at the enormous grain barges that wallowed in Peridos' orbit. It was these craft that ferried food supplies to the rest of the Diamor System, and their survival was paramount. The planet's defenders had fought back as best they could, defence lasers spitting fire into the sky while Lightning squadrons scrambled from airfields amongst the oceans of gene-crops. For all the heroics of those brave pilots, their numbers had been swiftly winnowed, while the Chaos cruisers continued to raid with impunity.

An Imperial response had not been long in coming. The system capital was the huge half-planet of Tourmalid, a strange relic of the Great Crusade that boasted an entire hemisphere of naval shipyards, grav-hives and voidbound structures. Tourmalid was an operational hub for the warships of Battlefleet Obscurus, and as such, it was ruled over by Planetary Governor Gordus, a former Lord Admiral of the Imperial Navy. This heroic veteran of void warfare recognised the terrible threat to his system

posed by the loss of Peridos and its barge fleet. Moreover, his infamous ire was stoked by the sheer audacity of the Chaos attack. Bellowing that it simply would not be borne, the Lord Admiral despatched almost the entirety of his planet's naval strength to protect his system's supply lines.

It was a commendably swift and decisive move, made for solid strategic reasons. It was also precisely what the Chaos forces were waiting for. Melting back into the cover of the Zircon Sprawl, the Black Legion cruisers began a cat-and-mouse fight, forcing the Imperial Navy to spend their strength hunting for targets and defending the vulnerable convoys of Peridosian grain barges. With the enemy fleet committed elsewhere, the main Chaos armada broke from the Warp and descended upon the industrial world of Ioline.

Lord Admiral Gordus and his court could only watch in horror as the warriors of the Black Legion and their Word Bearer allies slaughtered the defenders of Ioline's pan-polar hives. Worse was to come as, rather than launch a conventional assault against the world's southern hemisphere, the Chaos invaders simply deployed Ioline's atomic arsenal against it. One half of the old industrial world tore the other half apart in a hideous act of self-immolation, leaving billions dead and the invaders firmly in possession of Ioline's polar manufacturums. They wasted no time in converting these through dark ritual and arcane science,



creating monstrous Daemon Engine factories that would provide a steady stream of reinforcements for the war to come.

Those early assaults were but a preamble, the foundations upon which the true Chaos attack would be built. Now the traitors turned their attention to their real goal, the cursed paradise of Amethal.

A huge and idyllic garden world with a human-compatible biosphere, Amethal should have been the jewel in the crown of the Diamor System. Instead, it had long been an enigma to be feared. Astropaths and Navigators alike could say only that there was something 'wrong' with Amethal, the sense of a vast staring eye occluded by a mysterious veil. Though numerous attempts had been made to colonise Amethal over the centuries, none had been successful. The planet's beautiful meadows, lush forests, obvious mineral wealth and teeming oceans begged to be exploited by the rapacious Imperium. But like a starving man presented with a poisoned apple, a single bite proved lethal. Within hours of landing upon Amethal, human colonists reported nausea, dizziness, and crippling headaches. Auditory and visual hallucinations followed, accompanied by insomnia, dislocation and paranoia. The longest any prefab settlement had lasted on Amethal was two weeks. By the end of that time every last colonist had either killed themselves, or been slain by the others.

Amethal had thus remained unsettled and unexplored until just months before the Chaos invasion. It was at that time that Technoarcheologist Dominus Ivasnophon arrived at the head of a huge Explorator fleet from the forge world of Metalica. Though the Magos had declined to share with

Lord Admiral Gordus the nature of his work, he had insisted that his forces be permitted to land upon Amethal and to excavate its surface as they saw fit. Dismissing warnings that the world was cursed, the Metalicans pressed ahead, landing prefabricated macrotemples, forge factorums, extensive defences and huge excavator machines. They were accompanied to the surface by hundreds of thousands of Skitarii, Electro-Priests and Combat Servitors, as well as a sizeable force of Knights from the Mechanicus-aligned House Raven.

**'MAKE READY FOR WAR, MY SERVANTS. THE
OMNISSIAH DESIRES THE SECRETS OF THIS
WORLD, BUT WE SHALL NOT WIN THEM
WITHOUT BATTLE.'**

- Magos Dominus Ivasnophon

Ivasnophon and his followers wasted no time in establishing massive archeotechnological digs at key sites across the northern and southern hemispheres of Amethal. It was clear that they sought something beneath the surface, perhaps some ancient technology or powerful weapon. They also seemed to expect attack, for their fortification lines were formidable, and the blackened kill zones they blasted out around each of their enclaves could be seen from space. The machine spirits of the Metalican macrotemples linked noospherically across the globe, churning through endless reams of data as they worked on some grand computational conundrum. As the Mechanicus worked, they accepted the slow but steady attrition of their biological units as a reasonable cost for continued operations on Amethal's surface.





Curt misses from Ivasnophon to the office of Lord Admiral Gordus suggested that, after many months of toil, the Mechanicus were on the verge of a breakthrough that would be of paramount importance to the Imperium. And then the Black Legion and their allies struck.

By the time the ships of the Blood Angels' 5th Company broke Warp on the edge of the Diamor System, the Metalican forces were already firmly on the back foot. Kranon the Relentless, and a massive force of his infamous Crimson Slaughter, had executed headlong combat drops onto Amethal's surface, closing in upon the Mechanicus excavation sites and laying siege to their defenders.

The Blood Angels had barely time to gather the most basic auspex and vox data on the system before the enemy struck. Two Strike Cruisers, *Angelic Blade* and *Flame of Baal* bore the warriors of the 5th Company. Aboard both ships, alarms howled and emergency lighting strobed madly. Machine spirits attempted to seal Warp transit shutters, confused by auspexes flooded with conflicting data. On board both craft, the cloistered Navigators had time to scream in horror before a vast wave of sorcerous phantasms struck. This was no random translation catastrophe, but rather a Warp-spawned psychic storm conjured by the Black Legion Sorcerer Lord Xorphas, whose flagship, the *Stygian Beast* had waited in ambush within five hundred miles of the Blood Angels' emergence point. Billowing thunderheads of filthy unlight flowed around the Blood Angels' ships and subjected those on board to hideous psychic assault. Crew helots wailed in terror as their craft bucked madly around them and weird phantasms whirled behind their eyes. Yet worse by far were the psychic storm's effects upon the Blood Angels. Each battle-brother was

transported in an instant to the darkest hours of the siege of Terra. They witnessed screaming Daemons on every side, the walls of the Emperor's palace toppling in flames, and the godlike apparition of Horus, laughing triumphantly in the burning skies above. Worst of all, each of them saw Sanguinius lying broken amid the ruin of the Emperor's dreams, slain by the traitor's hands. A few, those of exceptionally strong will or possessed of the full wisdom of the Reclusiam, were able to endure. Dozens of noble battle-brothers did not, their sanity shattering as the Black Rage roared up from their souls to claim them. By the time the curse-storm finally dissipated, only Astorath the Grim, the stasis-frozen Chaplain Lemartes, and a handful of Librarians, Veterans and Death Company Chaplains remained sane. The Strike Cruisers themselves were paralysed, their helot crews stunned by the shock of what had befallen them. At that moment, the Chaos flagship might have struck and annihilated its victims while bedlam reigned upon the Strike Cruisers' decks.

Yet, for reasons unknown, it hung back. The timely arrival of those ships dispatched by Commander Dante – Strike Cruisers and escorts bearing the 2nd Company and a large portion of the 1st – saw the Chaos battleship retreat, leaving madness and misery in its wake. Outraged at the horrors that had been wrought, Captains Karlaen and Aphael formed a cordon of ships around their stricken brothers and despatched their Chaplains and veteran brothers to help restore order. Still, it was the best part of a day before the newly fallen Death Company – nearly one hundred strong – could be gathered, armed and armoured as befitted their damned status. During that time, Karlaen spoke via astropathic message with Lord Admiral Gordus, and with Dominus Ivasnophon on Amethal. A plan of action was swiftly established, and Karlaen swore that he would see the Black Legion pay for their heinous act.



After despatching an honour guard to Tourmalid to protect the Lord Admiral, the primary strength of the Blood Angels then drove straight for Amethal. It was theorised that this was the enemy's true objective, and that with their deviant sorcery they had perhaps hoped to prevent the Blood Angels from intervening in the battle. First Captain Karlaen was glad to disappoint them.

The five excavation sites dotted across Amethal were clearly the areas of primary importance on the planet's surface, having borne the brunt of the Chaos assault, and so the Blood Angels forces were split between them. The three sites in the northern hemisphere had been designated by the Metalicans as Hubs Alpha-Prime, Beta-Secundus and Cognis-Tertius. To the south were Hubs Daedalus-Quartus and Enigma-Quintus. All were beset by Lord Xorphas' Crimson Slaughter allies, but Beta-Secundus and Enigma-Quintus required the most immediate aid. The former had been all but overrun by Kranon the Relentless and his personal guard, who were reported to be exhibiting unusual levels of supernatural strength and fortitude that the Mechanicus believed were linked to a hidden power that lay beneath the planet's surface. Meanwhile, Magos Ivasnophon was in personal command of the forces fighting at Enigma-Quintus, and demanded immediate audience with Captain Karlaen. The Magos claimed that he was in possession of vital strategic information, but that this was so sensitive it could not be exchanged even via encrypted vox.

While smaller Blood Angels strike forces split off to oppose the Crimson Slaughter elsewhere, Karlaen led his Archangels to Enigma-Quintus, and the entire newly created Death Company descended upon Kranon and his Crimson Slaughter forces at Beta-Secundus.

Skimming low over woods and rivers in their black-hulled Stormravens, the Death Company fell upon Kranon's forces in a ferocious surprise attack. They were led by an assortment of heroes: Astorath the Grim, hefting his executioner's axe; Chaplain Lemartes, shaking in the perpetual grip of the Black Rage; and the sombre Death Company Chaplain Daenor and his brethren of the Reclusiam. It was these legendary warriors who led the way as the Death Company leapt from the assault ramps of their Stormravens and plunged into battle.

Kranon and his followers had breached the Mechanicus defence lines and hurled their enemies back to the very edge of the dig site. In part, this had been due to a strange manifestation of unnatural powers amongst the Crimson Slaughter, something an order of magnitude greater than the poltergeist activity previously documented to occur in their presence. Renegade Space Marines had been witnessed lifting and hurling Onager Duncrawlers, shrugging off direct hits from neutron lasers, and ripping open ferrocrete bastions with their bare hands. Yet the traitors' power appeared unstable. Many of them had burned up in its fires by the time the Death Company struck.

The black-armoured Blood Angels dropped in three distinct groups, led by Astorath, Lemartes and Daenor respectively. The first two of those groups landed on the edge of the blasted kill zone outside the Mechanicus defences, supported by bellowing Death Company Dreadnoughts. They lit their jump packs and soared swiftly into battle, making for where the Crimson Slaughter had overrun the defences so recently seized from the Metalicans. Daenor and the third group slammed down amidst the rubble-strewn streets, near to the excavation site itself and



the surviving Mechanicus defenders. Guided by the resolute will of their Chaplain, these Death Company Marines threw back the Crimson Slaughter who were pressing in towards the excavation site, and rallied the surviving Metalicans.

From a position of near victory, Kranon and his warriors suddenly found themselves beset from both sides. They were trapped amidst the defence lines they had taken, forced onto the defensive while the Death Company and their allies carved into them from both sides.

It was a brutal fight, packs of Daemon Engines storming out to engage conclaves of Death Company Dreadnoughts while wings of Stormraven Gunships streaked back and forth overhead, strafing the traitors with heavy fire. Three times, the Chaos forces attempted to drive their enemies off. They were met each time with the controlled ferocity of the Death Company and its lords, and were hurled back in disarray. After the third such defeat, with Daenor's spearhead hacking their way through his followers amidst the bunkers and trench-lines, Kranon the Relentless staged a vicious breakout.

The remainder of the Crimson Slaughter were not so fortunate. Death Company warriors ripped their renegade foes apart like rag dolls, hemming them in and overwhelming them through sheer brute force. Those few Crimson Slaughter who escaped the Blood Angels' encirclement fell to the waiting Metalican Skitarii, riddled with shots or vaporised by energy beams. By the time the guns fell silent around Hub Beta-Secundus, many of the Death Company and great swathes of the Mechanicus garrison had been slain, but of the Crimson Slaughter, not a single cursed warrior remained alive.

TO KNOW THINE ENEMY

Imperial strategos and cryptoscriptoralists have – since the opening salvoes of the 13th Black Crusade – been trying to determine the true strength of Abaddon's forces. Even with the shadowy aid of the Officio Assassinorum's Vanus Temple, they have been fighting a losing battle. The swirling cauldron of war engulfing the Cadian Gate has proved nigh unquantifiable, fresh waves of traitors and madmen flowing from the Eye of Terror by the hour. Where traitor forces have struck at neighbouring systems, however, the Imperium's intelligence gatherers have proven more successful. Such attacks have typically been made by select forces, smaller invasion fleets led by trusted Black Legion lieutenants and bolstered by allied renegade warbands.

The attack upon the Diamor System was no exception to this pattern, and the strategos of Tourmalid had soon collated all available information on their attackers. The Sorcerer Lord, Xorphas, led a core of Black Legion warriors, a sizeable army of Chapter-comparable strength embarked upon several Black Legion warships. Allied to this already-sizeable force came a second fleet, larger and more diverse, of Crimson Slaughter warships and bulk landers. Such was the main force of Lord Xorphas' fleet, and it was the Crimson Slaughter shock troops who were sent first against Amethal. Other traitor elements were also present in smaller numbers, from the lone Word Bearers warship *Cacodaemon*, to the immense engine-landers of the traitor Titan Legio Excruciatu. Each opened new strategic avenues for Lord Xorphas to exploit, and presented the Imperial defenders with yet another threat to be faced.







+++AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG+++

+++SEGMENT ENGAGE 0010110010101+++

+++OMNISSIAHREGNUMPERPETUARI+++

ASC 040: DEEP SPACE CONTACTS CONFIRMED TO BE NEWLY ARRIVED TRAITOR FLEET. KHORNATE ICONOGRAPHY IDENTIFIED BY ASTROLADIC AUGURY. PRESENCE OF PERSONA HERETICUS EXTREMIS [SUB-REF: KHÄRN 'THE BETRAVER'] CONFIRMED AMONGST TRAITOR FORCES. INTERACTION WITH EXISTING TRAITOR ASSETS MINIMAL. DIRECT AND UNSUPPORTED ADVANCE UPON PLANETARY ENGAGEMENT ENVELOPE.

ASC 041-45: CONFIRMATION OF FOCUSSED DROP PATTERN BY KHORNATE FORCES TO SECTOR H8L330 / TWENTY MILES SOUTH-EAST OF HUB BETA-SECUNDUS. KHORNATE DROP ENGAGED BY METALICAN SKITARII AND KNIGHTS OF HOUSE RAVEN - FORCES MOBILISED FROM DEFENDERS OF EXCAVATION ZONE. INITIAL CASUALTY RATIO EST. 1/100 IN METALICAN FAVOUR. AT ASC 44, SITUATION DESTABILISES UPON LANDING OF KHÄRN AND SUPER-HEAVY DAEMON ENGINES [SUB-REF: LORD OF SKULLS].

ASC 046-53: KHORNATE FORCES BREACH HUB BETA-SECUNDUS PERIMETER AND ADVANCE THROUGH FIRST TWENTY-ONE INTERCINE GRIDS. DEATH COMPANY LEADERSHIP PERSONNEL [SUB-REF: HIGH CHAPLAIN ASTORATH, CHAPLAIN LEMARTES, DEATH COMPANY CHAPLAIN DAENOR] ORCHESTRATE ORDERED RETREAT BEFORE OVERWHELMING ENEMY FORCE. DESPITE NEARLY 100% CASUALTIES - INCLUDING SEVERE INJURIES TO CHAPLAIN DAENOR DURING COMBAT WITH KHÄRN - BLOOD ANGELS FORCES HOLD KHORNATE FORCE [SUB-REF: BUTCHERHORDE] LONG ENOUGH FOR LEGIO METALICA REINFORCEMENTS TO ENTER ENGAGEMENT ZONE.

ASC 054-057: LAST REMNANTS OF DEATH COMPANY FORCES EVACUATE ENGAGEMENT ZONE [EXTRACTION POINTS 2726 / 3221 / 5454] BY STORMRAVEN SQUADRON DEPLOYMENT. LEGIO METALICA ENGAGE MAIN STRENGTH OF KHORNATE FORCE IN VIOLENT URBAN ENGAGEMENT. CASUALTY RATIOS: 39% METALICA CASUALTIES, 74% KHORNATE CASUALTIES. KHORNATE FORCE DIVERTS FROM HUB BETA-SECUNDUS, DISPERSES INTO RAIDING PARTIES THAT DISRUPT METALICAN HOLDINGS ON DUST-PLAINS EAST OF HUB BETA-SECUNDUS [AUDIO-LOG X23Y/X27U RECORDS ACCOUNTS OF SECONDARY ACTIONS AND COLLATERAL ASSET LOSS].

ASC 058-060: IMPERIAL FORCES SECURE STRATEGIC GAINS ACROSS NORTH AND SOUTH CONTINENTAL LANDMASSES. OPPOSED BY INCREASING WAVES OF HERETIC REINFORCEMENTS DEPLOYED BY BULK LIFTER FROM PLANET IOLINE [SUB-REF: HEX INFERNIUM, DAEMON ENGINES]. INCREASING STRENGTH OF TRAITOR ARMOUR UNDERMINES IMPERIAL MOMENTUM. HALTING ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS IS STRATEGIC PRIORITY: OMEGA.

+++SEGMENT CONCLUDES 00111100101+++

CHAPTER 2

HEX INFERNIUM





THE HELL FACTORIES

The arrival of the Blood Angels had changed the tides of war upon Amethal, and made possible a concerted counter-offensive on every front. Moreover, the attack by the Death Company upon Hub Beta-Secundus had seen Kranon the Relentless and his elite guard hurled back in disarray. For a time, it looked as though the war was turning resoundingly in the Imperium's favour. When the Chaos response came, however, it was devastating.

'Captain Karlaen. Word from Beta-Secundus.' A veteran battle-brother held out an ornate dataslate, which the Captain of the Archangels took with a nod of thanks. The First Captain frowned as he read the text. Karlaen's Terminator honour guard waited close by. They burned to know what had become of the Death Company, for news had been fragmented and contradictory since a Khornate fleet had entered the system and launched a combat drop against Hub Beta-Secundus. After digesting the information, Karlaen spoke.

'It is a report from Princeps Kadashi of the Legio Metalica. He confirms that the attack was carried out by a Khornate horde of prodigious size. The Princeps estimates enemy numbers were many times those of the Death Company. By the time his battle group reach Beta-Secundus, the majority of our lost brothers were already dead.

'The Princeps confirms the rumour that Khârn the Betrayer led the attack. We cannot know whether his arrival is part of the enemy's plans, but given their inexplicable strategy and apparent flashes of prescience, I am tempted to believe it.'

Karlaen was quiet for a moment, his stern gaze distant. The Sergeant of his Terminator Squad, Brother Alphaeus, spoke up into the silence.

'First Captain, what of Astorath, Lemartes, the other Chaplains?'

'Some good news there, at least,' replied Karlaen, snapping back to the present moment. 'Kadashi reports that his Scout

Titans engaged in a brief vox-burst with a pair of Stormravens that escaped the combat zone. They reported extraction of Astorath, Lemartes, and Death Company Chaplain Daenor, though the latter was severely wounded. He is believed to have fought the Betrayer.'



Sergeant Alphaeus shook his head in amazement.

'Then his continued survival is a blessing from the Angel.'

'Indeed,' nodded Karlaen, 'and we require as many of those as we can get. Vox-reports suggest the enemy have shipped in fresh waves of Daemon Engines from Ioline.'

'More?' one of the Terminators said, scowling.

'The Metalican advance across the Hollow Peninsula has stalled in the face of the enemy reinforcements, and the Legio Metalica have been pulled away from Hub Beta-Secundus. It is as we thought. We must stop these armoured reinforcements from Ioline, or we will lose Amethal.'

Karlaen and his honour guard stood atop a set of steel steps, before the arched doorway of Hub Enigma-Quintus' temple primus. Metalican structures rose on all sides, their smokestacks and heat exchangers thrusting into the sky. Servitors, Skitarii and machine-priests bustled past, ignoring the armoured demigods in their midst.

The Blood Angels had come at the summons of Technoarcheologist Dominus Ivasnophon, the leader of the Adeptus Mechanicus on Amethal. The Magos had hinted at the dark secrets he believed the enemy sought on – or rather beneath – this world. If his guess was right, Captain Karlaen dreaded to think what failure could mean. Yet the Magos' discoveries on Amethal could also herald an amazing opportunity for the Imperium...

Karlaen's train of thought was broken as a series of bells rang a jarring salute above the temple's door. From the gloom emerged the Magos Dominus, a hunched presence gliding at the head of a procession of chanting priests. A quartet of Servitors lumbered at the Magos' back, bearing between them a bulky contraption of riveted iron, runic panels, and glowing tubes.

'First Captain,' the Magos' voice buzzed from his vocal emitters, 'you still intend to launch a surprise attack against the Hex Infernum on Ioline?'

'After what you have told me, Magos? More than ever.'

'Quite,' whirred the Magos. 'Then have your Techmarines make arrangements to transport this device aboard your chosen spacecraft. My acolytes will aid in integrating its machine spirit with that of your ship.'

Karlaen looked dubiously at the tangle of technology before him.

'What will it do?'

The Magos favoured him with the glare of his blue-lit eye lenses.

'It will render your ship invisible, First Captain. It will give you the element of surprise.'

Days later, and many hundreds of thousands of miles away, diabolical factory lines churned. Pistons thumped and pounded, lubricated with steaming blood. Fang-mawed furnaces roared, molten brass running from their jaws into moulds



of adamantium and bone. Heavy industrial armatures and bloated servitors laboured ceaselessly to hammer runes of binding into spike-studded hull plates. Rivet guns whined. Chains rattled. Conveyor belts of metal and flesh whirled ceaselessly on, bearing empty Daemon Engines towards the armoured summoning pens. Cultist labourers toiled beneath the cracking lashes of their overseers, shovelling fuel, dragging laden carts and hammering iron panels until their hands bled. Radioactive rain fell through the shattered roof of the half-ruined manufactory, splashing down upon the hopeless masses that laboured within. The massive building was itself just one of many, ranks of crumbling gothic structures clustered around the feet of the vast and terrible Hex Infernum. This was summoning and binding on an obscene scale, an abomination of twisted industry.

Into this hell flashed the Blood Angels of Strike Force Karlaen. One moment, the purgatorial drudge of the engine factory ground on as it had since Ioline's fall. The next, lightning crawled across

infernal machineries and blinding Warp light strobed madly through the building. An expanding sphere of energy billowed between two heavy conveyor units, scything through steam-pipes and exploding rune-encrusted datastacks as it rushed outwards. Cultists staggered back in panic, blinded and deafened by the sudden blooming of the teleport flare.

With a boom, the energies dissipated. In their place stood the finest warriors of the Archangels: Captain Karlaen and his hand-picked Terminators; gold-helmeted Veterans, both Vanguard and Sternguard; Mephael, a grizzled Sanguinary Priest; the looming Dreadnought, Brother Zorael, his frag cannon primed and ready. And beside them, no less than twenty Sanguinary Guard, almost the entirety of their elite order.

The strike force's guns lit with fury before the Chaos forces had even grasped that there were foes in their midst. Storm bolters howled to life, drumming shells into Cultists, who exploded in fountains of gore. Hellfire rounds sprayed incendiary fuel across clusters of the foe, Chaos worshippers

reeling and screaming as they burned. Dreadnought Zorael's frag cannon discharged with a deafening bang, obliterating a knot of Black Legion overseers as they rushed into view. Bolt pistols cracked. Frag grenades span through the air to rip Cultists to gory tatters. In under a minute, well over one hundred Chaos worshippers were dead, and the Blood Angels' immediate area was completely clear.

'Brothers,' barked Captain Karlaen, 'let us not waste the element of surprise. Advance, attack pattern Rephalim.'

The Blood Angels moved out with the cool efficiency of veteran warriors, heading for the distant warding towers of the Hex Infernum. It had been unsafe to teleport any closer to that cyclone of Warp energy, but the structure's mighty towers made for an unmissable point of reference. Now Karlaen and his warriors were determined that nothing would stop them reaching the nearest of these. They switched magazines and charged power cells as they went, auspex beams sweeping out to search for unseen threats amidst the industrial tangle. The Sanguinary Guard and



Vanguard Veterans took point as their jump packs carried them forwards in great bounding leaps. Slower than his companions, Brother Zorael took rearguard duty, pounding unstopably between thundering conveyor belts with his sarcophagus torso tracking right and left in search of threats.

It was not long before the Blood Angels found themselves under attack. Screaming praise to the Dark Gods, masses of Cultists charged along the gangways between the production lines, and clattered along gantries suspended overhead. Autogun fire rained down on the Blood Angels from all sides, wild shots causing factory systems to short out around them in showers of sparks. As the wave of Cultists closed in, a cruel voice echoed from huge biomechanical speakers strung from the manufactorum's distant ceiling.

'Corpse worshippers,' echoed the voice, warped by feedback and outrage into a distorted storm of sound, 'I do not know how you came to invade my domain without warning, and I do not care. Just know that you stand amid the Forges of Warpsmith Althedrak,

and that your trespass upon this sacred ground means death.'

The Blood Angels ignored the echoing voice, concentrating upon the targeting runes that scrolled across their retinal displays. Bolts and energy blasts sprayed outwards, creating a zone of death through which no enemy could pass. In the cramped confines between the industrial machineries, the tightly packed Cultists stood little chance. Even those who dived into cover soon found themselves peppered with shrapnel, or engulfed in sheets of flame. Sparks flew as gunfire scythed through support cables, sending gantries tumbling down into vats of molten brass, taking gangs of screaming heretics with them.

Although the enemy continued to pour forwards, Captain Karlaen would not allow his advance to be stalled. With the Captain at their head, Assault Terminators charged forwards with their lightning claws swinging in gory arcs. They ripped a path through the onrushing foe, digging through flesh and bone as though carving a tunnel. From on high the Sanguinary Guard plunged down, glaives encarmine lashing out and

angelus boltguns hammering to reduce the Cultist hordes to bloody mist. These were no angels of mercy; they were the Emperor's angels of death, and they gave no quarter to the traitors and renegades they fought.

