

WARHAMMER
40,000



THE 13TH BLACK CRUSADE

The grievous history of Abaddon's most terrible invasion, as written by one who saw it all unfold

The Imperium of mankind is in dire peril. Abaddon's forces have gained a strong foothold in the Cadian sector and the armies of the Emperor are hard-pressed to hold back the tide of evil that threatens to overwhelm them. This, the 13th Black Crusade, has shaken humanity to its very core.

The journal of a high-ranking official on Cadia, one who was in the thick of the action, provides this incredibly in-depth background book with its insight and character. He was there as the first warnings began to filter through to Cadia, and remained at the sharp end of combat when the conflict eventually came to the lands of Cadia itself! In this fabulously illustrated book, his writings are accompanied by dozens of other sources of info: official reports, accounts of battles, eyewitness testimonies and dozens of pictures and graphics.

The 13th Black Crusade is the most comprehensive retrospective of this amazing episode of Imperial history and is a must for anyone who took part in the Games Workshop worldwide campaign, or anyone who loves 40K.

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THE 13TH BLACK CRUSADE

The grievous history of Abaddon's most terrible invasion, as written by one who saw it all unfold





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(Above) Portrait of the author, Adjutant General Alexis Grail, in his office where he wrote his journal.

AS I WRITE THIS, DEATH STALKS CADIA.

My name is Alexis Grail: Adjutant General to the Cadian High Command. I am but one man amongst a multitude, one servant of the Almighty God-Emperor of Mankind. It has been my honour, and my burden, to serve during this, Humanity's darkest hour in ten thousand years.

The tome you hold is an edited collection of my journal entries, made during the desperate months of the Defence of the Cadian Gate. You are a brother officer in the Armies of Man, for to be reading this, you have received clearance from your superiors and are entrusted with the lives of many men. It is my most fervent hope then, that my accounts of the events of the last few months will grant you wisdom and foresight in your own endeavours, that you will gain some understanding of what has led us to this juncture in the annals of our Glorious Imperium.

I make no apology that this account is written from the perspective of a man of the Imperial Guard, for I firmly believe that it was the fortitude and sacrifice of mortal men that held the enemy at bay as long as we did. Those wishing to learn of the actions of the Space Marines, the xenos eldar, or indeed of any of a hundred other forces that stood beside or against us, will find mention of such things within, but will not find an exhaustive account of their deeds or their motivations. Such an account would merely serve to distract the reader with half-truths and supposition, and the Emperor knows, in times such as these, we must content ourselves with those few facts we can trust.

I beg of you to employ this information wisely and bravely, for should you fail, then all is surely lost.

Lieutenant General Alexis Grail, Kasr Gallan Medicae Block VII, Cadia, 999.M41

○ SCARUS SECTOR

○ CALIBAN

○ MEDUSA

○ THE RUBICON
STRAIGHTS

○
EIDOLON

THE PERILOUS STAIR

○ SCELUS SUB-SECTOR

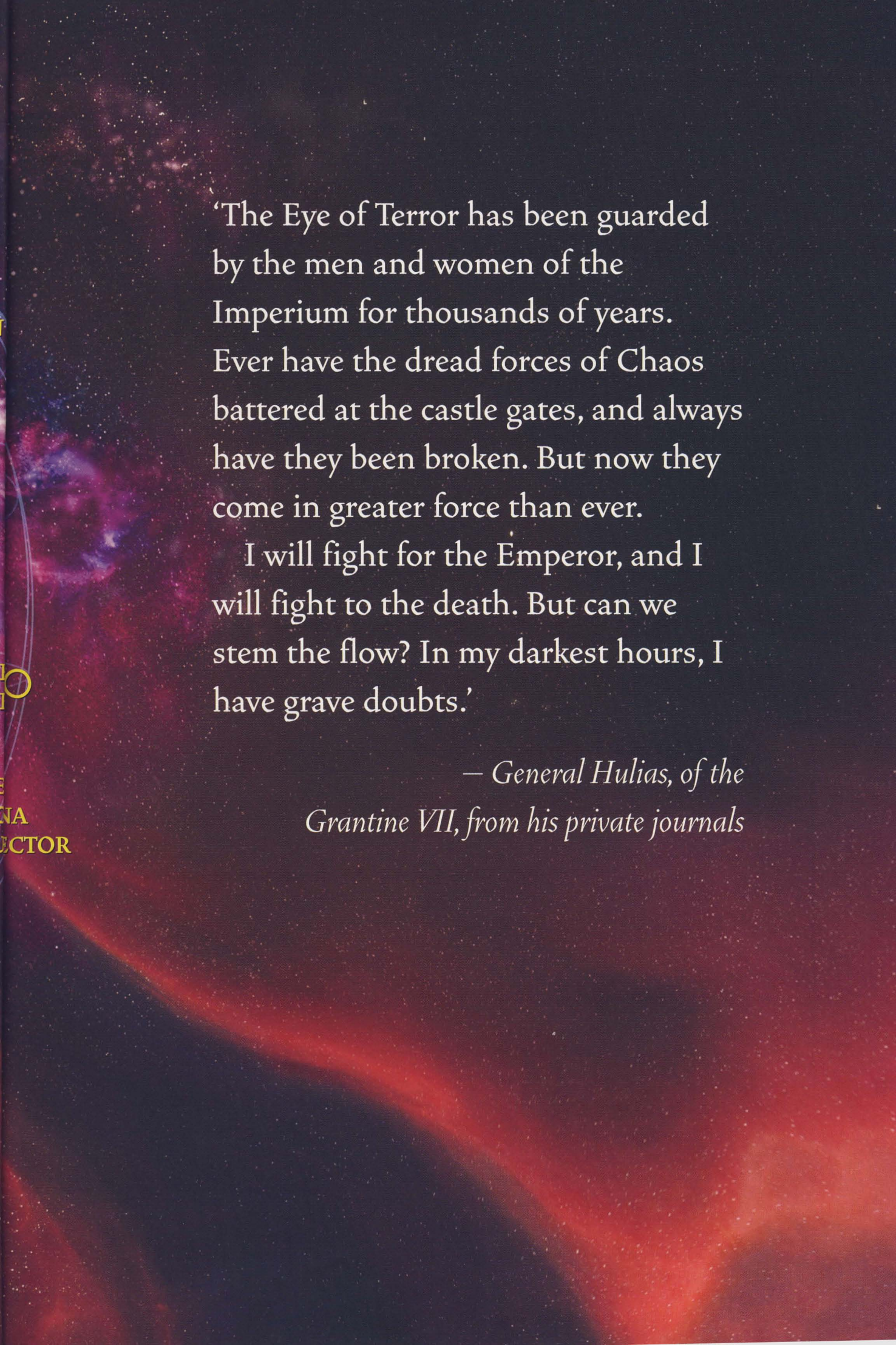
○ CHINCHARE
SUB-SECTOR

NEM
TESS

CADIA

○ BE
CO
SU

AGRIPINAA ○
SECTOR



'The Eye of Terror has been guarded by the men and women of the Imperium for thousands of years. Ever have the dread forces of Chaos battered at the castle gates, and always have they been broken. But now they come in greater force than ever.

I will fight for the Emperor, and I will fight to the death. But can we stem the flow? In my darkest hours, I have grave doubts.'

— General Hulias, of the
Grantine VII, from his private journals

IMPERIAL UNITS

IMPERIAL GUARD UNITS UNDER CADIAN HIGH COMMAND, EXTRACT 642d

Initial appreciation based on Officio Munitorum Logistics Detachment 72 report of 334999.M41.

AVELLORNIAN GUNNERS

238th Currently under strength, following loss of transport vessel Grace of Haven
32 Squadrons (232nd, 238th, 301st) - 4 Superheavy, 18 Heavy, 10 Field. Attached elements of Munitorum 2nd Heavy Logistics Echelon.
238th attached to CHC HQ, Cadian - yet to arrive, detail Captain Gaulard to investigate.

BAR-EL PENAL LEGIONS

9th Legion under direct command of Commissar General
1st, 3rd, 7th, 9th. *Both due to nature of legionnaires crimes. Expendable.*
Attached BE7 Munitorum Provost Command Corps.

CADIAN SHOCK TROOPS

Staff Corps auxiliary mustering at Ksar Portax.
612 Regiments under CHC (22 Sub Commands)
See sub-files I3/600/t5728d for breakdown of Cadian units.

DROOKIAN FEN GUARD

One company of the 11th reported missing- Commissar Darden investigating.
Composite of 7th, 11th, 18th and 23rd Regiments, formed into three Columns, totalling 16 companies.

FINREHT HIGHLANDERS

37th currently withdrawn to Rear Maintenance Facility Station 12 for rearming and replacement following Duro's Reach Counter-push - detail Night Surveko to estimate down time.
37th, 81st, 451st.

GUDRONITE RIFLES

4 companies of 335th en route to Khavian Primaris to serve as HQ protection unit.
3 regiments to reinforce Andur line?
47 regiments formed into 3 army groups under Marshal Tarun.

JOURAN DRAGOONS

Battlegroup Vendict formed under Brigadier Malak, attached elements of Kitarok 17th.
23rd, 29th, 30th, 39th, 87th, 103/9th, 112th.

KELLERSBURG IRREGULARS

1st, 2nd, 6th. *2nd detached to CHC HQ special service group under Colonel Grata.*

KNOVIAN GHARKAS

67th to be detailed special duties alongside 2nd Kellersburg.
14 Regiments Battlegroup Knovia under General Haylin.

IMPERIAL UNITS

MORDANT GUARD

303rd 'Acid Dogs' attached to Imperial Navy Independent Strike Group VI under Commodore Bale, engaged in hunt for Space Hulk 'Scion of Anguish' (W7822.2v/M41).

NARSINE YEOMANRY

32 Battle groups under Army Group Trieste.
122 home service PDF regiments tithed following General Order a730/20z/999.M41.

THRACIAN GUARD

35 Regiments.

Deployment of 15th Battlegroup unknown due to unstable Holographic communication conditions.

VAN DE'MAN'S WORLD REDBACKS

3rd, 4th, 5th, 67th, 104th.

67th reported overdue from Warp transit. Master Komplex to investigate.

ZENONIAN FREE COMPANIES

9 Companies under Colonel Holt.

Commissariat detachment re Artemis Sub-cult. Ensure this unit remains gated.

Further data required re-

Kantail Light Infantry deployment

Grenas 34th, 46th, 99th - where are they?

Kaor Saunen Garrison 1088

Vorga Borg Mechanised regiments reequipping - ready for transit?

Hilobas Pioneer detachment mission status

Claustan PDF readiness

Belisar General Staff appreciation

Subasio Diablo tithing levels - all health of tithed units unsatisfactory.

Phonosaar Queen regiments 13-34 readiness

14th Amistel Cavalry deployment

Cadia orbital defence detail - manning levels

Heavy AA company, Cadian 77th

Belis Corona spaceport defence groups

Umuntorum Line of Communication Corps - Cadia, Agryinaa, Thracia

Deep Space Support Lightboard security detachments - Cadian 34th?

PORTENTS AND WARNINGS

'And lo, as the veil is drawn on the last age of Man, the Despoiler shall gather his hosts once more. Where twelve times before the Faithful have cast him out, now shall he prove their undoing. For Man has grown weak, despairing at the woes of the galaxy. Where are the Faithful now? Where are the men that stood beside our Lord the Immortal Emperor and at his side conquered all? Gone.

They are less than ashes in the cold, cold earth.

At the Thirteenth hour shall the Despoiler return. All Humanity shall tremble, for lo, his doom is upon him.'

— *The last Oration of the Heretic Archivist of the Gethsemene Reclusium*

TRANSMITTED: BELISAR MAJORIS CHOIR
CHAMBER

RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: CADIA

TELEPATHIC DUCT: 031/2HG832

REF: ADAST/456W/SITREP.