Steadily, relentlessly, like men wading through rushing floodwaters, the Blood Angels continued to forge a path forwards. Enemy corpses piled up so thick that Karlaen's warriors sometimes had to barge through mounds of the slain, but still they did not stop. Here and there, a Veteran would stumble for a moment as the weight of fire drove him back, but then he would press on once more. A few Blood Angels fell, lucky shots punching into armour joints or smashing through the cypieces of helms. Most rose and battled on. A handful did not. No matter the cost, Strike Force Karlaen slaughtered its way onwards, drawing closer to the Hex Infernum with every step.

At the forefront of their advance, the wall of an alleyway crashed down in a sudden tide of rubble and twisted girders. Brother Varrian leapt backwards, the Sanguinary Guard's



jump pack boosting him through the hissing rain and out of danger. Through the tumbling ferrocrete came a massive shape, a hulking monster of iron and brass whose eyes and maw glowed with furnace fires.

‘Another Daemon Engine,’ voxed Varrian. ‘It has blocked this alleyway with rubble.’ The monster swiped with one massive claw and Varrian jumped aside, only to be struck in the chest by one of the thing’s metal tentacles. He felt his black carapace crack under the force of the blow, which drove him to the very mouth of the alley. Varrian raised his encarmine sword, ready to fend off the next blow, when a booming voice came from directly behind him.

‘Duck, brother.’

Recognising the heavy clunk of Brother Zoraël’s frag cannon priming, the Sanguinary Guard threw himself flat. A thunderous cloud of shrapnel roared over his head, close enough to send the proximity warnings in his armour clamouring. It slammed into the Daemon Engine’s head, sending the thing reeling back. Another blast followed the first, pounding through the mangled wreckage of the Daemon Engine’s face and blowing its torso apart in a hail of spinning metal fragments.

Varrian rose, driving rain and burning iron rattling from his armour. He turned and nodded his thanks to the Dreadnought looming behind him.

‘Another path is blocked?’ rumbled the massive walker.

‘It is,’ replied Varrian.

‘Then we will find another way!’ boomed Zoraël, wheeling and stomping away.

‘We shall,’ muttered Varrian. ‘But where?’ The Sanguinary Guard shot a quick glance up and down the street. It was hemmed in on both sides by scabrous manufacturums, from within which thundered the din of continued industry. That sound was almost drowned out by the crash and rumble of the battle raging all around. Despite their best efforts, the Blood Angels had become ever more spread out,

and their momentum had slowed to a crawl. Warpsmith Althedrak had begun sending Daemon Engines against them some minutes earlier, and the ironbound monsters were taking their toll. Cultists still flooded in from all sides, their numbers augmented by hardened knots of Black Legionnaires whose gunfire had claimed the lives of several Archangels already. The nearest warding tower of the Hex Infernum loomed above the streets just north of their position, so close that its crackling energies made Varrian’s skin crawl and his soul itch. With the foe pouring down upon them as fast as the irradiated rain, and every route blocked by fresh obstacles, it might as well have been on another planet.



The Blood Angels fought on with everything they had. They would never give in, no matter the odds. It was not in their nature.

‘Brothers,’ came Captain Karlaen’s shout over the vox, ‘Form on my position. Krak grenades at the ready. We’ll bring down the wall on the north side of the street and push forwards through that manufacturum. They won’t stop us.’

It was then that the street began to shake. Rubble and dust sluiced from the manufacturum facades, spilling into the street. The rain hissed red and bloody from armour and ferrocrete, and the roadway began to crack and splinter, vomiting molten brass and leering human skulls.

‘No...’ breathed Varrian, a moment before a towering monster of blood and brass crashed through the ruins and ploughed into the roadway. As tall as the buildings that surrounded it, rumbling forwards on a track unit as wide as two Land Raiders smashed together, the Lord of Skulls was a behemoth of war. Heat rolled from the thing in waves. Irradiated steam wreathed it.

As the monster rumbled into battle, the Cultists all around gave a mighty scream of terrified adulation. The many-barrelled cannon on the Daemon Engine’s arm spun up with a deafening whine, and an entire squad of Vanguard Veterans simply disappeared in an unstoppable hail of massive shells.

Varrian cried in outrage at the sight. He triggered his jump pack and hurtled up the street towards the abomination. His brothers flew with him, closing in from all sides to battle the Daemon Engine. The machine turned with shocking speed, its vast chain cleaver lashing out. Four golden-armoured warriors were struck from the air, smashed into a manufacturum wall by the weapon’s churning teeth and mangled to bloody ruins.

Varrian soared over the swing, landing on the monster’s shoulder guard and lunging forwards. The point of his sword rammed into the side of the Daemon Engine’s helm. Varrian’s cry of triumph was choked off as his masterwork blade shattered like glass against the thing’s armour.

With an echoing roar, the Lord of Skulls shook Varrian free. The Sanguinary Guard tumbled down to the road below. Varrian landed in a crouch, seeing the fire of his brothers hammering against the Daemon Engine’s armour to no avail. As it raised its cannon to let fly once again, Varrian knew a moment of despair.

Then the Sanguinary Guard saw a golden light plunging down through the churning clouds like a falling star, and hope soared within him.





VICTORY OR DEATH

Karlaen, too, felt hope rise up in him as the Sanguinor struck from on high like the sword of Sanguinius himself. The golden angel slammed down onto the Lord of Skulls' broad shoulders and rammed his sword through the top of its helm. Where Brother Varrian's blade had broken against the thing's hell-forged hide, the sword of the Sanguinor could not be stopped.

It stabbed down through the war engine's head all the way to the cross guard, before ripping free again in a geyser of molten brass. The Daemon Engine lurched, trying to swat its attacker with its massive cleaver, and Karlaen felt a moment of horror at the thought of that monstrous weapon striking the golden angel.

Yet the Sanguinor had already leapt away, coming down atop one of the tanks of boiling blood on his enemy's back. A

swift flick of the angel's sword and the tank's armaglass flank shattered, followed by another, then another. Scalding gore spilled in a tide across the roadway. The Lord of Skulls lashed out again, more sluggish now, and as it did so, Captain Karlaen saw his moment. Turning his back upon the Cultists who packed the street, he pounded down the roadway and swung his weapon with all his might. Karlaen's thunder hammer crashed against the Daemon Engine's nearest track, severing it in a blast of concussive force and stranding the monster amid a spray of buckled track links.

The Lord of Skulls gave a bellow of pure fury, but it was cut short as the Sanguinor swooped down to finish off his crippled foe. His blade sang. Metal sheared explosively. The Daemon Engine's severed head crashed down into the roadway. The Lord of Skulls juddered and spasmed as molten metal and gore

bubbled up from its neck like lava from a volcano, and then it ground to a halt.

'For Sanguinius!' shouted Karlaen, his battle-brothers joining him in a mighty cheer. It drowned out the moans of the Cultists, who stared in dismay at their butchered idol cooling to dull metal in the pouring rain.

With redoubled ferocity, the surviving Blood Angels cut a path through the enemy ranks. Dozens of Cultists were mowed down or ripped apart in a matter of moments. Traitor blood mingled with the falling rain, spreading in crimson slicks and spilling away into rubble-choked gutters and drains. Every second saw the heretic death toll rise, the Cultists' panic hampering their aim and shattering their cohesion. If such a mighty engine of death as the Lord of Skulls could not bring the invaders low, ran their thoughts, then what could?



When the golden angel swooped down from the dead engine's shoulders to join the fight, the enemy masses lost their last shred of nerve. They fled screaming into the surrounding streets, abandoning their sorely outnumbered Black Legion masters to a swift death. Their cries of terror even drowned out the furious voice of Warpsmith Althedrak, still booming impotently from gargoylemouthed speakers that lined the corpseheaped street.

Even as his brothers were scything down the last of the surrounding foe, Karlaen dropped to one knee before the Sanguinor. Rainwater sluiced down his face as he raised it to look upon the golden countenance of his Chapter's guardian angel. Wordlessly, the Sanguinor bade Karlaen stand, then turned his gaze towards the crackling, biomechanical monstrosity of the nearby warding tower. Arcs of black lightning

leapt and twined between the tower and its distant counterparts, then on around the cyclopean circumference of the Hex Infernum, forming a cage that held the whirling Warp rift in check.

'Yes,' said Karlaen resolutely, 'time is short. The enemy have been driven off, nothing more. We must get this done before they return.'

The Sanguinor nodded once then took wing in a rush of air, leaving Karlaen to order his surviving warriors. So many dead, thought Karlaen sourly as he watched the Sanguinary Priest moving between the bodies with his narthecium clicking and whirring. The traitors would pay for those deaths. He would make them mean something.

'Brothers,' he voxed, 'to me. Watch the flanks and follow the Sanguinor. We have bought ourselves a moment's respite; let's make the most of it.'

The Blood Angels moved quickly, their objective in sight and the Sanguinor soaring above as their guiding star. The surviving Sanguinary Guard gravitated to him, leaping and gliding in the angel's wake.

Karlaen watched his retinal display carefully, absorbing auspex feed, vox-intercepts, ammo counts and strategic dispositions with superhuman efficiency. The enemy were circling like vultures, fresh packs of Daemon Engines and bands of Black Legionnaires massing, herding the Cultists together before them. The circle was closing around Karlaen and his small band of survivors.

'This is going to be a close-run thing,' voxed Karlaen to Terminator Sergeant Alphaeus. 'If I order it, you will lead our brothers to the extraction point. I have the vortex grenade. It only takes one of us to set it off.'

'Understood, First Captain,' replied Alphaeus, his tone conveying his displeasure at the command even as duty compelled him to accept it.

Then the roadway turned, the manufactorums ran out, and the

Blood Angels found themselves standing upon the edge of an area of rubble and wreckage. Karlaen looked up at the obscene immensity of the warding tower rising above him, taking in its pulsing cables, its twisted amalgam of flesh and metal, and the glowing proliferation of eldritch runes that burned across its surface. He tasted ash and metal in his throat. His mind recoiled from the seething maelstrom of Warp energies half visible through the black lightnings leaping out from the tower.

'Unclean,' growled Sergeant Alphaeus. 'Let's kill the damned thing and be done.'

Karlaen shot his subordinate a humourless grin and set out across the rubble, leading his men towards the base of the tower. The structure was huge, easily thrice the height of a Warlord Titan, and riddled with tunnel entrances that receded into darkness. Karlaen glanced again at his tactical display. He watched the converging waves of the foe closing in. They had moments at most.

'Brothers,' began the First Captain, coming to a decision, 'from here I go on alone. I shall trigger the vortex grenade within the base of the tower and set loose the energies to bring it low. You will fight your way to the extraction point.' Several of the Blood Angels raised their voices in protest, but Karlaen silenced them.

'There is no time, and the enemy numbers are too great. Your breakout will distract the foe, providing enough time for me to trigger the grenade and complete the mission. We will not dishonour our fallen brothers by wasting their deaths.'

His warriors fell silent and Karlaen hefted the bulky vortex grenade, looking for a moment upon the last weapon he would ever wield. The destructive power of this rare device would be more than enough to rip the tower's base apart and bring it tumbling down.

Karlaen turned to do his duty, and found himself face-to-face with the expressionless mask of the Sanguinor.



Minutes later, the surviving battle-brothers of Strike Force Karlaen were fighting their way along a rain-slick street with the Hex Infernum at their backs.

‘These curs are slowing us down,’ growled Karlaen, blazing shots into another Black Legionnaire and sending him sprawling. ‘The Sanguinor will have the device in place by now.’

‘True,’ intoned Brother Zoraël, catching a traitor in his power fist and crushing him. The Dreadnought staggered as a krak grenade burst against his shoulder, ripping through armour plates and setting broken wires to sparking. His fist seized up, still gripping the pulped wreckage of his victim. ‘Which means we must make haste.’

Karlaen grunted in agreement and swung his thunder hammer, smashing aside a knot of Cultists. He led the way between the mangled wrecks of a pair of Daemon Engines, his warriors following. Stomping in Karlaen’s wake, the Dreadnought shouldered the wrecks aside, blasting frag rounds down the street towards the next approaching band of enemies. More Blood Angels poured through in his wake, firing back at the enemy hordes that dogged their steps.

‘Heretic scum!’ boomed Zoraël. ‘Do you not know you stand in the path of the righteous? Death is too good an end for such as you!’

‘They’re thicker than the Phodian swarms,’ gritted Karlaen, as enemy shots rattled from his armour and his brothers returned fire all around him, ‘but we must break through. Our strength is needed elsewhere.’

‘True, First Captain,’ rumbled Zoraël, and for a moment Karlaen could have sworn he heard a hint of grim amusement in the Dreadnought’s voice, ‘but according to my auspex readings, the golden angel has just detonated your vortex grenade. We’ll see them scatter now, will we not?’

The next moment, there came a vast, sky-shaking roar. Looking back the way they had come, Karlaen saw the top of the warding tower shudder. The Sanguinor must have succeeded

in triggering the vortex grenade. The weapon’s devastating energies would now be running rampant through the tower’s base, consuming everything they touched and dragging the matter of reality into the sucking abyss of the Warp. The tower-top shook again, then the whole structure began to lean and, slowly, to topple. As the tower fell it gathered pace, its structure buckling and collapsing as it was subjected to stresses it could no longer support. White fire jetted from between cracking supports, tearing sinews and bursting slime-spewing pipes. The tower fell faster, its rumble drowning out all other sound as thousands of tons of metal and flesh hurtled to the ground.



Karlaen smiled grimly as the tower came down, and a glowing golden speck hurtled up from the growing devastation to vanish amidst the swirling clouds.

‘The Sanguinor has done his part,’ rumbled the Dreadnought with grim satisfaction. ‘Now let us leave. Ioline is about to become inhospitable.’

The Dreadnought’s words were reinforced by a series of shuddering explosions that shook the ground and lit the sky with multicoloured fire. Black lightning forked madly out from the collapsing tower, lashing out to raise crackling detonations amidst the grim manufactorums.

‘Brothers,’ roared Karlaen over the catastrophic din of destruction, ‘on to the extraction point. Stop for nothing. Move!’

The Blood Angels increased their pace, the jump-troops maintaining a moving perimeter around their slower comrades. In their retinal displays, each warrior could see the distance to the extraction point winding slowly down, the gap closing between them and the defiled Square of the Emperor’s Grace where their Stormravens waited to extract them.

Absolute bedlam was erupting all around. Where before the enemy had pressed in from every side like the jaws of some monstrous beast, there was only a disintegrating roar of fleeing figures. Cultists ran screaming for their lives, fleeing the thunderous destruction of the tower or throwing themselves to the ground and praying for salvation. Some of the Black Legion ignored the Blood Angels entirely, dashing through the streets towards their own extraction craft. Others, the most fanatical, continued to hurl themselves at the Sons of Sanguinius. Their hatred of the loyalists eclipsed even the threat of approaching doom. A pack of Black Legion Raptors plunged down into the street ahead of Karlaen’s warriors, blazing away with their weapons. To the Captain’s left, Terminator Brother Taclador stumbled and fell, a glowing tunnel bored through his gut by a meltagun shot. Karlaen bellowed in anger, feeling the Red Thirst press close behind his eyes. He pelted headlong into the shrieking Black Legion assault troops, battering the melta-gunner into the floor with his hammer. Karlaen’s backswing took another foe in the helm, crushing his skull. The rest fled, screeching spitefully as they bounded away over a nearby rooftop.

The Blood Angels pressed on, reaching the end of the rain-slick roadway and bursting into the Square of the Emperor’s Grace. Karlaen cursed as he saw their Stormravens beset by foes. Several of the craft were on the ground, guns blazing as the Black Legion tried to storm them. The other aircraft were hovering overhead, holding station despite the howling gales and arcing lightning that filled the skies.

‘They’re not trying to destroy them,’ shouted Karlaen. ‘The Black Legion are trying to steal our craft. Sons of Sanguinius, slay them all!’

Battered, wounded, scorched and driven to the point of exhaustion, the surviving Blood Angels launched one last charge. As they hurtled forwards, the fallen warding tower gave one last convulsive boom and its sorcerous field collapsed completely. Feedback raced around the Hex Infernum as the unbound energies of the Warp clashed with the crackling wards of the eldritch towers. Daemonic entities shrieked through the air, mad cackling spiralling around the Blood Angels as they cut down the Black Legionnaires in the square. Warriors fell on both sides, hacked, impaled or riddled with shots. In the end, it was the Blood Angels who prevailed, their enemies trapped between the Stormravens' guns to the fore and Karlaen's strike force to their rear. Assault ramps whined open, and thrusters fought the screaming winds as the Blood Angels piled aboard their craft. Brother Zorael was the last to be recovered, the limping Dreadnought snatched up by the magna grapples of the last Stormraven to lift off.

The Blood Angels craft opened their thrusters and punched up through the convulsing skies, streamers of raw

Warp stuff streaking around them. Fighting the g-forces, Captain Karlaen dragged himself up to the cockpit of his Stormraven, hanging on to the back of the pilot's throne as he watched the destruction below. He had to know that it was done.

Below, amid the ruins, the warding towers of the Hex Infernum writhed, overwhelmed by powers they could no longer contain. Fail-safe wards kicked in, nullifying hexes and spells of abjuration that beat the Warp rift back and crushed it down, preventing empyric overspill. The very energies that fought to close the rift also overloaded the remaining towers.

Science and sorcery clashed hideously, catastrophically deforming the natural laws of the universe before imploding with the force of a dying star.

The last thing Karlaen saw of the surface, before the boiling clouds of the upper atmosphere spread their veil across all, was a cataclysmic shock wave hammering outwards at incredible speed. Nothing would survive its touch.

'Brothers,' voxed the First Captain wearily, 'in Sanguinius' name, victory is ours.'









STRIKE FORCE KARLAEN

For the attack on Ioline, First Captain Karlaen assembled a force of Blood Angels elites. This was a daring tactical strike in which skill, speed and resilience would far outweigh the benefit of numbers. Only the finest of the Angel's sons stood at Karlaen's side, a gathering of heroes whose valour and martial might would have made Sanguinius himself proud.

First Captain Karlaen is amongst the greatest strategists of his Chapter. The Captain sees grand patterns and logistical minutiae with equal clarity, assembling strata of information with incredible speed and gauging his enemies' moves with near-prescient accuracy. This talent alone would make Captain Karlaen an extremely effective military commander. When coupled with the audacity and selfless courage of his Blood Angels heritage, and Karlaen's own tightly controlled anger at those who would threaten the Imperium of Man, these qualities combine to forge a hero of exceptional worth. Karlaen's warriors follow him with absolute, unquestioning loyalty, sure in their hearts that they fight at the side of a true son of Sanguinius.

It was this bond that led every single warrior under Karlaen's command – and all of the Sanguinary Guard present on Amethal – to volunteer for the seemingly

suicidal raid upon the Daemon Engine factories of Ioline. Prudent and wise, Karlaen chose only the force he believed he would need from amongst these courageous battle-brothers, leaving the rest to shore up the defences of Amethal in case his mission should fail.

Strike Force Karlaen had aid from the Adeptus Mechanicus for their surprise attack, ancient relics of lost technology bequeathed by Magos Dominus Ivasnophon himself. The frigate aboard which Karlaen's force rode to battle was augmented with a complex stealth system, an ominous-looking tangle of incomprehensible archtech that hid the ship's drive emissions, heat signatures and auspex returns, and even veiled its presence in the Warp. Alongside this incredible gift, the Magos Dominus also had his servants make adjustments to the teleportarium of the *Angelus*



Redemptor. Originally, Karlaen had believed he would have to teleport his Terminator squads into battle as the first element of his attack, who would then have to hold out long enough for the rest of his force to reach them aboard Stormravens. Thanks the Ivasnophon's esoteric gifts, every single Blood Angel in Strike Force Karlaen – even the towering Dreadnought Brother Zorael who accompanied them – was able to deploy in a single, devastating teleport assault from on high.

With his typical strategic skill, Captain Karlaen had assembled the perfect force to fully capitalise upon such advantages. Leading from the front, Karlaen and his Terminator-armoured Command Squad headed up an Archangels Demi-company. The lightning claws and thunder hammers of that formation's Terminators were ideal for tearing apart the enemy in the close confines of this twisted city-fight. Supporting these resilient close-quarters warriors strode the armoured form of Brother Zorael, a Dreadnought with an arsenal of weaponry intended specifically for short-range fire fights against massed foes.

Around this unyielding core of his Chapter's finest warriors, Karlaen layered squads of Sternguard and Vanguard Veterans, hard-bitten warriors of the Archangels equipped to dispense swift death either in the crush of melee, or in brutal, close-ranged gunfights. Knowing that he was likely to face the very Daemon Engines whose production the Archangels were trying to stop, Karlaen ensured that these squads were well equipped with weaponry to handle such ironclad monstrosities; meltaguns and plasma weaponry were much in evidence, while all who could carry melta bombs and krak charges did so.

The final ace up Karlaen's sleeve was the Golden Host that accompanied him, a near-unprecedented gathering of Sanguinary Guard. Each of these gilded heroes was a veritable one-man army, a fearless master of combat both ranged and hand-to-hand, whose presence greatly increased Karlaen's chances of success. With the unexpected leadership of the Sanguinor himself, this force of angelic heroes was the bane of every Chaos worshipper foolish enough to stand in their way.

FORCES OF THE 1ST

Below can be seen the forces that First Captain Karlaen led into battle during the Ioline Raid. Built around a core of Archangels battle-brothers, the force incorporated further elite Blood Angels elements to form a force powerful enough to overcome Xorphas' Daemon Engines.

CAPTAIN KARLAEN

The Shield of Baal

BROTHER MEPHAEL

Sanguinary Priest



SQUAD BAVETIUS
Terminator Command Squad

SQUAD VASARUS
5 Assault Terminators



SQUAD TARANAEL
5 Terminators

SQUAD ALPHAEUS
5 Assault Terminators



SQUAD ANRAETOS
10 Vanguard Veterans

SQUAD MARIUS
10 Vanguard Veterans



SQUAD CAEMUS
10 Sternguard Veterans

SQUAD ALESSADRUS
5 Sternguard Veterans



ANCIENT ZORAEI
Furioso Dreadnought



THE SANGUINOR
The Golden Angel



THE GOLDEN HOST
15 Sanguinary Guard



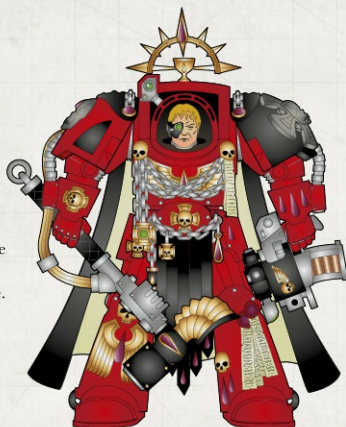
CAPTAIN KARLAEN

A masterful strategist and unstoppable warrior, it is for good reason that Captain Karlaen is known by many as the Shield of Baal. He has worn the mantle of 1st Company Captain for two centuries now, and has distinguished himself over and over again during that long span of years. At the battle of Forlorn Falls, Karlaen and his Terminators sundered the defences of their Iron Warrior foes to crush the traitors wholesale. During the cleansing of the infested Space Hulk *Solace in Sorrow*, Karlaen demonstrated the full breadth of his tactical brilliance, seamlessly coordinating battles across ten separate combat zones despite the failure of the Blood Angels' auspex web. Most recently, Captain Karlaen proved the faith of his old mentor, Commander Dante, by displaying matchless heroism during the war against the Cryptoid Tendril of Hive Fleet Leviathan. Were that terrible xenos swarm to have broken through the Cryptus Shieldworlds, it would have swept down upon the Blood Angels' home world like an all-consuming storm. Instead, Captain Karlaen was instrumental in seeing the aliens reduced to drifting, void-borne corpses.

COLOURS OF THE 1ST



The finest veteran warriors of their Chapter, every single Blood Angel of the 1st Company goes to war bedecked in honours, as befits heroes of their stature. Their armour is ornate, elaborately worked and intricately decorated by the Chapter artificers. Many display fine scrollwork and beautifully wrought slogans upon their battle-plate, while others are bedecked with purity seals and oath papers, or hung with talismanic relics of the battle-brothers who came before them in the war eternal.

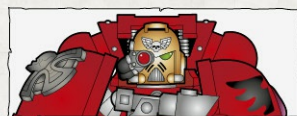


Captain Karlaen displays the skull emblem of the Archangels in several places upon his armour.

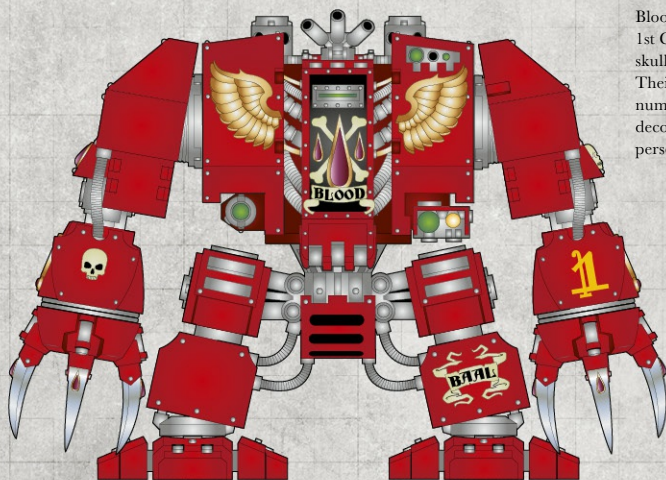


As with most Chapters' Librarians, those of the Blood Angels go to battle clad in the blue of the Librarius.

The Company Standard of the Archangels is a masterwork heraldic piece, showing the company's numeric designation and icon alongside the wing of Sanguinius, which symbolises excellence.

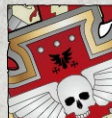


The helmets of Archangels Sternguard and Vanguard Veterans are finished in gold to mark their elite status.

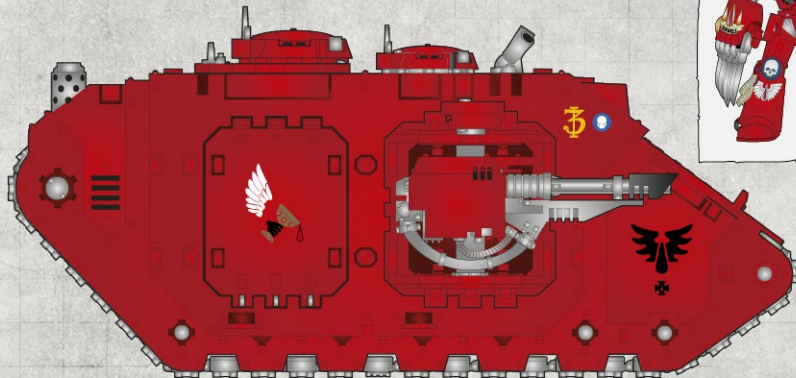


Blood Angels Dreadnoughts of the 1st Company display the white skull emblem of the Archangels. Their hulls also bear yellow vehicle numerals, along with elaborate decorative designs, slogans, and personal heraldry.

Many Archangels bear honour markings upon their armour. Each signifies a spectacular deed performed, a terrible danger endured, or a mighty foe slain.



This Archangels Landraider bears the Chapter icon and Crux Terminatus symbol upon its forward bulwark. Its vehicle numeral is picked out in yellow higher up on the forward hull, next to the squad marking that matches that displayed on the knee pads of its Terminator passengers. Finally, the tank's side hatch bears an honour marking depicting the Red Grail.



THE IOLINE RAID

>>> ASC 040-065

All across the Diamor System, spaceships, war engines and warriors battled to the death. Each war zone was a cog within a machine of Lord Xorphas' design. Those cogs meshed to achieve a dark and diabolical whole. Yet the Chaos plan's intricacy was also its weakness; if the Blood Angels could rip a single cog from the machine, the whole thing might fail.

In the wake of the Blood Angels' arrival, the war for the Diamor System entered a new phase. The Sons of Sanguinius had turned the tide upon Amethal, their engineered psyches proof against the planet's strange curse and their warrior strength a match for the battle-ravaged Crimson Slaughter warbands. Around several of the Mechanicus Hubs, and in numerous secondary combat zones scattered across the globe, the armies of the Imperium fought resurgent. Titans of the Legio Metalica and Knights of House Raven strode across highland wilds, weapons thumping as they exchanged blazing volleys of death with their traitor counterparts. Armies of Skitarii and Cult Mechanicus forces pushed back rampaging packs of Daemon Engines, or coordinated their attacks with the fast-moving Sons of Sanguinius to surround and eliminate Crimson Slaughter forces wherever they were found. Pristine woodlands burned and once-beautiful rivers ran with blood and ichor, but the forces of Chaos were pushed back hard.

Captain Karlaen, meanwhile, had learned from Technoarcheologist Dominus Ivasnophon what was at stake. The First Captain, initially angry at the Magos' imperious summons, had become serious and engaged as Ivasnophon revealed the nature of the technology that he sought upon Amethal. It was an ancient prize, something made by those who ruled the galaxy long before the first Terran life forms emerged from the primordial ooze. Other examples of its sort

had been found across the galaxy from time to time, hints at an incredibly potent weapon against the powers of Chaos. Ivasnophon specialised in the location, excavation and imitation of such archeotechnological treasures. For centuries he had been following a tenuous trail of clues towards this, his greatest find. Amethal was not a planet, he explained, but rather a skin of rock and biosphere stretched as camouflage over an ancient cage. Vast beyond belief, wreathed in arcane wards and dark technologies, it was a prison-eternal for daemonic entities. It was the Magos Dominus' belief that the Amethal Cage contained hellish beings beyond count, trapped for millennia behind warded bars. Why the ancients had sought to isolate these creatures from the Warp was a mystery lost to the mists of time, but the Magos was certain they had succeeded. Captain Karlaen was horrified at this revelation, for if that were true, then the empyric inmates of this world represented a dreadful danger to the defences around the Cadian Gate. At the same time, he was not slow to grasp Ivasnophon's purpose on this world. Building upon his countless decades of study and experimentation, the Magos Dominus was at last nearly able to replicate the technologies of the Daemon cage. He was weeks, months at most, from creating – and then mass producing – devices that could cage Daemons on a vast scale. Though not a permanent solution to the daemonic threat, such devices might end daemonic incursions as soon as they began, and thus turn the tide in the war for the Cadian Gate.







The Metalican excavations across Amethal had revealed that there was terrible danger here as well as great reward. The Daemon cage had a weak point, discovered beneath the excavation site at Hub Beta-Secundus. Whether an intentional exit or the product of millennia of wear and tear, there was a zone in Amethal's northern hemisphere where daemonic energies – whispering voices and strange phenomena – leaked through. Until this point, it had proven a localised hazard for the Metalicans but little more – a number of their excavation Servitors and Skitarii guards had mutated or engaged in murderous rampages, but these were acceptable losses considering the prize at hand. Now, however, it appeared that Lord Xorphas had learned of the weak spot as well. Magos Ivasnophon theorised that the heretics had deployed their Crimson Slaughter shock troops primarily for this very purpose. The daemon-haunted nature of the renegades was well documented, and it seemed that Xorphas had cynically exploited that open connection to the powers of the Warp.

If the planet-wide combat drops by the Crimson Slaughter had been punishing, the focussed hammer blow that had fallen next upon Hub Beta-Secundus was little short of apocalyptic. From the skies rained wave after wave of Dreadclaw and Kharybdis Drop Pods interspersed with heavy drop craft, all painted in the blood red of Khorne. Landing in a great mass in and around Beta-Secundus, Cultists, Berzerkers and war engines of the Blood God spilled from their transports with Khârn the Betrayer at their head. Elements from Forge World Metalica and House Raven moved to neutralise the drop sites while the leaders of the Death Company strove to gather their scattered

and psychotic battle-brothers. Initial Khornate casualties were high. The heretics spilled from their craft with no thought for strategy or cohesion and were mown down in their hundreds. But what the Chaos forces lacked in tactical acumen they more than made up for in murderous fury and sheer weight of numbers. Worse, they had Khârn. Within the first hour of battle, the Betrayer and his red-armoured tide of killers had overrun the Adeptus Mechanicus forces arrayed around Hub Beta-Secundus. Next, they surged in a great mass towards the heart of the hub. The Khornate horde poured through the ragged gaps in the area's defences and spilled down ferrocrete streets between the blazing ruins of prefab manufacturums and shrines to the Omnissiah. Lords of Skulls rumbled forwards amongst the masses, the ground shaking with their advance.

The surviving brothers of the Death Company met their enemies head-on. The expert leadership of Astorath and Death Company Chaplain Daenor had restored some order to the lost brothers' ranks. Spearheaded by the furious Chaplain Lemartes, the Death Company then counter-charged their enemies, dictating the shape of the battle rather than waiting to be overwhelmed. It was a daring move, and one that slowed the Khornate advance. Yet soon enough the massively outnumbered Blood Angels sustained appalling casualties. Over ninety percent of the Death Company were slain by the time multiple engines of the Legio Metalica were able to reach the engagement area. The thunderous advance of the Titans drove the Khornate forces back and fractured their cohesion, providing time for Astorath and Lemartes to extract the last remnants of

their forces. Chaplain Daenor was born from the battlefield by Astorath himself, hacked and mangled by Khârn the Betrayer. The loss of the Death Company brothers was acceptable, for it had always been their destiny to perish in selfless battle, and they had sold themselves as dearly as they could. Astorath would not allow Daenor to perish, however, for the Death Company Chaplain was amongst the most accomplished of his order.

In the wake of the Titans' attack, the surviving Khornate warbands scattered away from Hub Beta-Secundus, marauding at will in search of blood and skulls. The surviving Legio Metalica engines also disengaged, the Titans' strength needed elsewhere to defend against the fresh waves of Daemon Engines being flown in from Ioline. Neither was this danger restricted to Hub Beta-Secundus. As the war raged on across Amethal, Imperial counter-attacks were being driven back or ground down by huge packs of newly forged Daemon Engines. Baron Dargetus and his Knights of House Raven came to the fore at this time, driving hard into the monstrous packs of enemy war engines and ripping the heart from one Hellforged Warpack after another. It was the Knights that retook Hub Daedalus-Quartus from overwhelming traitor forces, driving out the Daemon Engines that had infested its ruins and crushing a warband of Crimson Slaughter sheltering amidst the destruction. Yet this was a temporary solution at best. The traitors were receiving a steady stream of powerful reinforcements. The Imperial forces were not. By the inescapable arithmetic of war, it could only be a matter of time before Chaos was victorious.

Captain Karlaen knew now more than ever that this could not be allowed. He thus opted for a daring solution to the problem, one that only the superhuman warriors of the Adeptus Astartes would have any hope of achieving. The Blood Angels would cut off the enemy reinforcements at their source. They would destroy the Daemon Engine factories on Ioline.

It was a dangerous gamble, but Magos Ivasnophon was able to improve the Imperial odds. With much ceremony and binharic chanting, he and his senior acolytes vanished into the depths of their temple primaris at Hub Enigma-Quintus and emerged some hours later with ancient and mysterious devices. Ivasnophon assured his allies that the machine spirits of these devices would conceal whatever spaceship they were installed aboard, allowing a Blood Angels craft to reach Ioline's low orbit undetected and launch a massed teleport assault against the planet before the foe even knew it was there.

Only days after the savage battle between the Death Company and Khârn's Khornate hordes, the Blood Angels frigate *Angelus Redemptor* ghosted into orbit over Ioline's northern continent. The industrial world had been reduced to an unrecognisable horror by the attentions of the Black Legion and their Warpsmiths. Auspex scans revealed that, where once had stood teeming hives and industrial macro-complexes, now there were cannibalised ruins, bleak shrines to the Dark Gods, and sprawling hellscape of daemonic forge-factories drenched by a constant, irradiated downpour.





These vile sites churned brimstone fumes into the sky as they constructed Daemon Engines by the hundred, depositing their brazen shells into holding areas around a vast circle of biomechanical warding towers. This was the Hex Infernum, an impossibly huge warding circle within which whirled a gateway to hell that spat legions of Daemons through its meniscus to be bound into the waiting engines.

Captain Karlaen led the attack upon Ioline in person, at the head of his elite Archangels. By the grace of the Mechanicus, squads of Terminators, Sternguard and Vanguard Veterans all teleported down into the industrial hell of Ioline, alongside more than a dozen of the golden-armoured Sanguinary Guard.



Unable to risk deployment within the swirling energies thrown off by the Hex, the Blood Angels flashed into being some way to the south amidst the thundering industry of a Daemon Engine factory. The element of surprise was total; the Cultists who worked the monstrous production lines died in droves beneath the Blood Angels' guns. Within moments of their deployment, Strike Force Karlaen was pushing north. The Blood Angels did not waste time with localised sabotage – destroying individual factorum units would be like trying to bring down a cliff face with a chisel. Instead, Karlaen's plan was to fell the nearest of the warding towers with a vortex grenade, and in doing so destabilise the Hex Infernum. Such a catastrophic containment breach would cause an impulsive collapse that would seal the rift and devastate Ioline.

Though their teleport attack allowed the Blood Angels to swiftly advance upon their objective, resistance quickly increased. The Blood Angels had landed within the domain of Warpsmith Althedrak, a former Iron Warrior who had sworn himself to Abaddon's cause in return for great power. Althedrak was not a subtle creature; upon discovering that enemies had infiltrated his infernal factorum and were clearly making for the Hex Infernum, the Warpsmith flew into a rage and threw everything he had at the Blood Angels.

So it was that Karlaen's forces found themselves mired amidst a warren of thundering industrial devices, roaring furnaces, looming ruins and narrow streets. Traitors poured in from all sides, driven by the exhortations of their Warpsmith master, while Daemon Engines flattened everything in their path to reach the interlopers. Karlaen and his warriors laid down a withering hail of fire, melta blasts ripping the enemy engines apart while Sternguard Veterans mowed down rank after rank of the enemy. Still

the Blood Angels could not stay where they were, for they would surely be buried in foes. Each attempt they made to press forwards was stymied, Althedrak jamming alleyways with the corpses of his underlings and bringing buildings down in avalanches to hold the Blood Angels at bay. When a bellowing Lord of Skulls loomed over the depleted strike force, it appeared as though the Blood Angels' attack was doomed to costly failure. Yet at that moment there came a manifestation of a mysterious power that has long aided Sanguinius' sons in their darkest hours. Blazing with golden light, the Sanguinor dropped from the storm-lashed heavens and drove his blade through the Daemon Engine's skull.

Led now by their Chapter's avenging angel, the surviving Blood Angels rallied and carved a path to the base of the warding tower. Barely half of Strike Force Karlaen still lived by the time they reached the tower's base. With massed traitor forces closing in on three sides and the maelstrom screaming on the other, the Blood Angels prepared to sell their lives dearly in order to achieve their objective. But before Karlaen could make the ultimate sacrifice, again the Sanguinor came to the fore. As the First Captain and his remaining brothers watched in reverence, the golden warrior took the vortex grenade and soared high, plunging headlong into the tangled workings of the warding tower. The entire edifice seemed to squirm and pulse as though it fought the Sanguinor's invading presence, and then with a thunderous roar the tower began to collapse.

Karlaen wasted no time in ordering a fighting retreat. With a swirling empyric hurricane blowing at their backs and the enemy ranks collapsing into panicked confusion, the Blood Angels cut a path through the encircling foe and dashed for their extraction point. They barely made it. With one warding tower fallen, the Hex Infernum raged out of control. The raw energies of change and madness swept through Ioline's tortured streets like a tidal wave, obliterating everything in their path. By the time the Blood Angels' extraction craft were burning for orbit and a rendezvous with the *Angelus Redemptor*, the Hex had detonated altogether.



In the hours that followed, a roiling blast wave swept across the planet's surface, obliterating all trace of Chaotic industry on the planet, and leaving nothing but blackened, glowing ash in its wake. It took seven days before the fury of the global firestorms burned down to fume and smoke, by which time the planet was little more than a ravaged shell. The destruction was unimaginable, but the Blood Angels had their victory, and had dealt Xorphas' forces a dire blow. And the Sanguinor? Karlaen himself had seen him escape the explosion of the warding tower, a streak of gold soaring away into the heavens. When the hour was once again dark enough, he would return.







+++AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG+++

+++SEGMENT ENGAGE 0011110001101+++

+++OMNISSIAHREGNUMPERPETUARI+++

ASC 061-063: IOLINE REINFORCEMENTS IDENTIFIED AS PRIMARY HAZARD TO WAR EFFORT ON AMETHAL [2.4% INCREASE PER HOUR SIDEREAL]. BLOOD ANGELS 1ST CAPTAIN KARLAEN LEADS STRIKE FORCE [SUB-REF: ARCHANGELS/SANGUINARY GUARD] AGAINST DAEMON ENGINE PRODUCTION FACILITIES ON IOLINE [SUB-REF HEX INFERNIUM]. AID PROVIDED BY MAGOS DOMINUS IVASNOPHON [0011 BINHARIC RECURSIVE, CLEARANCE - CLOAKING ENGINE/OMNIFACTORIAL TELEPORTARIA].

ASC 064: IOLINE RAID SUCCESSFUL [SUB-REF: SANGUINOR]. HEX INFERNIUM DESTABILISED, COLLAPSE OF HEXEGRAMMIC FAIL-SAFES TRIGGERED QUANTUM COLLAPSE. IOLINE SURFACE SCoured BY ECTOPLASMATIC ENERGY STORM, ALL BLACK LEGION ASSETS DESTROYED. ARCHANGELS EXTRACT SUCCESSFULLY FROM ENGAGEMENT AREA. 57% CASUALTIES SUSTAINED.

ASC 064-066: TRAITOR RESPONSE TO IOLINE RAID EXTREMELY RAPID. BLACK LEGION FLEET MOBILISE IN VOID SECTOR ALEPH-DAU-ZEPHRA, ADVANCE AGAINST PLANET AMETHAL. WORD BEARERS BATTLESHIP [SUB-REF: 'CACODAEMON'] DETECTED IN DEEP ORBIT - BEYOND RANGE OF CAPITAL PLANET TOURMALID NAVAL GUNS. MALIGN EMPYRIC SIGNAL DETECTED FROM WARSHIP AT ASC 065. SIMULTANEOUS HERETIC CULT UPRISINGS IN TOURMALID GRAV-HABS AND DOCK-SPIRE FACILITIES PARALYSE SYSTEM GOVERNANCE ORGANS, COMPROMISE SHIPYARDS AND ORBITAL RESERVE ELEMENTS [SUB-REF: WORD BEARERS, DARK APOSTLE GORATH-HEL]. BLOOD ANGELS HONOUR GUARD ENGAGE INSURGENTS AND WORD BEARER ELITES.

ASC 066: BLOOD ANGEL'S 2ND CAPTAIN APHAEL ENGAGES GLOBAL HOLOLITH STRATEGIC COUNSEL WITH PRIMARY MILITARY LEADERS ON PLANET AMETHAL [SUB-REF: HOUSE RAVEN, IVASNOPHON EXPEDITION, PRINCEPS PRIMUS LEGIO METALICA, SUBSID NAVAL OFFICERS - FULL AUDIO LOG X31B]. RESPONDING TO BLACK LEGION VOID-MOBILISATION AND SUSPECTED STRIKE COORDINATES, ALL AVAILABLE IMPERIAL FORCES MOVE TO DEFENCE OF HUB BETA-SECUNDUS.

ASC 066: ADDITIONAL - TRAITOR FORCES MOVE IN FOR OBJECTIVE ASSAULT ON AMETHAL [SUB-REF: BLACK LEGION] [SUB-REF: LORD XORPHAS]. UNEXPLAINED METEROEMPYRIC PHENOMENON ON DUST-PLAINS WEST OF BETA-SECUNDUS, EST 82.335% CHANCE TRAITOR LEADER KHARN REGATHERING REMAINING AVAILABLE FORCES AND RE-ENTERING PRIMARY ENGAGEMENT ZONE.

+++SEGMENT CONCLUDES 00111100101+++



The background is a dark space scene featuring a vibrant red and orange nebula. In the center, a large, white, stylized winged emblem, resembling a pair of wings or a stylized 'W', is superimposed. The emblem has a weathered, textured appearance. On the left and right sides, parts of a dark, metallic, industrial structure are visible, possibly a spaceship or a large machine. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and intense.

CHAPTER 3

THE SCREAMING PIT

FOR THE IMPERIUM

Stirred to action by the destruction of Ioline, the Black Legion had struck at Amethal. They concentrated their full force upon Hub Beta-Secundus, and the dark prize that lurked there. The Imperial forces had gathered to form a great noose, marshalling their strength before they struck the last blow to eradicate the Chaos threat once and for all. The plan belonged to Captain Aphael, whose own forces formed the southernmost element of the offensive.

Standing atop his command Rhino, Captain Aphael took a deep breath. He smelled machine oil and old sweat rising from the hundreds of Skitarii who stood in serried ranks before him. He heard the hum of power armour backpacks from the Blood Angels warriors gathered around him.

Aphael began to speak, his voice amplified by his helm to a godlike boom. He knew the vox would be carrying his words out around the perimeter of Hub Beta-Secundus to every battle group of Imperial warriors assembled there. Blood Angels. Knights. Cult Mechanicus. Titan crews. All would hear his rallying cry.

'Sons of the Angel. Servants of the Ommissiah. Warriors of the Imperium. Already, you have fought long and hard for Amethal. Already, you have faced dangers and hardships that would have broken lesser men. Yet to you proud souls this is nothing more than your duty, and for that I salute you.'

Aphael slammed one fist against his breastplate in a warrior's salute. The Blood Angels around his command tank mirrored the gesture.

'But our war for this world, this system, is not over. The sternest test still lies ahead. To the north, the traitors are landing their forces within the ruins of Hub Beta-Secundus. These faithless cowards have renounced every oath we hold sacred, and given in to weakness and fear. They make a mockery of our faith, our courage, our very species. And yet, in their arrogance, these spineless traitors think they can sweep aside the noble warriors of the Imperium and take whatever they want from this world.' Aphael's voice rose to an impassioned shout as he swept towards the conclusion of his speech. His audience watched, enraptured.

'Brothers of the Imperium, we may hail from different worlds, but within us all is the same strength. It is the strength to face temptation and evil, and to deny them. Within us all burns an unquenchable fire, and it is that fire that will bear us on to victory even as it scours the taint of Chaos from this world forevermore!'

All around Aphael, his battle-brothers raised a rousing cheer, brandishing their weapons in salute of Aphael's words. Even amongst the ranks of the Skitarii backs straightened, heart valves pumped faster, and binharic victory chants buzzed out from vocalisers. In response, Captain Aphael swept up his ornate blade, pointing north to where the sky was criss-crossed with the contrails of Chaos drop-craft.

'For the Emperor, the Angel and the Ommissiah!' he roared, 'Forwards, brothers, to victory!'

Even as he spoke, a wing of Stormraven Gunships screamed low over Aphael's head, the red of the Blood Angels and the Black of the Death Company stark against the hazy morning sky.



His speech delivered, the Captain of the Blood Angels' 2nd Company dropped through the roof hatch of his Rhino. Engines were gunning and snorting all around as the tanks of his strike force began their advance. Space Marine bikes slewed round, raising fans of dust and dirt as their riders swung their mounts towards the ruins of Beta-Secundus. Skitarii maniples marched in perfect lockstep towards the distant foe, their Ironstriders loping out ahead of them like weird flightless birds. Motivated by Aphael's words, and their detestation for the traitorous foe, the armies of the Imperium advanced on all fronts, a closing noose intended to strangle Lord Xorphas' tainted followers once and for all.

'An effective oration,' cracked Magos Ivasnophon's voice across Aphael's vox. 'I project that it will have raised the combat effectiveness of our combined forces by a variable value of between zero point seven and four point three percent.'

'I'm glad you approved,' responded Aphael wryly, as his Rhino accelerated across the churned grasslands, 'and that you support my plan of attack.'

'It is the optimal response to the enemy dispositions and objectives, given the difficult variables present in the strategic equation upon this world,' responded the Magos in his monotonous voice. 'Taking into account the almost complete devastation of Hub Beta-Secundus, and the scattered nature of our own forces at the time of Black Legion fleet mobilisation, attempting to secure and hold the hub would have been an inefficient response. Even with the sacrifices our fleet has made to delay the traitors outside of the orbital envelope, my projections confirm that we would not have been able to invest Hub Beta-Secundus with sufficient materiel to hold it against a concerted traitor drop.'

'Instead,' came a new voice, cutting into their command channel, 'you've gathered our strength, and forced the traitors onto the defensive. Make them hold that pile of rubble and ruin if they want it so much, and see how they like spreading their forces thin on every front. Good work, brother.'

Aphael's stern expression broke for a moment into a handsome grin.

'Ha! Captain Karlaen! Inspirational work on Ioline, brother. Where are you now?'

'On high,' came Karlaen's response, 'moving back into orbit aboard *Angelus Redemptor* with what's left of the raiding party. The fleet is moving in now to draw off the Black Legion ships – we'll punch through the blockade once it's sufficiently strung out, and meet you on the ground. But brother, be advised, there's a lot of iron up here and it's pointing in your direction. Expect heavy bombardments before you reach the hub.'

As though summoned by Karlaen's words, the first lance beam stretched down from the clouds just seconds later, blasting a vitrified crater a hundred yards across and annihilating a squadron of Baal Predators. Aphael watched his auspex, the grin gone from his face, as the ordnance began to fall and the world turned to thunder and fire. There would be terrible casualties, he thought, but they must press home their attack. This was the last battle for Amethal, and it was one they could not lose.



As one, the armies of the Imperium advanced across the burned-out kill zone that the Mechanicus had cleared so many weeks before. They charged into the blizzard of fire hurled from on high by the warships of the Black Legion. Barrage bombs sailed down to explode with enormous force, sending Knights sprawling and turning squads of Skitarii to ash. Lance beams hammered Titan void shields, or atomised squads of Assault Marines. Yet though the bombardment was heavy and the destruction horrific, the Imperial forces did not slacken their pace.

Technoarcheologist Dominus Ivasnophon advanced unflinchingly through the barrage. Sub-routines within his cerebral processors tracked the fire patterns of the enemy craft. He did what he could to direct the Electro-Priests, Servitors and robots that surrounded him out of the path of the enemy's fire, but Ivasnophon knew that casualties were inevitable. Many of the cybernetic warriors that followed him to war this day were priceless relics, wondrous examples of the Ommissiah's beneficence. Yet they were all expendable in this war. It was the will of the Machine God that the foe be stopped before they could unlock the secrets of the Daemon cage, and if that cost the life of every faithful warrior on Amethal, still the equation would balance. Besides, thought Ivasnophon, the Ommissiah would not let him find lasting death while the secrets of replicating Daemon cage technology remained hidden from him.

'That is not part of his design,' vocalised the Magos, as barrage bombs slammed down to the south of his position. Though well over two thousand yards distant, the pressure wave from the explosion swept across Ivasnophon and his followers, raising a vast cloud of dust that engulfed them completely. Those Electro-Priests closest to the detonation stumbled and a number fell, their organics pulped by the overpressure. The rest regained their footing and marched on, faces turned toward the ruined hub that loomed ahead.

Visibility was terrible. The bombardment was raising apocalyptic clouds of dust and smoke that whirled

across the battlefield, while the electromagnetic pulses of the lance strikes fouled auspex and augurs.

'Congregation is to repeat the canticle of the strengthened spirit,' ordered Ivasnophon, 'and focus prayers upon the abjuration of hostile energy phantasms. Never blind is he who sees with the dataframe clarity of the Ommissiah.'



The distance was closing rapidly. Ivasnophon calculated his forces would be leaving the bombardment zone and entering the fire-fields of the Black Legion within the next twenty-five seconds. He performed a cognitive scan and learned that he now led a force of precisely eight hundred and seventeen combat-capable warriors. Casualties from the bombardment had been significant, standing at fifty-six percent of his force.

'This is Technoarcheologist Dominus Ivasnophon,' announced the Magos across the Blood Angels' command channel. 'Advisory: my force has suffered significant casualties. Enemy bombardment heavier than calculated. Projections for success at breaching hub defences now at forty-two percent.' The vox channel crackled with static, even the hardened comms of the Adeptus Astartes struggling to cope with the

disruption of the bombardment. Ivasnophon could see from the noospheric net that his allies were pressing forwards with their own attacks, and it seemed unlikely that any were aware of his predicament. He received no response to his hails.

With sudden fury, the Black Legion guns opened up. Heavy weapons thumped and howled, hurling fire from concealed positions amongst the rubble. Bolters hammered, scything shells through the Cult Mechanicus ranks, and the Magos triangulated multiple battle cannons firing as Daemon Engines rained explosive death upon his forces. Calmly, Ivasnophon sent noospheric commands flitting through his forces, compelling them to attack.

Kataphron Destroyers hurled searing orbs of plasma into the enemy defences, vaporising power-armoured foes. Phosphor blasters sprayed the fringes of the hub, Kastellan Robots lighting the battlefield with the harsh glare of their weapons. Crackling with power, the bands of Fulgurite and Corpuscarii Electro-Priests charged headlong, weathering the Black Legion firepower in their determination to bring the foe to battle.

It took Ivasnophon less than five minutes of all-out battle to assess that his forces had been rendered insufficient to carry the enemy's defences. He and his followers were expendable, but there was no sense wasting their lives inefficiently. Better to pull back, try to lure the enemy from their defences, then probe for weak spots and strike there instead.

With that thought, the Magos sent out the commands to pull his surviving followers – now some four hundred strong – back from the fight.