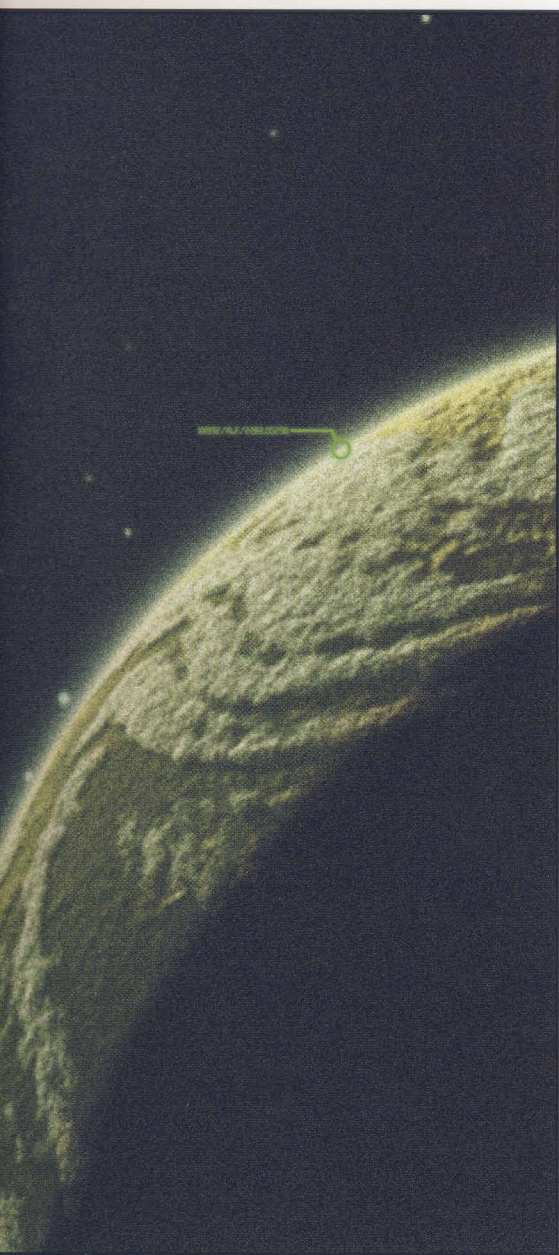
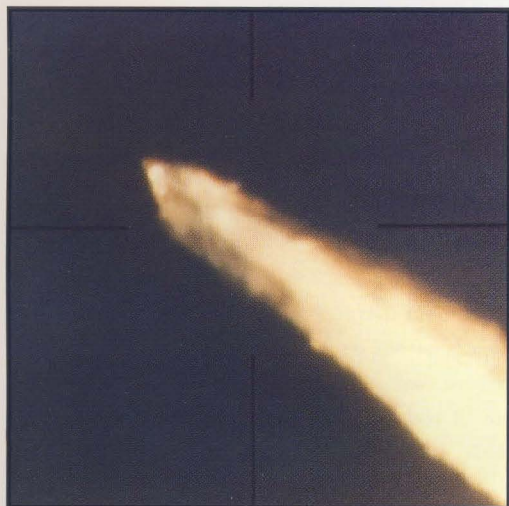
It is the duty of this Astropathic station to report that a high number of space hulks have been detected approaching the outer reaches of the Belisar and Agrabinaa systems. First signs are that the majority of these hulks are uninhabited, but this could be wrong. Current estimates place these vessels on a vector for the core planets of each system.

(Right) Unidentified Chaos vessel traverses the outer Caeruleus Nebula.



(Above) Imperial planetary defence missile on its way to fell the arch enemy's ships.





JOURNAL ENTRY:

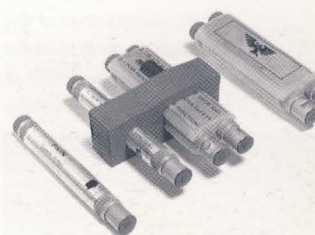
In response to this alarming report, Marshal Helk (commander-in-chief of the 2nd Army Group) has ordered the deployment of additional troops aboard the 231st, 340th and 401st Naval Interdiction Squadrons, with a view to affecting boarding operations on those hulks suspected of harbouring life. The commissariat has tripled attachment levels to these units, and all higher command ranks have been informed of the possibility that these vessels may carry the taint of the Warp.

I must confess to my unease at this turn of events, for it follows reports of increased cult activity upon the worlds of the Belisar and Agrapinaa systems. Following the discovery of a recidivist cell within the 34th Belisar PDF Regiment, I have ordered a full sweep of all the worlds' defence units lest they harbour further malcontents and traitors. I learned the depths to which such men will sink during my service on Finreht 37, and know where to look for the signs. Quartermaster stores and reserve depots will be targeted by these heretics, to be picked clean over a period of many months. I have ordered a detailed audit of equipment levels to be launched immediately. I know full well the junior adepts will curse such orders, yet it will be impressed upon them that the security of their worlds is at stake should they fail in their vigilance.

I would further note that this report comes in the wake of the launching of operations to locate the space hulk codified as the *Scion of Anguish*. Commodore Bale's strike group has reportedly split into four squadrons to traverse the outer reaches of the Cæruleus Nebula, and intelligence reports indicating xenofoms aboard the hulk have been called into question in the light of this new information. I have ordered my staff to liaise with the Ordos Cadia to ascertain whether the *Scion* may in fact harbour servants of the dark powers. I pray that it does not, for we can ill afford such an incursion, nor the loss of Bale's command or that of the Mordant 303rd attached to it.

Addendum: Captain Roark of the *Duke Lurstophan* has reported contact with the *Plagueclaw*, a known traitor vessel. Admiral Quarren has been tasked with hunting down and destroying this scourge of the Imperial Navy.

(Left) Pict capture taken from an Imperial Lightning of a Chaos fighter just before Captain Lyra Hebdre destroys it. She is now officially an ace and a hero of the Imperium.



(Above) Vials of solutions and mixtures to aid in the art of healing. Imperial medics carried such items to help casualties cope with pain while they dressed wounds.

(Far right) Pict capture of a chaos drop ship entering the upper atmosphere.

TRANSMITTED: BELIS CORONA STAR
CHAMBER
RECEIVED: SEGMENTUM OBSCURUS
NAVAL HIGH COMMAND
DESTINATION: CYPRIA MUNDI
TELEPATHIC DUCT: 541/45HO245
REF: ADA5T/4532/SITREP.