It was then that Ivasnophon's static-fouled augurs detected movement to the rear, closing rapidly. The Magos' cerebral cogitators whirled, projecting possible threat scenarios and responses. Was this reinforcement? The lie was put to that faint hope when, from amidst the murk, a bestial war cry rang out.

'Blood for the Blood God! Kill! Maim! Burn!'

The next moment, red armoured figures charged in to attack. They brought with them vast black clouds, unnatural meteorological phenomena that caused Ivasnophon's logic circuits to rebel. But there could be no denying that red-lit storm clouds were rolling overhead, nor that blood was falling from them in a hissing deluge.

Caught between the Black Legion to their fore and the sudden charge of Khârn and his Berzerkers to their rear, the Cult Mechanicus fought desperately. Electrostatic gauntlets spat coruscating bolts of power that electrocuted Berzerkers and hurled them from their feet. Chain axes screamed as they carved through flesh and metal. Krak missiles and battle-cannon shells continued

to fall amidst the mayhem, obliterating loyalist and traitor alike.

Gliding through the madness, Ivasnophon lashed out at the traitors surrounding him. With each swing of his power axe or shot from his volkite blaster, he sent another Chaos worshipper sprawling into the bloody mud. His only thought now was to weaken the foe enough that he could break out with the last of his warriors and withdraw. The numbers had been against his force from the beginning, and now defeat was inevitable.

And then came Khârn. The Betrayer's axe swept out of nowhere, faster even than Ivasnophon's optics could follow. The first blow severed his caliver from its mechadendrite and carved deep into the flesh and metal of his body. As Khârn raised his weapon for a second strike, the Magos diverted all power to his saviour protocols, watching data spooling out in his mind's eye, flowing away through the noosphere.

'You cannot kill me,' he began, voice still flat and calm despite his horrific wounds. 'The Ommissiah—'

'Has not the might of Khorne!' roared Khârn, bringing his screaming axe around again and hacking Ivasnophon's head from his shoulders. The master of the Metalican exploratory force felt one last roaring burst of neural feedback, and then he knew no more.



Captain Aphael's Rhino rang like a struck bell. The speeding vehicle lurched with the impact, then skidded to a halt. Smoke drifted from somewhere in the vehicle's workings, and the hull rattled as more enemy fire struck it. Aphael didn't hesitate. He shot a glance around at the battle-brothers of his Command Squad, and slammed a palm against the activation rune to lower the tank's rear ramp. The Blood Angels emerged into a scene of furious battle. 2nd Company battle-brothers and red-hulled battle tanks streamed past on both sides, guns blazing. Enemy fire lashed them, shredding tank tracks and punching Space Marines off their feet.

'Forwards brothers! For the Angel!' Aphael rounded his stalled Rhino and ran hard for the enemy lines. He could see the Black Legion ahead through whirling dust and smoke. They were dug in amidst the rubble and ruins of Beta-Secundus' southern fringes, pouring everything they had into stopping the Blood Angel assault. The Black Legion fire overlapped with lethal efficiency, hulking flesh-metal warriors and horn-helmeted traitors making the Blood Angels pay for every yard they advanced. A battle-brother ahead of Aphael was smashed into the floor, his arm blown off by a shot fired from the sagging ruin of a factorum. To Aphael's right, a band of Assault Marines soared down on tails of fire to slam into the Black Legion lines. To his left, Librarian Asmasael led his Librarius brethren into battle, lashing the enemy with psychic lightnings and thunderous shock waves of force.

Then the Captain was in amongst his foes, plasma pistol blasting and power sword swinging. He stabbed his blade through the throat of a nearby traitor, spinning away from a point-blank bolter blast before scything down the weapon's wielder. Stormravens screamed overhead, assault cannons howling. Aphael's Command Squad locked blades with the enemy all around him, power-armoured figures wrestling, hacking and blasting amidst the ruins.

'Keep up the pressure, brothers,' voxed Aphael, plasma pistol boring a shot through the chest of a monstrous Obliterator. 'All tanks, suppress any enemies attempting to reinforce the foe.

Assault squads, gather on me. We will break their line here.'

Aphael had fought his way into the shadow of the crumbling factorum, his mind intent upon the developing tactical picture as his warriors pushed the foe back. The next second, a Chaos Space Marine plunged down upon him from the balcony above. Aphael just got his blade up in time to block his attacker's own. The Blood Angels Captain parried a series of lightning-fast cuts, back-peddalling before the ferocity of his enemy. The Black Legionnaire was clad in ornate armour that lent him the appearance of a Daemon. It fought like one too. Aphael weaved around the next swing and attempted to run his enemy through, but before he could a terrible blast of sonic energy exploded from the traitor's vox grill. It was like being struck by a speeding tank. Aphael was smashed onto his back, senses screaming with overload. Through a haze of pain, he registered his Company Champion, Amadael, blocking the enemy's killing stroke and driving the traitor back into the press of battle. Gradually, as though in slow motion, Aphael's superhuman biology overcame the cracked bones and ruptured blood vessels he had suffered, dumping pain blockers into his blood stream and helping the Captain propel himself back to his feet.

Aphael was just in time to see the Chaos Champion ram its blade through Champion Amadael's head, splitting the valiant warrior's skull in two. Red tinged the edge of Aphael's vision as rage and guilt sought to overwhelm him. Yet he was a Captain of the Blood Angels and he would not give in to the Flaw. Aphael surged through the combat, coldly cutting down every enemy that barred his path. The Captain followed his quarry through the hollow doorway of the ruined factorum, where he found the Chaos Space Marine lurking, its back to the entrance.

'I must hold them back,' he heard it hiss, and felt nothing but contempt as he raised his plasma pistol.

'No, traitor,' spat Captain Aphael, pulling his trigger and unleashing his weapon's killing power, 'all you must do is die.'









INTO THE PIT

While battle raged on the planet below, vast warships duelled in the void high above Hub Beta-Secundus, salvos of explosive ordnance bursting against shuddering void shields and lance beams cutting the darkness. Fighters and bombers swarmed around capital ships, darting in to sting their prey before flitting away. Through the midst of the battle plunged the *Angelus Redemptor*, slipping between the larger craft like a knife between an enemy's ribs. Within the *Redemptor's* teleportarium chamber, Captain Karlaen and the survivors of his strike force stood ready to deploy.

'We're a smaller force than when we hit Ioline,' the Captain voxed privately to Sergeant Alphaeus. 'So many lost.'

'Smaller, but not lesser, Captain,' responded Alphaeus proudly. 'This force can still win the war.'

'I wouldn't doubt it for a moment,' replied Karlaen proudly, before switching his address to the warriors gathered amid the machineries of the teleport chamber. 'We shall honour the fallen through victory in battle. Every brother who fell upon Ioline will be repaid tenfold upon our return to Amethal.' A rumble of assent stirred through the chamber; these brothers still bore the scars of Ioline, and Karlaen expected no wild cheers from them. But he could see it in his warriors' eyes. Every last one of them was ready.

Moments later, the electroconces of the chamber pulsed, and the timbre of the thrumming engines deepened. The attendant Techmarines looked up expectantly from their consoles.

'It is time,' declared Karlaen. 'Prepare yourselves, my brothers. For the Angel and the Emperor.'

The Blood Angels gathered upon the broad, rune-glowing platform of the teleporter. Arcane energies whirled into a crackling storm, and an ethereal gale howled through the chamber. With an implosive rush of kaleidoscopic light, Karlaen and his warriors teleported into the midst of the battle for Hub Beta-Secundus.

The moment he re-manifested, Karlaen assessed and analysed the situation. The Archangels and Sanguinary Guard had flashed into being near the edge of a vast pit, clearly the Mechanicus excavation site. Nearby, a broad ramp of packed earth wound down the pit's inner wall. From the pit came a terrible, sawing scream, a distorted cacophony that tore at the mind and soul. The sound filled Karlaen with dread. Perhaps the Imperial forces were already too late. The Captain burned with urgency to find the source of that twisted symphony and silence it.

Karlaen and his warriors stood upon cracked ferrocrete, surrounded by the blasted ruins of what had once been prefab Mechanicus structures. The ordered enclave had been reduced to a vast sprawl of slumped architecture, scattered wrecks and heaped, mangled corpses. Titans, both loyalist and traitor, loomed over the ruins in the distance, hurling torrents of firepower at one another, while unnatural storm clouds seethed overhead, sluicing bloody rain down upon the field of war. Karlaen's auspex was distorted by electrostatic, but he could make out Imperial battlefronts pressing in from the north, east and south. He did not need his auspex, however, to see that all around his immediate position were dozens of hostile contacts. Chaos Space Marines. Cultists. Daemon Engines. It was a sizeable enemy force, but the Archangels had the element of surprise. Swiftly, the First Captain leapt into action.

'Open fire,' he roared. 'Expanding fire pattern, kill-priority on their armour. Hold until reinforced!'

As one, Strike Force Karlaen let fly. Bands of Black Legionnaires span with superhuman speed, trying to bring their weapons to bear. They were smashed off their feet by bolt rounds and plasma blasts. The foe had evidently been massing its Helforged Warpacks here for a counter-attack, as a clanking, roaring wave of the ironclad beasts burst from the ruins of a nearby manufactorum. Storming from amid the collapsing architecture of the factory came huge, loping horrors and scuttling

monstrosities of brass and spiked iron. Metal tendrils lashed. Glowing cannons whined as they powered up. Helbrutes bellowed their madness as their huge claws flexed.

'On our left,' barked Karlaen. His Sternguard Squads levelled their weapons and sent hissing melta beams out to meet the ironclad beasts. Forgefiends detonated in fountains of gouting ectoplasm. A Defiler crashed sideways as two of its legs were sheared off. The hideous contraption tried to scramble upright, resembling a wounded spider for a moment before a krak grenade blew off its head.

Still the Warpack came on, their fire chewing through the Blood Angels and felling several. One Maulerfiend, its hull ornately decorated and its eyes blazing with power, lunged in and ripped three Sternguard open.

For a moment, the Archangels' line buckled, then Karlaen charged in at the head of his Terminators. Like knights of legend, the Blood Angels elite battled the monsters hand to hand, feet braced amidst rubble and ruin as they smashed and battered at their foes. Energy fields flashed as lashing tentacles and massive claws crashed against storm shields. One Terminator was snatched off his feet by a Defiler and crushed like a ration tin, blood and pulped flesh squirting through the thing's brass talons as it squeezed. In return, Karlaen and his brothers wrought mayhem. Crackling hammers and lightning-wreathed claws swung, connecting with deafening bangs that crumpled armour plate and sprayed molten gore across the ruins. Iron skulls were staved in, hull plates and weapon limbs torn to scrap.

The Daemon Engines and Helbrutes pressed forwards despite their losses, their fury carrying them on even as their numbers thinned. Wherever their guns roared and their talons swung, they left red- and gold-armoured corpses strewn across the rubble. Yet Karlaen's warriors were undaunted, and within moments the last few Daemon Engines were surrounded by vengeful Blood

Angels. At the same moment, the last of the Sanguinary Guard leapt high, streaking across the battlefield to fall upon the iron-tentacled Warpsmiths at the Warpack's rear. Energised halberds flashed, clashing with black-bladed axes. Warriors fell on both sides before the Sanguinary Guard managed to surround and cut down the last Warpsmith.

Karlaen took a moment, hearts pumping from the exertion of battle. His auspex showed more enemy contacts moving in from the south, but they were coming fast and erratic.

'They're not advancing,' he smiled grimly, 'they're fleeing.' Karlaen changed vox channels and called out a greeting.

'Captain Aphael, I see you sent us a gift, brother.'

The Cultists burst from amidst the ruins in a panicked mass, skidding to a halt with expressions of horror as they saw the heaped Daemon Engine wrecks blocking their path. Before the heretics could turn and try to flee again, Captain Aphael's warriors smashed into their rear. The Blood Angels of the 2nd didn't waste ammunition, clubbing and smashing with bolter stocks, or carving through their terrified victims with bloody chainswords. The Archangels joined the massacre, charging in from the front and ripping apart the degenerate slaves of the Dark Gods. Within moments it was done, Aphael and Karlaen meeting over a sea of broken Cultist corpses.

'Well met, Captain Karlaen,' grinned Aphael. 'You and your men have laid the enemy reserves low, I see. That explains why their southern lines collapsed so suddenly.'

'Glad you joined us when you did, brother,' replied Karlaen. 'What's the situation? And what is that Angel-forsaken cacophony?'

'Nothing good,' replied Aphael, suddenly serious. 'The Legio Metalica are fighting their way in from the east and we have Skitarii moving up on our tail to secure this area. Our Death Company Stormraven was knocked from the air north of here, but Astorath and Chaplain Daenor have led the survivors from the wreck and are fighting their way towards our position. Reports from across the hub suggest the Black Legion lines are collapsing. It is as though their morale broke on all fronts at once, or...'

'Or as though the order to retreat has been given,' finished Karlaen. 'And if that is the case, then we may already be too late.'

'Not while we still draw breath, brother,' replied Captain Aphael, checking the charge on his plasma pistol and signalling Librarian Asmasael and his brothers to move up and join them. 'Let us put an end to this.'

'As you say,' nodded Karlaen, turning towards the excavation site, and the terrible cacophony still rising from its depths. 'Into the pit...'





Karlaen, Aphael and Librarian Asmasael led their warriors to the edge of the screaming pit, the Archangels Terminators and the survivors of Aphael's Battle Demi-company standing at the heroes' backs. Dirty, bruise-coloured light pulsed up from below, throwing the rocky walls of the vast hole into flickering relief. From their vantage point, the Blood Angels could see a massive shard of crystal, jabbed like a dagger into the distant floor of the pit. It was from this madly vibrating shard that the light and sawing screams undoubtedly emanated, and Karlaen and Aphael exchanged a look of dismay as they saw the shuddering cracks that radiated out across the ground from the wailing stone.

'The cage,' shouted Karlaen over the cacophony. 'They don't seek its secrets. The lunatics are trying to open it.'

'We must stop them before they throw wide the gates of hell,' replied Asmasael, power flickering in his eyes. He gripped his force staff in both hands. 'My brothers and I shall crush the power of that cursed stone.'

'Then let's move,' ordered Karlaen, 'We're not getting down there without a fight.'

The dirt ramp wound down and away into the depths, wide enough for a squadron of Land Raiders to drive two abreast. As the Blood Angels jogged down it, they could see an opposing force rising up to meet them. Black Legion Terminators were storming up the ramp, accompanying a band of weirdly attired Cultists and Sorcerers. At their head came a darkly regal figure clad in baroque armour, with dark psychic lightnings playing around him. There could be little doubt that this was the leader of the Black Legion on Amethal, the vile Sorcerer Lord Xorphas. It was he that had unleashed the psychic storm upon the ships of the 5th Company, and Captain Karlaen's blood ran hot at the thought of exacting vengeance for his fallen brothers.

The two forces opened fire upon one another as they closed the range, hammering gunfire joined by lashing psychic powers unleashed by the psykers of both sides. Even as the air



screamed with the energies of the Chaos crystal, it twisted and crackled at the manipulations of the powerful battle psykers on the ramp.

Karlaen saw Librarian Asmasael stab one hand forward, fingers working a mystical sign as his eyes flashed blue. Arcs of lightning shot from the Librarian's outstretched hand, crashing into a knot of Black Legion Terminators. Two of the elite warriors danced and twitched as they burned, while another was blown from the edge of the ramp and plunged into the darkness below. Kinetic bolts and black lightning flew back and forth in a storm, hammering against Terminator armour with a sound like some infernal forge.

Karlaen shrugged off a string of boltgun hits, the shots exploding against his adamantium breastplate, before he swung his hammer into the shooter's face. The Black Legionnaire's helm shattered in a cloud of metal and blood, and his heavy body crashed backwards and slid away down the slope.

'Traitors! Heretics! Know the Angel's justice!' roared Karlaen, ripping off another volley of shots from his storm bolter. He cursed as the rounds exploded in mid-air, stopped by a rippling shield of energy projected by Lord Xorphas. Karlaen started forwards through the fight, but the Sorcerer Lord was not done yet. The Sorcerer sucked daemonic power from the air around him and hurled a geomantic shock wave up the ramp. The packed soil exploded with a series of loud thumps, a racing wall of energy hurling rock and dirt into the air before ripping away the ground beneath the Blood Angels' feet. Veteran warriors who had survived days of harrowing battle yelled in alarm as they were pitched from the ramp and sent plummeting into the pit. Karlaen felt the ground torn out from under him, crashing onto his side with a snarled oath. The next moment everything was engulfed in a thunderous roar as the Sorcerer's powers leapt on, hammering the rock wall of the pit and spreading yawning cracks through its surface. Boulders the size of Drop Pods were torn loose, tumbling down onto the Sons of Sanguinius with killing force. A roaring tide of earth and rubble

followed, sweeping over the Blood Angels and burying those it did not smash from the ramp.

For a split second, Captain Karlaen lost consciousness beneath the pounding avalanche of rubble. As light and sound returned, he realised that he was all but buried in tumbled rocks, and that many of his brothers' predicaments were as bad, if not worse, than his own. With a surge of anger, he realised that the surviving traitors had seized their chance. They were scrambling over the rock fall as fast as they could, breaking through the Blood Angels' line while their enemies were stunned.

Using every iota of his superhuman might, Karlaen ripped his way free of the tons of soil and stone that buried him, servos screaming in his armour as detritus sluiced from its blood-red plates. With a roar of fury, the First Captain charged after the escaping Chaos worshippers. He blasted the legs out from under the rearmost Terminator, before smashing a pair of Xorphas' acolytes from his path with his hammer. Yet even as he swung back his arm to smite the fleeing form of Lord Xorphas, the searing energies of a teleport flare burst to life. There came a mighty boom, a swirling of unclean Warp-light, and Captain Karlaen's hammer swept through thin air. The last handful of traitors had been teleported away to safety, their leader amongst them.

Captain Karlaen looked up to where Black Legion Thunderhawks and landers were even now rising into the sky, guns hammering as they lifted off. Breathing heavily in his fury, he clenched his fist tight upon the haft of his hammer.

'Cursed traitors!' he roared. 'Damned cowards! You will not escape the vengeance of the Blood Angels!'

Karlaen felt a hand grasp his arm firmly. He looked into the face of Captain Aphael, his ire cooling at his comrade's dire expression.

'They're gone, brother. Let the fleet deal with them. We must stop the Chaos stone.'

So began a desperate race to the bottom of the pit, the surviving Blood

Angels ripping themselves free of the rock fall and rushing down into the depths. The closer they got to the madly screaming crystal, the more their senses reeled. Noses bled. Eyes ached and swam with hallucinations. Ears rang while the vox network choked on the gibber and cackle of daemonic voices.

As the Blood Angels reached the cracked floor of the pit, their Librarians moved to the fore, deploying their powers in a bid to still the furiously shaking ground. Blood was pouring from the bedrock around them, streaming into the yawning maws that flowed and screamed across the surface of the howling crystal. More cracks opened in the ground, infernal light glowing up from the depths of Amethal.

Karlaen watched as Asmasael and his brothers pushed through the obscene cacophony towards the stone, hands outstretched and force weapons glowing. One Librarian dropped to his knees, hands clutched to his bleeding eyes as his mind was overcome. Another screamed as ethereal flames engulfed him, turning him into a living torch. Still the Librarians pushed forwards, their chanting voices rolling and echoing around the pit even as the rest of the Blood Angels were driven back by the stone's piercing screams. Finally, with a whip-crack of force, Asmasael channelled the energies of his Librarian brethren and smote the terrible crystal with his glowing force staff. A sound rolled forth like the breaking of every mirror in creation, and then a blissful silence fell.

Gradually, Karlaen's hearing returned to him, bringing with it the crackle of triumphant Imperial voices across the vox network. The enemy were in full rout. The Chaos crystal had been shattered and slain. Lord Xorphas had fled.

'They are calling it victory,' said Captain Aphael, eyes blazing with triumph.

'In this battle, perhaps,' replied Karlaen, his grim gaze fixed upon the shattered stone, and the glowing cracks spreading from its base. 'But in the war? I fear this may be just another of the Sorcerer's tricks...'





THE BLOODED

The heroic warriors of the Battle Companies are the heart and soul of the Blood Angels Chapter. Of these august brotherhoods, none has garnered more renown than the 2nd Company, known as the Blooded. The warriors of the glorious 2nd have fought and won time and again, from the Valvadire Crawlclities to the gas refineries of Helios.

In recent years, the star of Captain Aphael has been very much on the rise. Master of the Watch and commander of the Blood Angels' 2nd Company, Aphael has won himself countless commendations for victories against seemingly impossible odds. The Captain is possessed of boundless strength, energy and dynamism. He values the life of every single servant of the Emperor, be they Space Marine, Mechanicus cyborg, or unaugmented human soldier, and will fight with everything he has to preserve and defend them. Aphael is charismatic in the extreme, from his angelic features and noble humility to his exceptional skills as an orator – his words lift even the most desperate and defeated of warriors, filling their hearts with new courage and a determination to do the Emperor's will. It is the Captain's sheer force of personality, his optimism and hope as much as the words he speaks, that rouse his followers to new heights of heroism. More than one seemingly doomed fight has

been won at the last by the impassioned rhetoric and heroic deeds of Captain Aphael.

The Captain's skills in combat are every bit as great as his words. Aphael is a skilled swordsman and an excellent shot, but if his century and a half of battlefield experience has taught him anything, it is that personal heroics – while grand and often crucial to victory – cannot match the might of an army of exceptionally trained and equipped warriors acting as one. Aphael has drilled his Battle Company to perfection. The Captain watches over every aspect of his battle-brothers' lives, ensuring that not only are they exceptionally well drilled for combat, but that their spiritual focus is absolute and their command theoreticals are of the highest standard. Every Space Marine Battle Company is highly trained and elite, but the Blooded stand out as exceptional, even by these standards.



Aphael claims with confidence that, should he and his lieutenants fall in battle, any given warrior from amongst his ranks could rise to take command of the company at a moment's notice. It is, furthermore, an undeniable fact that the 2nd Company suffers the fewest instances of both the Red Thirst and the Black Rage of any Blood Angels Company save the 1st.

All of these qualities stood the Blooded in good stead upon the battlefields of Amethal, allowing them to shrug off the pernicious influence of Chaos and discharge their duties with flawless skill and heroism.

At the heart of the 2nd Company force stood its Tactical Squads, each equipped to deal with a variety of enemies and capable of facing any strategic challenge without hesitation. Each battle-brother amongst these squads was a warrior seasoned by many decades of battle in the Emperor's name. They were versatile and deadly sons of the Angel, whose dedication to obliterating the Chaos threat was total. Supported by a fleet of transport vehicles, as well as heavier armoured assets from the Chapter

Armoury, this formidable core of warriors was in itself powerful enough to conquer an entire world. Though their numbers were comparatively few, every single Blood Angel was worth many times their number of human warriors, and their valour and skill was such that even the traitors of the Black Legion would struggle to fight them toe-to-toe.

The company's might and strategic versatility were further enhanced by the Assault and Devastator Squads who marched alongside their Tactical brothers, the former adding speed and close-quarters lethality while the latter slaughtered the foe from afar with their heavy weapons.

This potent force was rounded off by the addition of the Chapter Ancients, a trio of Dreadnoughts who wielded their veritable arsenal of weaponry with the skill and wisdom of those who had seen entire millennia of war. Bolstered by the sage experience and armoured might of these warriors of old, Aphael's Blooded were a force fit to seize victory upon Amethal, no matter the dangers they faced.



WARRIORS OF THE 2ND COMPANY

With the 5th Company lost to the Black Rage, it fell to the battle-brothers of the Blood Angels' 2nd to form the mainstay of Captain Karlaen's forces on Amethal. This was a task they rose to admirably, for the Blooded are heroes one and all, and with their full strength present the 2nd were a mighty force indeed.

CAPTAIN APHAEL

Master of the Watch

COMMAND SQUAD APHAEL

Command Squad



SQUAD MORDAEUS
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD VORLOIS
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD METEROS
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD ANGELON
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD GORIEL
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD BORGIO
10 Tactical Marines



SQUAD ABRAHAEL
5 Assault Marines



SQUAD DAENTO
5 Assault Marines



SQUAD RAPHAN
5 Devastator Marines



SQUAD KAROS
5 Devastator Marines

ZAPHALON

Librarian Dreadnought

TARONOS, THE ANGEL'S TALON
Furioso Dreadnought

RAELYN THE UNBOWED
Dreadnought

CAPTAIN DONATOS APHAEL

A charismatic hero and dynamic leader, 2nd Company Captain Aphael is venerated in statuary, stained glass and illuminated script across countless Imperial star systems. He is a shining example of all that the Adeptus Astartes stand for, a shield to the Emperor's servants and a deadly blade to his foes. Captain Aphael seeks always to live up to the example of his angelic Primarch, for he refuses to allow the hidden darkness of the Chapter's gene-seed to undermine his heroic deeds. The Captain demands no less from the battle-brothers of his company, driving them hard to excel in every area. This exhaustive regime includes the perpetuating of an ancient and little-spoken-of tradition of the 2nd Company, the Bleeding. During this rite of initiation, each battle-brother allows the Red Thirst to take them fully, venting the resultant savage fury upon a hapless enemy of the Imperium. They then gain mastery over their own fury by sheer force of will, learning to subdue their inner beast by looking it square in its bloodshot eyes. It is from this ritual that the 2nd Company get their name, and though it sounds barbaric, there can be no denying that Aphael's brothers display the lowest rates of succumbing to the dreaded Black Rage.



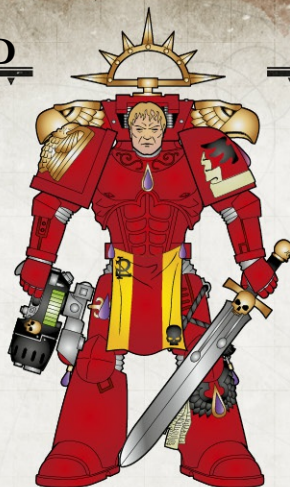
ICONOGRAPHY OF THE BLOODED



The Blood Angels 2nd Company, known as the Blooded, are typical of their Chapter's line formations. Heroic and courageous, many bear marks of honour upon their armour and wargear. Personal embellishments are much in evidence, for the Blood Angels are artistically gifted and individualistic warriors who honour their weapons and armour with the fruits of their creative talents.



The golden-yellow blood drop is the symbol of the Blood Angels 2nd Company.



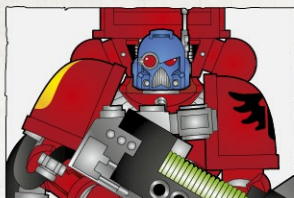
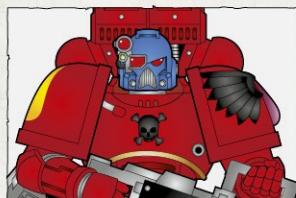
Captain Aphael bears the golden colour and gothic numeral of his company upon his tabard.



This Company Champion bears his squad marking on his greave due to the sculpted design of his knee pad.



These 2nd Company Assault Marines wear yellow battle helmets to denote their assault status.



As with all Blood Angels Devastator Marines, these 2nd Company brothers wear blue battle helmets.

The battle-brothers of the Blood Angels usually wear their squad markings on their right knee pads, and the warriors of the 2nd Company are no exception. Each symbol represents the squad to which the battle-brother belongs, making him easily identifiable by his fellows.



1st Squad



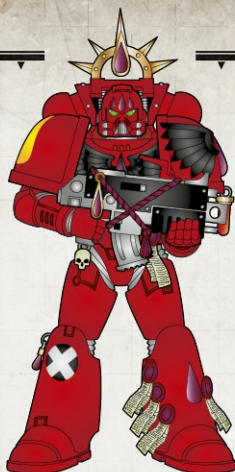
2nd Squad



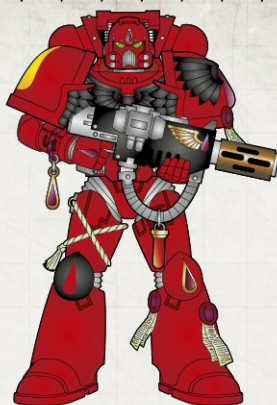
3rd Squad



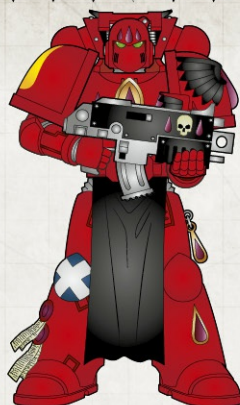
4th Squad



This battle-brother is a member of the 5th Squad, as denoted by the marking on his right greave.



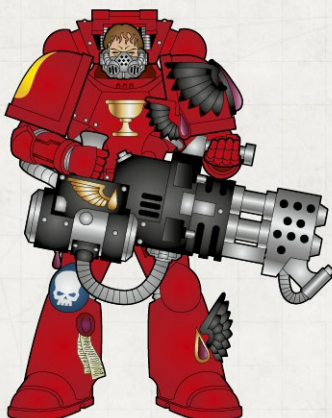
The blood drop on this battle-brother's right knee pad shows he is part of 4th squad.



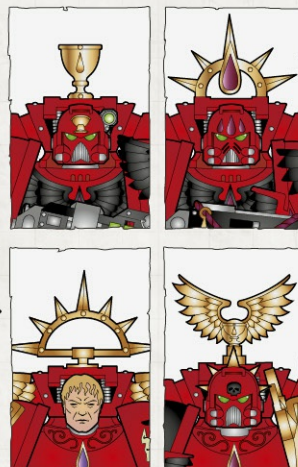
Details such as tabards tend to be ashen black, matching the Blood Angels' gun casings.



The Blooded sometimes take to the field adorned with scrolls proclaiming their noble victories past.



The more veteran battle-brothers of this company often bear adornments such as wings or golden chalices.



Decorations borne upon the power packs of battle-brothers' armour show their elite status.



5th Squad



6th Squad



7th Squad



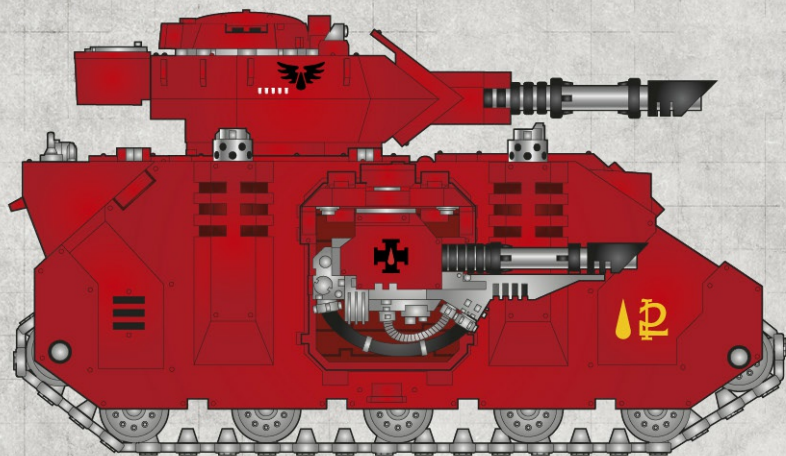
8th Squad



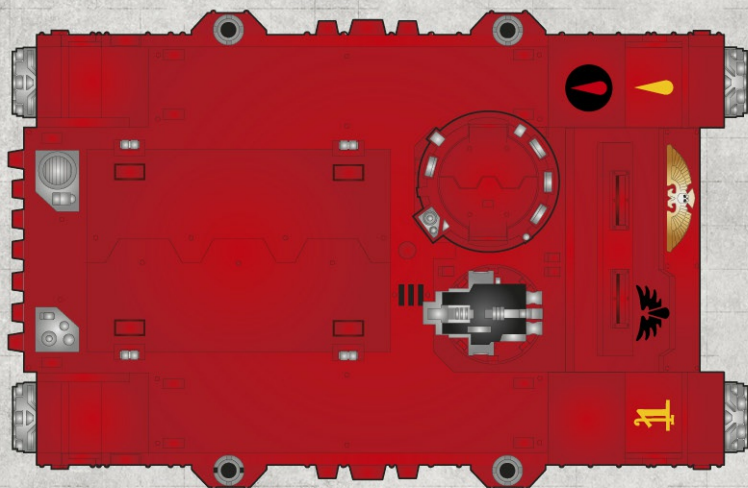
9th Squad



10th Squad

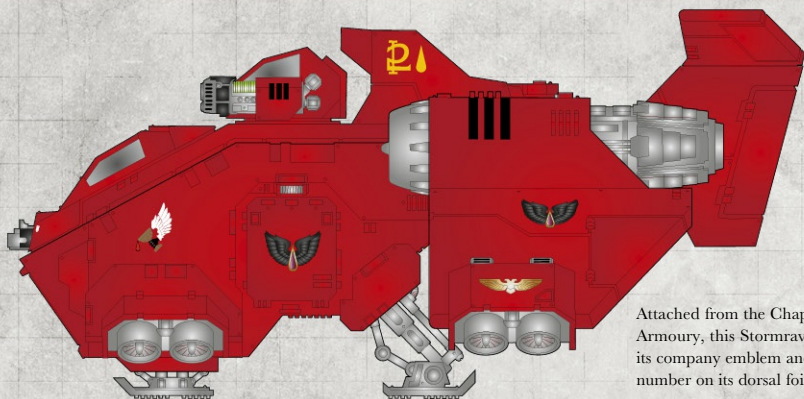


Attached to the Blooded for combat operations on Amethal, this Predator shows their company emblem on its forward bulwark, along with its vehicle numeral, denoting it as the second vehicle in its squadron.

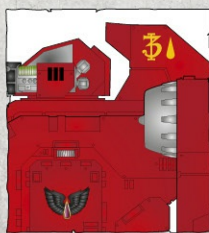
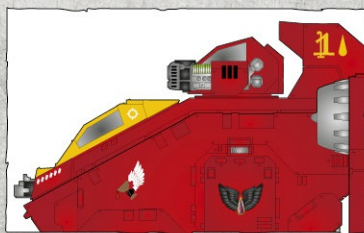


Blood Angels transport vehicles bear their Chapter icon and a vehicle numeral upon their hulls, along with the company emblem and squad marking of the Blood Angels that they provide transport for.

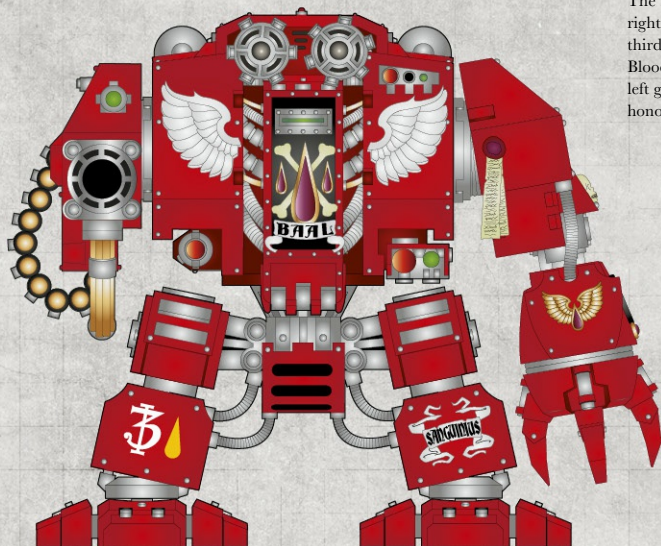




Attached from the Chapter Armoury, this Stormraven shows its company emblem and vehicle number on its dorsal foil.



The numerals shown here are vehicle numbers within a specific squadron of aircraft, with '1' being the squadron leader. Its status is also denoted by its yellow cockpit hatch.



The markings on this Dreadnought's right greave show that he is the third Dreadnought brother of the Blood Angels 2nd Company. On his left greave is a scrollwork design in honour of the Chapter's Primarch.

BATTLE FOR AMETHAL

>>> ASC 065-082

In the wake of the Archangels' destruction of Ioline, the war for the Diamor System entered its finale. Within hours of the Hex Infernum's destruction, word reached the Imperial leadership of combat escalating across the system. Meanwhile, Chaos ground forces moved to strike the killing blow. The time had come for victory, or death.

Captain Karlaen's battered raiding party made it back to Amethal, only to find their foes already engaged in orbit. Until now, the compact Black Legion fleet had lurked in the void beyond Ioline. With that planet lost, the Black Legion had moved fast to seize victory, before the Imperial forces could regain control of Amethal.

Lord Admiral Gordus and his strategos had been furiously attempting to discern why the Black Legion had been holding back in this way, but they could not establish what the traitors' master was up to. Why drip-feed forces into the Amethal war zone over days of costly battle, only to see each attack wave slowly picked apart? Some of Gordus' advisors scoffed that the enemy were fools, but the Lord Admiral had seen the machinations of Chaos before. He understood how nonsensical the schemes of the Ruinous Powers could seem, until the very moment it was too late. However, with the majority of his ships tied up defending Peridos, Gordus barely had enough left to maintain skeleton patrols around Tourmalid, let alone hunt enemy battleships. Yet as the Chaos armada fell upon Amethal, Gordus prepared desperate orders to mobilise what reserves he had left.

Before the orders could even be sent, more bad news reached Tourmalid's astropathic choir. Anticipating the Imperial strategy once again, Lord Xorphas had ordered his piratical raiders to break from the Zircon Sprawl and launch an all-out

attack against Peridosian high anchorage. It was a fight that the Chaos cruisers were unlikely to win, but with glory-hungry veteran captains at their helms, and prodigious firepower and resilience on their side, they would not die quickly. With a heavy heart, Gordus commanded all convoy ships to turn and consolidate on Peridos once again. Even should they triumph over the Black Legion pirate craft, the Diamor System's navy would play no part in the battle for Amethal.

At the same time, Tourmalid itself came under attack as hidden cells of Chaos Cultists rose up amongst the populace. The fighting that followed was brutal and confused, with Terminators of the Word Bearers teleporting in from points unknown to make an attempt upon the life of Lord Admiral Gordus himself. The Word Bearer insurgency was comparatively small, a suicide mission by fanatics doomed to destruction, but it served its purpose. Tourmalid's naval yards were thrown into chaos. Multiple warships, dry-docked for repairs, were destroyed completely. The Tourmalid muster was shattered, and, before the Word Bearers Terminators could finally be slain, every last one of the Blood Angels Honour Guard, sent by Karlaen to protect the planetary governor, sold their lives dearly to save that of Lord Admiral Gordus. With destruction and confusion rife, no reserves would be sent from Tourmalid in time to aid the defenders of Amethal. They were on their own.





Thus, as the Black Legion swept down upon the cursed world, they were opposed by only a handful of spacecraft. Still, the flotilla of Blood Angels and Mechanicus warships fought hard, unwilling to cede orbital dominance of Amethal so easily. Gathering the tattered remnants of the Crimson Slaughter and Khornate warships in their wake, the Black Legion spread out and pounced upon their enemies from all sides. The Imperial warships did what they could, Metalian Explorators deploying ancient super-weapons that split Chaos warships from prow to stern, while the sleek Blood Angels Strike Cruisers danced like blades to cut and kill.

Soon enough though, the wealth of traitor gun decks and lance batteries began to tell. Two Explorer ships had been reduced to drifting wreckage, and the *Flame of Baal* torn in half by tainted torpedoes by the time the surviving Imperial ships fought their way clear and disengaged. With the battle in orbit lost, it was left to the Imperial forces on the ground to stop the attack.

Originally, the Imperial commanders had intended to follow the fall of Ioline with an offensive on all fronts. With the enemy reinforcements curtailed, the plan had been to drive the outnumbered invaders from their last enclaves around the Mechanicus hubs, before consolidating their defensive strengths around Beta-Secundus.

The speed of the Chaos response made that plan impossible. Imperial forces were scattered across the surface of Amethal or, in the case of Karlaen and his returning strike force, even

further afield. Yet the Black Legion attack was focussed solely against Hub Beta-Secundus. If that site fell, the traitors would have their victory, and with all that was at stake, that could not be allowed to happen. Matters were desperate. Khâm's horde had been scattered during the previous engagement, but they had torn the Imperial defenders of Beta-Secundus apart. It would take time to mass sufficient forces at the site, to bolster its wrecked barricades and reconsecrate the machine spirits of its orbital guns – time they did not have. Magos Ivasnophon calculated that, by the time the Black Legion landed, those loyalist forces that could reach Beta-Secundus would be singularly insufficient. They would do some damage to the heretics, even slow them a little. Then they would all die.

Instead, Captain Aphael advocated a daring solution, one supported by Astorath himself. The Black Legion could not be stopped, so the Blood Angels would not attempt to do so. Instead, all available Imperial forces made haste to staging areas surrounding the hub, ready to pounce the moment the traitors landed. From the north came the surviving Knights of House Raven. The remaining Titans from Legio Metalica gathered to the east. From the west came a grand procession of the Cult Mechanicus led by Magos Ivasnophon, while to the south the Blood Angels' 2nd Company – bolstered by elements of the Armoury and the 10th – mustered their strength. On all fronts, maniples of Skitarii marched into position. Scattered elements of countless War Cohorts gathered once more into coherent forces, their binharic control signals allowing them to muster with a seamless ease that no other army could have matched.

Ivasnophon had calculated the precise amount of time that the traitor forces would be delayed in orbit, and how long it would take them to land, based upon stolen data on their force strengths and dispositions. The numbers were tight, with many Imperial forces racing desperately through foe-haunted territory or burning wilderness to reach the staging points before the signal to attack was sent. Even so, as the countdown chron in Captain Aphael's retinal display reached zero, it was clear that the armies of the Imperium had mustered a huge force of infantry, tanks, aircraft and super-heavy war engines with which to crush the Chaos invaders.

Standing atop his command Rhino, the 2nd Company Captain drew upon every iota of his skill as an orator to deliver a speech across the vox-networks that stirred even the cold metal hearts of the Skitarii. He spoke of duty. He spoke of vengeance. He warned of the consequences of defeat, and then of how the Despoiler's evil plans would never come to fruition. Aphael raised his blade to point north, to where the blazing jets of Chaos drop craft and the shadows of low-orbiting spaceships turned the skies to darkness and flame. With a single bellowed order, he began the attack.



The thunder of the Imperial advance rolled across the burning plains. Tank engines roared as squadrons sped forwards, bouncing through craters and raising plumes of dust and smoke behind them. Titans and Imperial Knights shook the ground with their footfalls, sounding out long, booming notes from their war horns. Skitarii advanced double-time in perfect lockstep, tracked Servitors grinding along beside them. Overhead, flights of Stormraven Gunships settled into attack vectors, shrieking out across no man's land towards the Black Legion lines.

Quickly the noose closed, the Imperial forces moving at top speed. Then the shooting began. The Chaos warships in orbit were first to launch their attacks. Fire rained from the heavens as barrage bombs and lance strikes pounded the kill-zone, hurling great spumes of rock and dirt into the air. Metalican soldiers were blasted to ash in a heartbeat. The Reaver Titan *Divine Fury* crashed to its knees as its void shields imploded and its bridge was vaporised. Battered but unbowed, the Imperial forces pressed forwards.

Moments later, the orbital bombardment slackened as, defying the orders of Captain Aphael, the last of the Imperial space fleet swept back into the fight. Seeing their enemies wallowing

in low orbit, the Blood Angel and Mechanicus captains seized their chance. Sweeping in high, they raked the larger enemy fleet with firepower. The Chaos ship captains were forced to choose between staying on station, and thus remaining exposed to Imperial torpedo and lance fire from above, or breaking off their bombardment in order to fight back. Most chose the latter. As lance fire flashed back and forth between the duelling ships, a single, smaller craft arrowed through the midst of the fight. This was the *Angelus Redemptor*, carrying Karlaen and his surviving Archangels. On the 1st Captain's orders it made straight for the orbital engagement zone above Hub Beta-Secundus.

Having braved the bombardment, the lead Imperial elements were closing on the Black Legion defences. The traitors had deployed in a ring around the excavation site, Chaos Space Marines drawn up behind ruined defences alongside rumbling tanks and snarling Daemon Engines. In the split second before the Chaos lines opened fire, Stormravens streaked overhead in tight formation, missiles stabbing down from their wings to hurl traitors off their feet amid blossoming explosions. Then the Black Legion let fly with everything they had, and the kill-zone became a hellish cauldron of flame.

Tanks exploded and rolled to a stop, billowing thick black smoke. Ironstriders toppled, or strode aimlessly on with their pilots slumped dead in the saddle. To the north, the Knights of House Raven hunkered behind their flickering ion shields, wading into the enemy fire like men striving against gale-force winds. Imperial warriors died by the hundred but, firing back furiously, the Emperor's servants pressed their charge home.

On some fronts, it was not enough. To the west, Magos Ivasnophon and his sprawling Cult Mechanicus procession found themselves being cut to pieces by the hammering fire of Daemon Engines and Black Legion heavy weapons. Calculating that his forces would be obliterated before they could conclude their attack, the Magos began a steady retreat, only to meet enemy forces at his rear. Khârn had returned from the western plains at the head of a Maelstrom of Gore.

It was Ivasnophon's great misfortune to find himself caught between the guns to his fore and the Berzerkers to his rear. Electro-Priests duelled with frothing Khome worshippers amidst the indiscriminate explosions of the continued bombardment, but the mauled Mechanicus forces were outmatched. Ivasnophon's followers were hacked and mangled, the Magos himself despatching precisely thirteen power-armoured enemies before Khârn fell upon him with a roar of hate. Gorechild swung once, twice, and Ivasnophon's severed head thumped into the gore-slick mud.

Though the Imperial attack from the west collapsed, to the east, the Legio Metalica was unstoppable. Titan Princes snarled with the fury of war-gods as they blitzed fire into the foe. The world exploded before them, and even the twisted engines of the Legio Excruciatius could not stay their wrath. Meanwhile, to the south, atop the packed-earth ramp that led down into the dig site, crackling energies burst to life as Karlaen and his surviving warriors teleported into battle.



BLOOD ANGELS



CULT MECHANICUS



SKITARII



WORLD EATERS



BLACK LEGION



IMPERIAL FORCES
ELIMINATED





Their armour still scorched and battered from the fighting on Ioline, the Archangels opened fire, their guns punching shocked Black Legionnaires off their feet and blasting tanks apart. Karlaen and Aphael had coordinated their strikes to perfection, for even as the Archangels and Sanguinary Guard appeared amid the Chaos rear lines, the 2nd Company hit their enemies from the front in a speeding armoured column.

The Archangels ripped their way through a huge Helforged Warpack, despite the savage casualties inflicted by the massed Chaos war machines. As the Blood Angels battle tanks continued to fire, their transports slewed around and spilled red-armoured warriors into the fray. Meanwhile, the last battle-brothers of the Death Company were borne into the fight by Stormravens, led – against all odds – by the still-limping Death Company Chaplain Daenor.

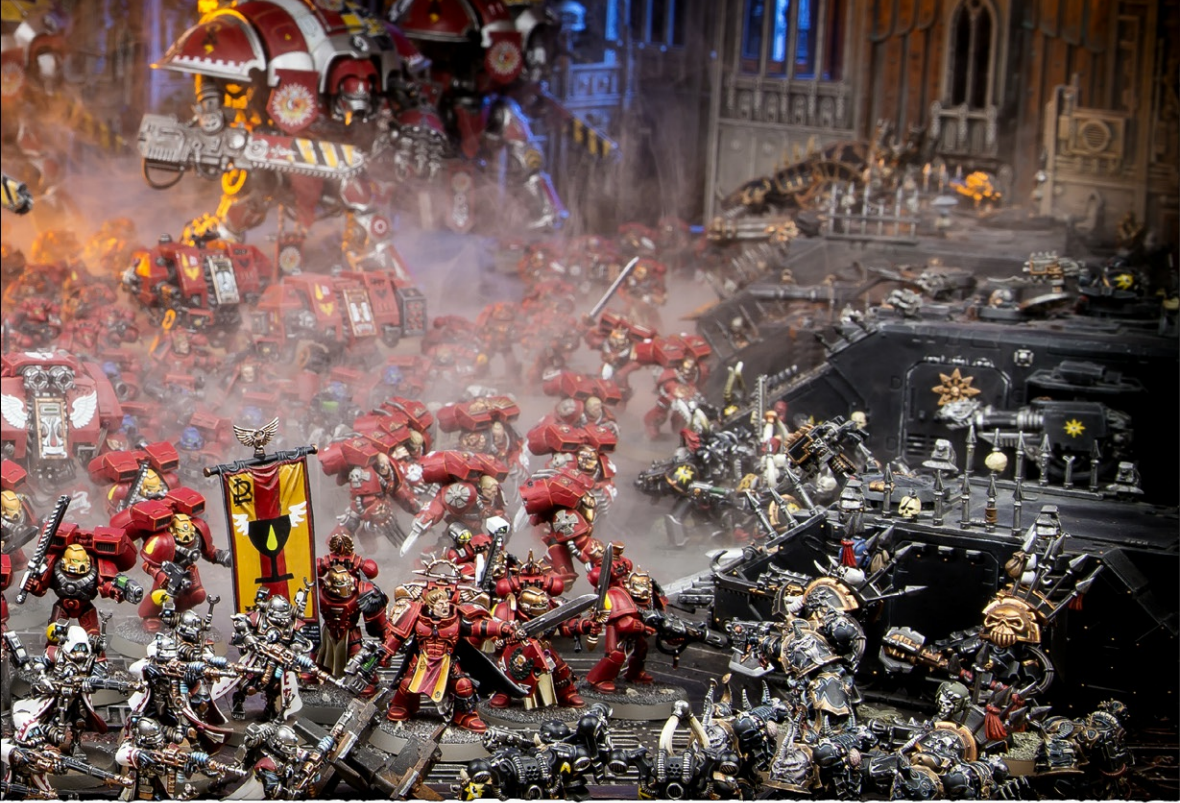
The Black Legion had been forced to spread their defenders to every side, facing an attack on all fronts by a foe who were now numerically superior thanks to earlier victories in the southern hemisphere. Captain Aphael's tactical nous showed as the concentrated might of the Blood Angels tore through the foe.

A gap was smashed in the Chaos defences as the two Blood Angel forces linked up, the Captains of the 1st and 2nd Companies clasp ing gauntlets upon the very edge of the excavation pit. With Skitarii pushing in to widen the breach, and supporting fire raining down from the Legio Metalica, the Blood Angels prepared to press down into the depths of

the excavation site, from which rose a hellish cacophony of sawing screams.

With their heroes at the fore, Sanguinius' sons advanced onto the packed-earth ramp that wound down around the pit's edges to its depths far below. As they did so, they saw a force of Black Legion warriors pressing up towards them, and became aware of the terrible howling din growing louder by the moment. The pit was lit by weird, multihued light that spilled up from a massive crystal shard driven into its heart. The rock walls gushed blood. It was from the strange crystal that the awful sounds emanated, and cracks shuddered through the bedrock all around it. Yet the Sons of Sanguinius did not have long to stare at this terrible sight, for Lord Xorphas and his elite guard were upon them. The Chaos leader hit the Blood Angels headlong, he and his sorcerous acolytes hurling dark lightnings and tearing up the ground with geomantic spells. Around them marched the elite of the Black Legion, clad in baroque Terminator armour.

The clash that followed was bloody and brutal, and saw many veteran warriors fall on both sides. Before the Blood Angels could strike Lord Xorphas down, shimmering teleport energies swathed their hated enemies and whisked them from the battlefield. Xorphas and his elites had not been looking to fight, but to flee, and as the Sorcerer and his acolytes vanished, so the entire Chaos army began to disintegrate. Clearly the order to retreat had been given, and the Imperial warriors cursed as the traitors made a break for any craft that could carry them to safety.



It looked like victory, but the heroes of the Blood Angels felt a terrible sense that they had been manoeuvred into attacking too late. With their foes gone, the red-armoured warriors rushed down the earth ramp and into the flickering depths of the excavation site. There they faced the screaming horror of the Chaos artefact, a twisted crystal the size of a boarding torpedo around which blood was welling through the cracking bedrock in lapping tides. It was Warpcraft of the darkest sort, surely the weapon the Black Legion were using to break the bars of the cage, and as the Archangels and Blooded alike were driven to their knees by its energies, it seemed as though Xorphas might still be triumphant. At the last, it was the Librarians who ended the threat, Asmasael channelling his powers through his force staff to turn the crystal's disharmonic barrage back upon itself and shear the evil stone into fragments.

With that last heroic effort, the Blood Angels ended the war on Amethal. It would be hours before the last of the traitor forces at Beta-Secundus were slain, and weeks before the rest of the world was pacified. Yet Xorphas and the great bulk of his followers had fled, taking the Betrayer with them.

The Chaos warships took in as many fleeing craft as they could before turning and breaking away, vanishing into the Warp upon the system's edge and leaving the Diamor System reeling in their wake. The war had been costly and desperate, but victory belonged to the Imperium. Or so it seemed, until Librarian Asmasael and his brothers reported their findings to Captain Karlaen. The Blood Angels had

hoped that Xorphas had simply fled at the very moment of his triumph, choosing to save his own skin rather than complete whatever diabolical ritual he was engaged in. The otherworldly senses of the Librarians told a different story. They reported empyric emanations shimmering from the site of Beta-Secundus in greater quantity than ever before, and a fluctuation of Warp currents as though the Immaterium pressed close to the surface. Perhaps, suggested Asmasael grimly, the enemy had done more damage to the Daemon cage than the Blood Angels had first realised. Perhaps defeat here had not been avoided, only delayed. It was a sobering thought, especially when coupled with the loss of Magos Ivasnophon and his knowledge of the technologies he had so nearly unlocked.