It is my sad duty to report on an engagement fought in the shadow of the Frenerax Dust Cloud. Imperial ships were attacked in a cowardly ambush in the vicinity of this spatial anomaly by a force of traitor warships reportedly led by the *Terminus Est*, flagship of the Herald of Nurgle, Typhus himself. Writs of commendation have been lodged for the conduct of Admiral Quarren who rallied the forces under his command and launched a brilliant counterattack, which allowed his ships to fight their way clear of the trap. A full damage assessment is attached with this missive.

(Below) Orbital pict of the destruction wrought on Medusa, as one of the fortress monasteries of the Clan Companies is brought to ruin, leaving a trail of smoke to note its passing.



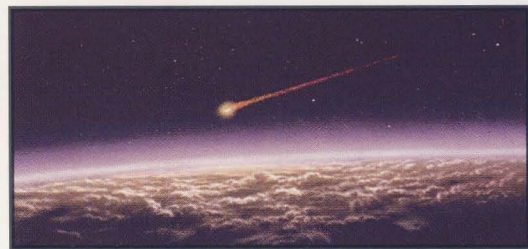
JOURNAL ENTRY:

High Command has been a place of frenzied activity these past days, for Quarren's disastrous clash with the *Terminus Est* whilst hunting the *Plagueclaw* has heralded an unprecedented increase in space hulk contacts. It is almost as if the Ocularis, that cosmic sink hole for all that is impure in the galaxy, has suddenly begun to spew forth the jetsam it has collected over the past millennia. Gestalt conglomerations of vessels of patterns not even recorded in the most ancient and venerated archives of the Adeptus Mechanicus have been reported, and our savants are at a loss to explain such an event.

A number of these vessels have been boarded by both Naval boarding crews and Inquisitorial kill-teams of the Ordos Xenos and Malleus. Furthermore, the Battle Brothers of at least five Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes have boarded and destroyed hulks that their fleets have intercepted en route to our core systems. Though the Astartes remain, as ever, aloof in their dealings with us, they have reported that the hulks they destroyed were places of filth beyond imagining, and crewed by creatures made twisted and vile by their devotion to the Warp.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Further ill-news reached us not twelve hours ago, in the form of reports that the crew of the *Duke Lurstophan* have been placed under a quarantine order, following the outbreak of an unknown, preternaturally virulent plague



upon their vessel. The source of the plague is a mystery, yet the fact that it follows the ship's contact with the *Plagueclaw* has led Naval authorities to treat it with extreme caution. The fact that the *Duke Lurstophan* did not (if reports are to be believed) execute a boarding action against the *Plagueclaw* — she merely approached abeam within 20,000 kilometres — confirms to those of us with access to the larger picture that the influence of the Ruinous Powers is waxing.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The quarantine placed upon the men of the *Duke Lurstophan* has proved ineffective. My command is receiving reports of plague outbreaks in Naval facilities across three sectors, reducing the Navy's capacity to a terrifyingly low level. The vessels of Admiral Quarren's fleet are reportedly operating on skeleton crews as the same plague manifested itself during their return voyage to Belis Corona.

TRANSMITTED: SUBIACO DIABLO
MEDICAE FACILITY
RECEIVED: SEGMENTUM OBSCURUS
NAVAL HIGH COMMAND
DESTINATION: CYPRIA MUNDI
TELEPATHIC DUCT: 024/7HD543
REF: ADA5T/4062/SITREP.

No doubt you are aware of the virulent epidemic spreading through the sector, so I shall spare you the gory details of its effect. What you may not be aware of are the circumstances surrounding this outbreak. As it has spread, apocalyptic sects have appeared with monotonous regularity on every world afflicted, preaching that the Emperor's wrath has descended, and that the plague is a punishment for the sufferers' sins of wickedness and vice. Apparently, only the faithful will be spared the Curse of Unbelief (as the masses are calling it) and hordes of flagellating devotees now fill the streets, whipping up hysteria and panic. I urge you to send more troops to stem the flow of these lunatics before any further disturbances occur.

PHASE ONE: INSURRECTION AND PLAGUE

TRANSMITTED: KASR PARTOX CHOIR
CHAMBER

RECEIVED: SEGMENTUM OBSCURUS

NAVAL HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: CYPRIA MUNDI

TELEPATHIC DUCT: 033/2PW884

REF: ADAST/4062/SITREP.

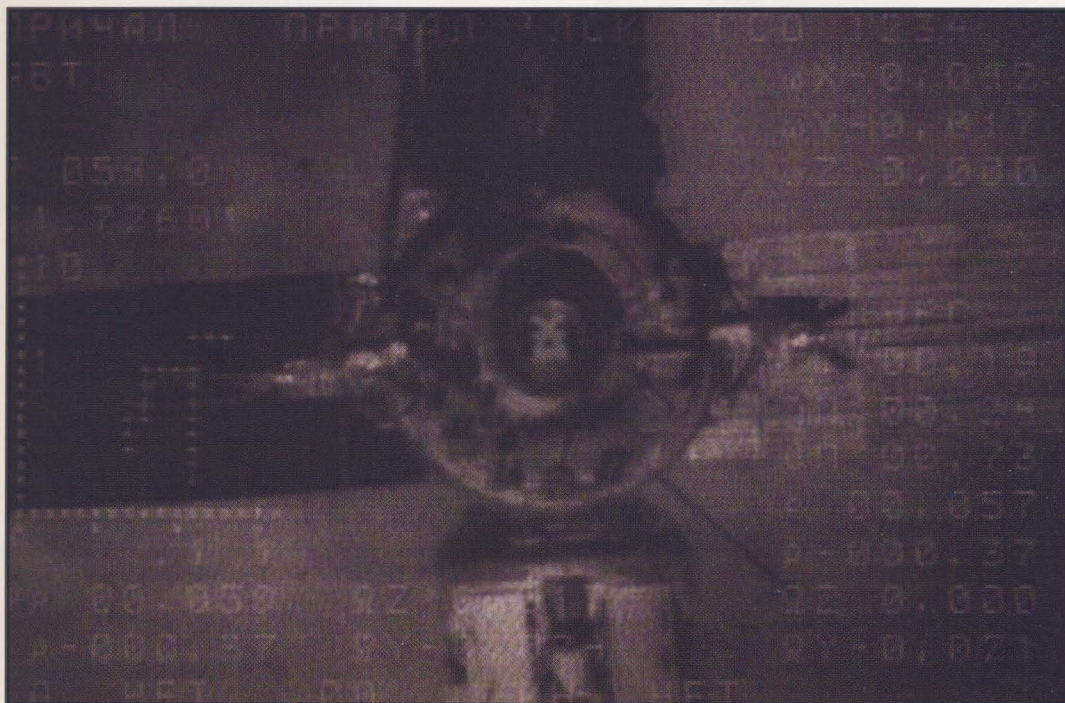
In the wake of such catastrophic breakdown of Imperial rule on so many planets in the surrounding sectors, vast ructions have been sensed in the Warp, stirring the already volatile medium of the Immaterium into new and violent life. The fringes of Warp Storm Baphomael have expanded to engulf the edges of the Cadian system and many of the Astropaths based here have reported terrible visions and bloody omens that all point to a time of coming war. Reports are also coming in, which, if they are to be believed, indicate a horrifying escalation in the scale of these disturbances. Reports are sketchy at present, but it appears that a massive psychic backlash has caused the Choir Chamber at Belisar in the spire of Hive Teriax to explode. The top nine levels of the spire have been obliterated and the death toll is sure to be in the thousands.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Any doubt that Chaos is in the ascendant has been cast aside following recent events on almost every civilised

world of this sector. The rantings of self-proclaimed 'Prophets of the End Times' have whipped entire populations into frenzies of insanity. The Ecclesiarchy has dispatched the highest officers of the Church to quieten the souls of the people, yet at this time of direst need has become itself embroiled in internecine conflict. A number of cardinals have cast in their lot with those who preach that the Emperor's judgment has found us wanting, rendering the Synods impotent and powerless to impose their spiritual authority when it is most desperately needed. My own confessor, Pator Conisticus, counsels this fracture is the will of the Great Enemy, and so my resolve to act is strong.

Even here on Cadia we have seen signs of recidivist activity. So close to the Eye, we have come to expect the taint of the Warp to afflict those of weak soul, and we have learned to recognise and excise its influence wherever we find it. Yet today, Lord Commissar Salin seconded a company of Kasrkin assigned to Headquarters Security and led a raid upon the barracks of the 92nd. He rounded up a cadre of senior officers who, he claimed, were in league with agents of the Warp. No evidence of his accusation was presented to the General Staff, and there is no duty upon the Lord Commissar to do so. The officers were summarily executed upon the parade ground of Kasr Orlak. That highly regarded officers of the Cadian military might have thrown in their lot with the enemy fills my soul with shame and confirms the worst of my fears. A dark time is surely approaching.



(Left) Grainy pict of an unknown vessel spied in the Medusan sub-sector. Other pict were taken of similar vessels all over the segmentum. Investigations are being undertaken.

(Right) Warning circulated by the Order Hospitillar on Subiaco Diablo.

BEWARE TH

BE VIGILANT! KEEP A WATCH ON YOUR COMRADES AND FAMILY.



1. THE FIRST SYMPTOMS ARE HARD TO SPOT. THE SKIN BECOMES PALLID AND SICKLY. THE VICTIM BEGINS TO FEEL NAUSEA AND SEES SPOTS IN FRONT OF HIS EYES. SMALL OUTBREAKS OF GREEN SCABBING MAY OCCUR ALL OVER THE BODY.

2. THE SKIN TIGHTENS, CAUSING VEINS TO STAND OUT. THE SCALP SHEDS HAIR AND SCABBING SPREADS ACROSS THE SKIN. THE VICTIM IS SURELY BEYOND HOPE. AT THIS STAGE THEY BECOME DANGEROUS!

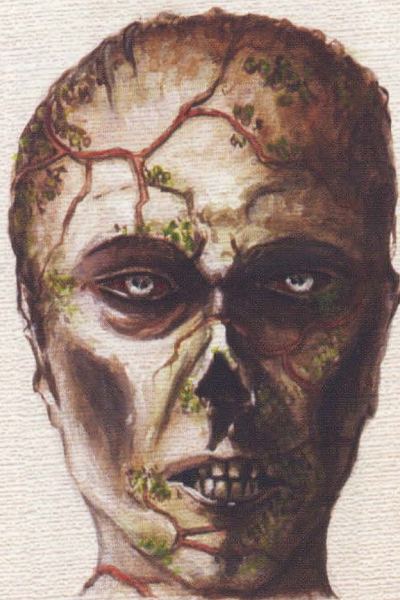


E PLAGUE



3. LITTLE CAN DISGUISE THE TERRIBLE EFFECTS OF THE DISEASE NOW. THE PERFECTION OF THE HUMAN FACE IS MARRED BY SUNKEN CHEEKS, THIN LIPS, WHITE SKIN, ROTTING TEETH AND LARGE AREAS OF SEEPING PUS BUBBLES. NECROSIS SETS IN.

4. THE FINAL STAGE IS TRULY HORRIBLE. NECROSIS CAUSES EXTREMITIES TO FALL OFF, VEINS BUBBLE UNDER PARCHMENT THIN SKIN, AND DEATH IS THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM THE TORMENT.



MAY THE EMPEROR WATCH OVER YOU

TRANSMITTED: CADIAN EXPLORATOR
RESEARCH TEAM QUINTUS
RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND
DESTINATION: KASR PARTOX
VOX DUCT: 033/2PW884
REF: ADMech/4032/SITREP.
CROSSFILE TO: ADMech/4.1.4445/K43

It is with a matter of grave concern that I come before you. In all the time I have been studying the Cadian pylons, I have never known them to be anything other than utterly inert, but over the last few weeks we have been detecting a resonance causing microscopic stress fractures along the surfaces. Quite what is causing this is, as yet, unknown. I fear the worst.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The pylons of Cadia have stood since long before the coming of Man to the world – that much we of the officer class are told. But their purpose remains a mystery. We occasionally hear hypotheses and theories amongst the adepts of the Machine God. Some of these, it is whispered, stray perilously close to heresy. I have read

in several texts that the pylons exert some effect over the Immaterium, rendering it calm and creating the Cadian Gate, yet none have been able to measure any activity in the structures, for, as the comm states, they have always been inert. What this sudden activity means, I have no idea, for I am a military man and not privy to the ways of the machine.