As they gathered their forces to depart the system and return to Baal, the Blood Angels left behind Librarian Asmasael and a squad of 10th Company Scouts. They would remain on Amethal, attempting to gauge the true extent of the damage done, and standing watch in case the bars of the Daemon cage should ever threaten to break asunder.

Meanwhile, many light years distant, arcane systems churned to life. Mnemoschematic units hummed and biometric feeds spooled up. In a hidden laboratory, deep below the surface of Forge World Metalica, Magos Ivasnophon began the laborious task of inloading his personality and mental algorithms to his backup body. Only in death does duty end, and the Magos' work for the Ommissiah was still not done...





+++AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG+++

+++SEGMENT ENGAGE 01100110+++

ASC 067-082: TRAITOR AND LOYALIST FORCES ENGAGE IN AND AROUND HUB BETA-SECUNDUS. SIGNIFICANT CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES [ATTRITION RATES OF 77% FOR TRAITOR LOSSES, 82% IMPERIAL].

ASC 083: FULL TRAITOR WITHDRAWAL FROM ENGAGEMENT ZONE, CAUSE STILL UNCONFIRMED [SUB-REF: AUDIO FILE X43Y - TOURMALID STRATEGOS DEBRIEF].

ASC 084: TRAITOR FORCES DEPART DIAMOR SYSTEM ENTIRELY. SYSTEM FLEET ELEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL METALICAN CRAFT [SUB-REF: EXPLORATOR-CLASS BATTLESHIP] RE-ESTABLISH DEEP-SPACE INTERDICTION CORDON.

ASC 085+: EMPYRIC READINGS REGISTERED AROUND HUB BETA-SECUNDUS EXCAVATION ZONE CONTINUE TO INCREASE [SUB-REF: AOL 001 - EXCAVATION MONITOR LOGS RH077]. FULL QUARANTINE ESTABLISHED, NON-ESSENTIAL FORCES WITHDRAWN, METALICAN ASSET RECOVERY COMMENCES.

ASC 086: ON AUTHORITY OF BLOOD ANGELS [SUB-REF: LIBRARIAN ASMASAEI] VERMILION-CLEARANCE CODED ASTROPATHIC COMMUNIQUE DESPATCHED AT HIGHEST ASTROPATHIC STRENGTH [SUB-REF: TITAN/ GREY KNIGHTS CHAPTER]

+++AMETHAL STRATEGIC CHRONOLOG ENDS+++

+++AMETHAL QUARANTINE TALLY BEGINS+++





CHAPTER 4

THE ANGELIC HOST



FORCES OF THE BLOOD ANGELS

The following section updates and supplements the information that can be found *Codex: Blood Angels*. It contains new Blood Angels Army List Entries, Formations and items of wargear, as well as the powerful new Detachment – the Angel's Blade Strike Force.

Since *Codex: Blood Angels* was published there have been several new miniatures released into the Blood Angels range. This chapter of the book is designed to be used in conjunction with *Codex: Blood Angels* to provide players with all the rules needed to play games of Warhammer 40,000 with the entire range of Blood Angels miniatures. The rules here – where relevant – update, replace or supplement the rules in your codex.

Foremost amongst the new rules is the introduction of the Terminator Captain (pg 104) and Death Company Chaplain (pg 105). You can also organise your Blood Angels collection as an Angel's Blade Strike Force (pg 102) and enjoy the Command Benefits your army gains for doing so.

The Assault Squad (pg 106) and Devastator Squad (pg 107) datasheets replace their counterparts in *Codex: Blood Angels*. Furthermore, recent Adeptus Astartes codex updates enable Vindicators, Whirlwinds and Predators to be fielded as vehicle squadrons, as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*. Land Speeder squadrons also benefit from an additional special rule, and Baal Predators can also now be taken in squadrons. These updates are detailed here.



VINDICATOR

SPECIAL RULES:

Linebreaker Bombardment: If this unit contains three Vindicators that can all fire their demolisher cannons, the squadron can fire a single Linebreaker Bombardment instead of firing normally. To do so, nominate one model in the squadron as the firer; the firer's demolisher cannon changes its type from Large Blast to Apocalyptic Blast and gains the Ignores Cover special rule.

OPTIONS:

- May include up to two additional Vindicators120 pts/model
- Any Vindicator may take a siege shield10 pts/model
- Any Vindicator may take overcharged engines10 pts/model
- Any Vindicator may take items from the **Blood Angels Vehicle Equipment** list.

WHIRLWIND

SPECIAL RULES:

Suppressive Bombardment: Whilst this unit includes three Whirlwinds, each model's Whirlwind multiple missile launcher has the Pinning and Shred special rules (regardless of which missile type it fires).

OPTIONS:

- May include up to two additional Whirlwinds65 pts/model
- Any Whirlwind may take overcharged engines10 pts/model
- Any Whirlwind may take items from the **Blood Angels Vehicle Equipment** list.

LAND SPEEDERS

SPECIAL RULES:

Anti-grav Upwash: Whilst this unit includes three Land Speeders, it can move an additional 6" when moving Flat Out.



PREDATOR

SPECIAL RULES:

Killsbot: Whilst this unit includes three Predators, all Predators in the unit have the Monster Hunter and Tank Hunters special rules.

OPTIONS:

- May include up to two additional Predators *75 pts/model*
- Any Predator may replace its autocannon with a twin-linked lascannon *25 pts/model*
- Any Predator may take two side sponsons which are both armed with one of the following:
 - Heavy bolters *20 pts/model*
 - Lascannons *40 pts/model*
- Any Predator may take overcharged engines *10 pts/model*
- Any Predator may take items from the **Blood Angels Vehicle Equipment** list.



BAAL PREDATOR

SPECIAL RULES:

Wall of Firepower: Whilst this unit includes three Baal Predators, you can re-roll all To Wound rolls of 1 when shooting their weapons.

OPTIONS:

- May include up to two additional Baal Predators *115 pts/model*
- Any Baal Predator may replace its twin-linked assault cannon with a flamestorm cannon *free*
- Any Baal Predator may take two side sponsons which are both armed with one of the following:
 - Heavy bolters *20 pts/model*
 - Heavy flammers *20 pts/model*
- Any Predator may take items from the **Blood Angels Vehicle Equipment** list.



THE ARMY OF SANGUINIUS

Angel's Blade Strike Forces are used exclusively by the Blood Angels Chapter and their successors. The rules below will allow you to organise the models in your Blood Angels collection of miniatures to represent one of these Detachments in your games of Warhammer 40,000.

CHOOSING AN ARMY

When choosing an army to play a game of Warhammer 40,000, there are two main ways of organising your collection. These are the Unbound method, which means taking whichever units you like, and the Battle-forged method, which is more rigid but has extra benefits. Both are described fully in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

If you are using the Unbound method, simply use the datasheets that correspond to the models in your collection. If you are using the Battle-forged method, you will instead need to organise the models in your collection into Detachments. This is a fun process in its own right. The most common of these are the Combined Arms and Allied Detachments. Note that you can also include any of the Formations presented in this section as part of a Battle-forged army.

RESTRICTIONS:

This Detachment must include at least one Core choice and one Auxiliary choice. It may include up to five Command choices and any number of additional Core or Auxiliary choices, in any combination. Only the datasheets listed here can be included in this Detachment, and all units in the Detachment must have the Blood Angels Faction.

COMMAND BENEFITS:

The Angel's Virtue: If this Detachment is your Primary Detachment, you can re-roll the result when rolling on the Warlord Traits table in this book or *Codex: Blood Angels*.

The Red Thirst: In a turn in which a model from this Detachment charges into combat, the model adds 1 to its Initiative characteristic until the end of the Assault phase. A model that has made a disordered charge that turn receives no benefit from the Red Thirst.

The Sons of Sanguinius: Any unit from this Detachment that is reduced to half its starting number of models (rounding fractions down) immediately gains the Zealot special rule. For example, a unit that started the battle with 5 models would receive the Zealot rule once it had been reduced to 1 or 2 models.



Command
0-5



Auxiliary
1+



Core 1+

An Angel's Blade Strike Force is a special type of Detachment that can be included in any Battle-forged army. Unlike the Detachments shown in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*, it has a Force Organisation Chart whose slots are a combination of specific Formations and Army List Entries instead of Battlefield Roles. However, it still has compulsory and optional elements, as well as Restrictions and Command Benefits, just like any other Detachment.

Although units cannot normally belong to more than one Detachment, units from a Formation that is part of an Angel's Blade Strike Force are an exception. They count as part of both their Formation and the Detachment, and have all associated Command Benefits and special rules. If your Warlord is part of a Formation or an Army List Entry that makes up part of an Angel's Blade Strike Force, the entire Angel's Blade Strike Force is your Primary Detachment.



GOLDEN HOST (pg 113)

- The Sanguinor or Commander Dante
- 2-5 units of Sanguinary Guard



LEADERS OF THE ANGELIC HOST

- 1 of the following: Terminator Captain, Captain Tycho, Librarian, Mephiston, Sanguinary Priest, Brother Corbulo
- 0-1 Command Squad
- 0-1 Stormraven Gunship



CHAPTER ANCIENTS (pg 114)

- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Librarian Dreadnought
 - Dreadnought
 - Furioso Dreadnought



BATTLE DEMI-COMPANY (pg 108)

- 1 Captain or Chaplain
- 1 Command Squad or Furioso Dreadnought
- 3 Tactical Squads
- 1 Assault Squad, Bike Squad, Attack Bike Squad or unit of Land Speeders
- 1 Devastator Squad
- 1 Dreadnought

ANGEL'S BLADE STRIKE FORCE

The Angel's Blade Strike Force allows you to represent a typical Blood Angels army on the Warhammer 40,000 battlefield. Whether you wish to deploy the full might of a Blood Angels company with all its support elements, or a strike force assembled to tackle a specific threat, the choices below offer a great way to pick your army.

For example, Gabrio's Blood Angels collection consists of the Sanguinor, a Terminator Captain, a Captain, a Death Company Chaplain, two units of Sanguinary Guard, two Command Squads, three Death Company Squads, three Tactical Squads, an Assault Squad, two Devastator Squads, a Dreadnought, a Death Company Dreadnought, a Stormraven, a Whirlwind and a Vindicator.

Gabrio wishes to organise his collection using the Battle-forged method, so all of his units need to be part of a Detachment or a Formation. Gabrio achieves this by taking an Angel's Blade Strike Force consisting of the following Formations: a Golden Host, a Leaders of the Angelic Host, a Battle Demi-company, a Death Company Strike Force, and a Fire Support Force.

The Golden Host consists of the Sanguinor and two units of Sanguinary Guard. The Terminator Captain, one of the Command Squads and the Stormraven form the Leaders of the Angelic Host. The Battle Demi-company has the Captain, second Command Squad, Tactical Squads, Assault Squad and one Devastator Squad, plus the Dreadnought. The Death Company Strike Force has the Death Company Chaplain, Death Company Squads and Death Company Dreadnought. The Fire Support Force rounds off the army and consists of the second Devastator Squad, the Whirlwind and the Vindicator.

As all of his units belong to an Angel's Blade Strike Force, Gabrio's army is a Battle-forged army. The army has the Angel's Virtue, Red Thirst and Sons of Sanguinius command benefits. Finally, Gabrio chooses the Sanguinor to be his Warlord – the Angel's Blade Strike Force is therefore his Primary Detachment.



ARCHANGELS DEMI-COMPANY (pg 110)

- 1 Terminator Captain
- 2 Furioso Dreadnoughts
- 5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Terminator Squad
 - Terminator Assault Squad
 - Vanguard Veteran Squad
 - Sternguard Veteran Squad



DEATH COMPANY STRIKE FORCE (pg 112)

- 1 Death Company Chaplain
- 3 Death Company Squads
- 1-3 Death Company Dreadnoughts



STORMRAVEN SQUADRON (pg 115)

- 2-4 Stormraven Gunships



RAPID ASSAULT FORCE

- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Assault Squad
 - Bike Squad
 - Attack Bike Squad
 - Land Speeder Squadron



ARCHANGELS ORBITAL INTERVENTION FORCE (pg 109)

- 3 Terminator Squads or Terminator Assault Squads (in any combination)



LUCIFER ARMoured TASK FORCE (pg 116)

- 1 Techmarine
- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Baal Predator
 - Predator
- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Land Raider
 - Land Raider Crusader
 - Land Raider Redeemer



FIRE SUPPORT FORCE

- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Devastator Squad
 - Vindicator
 - Whirlwind



10TH COMPANY AMBUSH FORCE (pg 111)

- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Scout Squad
 - Scout Bike Squad



TERMINATOR CAPTAIN

135
POINTS



The Captains of the Blood Angels are great warriors, brave leaders, and masterful strategists. They are noble lords who lead their battle-brothers with selfless determination, and willingly face the most terrible dangers in the name of victory for the Imperium. In order to augment their might in battle yet further, and furnish themselves with exceptional protection from the weapons of their foes, some Captains stride to battle clad in Terminator armour. Each suit of Terminator plate is a precious relic of the Chapter, carefully maintained by the finest artificers of Baal and incorporating a minute sliver of the Emperor's own armour within its design. A Blood Angels Captain clad in such precious armour can shrug off direct hits from the heaviest of weapons as he pounds unstoppably forwards to deal the killing blow to his foe. Wielding potent weapons of war, and with the ability to teleport directly into battle, the Blood Angels Terminator Captain is a versatile and powerful warrior who leads his brothers to victory time and again.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition
Terminator Captain	6	5	4	4	3	5	3	10	2+	Infantry (Character)	1 Terminator Captain

WARGEAR:

- Terminator armour
- Storm bolter
- Thunder hammer
- Iron halo

SPECIAL RULES:

- And They Shall Know No Fear
- Furious Charge
- Independent Character

OPTIONS:

- A Terminator Captain may take items from the **Terminator Weapons**, **Special Issue Wargear** and/or **Relics of Baal** lists.
- A Terminator Captain may replace their thunder hammer with the Hammer of Baal (pg 117).....10 pts





DEATH COMPANY CHAPLAIN



Soaring into battle on crimson wings, the Death Company Chaplain leads his fallen brothers in their final battle. As he smashes the enemy from their feet with devastating swings of his crozius arcanum, the Death Company Chaplain booms a constant litany of hatred and vengeance, exhorting his brothers to give meaning to their sacrifice before their tragic and inevitable end.

Simple zealotry is not enough to recommend a Blood Angels Chaplain for elevation to the rank of Death Company Chaplain. Rage and hatred are useful tools, but they are nothing without control. The role of the Death Company Chaplain is much more complex, and more sacred, than simply inciting his brothers to new heights of wrath in battle. This deeply spiritual warrior acts as the light of the Angel himself, a guiding illumination that those brothers lost to the Black Rage can follow into glory and death. He is a beacon of sanity, the eye of a bloody storm, and the last sight that many of his luckless foes will set eyes upon before their savage demise.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition
Death Company Chaplain	5	4	4	4	2	4	2	10	3+	Jump Infantry (Character)	1 Chaplain

WARGEAR:

- Inferno pistol
- Crozius arcanum
- Jump pack
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Rosarius

SPECIAL RULES:

- Furious Charge
- Independent Character
- Zealot

Rites of Blood: In a turn in which a Death Company Chaplain charges into combat, all Death Company Marines in his unit re-roll failed To Wound rolls in the Fight sub-phase. A model that has made a disordered charge that turn receives no benefit from the Rites of Blood special rule.

OPTIONS:

- A Death Company Chaplain may take items from the **Special Issue Wargear** and/or **Relics of Baal** lists.





ASSAULT SQUAD

70
POINTS



Blood Angels Assault Squads strike like the wrath of the Primarch himself, slaughtering their foes in a storm of hacking blades and spraying blood. Ideal for flanking attacks, low-orbit drops, or thunderous line-breaker charges, Assault Squads offer a Blood Angels Captain a wide variety of front-line tactics. The Blood Angels' aggressive fighting style means that most battle-brothers that are newly graduated from the 10th Company immediately join the ranks of the Assault Squads rather than the Devastator Squads, as these hot-tempered killers are naturally conditioned for the bloody release of hand-to-hand combat. Thanks to their genetic heritage, the Blood Angels take naturally to aerial manoeuvres, and thus their Assault Squads often soar into battle upon the wings of a jump pack.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition
Space Marine	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+	Infantry	4 Space Marines
Space Marine Sergeant	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+	Infantry (Character)	1 Space Marine Sergeant
Veteran Sergeant	4	4	4	4	1	4	2	9	3+	Infantry (Character)	

WARGEAR:

- Bolt pistol
- Chainsword
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades

SPECIAL RULES:

- And They Shall Know No Fear
- Combat Squads
- Furious Charge

OPTIONS:

- May include up to five additional Space Marines14 pts/model
- The entire squad may take jump packs.....3 pts/model
- Up to two Space Marines may replace their bolt pistols with one of the following:
 - Flamer5 pts/model
 - Meltagun or hand flamer10 pts/model
 - Plasma gun, inferno pistol or plasma pistol.....15 pts/model
- For every five models in the unit, one model may replace its bolt pistol and chainsword with an eviscerator.....25 pts/model
- May upgrade the Space Marine Sergeant to a Veteran Sergeant.....10 pts
- The Space Marine Sergeant or Veteran Sergeant may do any of the following:
 - Take items from the **Melee Weapons** and/or **Ranged Weapons** lists.
 - Take a combat shield and/or melta bombs5 pts each
- The unit may select a Drop Pod or Rhino as a Dedicated Transport, unless it has jump packs.



DEVASTATOR SQUAD

70
POINTS



Blood Angels Devastator Squads provide supporting fire for the advance of their battle-brothers. Typically equipped with a mix of four heavy weapons, Devastator Squads can turn their hand to blasting tanks into blazing wreckage, mowing down swathes of enemy infantry, or even smashing the foe's aircraft from the skies. To maximise the impact of their squad's firepower, Devastator Sergeants and their men must demonstrate superb target prioritisation and self control – unlike those of most Chapters, Blood Angels battle-brothers are only permitted to join the Devastator Squads once they have worked out their aggression amid the ranks of the Assault Squads. Yet even Devastators occasionally fall prey to the Red Thirst, duty forgotten as they hurl themselves wild-eyed into the midst of the foe.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition
Space Marine	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+	Infantry	4 Space Marines
Space Marine Sergeant	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+	Infantry (Character)	1 Space Marine Sergeant
Veteran Sergeant	4	4	4	4	1	4	2	9	3+	Infantry (Character)	

WARGEAR:

- **Boltpgun**
- **Bolt pistol**
- **Frag grenades**
- **Krak grenades**
- **Signum** (Space Marine Sergeant and Veteran Sergeant only)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **And They Shall Know No Fear**
- **Combat Squads**
- **Furious Charge**

OPTIONS:

- May include up to five additional Space Marines14 pts/model
- Up to four Space Marines may replace their boltpgun with the following:
 - Items from the **Heavy Weapons** list.
 - Grav-cannon and grav-amp (pg 117)35 pts/model
 - The unit may take an armorium cherub (pg 117)5 pts
- May upgrade the Space Marine Sergeant to a Veteran Sergeant10 pts
- The Space Marine Sergeant or Veteran Sergeant may take items from the **Melee Weapons** and/or **Ranged Weapons** lists.
- The Space Marine Sergeant or Veteran Sergeant may take melta bombs5 pts
- The unit may select a Drop Pod, Rhino or Razorback as a Dedicated Transport.



BATTLE DEMI-COMPANY



The Battle Demi-companies of the Blood Angels are swift and deadly formations. Comprising a strategically balanced array of battle-brothers versed in both ranged firefights and close combat, the versatile Demi-companies are able to adapt quickly to changing battlefield conditions. When the enemy advance in great number, the thundering bolters of the Tactical Squads and the heavy weapons of the Devastators quickly thin their ranks. When the foe are dug in on the defensive, the swift onset of the Assault Marines breaks their lines wide open. Such proactive strategies are especially favoured by the Demi-companies of the Blood Angels – their constant thirst for battle compels the Sons of Sanguinius to surge forwards into the foe, tearing through all who oppose them in a weller of blood.

FORMATION:

- 1 Captain or Chaplain
- 1 Command Squad (only if Captain is taken)
- 3 Tactical Squads
- 1 Assault Squad, Bike Squad, Attack Bike Squad or unit of Land Speeders
- 1 Devastator Squad
- 1 Dreadnought
- 1 Furioso Dreadnought (only if Chaplain is taken)

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

The Angel's Virtue: If this Formation is your Primary Detachment, you can re-roll the result when rolling on the Warlord Traits table in *Codex: Blood Angels*.

The Red Thirst: In a turn in which a model from this Formation charges into combat, the model adds 1 to its Initiative characteristic until the end of the Assault phase. A model that has made a disordered charge that turn receives no benefit from the Red Thirst.



ARCHANGELS ORBITAL INTERVENTION FORCE



A specialised swift-strike formation drawn from amongst the ranks of the Blood Angels 1st Company – the Archangels – this devastating force teleports directly into battle. They strike like the sword of Sanguinius himself, appearing in a blaze of golden light to tear the heart from the enemy with their crackling claws and blazing storm bolters. The natural swiftness and warrior grace of the Blood Angels combine with centuries of combat experience and specialised training, allowing the Archangels to react with incredible speed the moment they deploy. Enemy fire ricocheting harmlessly off their formidable Terminator armour, the Archangels charge into battle or take up optimised firing positions before laying down a fusillade that sweeps the foe away like a howling gale.



FORMATION:

- 3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Terminator Squads
 - Terminator Assault Squads

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

Swift Deployment: All units in this Formation must be held back in Deep Strike Reserve. When making Reserve Rolls, make a single roll for the entire Formation. On a successful Reserve Roll, all of the units in this Formation arrive from Deep Strike Reserve.

Orbital Intervention: Terminator Squads in this Formation can shoot twice on the turn they arrive by Deep Strike. The second round of shooting does not need to target the same enemy unit. Terminator Assault Squads in this Formation can instead charge on the turn they arrive from Deep Strike Reserve, but always count as making a disordered charge when they do so.



ARCHANGELS DEMI-COMPANY



Few forces in the galaxy can match the incredible efficiency and lethal martial skills of the Archangels, the hyper-elite 1st Company of the Blood Angels. Here are warriors who have survived hundreds of years of constant battle, rising to triumph time and again over the deadliest foes of Mankind. They have mastered the wild aggression of their youth, and the bloody call of the Flaw. They have forged themselves into living weapons, and trained exhaustively to combine their strengths with those of their battle-brothers. The result is a force that deploys with incredible swiftness and absolute precision, armed with elite wargear that allows them to achieve the concentrated destruction of each target in turn, while maintaining an iron grip upon the broader tactical situation around them.



FORMATION:

- 1 Terminator Captain
- 2 Furious Dreadnoughts
- 5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Terminator Squad
 - Terminator Assault Squad
 - Vanguard Veteran Squad
 - Sternguard Veteran Squad

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

- **Stubborn**

Elite Strike Force: Make Reserve Rolls for units in this Formation from your first turn.

Storm of Angels: You can re-roll failed Reserve Rolls for units in this Formation with the Deep Strike special rule. In addition, units from this Formation arriving from Deep Strike Reserves scatter D6" less (normally D6" rather than 2D6").

The Angel's Virtue: If this Formation is chosen as your Primary Detachment, you can re-roll the result when rolling on the Warlord Traits table in *Codex: Blood Angels*.



10TH COMPANY AMBUSH FORCE



Utilising speed and cunning, the squads of the 10th Company Ambush Force press ahead of the Blood Angels battlefield. Working from auspex scans and auguries, these newly blooded warriors take up positions around crucial strategic sites, or else position themselves in concealment along the projected route of advancing enemy forces. Overlapping fields of fire are established and ranging markers sited, the Scout brothers readying their weapons and establishing kill-boxes into which they wait for the enemy to stray. The moment the foe advances into the Scouts' sights, they are caught in a lethal crossfire, vehicles exploding and warriors falling as rounds rip through them. As the enemy reel in panic, the Scout brothers strike, bursting from cover to finish their enemies off in Sanguinius' name.

FORMATION:

- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Scout Squad
 - Scout Bike Squad

RESTRICTIONS:

Scout Bike Squads in this Formation must be equipped with cluster mines (see *Codex: Blood Angels*).

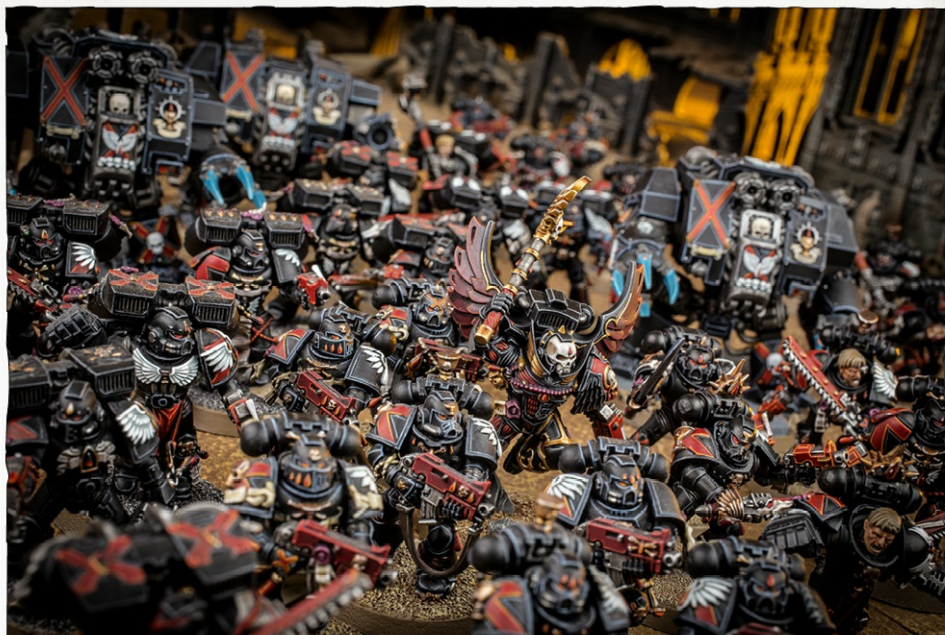
SPECIAL RULES:

Concealed Positions: Each unit from this Formation that deploys using the Infiltrate special rule and does not have the Stealth special rule is Concealed. A Concealed unit has the Stealth special rule until it Moves, Runs, Turbo Boosts, Charges or Falls Back, at which point it immediately loses the Stealth special rule for the rest of the battle.