TRANSMITTED: NAVAL RELAY STATION VGR84
RECEIVED: SEGMENTUM COMMAND
DESTINATION: CYPRIA MUNDI
VOX DUCT: 033/2ED209
REF: NAV/9032/SITREP.

Confirmed reports indicate that the 31st Destroyer Squadron (Deathbringers) operating out of Demios Binary have been attacked and destroyed by unknown ambushers. In response to this latest attack in the sector, the Navy has pulled all ships back to port, Tactical Strategos have identified a pattern in the attacks that implies a movement inwards from the eastern sub sectors, directly towards Cadia.

FILE REF: ADMech/4.1.4445/K43

Of 5,810 known intact pylons, it is verified that 1,292 are now emitting a psycho-temporal resonance in excess of the third magnitude on the Geller-Magnos scale. Teams have been dispatched to investigate the remaining sites, and it is estimated this endeavour will take between 14.3 and 14.5 local days to complete.

Of the 2,000 known semi-intact, ruined or sunken pylons, three to date have been examined by our brethren. Each is giving readings that cause us grave concern, with artefact n3/343/6890 transmitting a polarised sub-planar accretion field of an amplitude that I have never before witnessed, nor even heard of. In my humble opinion, this field is symptomatic of sub-molecular instability in the fabric of the artefact, and I believe it may lead to a significant quantum translation flux should an unchecked cascade event occur. Clearly, these damaged pylons are malfunctioning and determining a mode of containment must be our primary objective.

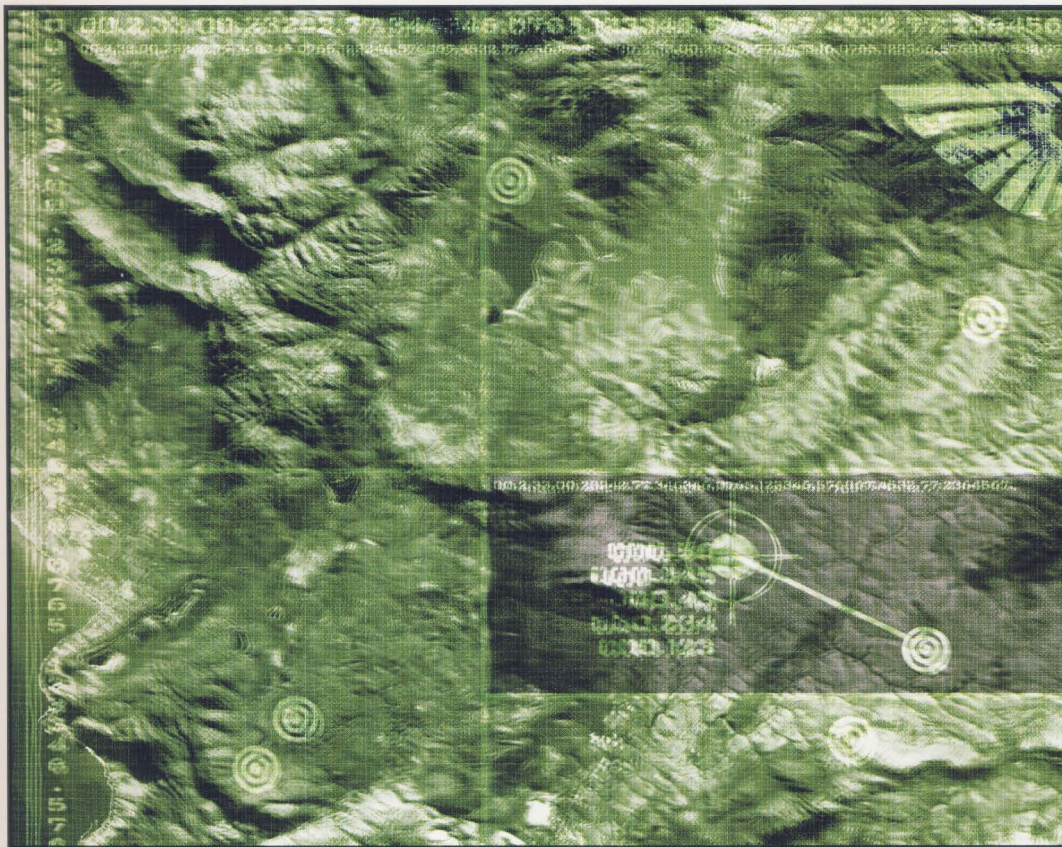
Further to these events, I have ordered a psyk-astrometric scan of surrounding subspace. The preliminary results of these researches make disturbing reading, and I offer hourly prayers to the Omnissiah that they do not indicate what I fear they may. At a distance of merely 3 LUs, the Warp exclusion termination threshold (as revised by Magos Tristan of course, I would never use Adept Ursha's flawed M.39 model) has been reduced to merely 2%. At 4.73 AUs it drops to 1%, and at 0.87 LYs 0.5%. I would not presume to patronise by spelling out just what this could mean...

I have absolutely no idea what the Honourable Adept refers to...

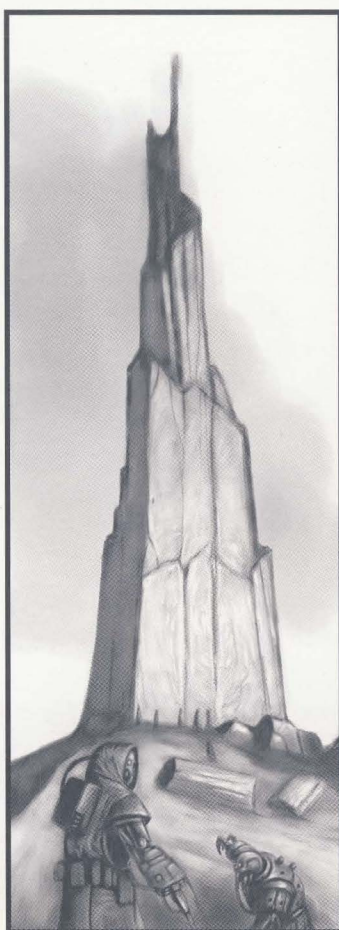
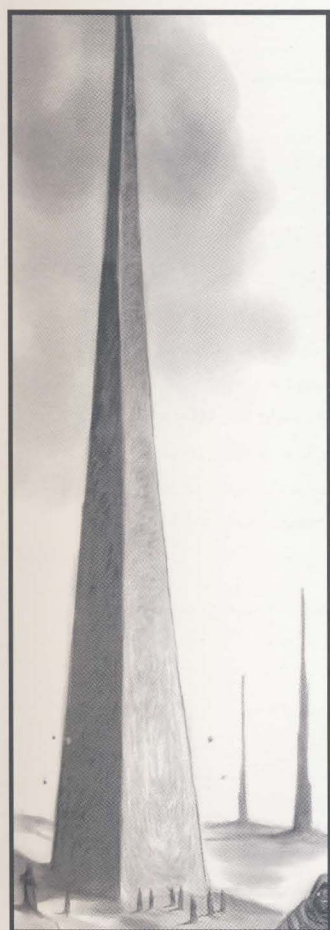


(Above) The Honour of Cadia medal. This award was especially created in the aftermath of the invasion, to recognise certain officers and men and women of senior rank who demonstrated courage in the field and inspired leadership under fire. Many were awarded posthumously. May the Emperor keep them, and may we never forget them.

PHASE ONE: INSURRECTION AND PLAGUE



(Left) Adeptus Mechanicus orbital scan of pylon activity.



(Left) The Cadian pylons, intact, semi-intact and ruined.

PHASE ONE: INSURRECTION AND PLAGUE

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The attack on the Deathbringers has proved to be just the first in a series of devastating raids conducted across surrounding sectors. Neither are these attacks contained to those sectors within the Cadian Gate, for several systems in the Scarus sector have reported enemy activity, as have three sub-sectors along the Cassandra Spar.

Reports are coming in from Phonosar Prime, indicating an attack by warriors thought to be of the Night Lords Traitor Legion. The raid was timed to coincide with the local annual Festival of the Three Maidens, a holy time for the population of Prime and its three moons, during which the adherents fast and meditate upon their own weaknesses, the better to serve our Lord the Emperor. Evidently, the attackers took advantage of the fact that most of the world's population were cloistered in prayer and descended upon the capital Medea like a pack of terrosaurs amongst grox calfs. Survivors have reported that the enemy made planet fall at Medea's primary generatorium, destroying it and plunging the city into darkness before crippling the city's reserve power facilities. With the city's power grid out of action, the traitors stalked the streets, killing wantonly as and when they saw fit. It was many hours before the PDF could be mobilised to face the threat, although many militia units mounted heroic improvised counter attacks, to no avail. By the time the native defence forces were able to muster, the raiders had vanished into the darkness, leaving a death toll of many thousands in their wake.

Xersia too has suffered at the hands of the enemy. I have received a delegation from the Order of the Wounded Heart, an Order Militant of the Adepta Sororitas, during which it was reported to me that a small force of unidentified traitors had been defeated when they came to the aid of a cult that the Sisters were engaged upon purging. It appears the cult had chosen their moment to call upon the traitors with great care, hoping that the counterattack would wipe out the small force of Sisters as they closed upon their target. It is a great credit to the Sororitas that they defeated both the cultists and the renegades, and I have passed a commendation on to their Canoness Superior.

We have also received garbled Astropathic communications from forces in the Helotas, Sarlax, Vagera and Skyren systems over the last twelve hours. Though no details have been confirmed, we fear the worst.

Less than an hour ago, we received word that the listening station at Ormantep had come under attack by

traitor forces. In this particular instance it appears that the Traitors were repelled, though by a force we have no record of. Reports indicate only a handful, at most, of the station's personnel survived the attack, and we have requested a Naval task force redirect there to ascertain what has occurred.

All of this comes at a time when civil disorder across surrounding sectors has reached unprecedented levels. Now we must guard against both traitors within and traitors without.

TRANSMITTED: ORDO HERETICUS,
OPERATIVE 4794
RECEIVED: ORDOS CADIAN COMMAND
DESTINATION: CLASSIFIED
ENCRYPTED ASTROPATHIC DUCT:
032/U74284
REF: ORDH/4032/SITREP.

On Lelithar, a powerful figure has arisen amongst the raving cults and fanatics, proclaiming himself to be the 'Voice of the Emperor'. An orator of fearsome skill, this mysterious individual has roused entire populations with his passionate speeches. I would advocate the extermination of this individual, lest his outpourings lead to further unrest.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The above communication was shared with me less than an hour ago, for the Ordos Cadia believe this 'Voice of the Emperor' to be an individual of the utmost danger. Lelithar is home to several thousand PDF regiments divided into 65 army groups, and it appears that an estimated 40% of their personnel have thrown in their lot with the 'Voice'. Many of these units have deserted, a large number actually making it off world, where they have dispersed to varying locations including Yavor, Amistel, Albitern and Bar-el. That we have lost such a body of men to a demagogue is cause for grave concern in itself, but it would be enough for me that the Ordo Hereticus wanted him dead.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

It is with great pride that I write this journal entry. The events of previous weeks have sorely tested our faith, yet now we see a great resurgence in piety, thanks (it seems), to the so-called 'Voice of the Emperor'. Scant weeks ago we feared that the teachings of this heretic might plunge the region into the depths of apostasy, yet

(Below) Illuminated by the pillar of fire from a missile's thrusters, one of the air defence bases on Cadia is shown in its glory, as it moves to destroy another of Abaddon's dread fleet of warships.