The Trap is Sprung: During the first game turn, all units from this Formation have the Precision Shots special rule.



DEATH COMPANY STRIKE FORCE



A force as tragic as it is deadly, the Death Company Strike Force is deployed only when an appalling number of battle-brothers have fallen to the Black Rage. Guided to war by the spiritual beacon of a Death Company Chaplain, and supported by the armoured fury of their lost Dreadnought brethren, the fallen brothers of the Death Company surge into battle with screams of psychotic rage. They tear through everything that stands in their path, giving no thought to their own survival, for their tortured minds are beyond such concepts. Against such a battering ram of destructive power, few enemies can survive for long, their defences overwhelmed and their warriors torn apart by superhuman warriors driven to the depths of berserk madness by the curse upon their souls.



FORMATION:

- 1 Death Company Chaplain
- 3 Death Company Squads
- 1-3 Death Company Dreadnoughts

RESTRICTIONS:

Any Death Company Squad in this Formation can take a Stormraven Gunship (see *Codex: Blood Angels*) as a Dedicated Transport.

SPECIAL RULES:

The Black Rage: All models in Death Company Squads from this Formation and all Death Company Dreadnoughts from this Formation add 1 to their Attacks characteristic whilst they are within 12" of their Formation's Death Company Chaplain.



GOLDEN HOST



The Golden Host sweeps down from the heavens, bringing the cleansing wrath of Sanguinius to the darkness of the battlefield. Radiant nobility shines from every plate of these warriors' golden armour, and plays in crackling haloes about their death-mask helms. Led by the greatest heroes of their Chapter, the Golden Host carve unstoppably through the enemy ranks, who seem slow and dull by comparison. So swift and lethal is the Golden Host that it is upon the enemy before they have even realised their danger. Glaives encarmine crackle with deadly power as they scythe through armour, flesh and bone, the Golden Host laying low all who would threaten the supremacy of the Imperium of Man.



FORMATION:

- The Sanguinor or Commander Dante
- 2-5 units of Sanguinary Guard

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

Airborne Assault: From your second turn, you can choose the turn in which the units from this Formation arrive from Reserves (there is no need to roll the dice). All units in the Formation must arrive on the same turn, and all must Deep Strike onto the battlefield. You can re-roll the scatter dice when units from this Formation arrive from Deep Strike Reserve.

Glory of Sanguinius: Units in this Formation can charge on the turn they arrive from Deep Strike Reserve, but always count as making a disordered charge when they do so.



CHAPTER ANCIENTS



The ground shakes beneath the tread of the Chapter Ancients. Revenant warriors with millennia of battle-wisdom between them, these Dreadnoughts march across the battlefield while enemy fire rattles from their armoured forms. In return, the Dreadnoughts' heavy weapons roar to life, spitting fist-sized shells or blasts of superheated energy that rip through the foe. Librarian Dreadnoughts loose the powers of their augmented minds, crackling arcs of light blasting enemies apart while Warp energy wreathes allies in sparking shields. Whether anchoring a Blood Angels battle-line against onrushing forces, or spearheading an infantry assault to drive the foe from their own defended positions, the Chapter Ancients are as unstoppable as the march of time itself.

FORMATION:

- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Librarian Dreadnought
 - Dreadnought
 - Furioso Dreadnought

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

Well-timed Blow: Once per battle, at the start of any Blood Angels turn, the Dreadnoughts in this Formation can deliver a Well-timed Blow upon the foe. When they do so, instead of moving in the Movement phase, they can either shoot as if it were the Shooting phase, or Pile In and fight as if it were the Fight sub-phase. Different Dreadnoughts can carry out different actions if desired, so some might move, some shoot and some fight. Dreadnoughts that shoot or fight can do so again later in the same turn.



STORMRAVEN SQUADRON



The sky fills with the howl of powerful ramjets as the Stormraven Squadron swoops into battle. More akin to flying tanks than conventional aircraft, these heavily armoured craft thunder over the field of battle, plunging on through flak fire that would saw lesser craft in half, and scattering enemy fighter squadrons like panicked birds with their head-on attacks. The firepower of the Stormraven Squadron is terrifying in its own right, volleys of stormstrike missiles shredding enemy flyers to scrap, while lascannons rip through armoured foes and assault cannons tear massed infantry apart. By the time the squadron skims low to drop off the power-armoured warriors it transports, the enemy are reeling in disarray, ripe targets for the Angels of Baal to put to death in short order.



FORMATION:

- 2-4 Stormraven Gunships

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

Annihilation Strike: Once per battle, at the start of any of your turns, you can pick an enemy unit anywhere on the battlefield to be the target of an Annihilation Strike. When you do so, any Stormraven Gunships from this Formation that are within 72" of the target unit and have line of sight to the target must fire **all** of their remaining stormstrike missiles at it. Conduct the attacks as if they were being carried out in the Shooting phase. No other attacks can be made by the Stormraven Gunships as part of an Annihilation Strike.

The Stormraven Gunships can shoot again in the Shooting phase of the same turn, using the weapons they have remaining, and not counting the stormstrike missiles they used against the number of attacks that can be made this turn.



LUCIFER ARMOURED TASK FORCE



The first the enemy sees of the Lucifer Armoured Task Force is a great dust cloud above the horizon, drawing closer like an onrushing storm. Warriors rush to their barricades and heavy weapons are sighted, yet the action takes on a frantic pace as the foe realise this armoured spearhead is coming on at breakneck speed. Panicked enemies are still fumbling the lids from ammo crates or yelling orders into their comms when the first Blood Angels salvos fall amongst them. The red-armoured tanks of the Lucifer force plunge into the enemy ranks like Sanguinius' spear, the roar of their overcharged engines melding with the thunder of their guns and the screams of their dying victims as they surge on to swift and total victory.

FORMATION:

- 1 Techmarine
- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Baal Predator
 - Predator
- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Land Raider
 - Land Raider Crusader
 - Land Raider Redeemer

RESTRICTIONS:

None.

SPECIAL RULES:

- Scout

First Into Battle: All Predators and Land Raiders in this Formation have overcharged engines (at no additional points cost). This means that all vehicles in a Lucifer Armoured Task Force have the Fast unit type, as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

WARGEAR OF BAAL

This section of *Black Crusade: Angel's Blade* describes new weapons and wargear options listed on the Blood Angels datasheets within this book. All other items of wargear are described fully either in *Codex: Blood Angels* or in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

ARMORIUM CHERUB

Cherubim are diminutive flying cyborg constructs created to assist the Emperor's servants, be they scribe or soldier. Among the Adeptus Astartes they are rarely seen outside of the Librarius, save for those few that relay targeting data and carry spare ammunition for Devastator Squads.

One use only. One model in a unit equipped with an armorium cherub can re-roll all failed To Hit rolls in one Shooting phase. An armorium cherub is represented by a separate miniature that will always remain as close as possible to the unit that selected it. The model itself is purely decorative and is always ignored for game purposes – just move it to one side if it gets in the way. Remove the armorium cherub once it has been used or once the unit that selected it has been completely destroyed.

GRAV-AMP

The grav-amp is a wonder of archeotech that focusses and strengthens the field of the bearer's grav-weapons.

When rolling To Wound with a grav-weapon, or to determine its effects on a vehicle, the bearer can re-roll the result.

RELIC OF BAAL

The Hammer of Baal: *This exquisite weapon was forged by master-artisans several millennia ago. It was entrusted by Dante himself into Karlaen's custody when he took up the mantle of Captain of the 1st Company. Since that day, it has been the doom of traitors and aliens beyond counting.*

Range	S	AP	Type
-	x2	2	Melee, Concussive, Master-crafted, Specialist Weapon, Unwieldy



PSYKANA LIBRARIUS

Masters of the esoteric arts, Librarians are warrior mystics who unleash the power of the Warp onto the 41st Millennium's battlefields. With crackling bolts of lightning and storms of telekinetic force, they smite the enemies of the Imperium, serving their Chapter as both peerless advisors and masterful battle leaders.



Space Marine Librarians are among the most potent of all of Mankind's psykers. Every one is a warrior of two worlds, mastering the arts of bolter and blade as well as being trained to fight foes upon the supernatural battlefield of the mind. A skilled Librarian can manipulate the energy of the Warp in extraordinary ways, and with spectacular effects. Compared to the sanctioned human psykers used by the other institutions of the Imperium, Space Marine Librarians can wield far more raw power in a considerably wider array of disciplines. Nevertheless, a few Chapters still recruit potential Librarians from the halls of the Scholastica Psykana, hoping to find gifted initiates among the youngest and most brilliant of those pupils. If they manage to become Space Marines, the superhuman strength, discipline and longevity they acquire allows them to practise their art and bolster their mental defences over many more centuries than the relatively frail mind of a mere human could ever hope to manage. Though this power is sufficient to draw victory on a battlefield from the jaws of defeat, it does not come without significant risk.

Every psyker's mind holds within it a miniscule link to the Warp, through which they access that metaphysical dimension to power their abilities. Each time a psychically sensitive individual uses the power of the Warp, they expose themselves to the malevolent entities that dwell there, their minds glowing in that realm like bright candles in a dark fog. With ruthless and often life-threatening training, psykers learn to obscure and defend themselves against these forces. Should their focus waver or their mental defences fall, however, a psyker's mind and body will be vulnerable to all manner of horrific fates. If a daemon gains access to realspace through the mind of a weak psyker, they could wreak untold havoc through the act of possession. Worse yet, they could even spell the doom of entire sectors by tearing a rift in the skein of reality and causing a daemonic incursion.

Understandably then, to even become a Librarian, a Space Marine must be an exceptionally talented psyker and undergo years of gruelling training within the depths of their Chapter's fortress-monastery. This training continues throughout their lives, and Librarians are constantly testing their minds and bodies to reinforce the strength and breadth of their willpower. Therefore, just as a Chapter's Apothecaries test the genetic suitability of potential Space Marines, the existing Librarians are responsible for assessing all potential recruits to the Chapter for psychic ability. Any who show signs of psychic sensitivity must submit to painful and invasive mental bombardments before they are trusted to wield their talent in combat situations or are fully inducted into the ranks of a Chapter's Librarians. Parallel to their instruction in the Librarius, initiates also undergo the same robust combat training as their brothers in the Battle Companies. Though the risks of using psykers in the

armies of the Imperium are great, there are few individuals as potent on the field of battle. If, from a thousand potential candidates, even a single Librarian emerges, then it is a boon to the strength of the Chapter and its future.

The warriors that win their place within a Space Marine Chapter's Librarium are feared across the galaxy by all who seek the Imperium's downfall. One need only witness one of these proud mystics as they stride through the maelstrom of battle, untouched by bullet or flame and hurling searing lightning bolts through the ranks of the Imperium's enemies, to see what they add to the already prodigious power of the Adeptus Astartes. Like a storm cloud that presses down upon the world, the psychic shadow of the Librarian causes allies and enemies alike to look up as he enters the fray. Light streams from his eyes and sparks dance around his head, hinting at the intense energy of the Warp coiled within the weapon that is his mind. The true mastery of a Librarian is evinced when he utters his incantations. In a booming voice that reaches warriors even through the roaring din of combat, his words and thoughts become lightning, flame, and swirling vortexes that ravage the air with their fury.

When not devastating the plans of enemy warlords in war zones from Damocles to the Cadian Gate, Librarians have a host of other, less violent, duties to attend to. In addition to testing recruits and tending to their own training, Librarians are responsible for maintaining their Chapter's Librariums. Overseen by the Librarians, each is a silent and sacred place of whispered secrets and hidden truths. Filled with ancient tomes and sacred scrolls, every piece of text laid down by the Chapter, or relevant to its existence, is housed within. Every fortress-monastery will have a Librarium to house the lore, battle records, and certain psychically active artefacts like force weapons. Famous victories, shameful defeats and the legends of the Chapter's heroes are recorded there, and the Librarians are fiercely devoted to their role as keepers of their legacy.

In addition to the main Librarium on a Chapter planet, many Battle Barges maintain smaller Librariums for use during their long campaigns. While no two Librariums are exactly the same, they are often built around a central pillar, its racks of books and scrolls spiralling out into antechambers that hold rows of written works, data-slates, chronicle-stones and mnemo-slates recording the accounts of great battles, the final words of its heroes, and the secrets of vanquished foes. The central pillar of the Librarium houses its oldest available copy of the Codex Astartes, held in a stasis-plinth or protected by holo-reflection. Many lords of the Adeptus Astartes visit the quiet, dusty halls of the Librarium to draw their inspiration and resolve from the ancient book in times of darkness.

LIBRARIANS

Any Psyker with the Blood Angels Faction can generate their psychic powers from the **Librarius**, **Technomancy**, **Fulmination** and **Geokinesis** disciplines, in addition to any other disciplines they have access to.



LIBRARIUS DISCIPLINE

The ancient lore of the Chapter's Librarium is vast indeed, and hidden among its complement of ancient tomes and scrolls are the hard-won secrets of the Space Marine Librarians. Within a sacred few of these closely guarded texts are techniques that allow the user to enhance his own psychic might or quell that of his foes. In battle, those trained in the Librarius discipline can batter enemies with ethereal force, strengthen their own minds and bodies with the power of the Warp, or sever the connection of other psykers.



TECHNOMANCY DISCIPLINE

Technomancy affects the spirits of machines the same way other disciplines manipulate the minds of sentient creatures. No technology is proof against this power, and weapons, vehicles and even fortifications can be cursed by a talented technomancer. The psyker reaches into the workings of his target, subverting its vital energies to turn guns on their owners or cause tanks to roll to a shuddering halt. The power to destroy can also be turned to more benign ends, and Technomancy is equally effective in mending ailing machine spirits, readying them for war once more.



FULMINATION DISCIPLINE

Some psykers regard lightning as the crackling essence of life, a vital force that the Warp-touched can draw upon to annihilate their foes. Fulmination is the power of arcing energy and electricity, and a psyker can wield it with but a flicker of thought. At its most basic, this discipline allows the user to hurl bolts of lightning across the battlefield, but this is only the beginning of what might be achieved. Fields of sparking light can be summoned by the Librarian to ward away damage or, with a blaze of light, he can teleport allies across a battlefield.



GEOKINESIS DISCIPLINE

The ground shudders beneath the feet of a geokine as he summons forth his powers. The discipline of earth and stone, Geokinesis is the art of reaching down under the skin of a world and turning its natural might into a weapon. The battlefield yawns open to swallow up those that oppose the Space Marines, or is riven by brutal earthquakes. Even whole segments of the battleground might be levitated high in the air by the Librarian – enemies fall screaming to their deaths from floating plateaus, and yet more are crushed as the psyker relinquishes his control, causing hundreds of tonnes of rock to plummet from the sky.



LIBRARIUS DISCIPLINE

PRIMARIS POWER

THE EMPEROR'S WRATHWARP CHARGE 1

Crackling bolts of psychic force leap from the Librarian's gauntlet, tearing through armour to annihilate the enemies of the Imperium.

The Emperor's Wrath is a **witchfire** power with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	5	3	Assault 1, Blast

1. VEIL OF TIME.....WARP CHARGE 2

The psyker projects his will beyond the regular passage of time, taking in the strands of fate before returning to the present to sway the tide of battle.

Veil of Time is a **blessing** that targets the Psyker's unit. Whilst the power is in effect, the Psyker and his unit can re-roll all failed saving throws.

2. FURY OF

THE ANCIENTSWARP CHARGE 1

Calling upon the myths and legends of his Chapter's home world, the psyker sends forth a terrifying monstrosity wrought from psychic energy.

Fury of the Ancients is a **beam** with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
20"	6	4	Assault 1, Pinning

3. PSYCHIC FORTRESS...WARP CHARGE 1

Drawing on boundless reserves of inner strength, the psyker shields his mind – and those of his brethren – from the threat of sorcerous assault.

Psychic Fortress is a **blessing** that targets the Psyker. Whilst the power is in effect, all friendly units within 12" of the Psyker have the Fearless and Adamantium Will special rules. In addition, whilst this power is in effect, all friendly units within 12" of the Psyker have a 4+ invulnerable save against any Wounds caused by **witchfire** powers.

4. MIGHT OF HEROESWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker cages the immense power of the Immaterium within his physical form and becomes the Emperor's vengeance made manifest.

Might of Heroes is a **blessing** that targets the Psyker. Whilst the power is in effect, add 2 to the Psyker's Strength, Toughness, Initiative and Attacks.

5. PSYCHIC SCOURGE.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker pits his superhuman willpower against that of an enemy sorcerer in a battle of mental fortitude, seeking to scour arcane knowledge from the foul witch's mind.

Psychic Scourge is a **malediction** that targets an enemy Psyker within 24". The Psyker manifesting this power rolls two dice and adds their Mastery Level to the highest result. The other Psyker rolls a single dice and adds their Mastery Level to the result.

If the enemy Psyker's result is higher, there is no effect.

If the scores are drawn, or your result is higher than the enemy Psyker's, the target suffers a Wound with no saves of any kind allowed and, whilst this power is in effect, can only successfully manifest Warp Charge points on the roll of a 6.

Finally, if your result is at least 3 points higher than that of the enemy Psyker's, then they also lose a randomly chosen psychic power – they cannot use it for the rest of the battle.

6. NULL ZONE.....WARP CHARGE 2

The psyker unleashes the full might of his mind to cast down his target's defences, both technological and mystical, rendering them vulnerable to the retribution of the Adeptus Astartes.

Null Zone is a **malediction** that targets an enemy unit within 24". Whilst the power is in effect, all models in the target unit suffer a -2 penalty to any invulnerable saves they have. This is cumulative with any other modifiers to a model's invulnerable save, but cannot make it worse than 6+.





TECHNOMANCY DISCIPLINE

PRIMARIS POWER

SUBVERT MACHINE...WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker imposes his will upon an enemy machine spirit, forcing it into a state of dormancy or confusion, or even causing it to fire upon its own allies.

Subvert Machine is a **malediction** that targets a single enemy vehicle within 18". If this power is successfully manifested, randomly select one of the vehicle's weapons (do not include Bombs, weapons with the One Use Only/One Shot Only special rule that have already fired, and weapons that have been destroyed). Then, you and your opponent each roll a dice and look up the result below:

If your opponent rolls higher, nothing happens.

If the results are drawn, then that weapon can only fire Snap Shots whilst this power is in effect.

If you roll higher, you can immediately shoot with that weapon at another enemy unit – the weapon fires using the vehicle's Ballistic Skill, unless the vehicle is Crew Stunned or Shaken, in which case the weapon can only fire Snap Shots.

1. BLESSING OF

THE MACHINE.....WARP CHARGE 1

A dormant machine spirit is coaxed into vital life by the psyker's mental impulse. Though granted only fleeting animus, when such a spirit is roused from its slumber, it will not hesitate to lash out at those it deems a threat.

Blessing of the Machine is a **blessing** that targets a single friendly vehicle within 24". Whilst the power is in effect, the target vehicle ignores the effects of Crew Shaken and/or Crew Stunned damage results and has the Power of the Machine Spirit special rule. If the vehicle already has this special rule, it instead increases its Ballistic Skill by 1 whilst this power is in effect.

If the Psyker is embarked on a Transport vehicle, he may still attempt to manifest this psychic power, but may only target the vehicle he is embarked upon.

2. MACHINE CURSE.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker's otherworldly vision penetrates the vehicle's armoured shell, laying bare its vulnerable inner workings to his destructive manipulation.

Machine Curse is a **focussed witchfire** power that targets a single enemy vehicle unit within 18". The target model immediately suffers D3 Strength 1 AP- hits with the Haywire special rule.

3. REFORGE.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker's mind communes with the machine spirit of a damaged vehicle, soothing its pain as otherworldly energies reforge its wounded hull.

Reforge is a **blessing** that targets a single friendly vehicle within 24". The controlling player can choose for the target vehicle either to immediately recover one Hull Point lost earlier in the battle, or repair a Weapon Destroyed or Immobilised result suffered earlier in the battle. In addition, the target vehicle has the It Will Not Die special rule whilst this power is in effect.

If the Psyker is embarked on a Transport vehicle, he may still attempt to manifest this psychic power, but may only target the vehicle he is embarked upon.

4. WARPMETAL

ARMOUR.....WARP CHARGE 2

At the psyker's command, Warp energy temporarily coalesces into a steely metal, bolstering the armour of nearby tanks or wrapping allies in a second skin capable of turning aside bullet and blade alike.

Warpmetal Armour is a **blessing** that targets a single friendly unit within 24". If this power targets a vehicle unit, then whilst it is in effect add 1 to all the Armour Values (Front, Sides and Rear) of models in that unit. If this power targets a non-vehicle unit, then whilst it is in effect add 1 to the Toughness of all models in the target unit.

If the Psyker is embarked on a Transport vehicle, he may still attempt to manifest this psychic power, but may only target the vehicle he is embarked upon.

5. FURY OF MARS.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker channels the mechanical wrath of the Omnissiah into an enormous, Warp-fuelled pulse that surges forth in an invisible weave to unleash ruin upon the impure technology of the foe.

Fury of Mars is a **beam** with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	1	-	Assault 1, Haywire

6. MACHINE FLENS.....WARP CHARGE 2

The psyker's mind lashes out at an enemy war machine to shred its armoured hull. Not yet satisfied with the damage he has wrought, the psyker redirects the jagged fragments he has torn free to assail yet more of his foes.

Machine Flense is a **focussed witchfire** power that targets a single enemy vehicle unit within 18". The target immediately loses D3 Hull Points. For each Hull Point that the vehicle loses, the Psyker inflicts D6 Strength 4 AP6 hits with the Rending special rule on a single enemy unit within 12" of the target vehicle. You can choose a different target for each Hull Point lost in this way if you wish.



FULMINATION DISCIPLINE

PRIMARIS POWER

ELECTROSURGEWARP CHARGE 1

Electrokinetic energy surges through the psyker's veins and arcs between his fingertips. With a gesture, it leaps forth to transform flesh into charred meat.

Electrosurge is a **witchfire** power with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	5	4	Assault 6

1. ELECTROSHIELDWARP CHARGE 1

With a thought, the psyker summons a crackling shield of electrokinetic energy to ward away the bullets and blows of the enemy.

Electroshield is a **blessing** that targets the Psyker. Whilst the power is in effect, the Psyker has a 3+ invulnerable save.

2. ELECTROPULSEWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker concentrates his power into a raging cyclone of electromagnetic energy that spirals outwards before detonating in a shock wave that causes machine circuits to sputter and die.

Electropulse is a **nova** power with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
9"	1	-	Assault 1, Haywire

3. LIGHTNING ARCWARP CHARGE 2

Bolts of Warp lightning leap forth from the psyker's eyes and mouth, arcing violently among the enemy forces and leaving death in their wake.

Lightning Arc is a **witchfire** power with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	5	4	Assault D6, Lethal Discharge

Lethal Discharge: After this attack has been resolved against the target, roll a dice for every other enemy unit within 6" of the target. On the roll of a 4 or more, that unit suffers D6 Strength 5 AP4 hits that are Randomly Allocated.

4. FISTS OF

LIGHTNINGWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker summons crackling coronae of living lightning that surround his fists. Whenever enemies are struck, incandescent arcs of lethal energy leap forth to course through their ranks.

Fists of Lightning is a **blessing** that targets the Psyker. Whilst this power is in effect, the Psyker adds 1 to both his Strength and Attacks. In addition, each time the Psyker hits an enemy unit in close combat, that unit suffers two additional Strength 5 AP- hits.

5. MAGNETOKINESISWARP CHARGE 2

The psyker surrounds his allies in a bubble of magnetokinetic force before levitating them across the battlefield to a tactically superior position.

Magnetokinesis is a **blessing** that targets a single unit within 18".

Unless the target is Zooming, Swooping or is locked in combat, it can immediately make a move of up to 18". The unit can move over all other models and terrain as if they were open ground, but it cannot end its move on top of other models or impassable terrain. Any model that starts or ends this move in difficult terrain must take a Dangerous Terrain test. The unit cannot charge in the same turn that it was moved using this power, and all models in the unit count as having moved in the Movement phase for the purposes of shooting weapons in the Shooting phase.

6. ELECTRODISPLACEMENTWARP CHARGE 2

The psyker bends the power of the Warp and an eldritch bolt of lightning flashes across the battlefield. In an instant, the psyker has displaced himself, switching his location with that of his allies.

Electrodisplacement is a **blessing** that targets a single non-vehicle unit within 24". Remove all models in the target unit except one, then swap the position of the Psyker with that model. Then, set up all models from the Psyker's unit (if any) within 6" and unit coherency of the Psyker, and set up all remaining models from the swapped model's unit within 6" and unit coherency of that model.

If either unit was locked in combat, the displaced unit is now locked in combat with that enemy – models cannot otherwise be placed within 1" of an enemy model.

Unless locked in close combat, these units can charge in the same turn.





GEOKINESIS DISCIPLINE

PRIMARIS POWER

CHASM.....WARP CHARGE 2

The psyker slams his hands together, and then pulls them slowly apart. As he does so, a wide chasm filled with lava opens under an enemy unit.

Chasm is a psychic power that targets an enemy unit within 18" of the Psyker that is not locked in combat. All models in the enemy unit must immediately take a Dangerous Terrain test with no armour saves allowed (invulnerable saves can be taken normally). This psychic power has no effect on Swooping or Zooming units.

1. EARTH BLOOD.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker draws on the very life force of the planet upon which he treads, sending forth a surge of healing energy that spreads up from the ground and into those standing nearby.

Earth Blood is a **blessing** that targets a single friendly non-vehicle character within 18". The target immediately regains D3 wounds lost earlier during the battle. In addition, whilst the power is in effect, the target and all models in their unit have the It Will Not Die special rule.

2. SCORCHED EARTH.....WARP CHARGE 1

The psyker focusses his mental powers on an area of nearby ground. The once-solid surface begins to writhe and burn, spewing rocks and lava into the air and turning the area into a quagmire of fire and magma.

Scorched Earth is a **malediction** that targets a point on the battlefield within 24" of the Psyker. Choose the point when the power is manifested. Each unit within 6" of that point immediately suffers a single Strength 5 AP4 hit with the Ignores Cover special rule (hits are Randomly Allocated). In addition, whilst the power is in effect, all terrain (including open ground) within 6" of the point chosen is treated as being dangerous terrain.

3. LANDQUAKEWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker stamps down hard upon the ground, triggering a violent shock wave that ripples outwards and knocks enemy warriors from their feet.

Landquake is a **malediction** that targets all enemy units within 18". Whilst this power is in effect, the targets move as though they were in difficult terrain. Furthermore, whilst this power is in effect, the targets cannot Run, Turbo-boost, or move Flat Out. This psychic power has no effect on Swooping or Zooming units.

4. PHASE FORMWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker creates an anomaly that pushes an ally out of sync with reality. Objects lose some of their substance, allowing the ally to pass through them when it moves or see through them when it attacks.

Phase Form is a **blessing** that targets a single friendly unit within 24". Whilst the power is in effect, the unit has the Move Through Cover special rule and all of its weapons have the Ignores Cover special rule. In addition, the unit does not need line of sight in order to attack an enemy unit in the Shooting phase – as long as the target is in range, it can be shot at.

5. WARP QUAKEWARP CHARGE 1

The psyker focusses on a building and balls his hand into a tight fist. As his hand starts to shudder, so too does the building, until it starts to crumble and collapse.

Warp Quake is a **witchfire** power that targets either a single building or a single piece of Ruins terrain within 24".

If you targeted a building, roll a dice; on a roll of 1-3, the building suffers a glancing hit, and on a roll of 4-6, it suffers a penetrating hit.

If you targeted a piece of Ruins terrain, roll a dice for each unit that is even partially within those ruins: on a 4 or more, that unit suffers D6 Strength 6 AP- hits as they are struck by falling debris. These hits are Randomly Allocated.

6. SHIFTING WORLDSCAPE.....WARP CHARGE 3

The psyker tears the landscape asunder, raising up an area of ground and everything standing upon it, and moving it through the air to a new location.

Shifting Worldscape is a psychic power that targets a single terrain feature within 24" of the Psyker and in their line of sight. The terrain feature must be one that can be physically picked up and placed in a different location on the battlefield. Move the terrain to an area of open ground anywhere on the battlefield within 24" of its starting position, so long as it is more than 1" away from any other models or other terrain features after the relocation is complete.

Any units that have all of their models on the piece of terrain are moved with it. If a unit has only a portion of its models on the terrain feature, then the models that occupy the terrain piece are immediately moved off it by their player, in the same manner as a model disembarking from a vehicle (treating the edge of the terrain as an Access Point and ending this move wholly within 6" of the terrain and in coherency). Models moved in this way must then take a Dangerous Terrain test.

ALTAR OF WAR: DEATH ON THE WING

The Blood Angels are renowned for the swiftness and decisiveness of their attacks. As if from nowhere, the Sons of Sanguinius descend upon wings of fire to deliver the Emperor's vengeance to any that would challenge the supremacy of Mankind. Once battle is joined in such a manner, the Blood Angels are seldom denied.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*. The Blood Angels player's Warlord must have the Blood Angels Faction.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*, using the deployment map included in this mission.

DEPLOYMENT

Players deploy using the Standard Deployment Method as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

However, any units in the Blood Angels player's army that have the Jump, Skimmer or Flyer unit type (and any units embarked upon them) are not deployed, and must be held in Reserve.

FIRST TURN

The player that deployed first has the first turn unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, the player that has scored the most Victory Points wins the battle. If the players have the same number of Victory Points, the game is a draw.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

At the end of the game, each player receives 1 Victory Point for each enemy unit that has been completely destroyed. Units that are Falling Back at the end of the game, and units that are not on the board at the end of the game, count as destroyed for the purposes of this mission. Remember that Independent Characters and Dedicated Transports are individual units and award Victory Points if they are destroyed.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

First Blood, Linebreaker, Slay the Warlord.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

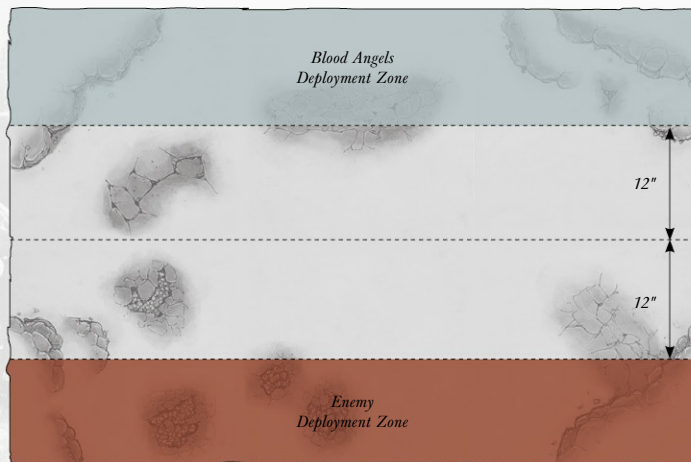
Reserves.

Home Ground: All enemy units have the Move Through Cover and Stubborn special rules.

Upon Wings of Fire: From the start of their first turn, the Blood Angels player makes a single Reserve Roll for all of the units in their army with the Jump, Skimmer or Flyer unit type (and any units embarked on them). If successful, all of the units being rolled for arrive that turn.



Blood Angels Table Edge



Enemy Table Edge

ALTAR OF WAR: HONOUR OF THE ANGELS

As a First Founding Chapter, the reliquaries of the Blood Angels' fortress-monastery on Baal are filled with some of the most priceless artefacts in the Imperium. Should a hero of the Blood Angels be granted stewardship of such a relic and fall in battle, the Chapter's honour cannot be satisfied unless it is recovered.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*. The Blood Angels player's Warlord must have the Blood Angels Faction.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*, using the deployment map included in this mission.

OBJECTIVE MARKERS

After setting up terrain, the enemy player places a single Objective Marker anywhere in their deployment zone to represent the Relic. The Objective Marker cannot be placed within impassable terrain or 6" of any battlefield edge.



DEPLOYMENT

Players must deploy using the Standard Deployment Method as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

FIRST TURN

The player that deployed first has the first turn unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

If the Blood Angels player retrieves the lost relic and removes it from the table, the game immediately ends and the Blood Angels player is the winner. If the lost relic is still on the table when the game ends, the enemy player is the winner. If at any point the Blood Angels player no longer has any Infantry models (including those in Reserve), the game immediately ends and the enemy player is the winner.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Night Fighting, Reserves.

The Skies are Guarded: At the end of any Blood Angels Movement phase, any enemy unit can choose to fire at a single Blood Angels unit that has arrived from Reserve and ended its movement within 12" of the Objective Marker, as long as it is within range and line of sight. Any weapons fired in this way cannot be fired in the next turn, but the firing models can shoot different weapons if they have them.

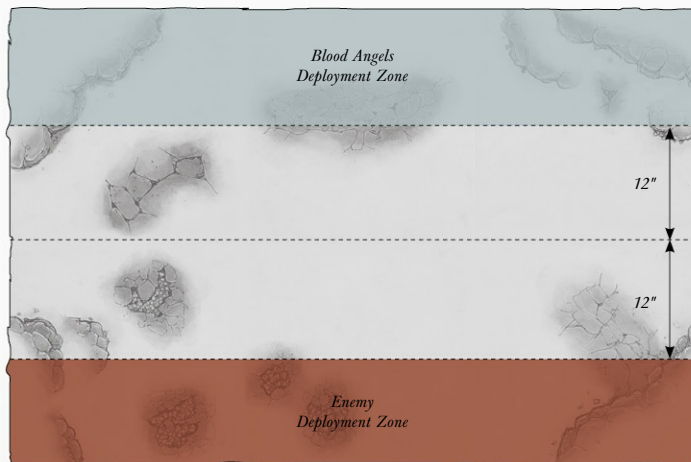
Retrieving the Relic: The Relic is taken immediately when a Blood Angels Infantry model moves into base contact with it. Place the marker under the model's base to show it is carrying the Relic. A model that is carrying the Relic may move and fight normally. When the model moves, the marker moves with it. If the model is removed from play for any reason (including reaching a table edge when Falling Back, but excluding Exiting the Table as described below), then the marker is left on the table in the last position the model occupied, and will be captured by the next Blood Angels Infantry model to move into base contact with it. The model cannot give the Relic to another friendly model, or choose to abandon it. Models other than Blood Angels Infantry models may not end a move on top of the marker (though they may move over it).

Exiting the Table: If a Blood Angels model that is carrying the Relic voluntarily moves into contact with its own table edge (or is in a Transport that does so), it exits the table and is removed from play. If this happens, the game ends immediately – see Victory Conditions.





Blood Angels Table Edge



Enemy Table Edge

ALTAR OF WAR: NO MATTER THE ODDS

The Blood Angels are masters of strategy, but this does not mean that they are afraid to set loose the Death Company in a frontal assault against a dug-in enemy. Though this would seem like folly to most, those under the irrepressible grip of the Black Rage seek nothing more than to die a glorious death in battle.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*. The Blood Angels player's Warlord must have the Blood Angels Faction.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*, using the deployment map included in this mission.

OBJECTIVE MARKERS

After terrain has been set up, the enemy player places 3 Objective Markers anywhere within their deployment zone. No Objective Marker can be placed within 6" of any battlefield edge or 12" of another Objective Marker.

DEPLOYMENT

Players must deploy using the Standard Deployment Method as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

FIRST TURN

The player that deployed first has the first turn unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length as described in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, the player that has scored the most Victory Points wins the battle. If the players have the same number of Victory Points, the game is a draw.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

At the end of the game, each Objective Marker is worth 3 Victory Points to the player that controls it.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

First Blood, Linebreaker, Slay the Warlord.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

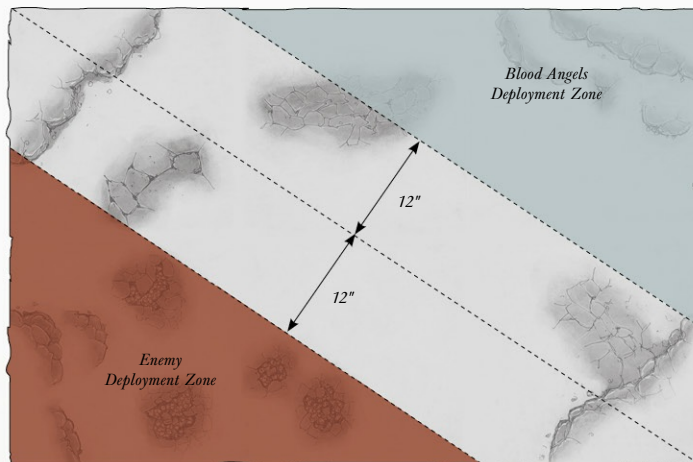
Mysterious Objective, Reserves.

The Odds Are Against Them: At the start of each of their turns, the enemy player can place a single Troops unit that has been completely destroyed earlier in the battle into Ongoing Reserve, from where it will immediately be available to return to the battle.

Doomseekers: The Blood Angels player can add 1 to any Feel No Pain rolls they make for their units of Death Company. In addition, if at the start of the Fight sub-phase, any of the Blood Angels player's units of Death Company are locked in a combat that contains more enemy models than friendly models (count all models locked in the combat, not just those models that are engaged), then models in that Death Company unit gain 1 Attack for the duration of that Fight sub-phase.



Blood Angels Table Edge



Enemy Table Edge





FORCES OF THE DEATH COMPANY

This section of the book details the rules for using a Blood Angels army in your games of Warhammer 40,000 that is centred around the infamous Death Company, and includes their unique Warlord Traits, relics, Tactical Objectives and the Lost Brotherhood Strike Force.

DEATH COMPANY SPECIAL RULES

Strike forces drawn from the Death Company are slightly different to those normally fielded by the Blood Angels.

If you use the Death Company Strike Force or a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force, the following supplemental special rule applies to all of the units they contain.

FINAL FLIGHT

Death Company Squads can take Stormraven Gunships (see *Codex: Blood Angels*) as Dedicated Transports.

RELICS OF THE LOST

Any units from a Death Company Strike Force or a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force that can select Relics of Baal can select an item from the Relics of the Lost list, presented opposite, at the points cost shown, in addition to Relics of Baal.

WARLORD TRAITS

If your Warlord is a member of a Death Company Strike Force or a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force, you can roll on the Warlord Traits table to the right instead of using one of the Warlord Traits tables in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules* or *Codex: Blood Angels*.



WARLORD TRAITS TABLE

D6 WARLORD TRAIT

- 1 **Blood-augur:** *This Warlord is adept at snatching moments of prophecy from amid the ravings of those under his command.*

Once per game turn, as long as your Warlord is still alive, you may re-roll any single dice. This could be a Reserve roll, a To Hit roll, a Saving Throw, a single dice of a Leadership test, etc.

- 2 **Beacon of Rage:** *The Warlord's fervent advance drives the Death Company onwards.*

Your Warlord and all friendly Death Company Squads within 12" of him when they declare a charge have the Fleet special rule.

- 3 **Caged Fury:** *This Warlord has learnt to restrain the ferocity of his charges until it can be unleashed to greatest effect when they are surrounded by foes.*

Your Warlord and any unit he joins have the Rampage special rule.

- 4 **Infectious Tenacity:** *Inspired in turn by the unstoppable determination of the Death Company surrounding him, your Warlord refuses to fall.*

Your Warlord has the Feel No Pain special rule. If your Warlord already has the Feel No Pain special rule, add 1 to any Feel No Pain rolls you make for him instead.

- 5 **Black Fury:** *The Black Rage stirs in this Warlord's heart and his ferocity in battle escalates out of control.*

Your Warlord has the Rage special rule.

- 6 **Visions of Heresy:** *To those that share the race memory of Sanguinius' fall, the forces of Chaos must be made to pay in blood at any cost for the death of their Primarch.*

Your Warlord and all friendly Death Company Squads within 12" of him have the Hatred (Chaos Daemons and Chaos Space Marines) special rule.



RELICS OF THE LOST

Relics of the Lost are items of incredible rarity and power, each a piece of wargear once borne by a legendary hero of the Chapter who succumbed to the Black Rage. Only one of each of the following relics may be chosen per army.

THE RELIQUARY ARMOUR.....30 PTS

A grim memorial to the mortal sacrifices of the Death Company, the Reliquary Armour is decorated with the bones of Lost Brothers. Only the greatest of heroes are commemorated in this way, and it is a tragic indictment of what has been lost to the Flaw that the armour still bears the bones of over thirty different Chapter heroes. It is said that the strength and determination of those mighty warriors is conferred to the wearer of this macabre armour, along with their burning desire for vengeance upon the Imperium's foes. The wearer of the Reliquary Armour becomes a grim and unstoppable figure upon the field of battle, his presence reminding the Blood Angels of the losses they have suffered, the sacrifices their heroes have made, and the unending duty they have to honour those sacrifices in blood.

The Reliquary Armour confers a 2+ Armour Save. In addition, the bearer has the Adamantium Will and Crusader special rules.

THE GUARDIAN'S BLADE.....30 PTS

The Guardian's Blade is a powerful glaive encarmine. This ancient sword was crafted at the height of the Legion's power, and is said to have once belonged to the personal armoury of Azkaellon himself. After the Legion divided, and Azkaellon vanished from Chapter records, the Guardian's Blade was passed to only the most worthy heroes of the Blood Angels – until one day its former bearer fell to the Black Rage and died in service as a Lost Brother. After this tragedy, the sword was interred in the Forbidden Armoury and issued in sorrow only to lost heroes of the Death Company. The Guardian's Blade is famed for its powerful razor-sharp edge, which can cut through the most robust armour in the galaxy. Those foes that face its wielder cannot hope to stop the sword from cutting them down.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	User	2	Melee, Armourbane, Master-crafted, Two-handed

THE BLOOD SHARD.....30 PTS

A strange spiritual energy flows from the crimson gem known as the Blood Shard. It fills the Blood Angels with a ferocious desire to tear their foes limb from limb. Accordingly, the Blood Shard has a dark reputation. Some even say that it is a distillation of the curse, that the flecks of blood within the stone were scraped from Sanguinius' armour at the very hour of his death and contain all the bitterness and soul-rending hatred of that moment. Yet it is the perfect tool to deploy amongst the ranks of the Death Company, for the Lost Brothers infused with its energies simply become more deadly than ever when caught up in its aura of uncompromising wrath.

The bearer of the Blood Shard has the Counter-attack special rule.

BAAL'S VENGEANCE.....20 PTS

Baal's Vengeance is a hand flamer equipped with a unique and deadly payload. It sprays forth a highly radioactive fluid, distilled from toxic underground lakes beneath Baal's surface. Victims find their flesh boiling within their armour, teeth dropping from rotting gums and bones blackening and warping in the intense radiation. Mere proximity to this lethal substance is a death sentence, but this does not concern its wielder, who is cursed with death no matter what weapon he carries.

Range	S	AP	Type
Template	X	6	Pistol, Poisoned (4+)

FYRESTORM.....25 PTS

When the trigger of this masterwork inferno pistol is pulled, microgenerators around its barrel project an arcane energy tunnel down which the weapon's super-heated fury is channelled. Created in the Chapter's distant past by the finest Blood Angel artificers, the weapon is said to embody the wrath of Baal's lethal star. A shot from Fyrestorm leaps out like a lance of fire, leaving a searing line of light in the air as it connects with its target. Armour vaporises in microseconds. Flesh and blood explode into ashen clouds. Complex machinery is reduced to glowing remnants. As the beam from Fyrestorm dies away, all that remains of its victim is a blackened husk.

Range	S	AP	Type
12"	8	1	Pistol, Melta, Master-crafted

THE GILDED CROZIUS.....25 PTS

It is said that, in the eyes of the Lost Brothers, the Chaplains of the Blood Angels Reclusium appear as glowing golden figures whose words of command cut through the madness of the Flaw. He who wields the Gilded Crozius has a greater effect still upon his lost brethren. The mere presence of this weapon and its wielder seems to redouble the valour and determination of the Death Company, driving them on through wounds that should spell their bloody end. Some have called this miraculous. Others – servants of the Inquisition most of all – look upon it with deep suspicion. Whatever their true nature, there can be no denying that the energies that spill from the Gilded Crozius drive warriors on to the extremes of endurance and beyond.

Death Company Chaplain only. Replaces the model's crozius arcnum. In addition to having the weapon profile below, all models in the bearer's unit that have the Feel No Pain special rule can re-roll Feel No Pain rolls of 1.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	+2	3	Melee, Concussive, Master-crafted

DOOMED SONS OF SANGUINIUS

Lost Brotherhood Strike Forces are used exclusively by the **Blood Angels Chapter** and their successors. The rules below will allow you to organise the models in your collection of **Blood Angels** miniatures to represent one of these **Detachments** in your games of **Warhammer 40,000**.

CHOOSING AN ARMY

When choosing an army to play a game of **Warhammer 40,000**, there are two main ways of organising your collection. These are the **Unbound** method, which means taking whichever units you like, and the **Battle-forged** method, which is more rigid but has extra benefits. Both are described fully in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*.

If you are using the **Unbound** method, simply use the datasheets that correspond to the models in your collection. If you are using the **Battle-forged** method, you will instead need to organise the models in your collection into **Detachments**. This is a fun process in its own right. The most common of these are the **Combined Arms** and **Allied Detachments**. Note that you can also include any of the **Formations** presented in this section as part of a **Battle-forged** army.

A **Lost Brotherhood Strike Force** is a special type of **Detachment** that can be included in any **Battle-forged** army. Unlike the **Detachments** shown in *Warhammer 40,000: The Rules*, it has a **Force Organisation Chart** whose slots are a combination of specific **Formations** and **Army List Entries** instead of **Battlefield Roles**. However, it still has compulsory and optional elements, as well as **Restrictions** and **Command Benefits**, just like any other **Detachment**.

Although units cannot normally belong to more than one **Detachment**, units from a **Formation** that is part of a **Lost Brotherhood Strike Force** are an exception. They count as part of both their **Formation** and the **Detachment**, and have all associated **Command Benefits** and special rules. If your **Warlord** is part of a **Formation** or an **Army List Entry** that makes up part of a **Lost Brotherhood Strike Force**, that entire **Lost Brotherhood Strike Force** is your **Primary Detachment**.

RESTRICTIONS:

This **Detachment** must include one **Command** choice, and at least one **Core** choice. It may include up to five **Auxiliary** choices and any number of additional **Core** choices, in any combination. Only the datasheets listed here can be included in this **Detachment** and all units in the **Detachment** must have the **Blood Angels Faction**.

COMMAND BENEFITS:

The Angel's Virtue: If this **Detachment** is your **Primary Detachment**, you can re-roll the result when rolling on the **Warlord Traits** table in this book or *Codex: Blood Angels*.

The Red Thirst: In a turn in which a model from this **Detachment** charges into combat, the model adds 1 to its **Initiative** characteristic until the end of the **Assault** phase. A model that has made a **disordered charge** that turn receives no benefit from the **Red Thirst**.

Unleashed Upon the Foe: Immediately after setting up a unit from this **Detachment** during deployment, you can move the unit 6" as if they were making a move in a **Movement** phase (the unit cannot **Run**). Units that arrive from **Reserve** do not receive this bonus move.



DEATH COMPANY COMMAND

- 1-3 of the following: **Astorath**, **Lemartes**, **Death Company Chaplain**



DEATH COMPANY STRIKE FORCE (pg 112)

- 1 **Death Company Chaplain**
- 3 **Death Company Squads**
- 1-3 **Death Company Dreadnoughts**



Command
1



Auxiliary
0-5



Core 1+

LOST BROTHERHOOD STRIKE FORCE

The Lost Brotherhood Strike Force allows you to field an army of Death Company squads supported by fast-moving support elements from the Blood Angels Chapter. A Lost Brotherhood Strike Force is one of the most powerful attack formations fielded by any army, capable of overrunning and destroying any enemy it encounters.

Gabrio has decided to expand his Blood Angels collection (see page 103 for details of his original collection). He already has one Death Company Strike Force, which he decides to use as the core of a new Lost Brotherhood Strike Force. Gabrio expands his collection with Astorath and Lemartes, three Death Company Chaplains, nine Death Company Squads, and four Death Company Dreadnoughts. He also gets a new Stormraven Gunship, a new Terminator Squad and two new Terminator Assault Squads.

Gabrio wishes to organise his collection using the Battle-forged method, so all of his units need to be part of a Detachment or a Formation. The original models in his collection, less the Death Company Strike Force, form an Angel's Blade Strike Force. The new models and the Death Company Strike Force are used to make a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force that has a Death Company

Command, three Death Company Strike Forces, and an Archangels Orbital Intervention Force. The Death Company Command consists of Astorath and Lemartes. Each Death Company Strike Force has a Death Company Chaplain, three Death Company Squads and a Death Company Dreadnought. One also has a Stormraven (taken as a Dedicated Transport), and one has an additional Dreadnought. The three Terminator Squads make up the Archangels Orbital Intervention Force.

As all of his units belong to a Detachment, Gabrio's army is a Battle-forged army. The units that are part of the Lost Brotherhood Strike Force have the Angel's Virtue, Red Thirst and Unleashed Upon the Foe Command Benefits. Finally, Gabrio chooses Astorath to be his Warlord – the Lost Brotherhood Strike Force is therefore his Primary Detachment.



ARCHANGELS ORBITAL INTERVENTION FORCE (pg 109)

- 3 Terminator Squads or Terminator Assault Squads (in any combination)



LUCIFER ARMoured TASK FORCE (pg 116)

- 1 Techmarine
- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Baal Predator
 - Predator
- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Land Raider
 - Land Raider Crusader
 - Land Raider Redeemer



STORMRAVEN SQUADRON (pg 115)

- 2-4 Stormraven Gunships



10TH COMPANY SUPPORT (pg 111)

- 3-5 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Scout Squad
 - Scout Bike Squad



RAPID ASSAULT FORCE

- 1-3 units chosen in any combination from the following list:
 - Assault Squad
 - Bike Squad
 - Attack Bike Squad
 - Land Speeder Squadron

DEATH COMPANY TACTICAL OBJECTIVES

Black Crusade: *Angel's Blade* describes six Tactical Objectives to use in your games that are exclusive to Blood Angels players and reflect the terrifying fury of the Death Company once the Black Rage has taken hold.

If your Warlord is a member of a Death Company Strike Force or a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force, the following Tactical Objectives replace the Tactical Objectives (numbers 11-16) in *Codex: Blood Angels*.

If a Warhammer 40,000 mission has the Tactical Objectives special rule, players use the normal rules for using Tactical Objectives with the following exception: when a Blood Angels player with a Warlord who is a member of a Death Company Strike Force or a Lost Brotherhood Strike Force generates a Capture & Control objective (numbers 11-16), use the corresponding Death Company Tactical Objective instead, as shown in the table on the right. Other Tactical Objectives (numbers 21-66) are generated normally.

D66	RESULT	
11	Glory of Angels	
12	Legacy of Ka'Bandha	
13	Drive Them Back	
14	All-out Attack	
15	The Martyrdom of Sanguinius	
16	Vengeance for Sanguinius	

11 GLORY OF ANGELS

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

There are few more symbolic images of victory than when one of the Emperor's Angels triumphs over a champion of darkness.

Score 1 Victory Point at the end of your turn if any of your Blood Angels character models killed an enemy in a challenge during your turn. If any of those enemy models had the Independent Character special rule, score 2 Victory Points instead.

12 LEGACY OF KA'BANDHA

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

To those whose madness sees them relive the final hours of Sanguinius, the largest enemies can appear as the mighty Bloodthirster of Khorne cast down by their Primarch.

Score 1 Victory Point at the end of your turn if at least one enemy Vehicle or Monstrous Creature was destroyed during your turn.

13 DRIVE THEM BACK

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

There is perhaps no force available to the Blood Angels better suited to the task of driving the enemy from a well-defended strategic location than the Death Company.

When this Tactical Objective is generated, your opponent must select a single Objective Marker that is within their table half. If you control that Objective Marker at the end of your turn, score 2 Victory Points.

14 ALL-OUT ATTACK

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

All but impossible to restrain once the enemy has been sighted, the Death Company are at their most lethal when set loose upon the foe to sate their maddened blood-lust.

Score D3 Victory Points at the end of your turn if every one of your units that could have declared a charge in your turn did so.

15 THE MARTYRDOM OF SANGUINIUS

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

The Primarch of the Blood Angels was famed for his many noble traits, but none more so than his honour, which saw him defy Horus despite knowing that it would cost him his life.

Score 1 Victory Point at the end of your turn if at least one of your characters and/or your Warlord was slain during your turn.

16 VENGEANCE FOR SANGUINIUS

TYPE: BLOOD ANGELS DEATH COMPANY

The trauma of their Primarch's death at the hands of Horus first caused the Black Rage to emerge. Ever since, only the violent killing of their enemies can dull the pain of those in whom the curse has manifested.

Score 1 Victory Point at the end of your turn for each enemy unit that was completely destroyed during the Assault phase of your turn. You can score a maximum of 6 Victory Points with this Tactical Objective.

WE THINK YOU'D LIKE...

THE SECOND SONS OF SANGUINIUS, THE FLESH TEARERS ARE BRUTAL, SAVAGE AND VERY, VERY DEADLY. TURN YOUR BLOOD ANGELS ARMY INTO A FLESH TEARERS HOST WITH THIS SUPPLEMENT.