PHASE ONE: INSURRECTION AND PLAGUE

ESTIMATED STRENGTH – LELITHAR PDF AND OTHER NATIVE FORCES (ARMS)*

LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (LIGHT)	1,424 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (MECHANISED)	245 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (ARMOURED)	91 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (ARTILLERY)	52 REGIMENTS
GOVERNOR'S OWN MOUNTED GUARD	3 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR WILDERNESS PATROL REGIMENTS	17 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR VOLUNTEER RESERVE	951 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR CITIZEN'S MILITIA	1,874 REGIMENTS
OFF WORLD SETTLERS' VOLUNTEER REGIMENTS	27 REGIMENTS

**Figures do not include native or Munitorum support services.*

the people have rallied against his twisted followers, casting down his prophets and decrying his words. Even now, the agents of the Throne hunt the 'Voice', and surely his days are numbered. Though chaos and anarchy have come to a great many of our worlds, we have reason for hope, for all is not lost while faith is strong.

The great strength of the Imperium is stirring at last. Cadian High Command has ordered a muster to take place at Cadia, upon the ancient and venerated Tyrok Fields. There, we will begin the Emperor's work in earnest, for none can stand against the gathered might of the Imperium of Man.



(Left) The benighted face of the enemy, as witnessed at Xersia by the Sisters of the Wounded Heart.

THE BATTLE OF TYROK FIELDS

In the dark, doom-laden days before the Thirteenth Black Crusade of Abaddon the Despoiler was unleashed upon the dutiful servants of the almighty Emperor, blessed Cadia was the scene of an act of base treachery.

As is ever the case with the foul tricks of the heretic, their deeds drew forth greater resolve and courage from the faithful and few were more loyal in their faith than the Lord Castellan of Cadia, Ursarker E. Creed.

At the time, Cadia was alive with the diligent preparations of the servants of the Divine Emperor. Shock Troop Regiments were being mustered alongside Titan Legions and their Skitarii. Regiments of mighty-thewed Feral warriors stood alongside brightly accoutred Mordian Guards. Amongst this mighty throng, faith welled strong and the morale of every man soared to see the power of his lord, the Emperor.

But a vile serpent lay ready to strike. The Volscani regiments landed to join the muster. Many were the battles they had won against the Great Enemy and each of them had stared into the maw of hell and still fired his lasgun straight and true. It had been some time since their last action though, and the sure knowledge of the horror they would face again had worked on their minds. Sometimes knowledge of what the enemy truly is will stiffen a warrior's resolve to protect his hearth and home from depravation. Other times the thought pushes men beyond their endurance, especially when given time to brood. Perhaps the Holy Inquisition should have retired the Volscani after their last battle, but in such times soldiers cannot be easily discarded. Suffice to say, the Volscani Regiments feared to face Chaos again, and even if they had not changed sides, they had decided that it was better to die in clean battle against men than to stand at the gate to the Warp and close ranks in the face of hell once again.

On the great landing fields of Kasr Tyrok, the Volscani disembarked from their drop ships. For each of their nine Regiments there was a mighty Leviathan command transport. Around each Leviathan the companies fell in, nine companies to a regiment, each company three hundred strong. Around the dark phalanxes of infantry, the Volscani armour, mostly light Chimeras and Sentinels swiftly formed their squadrons. It was an impressive display, from atop their Leviathans the High Command of Cadia took the salute. Some wondered why the troops wore helmets with lowered blast visors rather than full dress kepis, but no one was suspicious.

Then, in accord with a wailing klaxon from each Leviathan, great banners of blue and yellow, showing sigils too obscene to be looked upon, were unfurled over the sides of the transports. With a roar the Volscani surged forward, presenting a rolling sea of razor-edged sword bayonets.

The Cadian Honour Guards were unprepared but were trained to aim and fire without hesitation. The thin line of the 840th fired three volleys at the onrushing column, but it did not halt. The Volscani Sentinels swept the line with multilaser fire before their infantry struck home. The two companies of the 840th in the line, outnumbered forty to one, died to a man as the enemy swept over them. Their sacrifice will be remembered.

From all along the Volscani line the Leviathans opened fire. The huge forward macro-cannons were heard in Kasr Valtoss some fifty miles away. Each Leviathan was rocked back on its tracks by the recoil and the swarms of infantry surrounding them fell to the ground, unable to stand this close to the discharge. The ten-yard long cannon shells could scarcely miss the Leviathans of the Cadian command barely a mile from them. This first volley was aimed low, hitting the tracks. The Cadian Leviathans had not had a chance to raise their void shields, each was rendered immobile by the fusillade. Too late did their shields come to life. By this time the traitor Leviathans were roaring forward, their battlements swarming with soldiers manning the power grapples and corvus ramps.

But woe to the traitors at that time: an Ornithopter in the markings of the 8th Cadian regiment was approaching Kasr Tyrok. Inside it was the Lord Castellan of Cadia, Ursarker Creed and Jarran Kell, his colour sergeant. Their instincts told them something was afoot before the first terrible volley of the macro-cannon. It is said that Creed sniffed, like a great hound sensing a wolf near the flock, and immediately began issuing his battle orders through the Ornithopter's vox caster.

Back on the field of treachery, the Volscani Leviathans rumbled through the void shields of the courageous Cadians. It is a fact that Leviathan armament is primarily devised to destroy infantry. Once another Leviathan has its void shields raised gunnery will not conclude the issue. As the first volley had immobilised the Cadians, another option was available. Pulling alongside the faithful Cadians, the vile Volscani fired grapples and dropped their corvus ramps, with a blasphemous roar they swarmed aboard. On each Cadian Leviathan the warning bells sounded 'arm topside' and the bastions filled with gallant defenders. In the iron heart of the *Excubitoi Castellum* – the Leviathan that had for four thousand years been the ceremonial transport of the Cadian High Command – Governor Primus Marius Porelska drew his sword and organised the defence of the command deck.

The huge doors of the Volscani Leviathans were opened; their infantry swarmed towards them and began to climb deck by deck to the battlements. Where each Cadian Leviathan had little more than a platoon of troops, the Volscani Leviathans were a gateway for a limitless horde of boarders. The Volscani Chimeras had meantime been filled with infantry and stood off to one side of the battle, along with their Sentinels. Every time an Imperial detachment approached the battle this mobile force would fall upon them and destroy them piecemeal. Their commander was disturbed to see a dust cloud coming out of the west that betokened a strong force. He had not expected serious resistance this soon, but still signalled for his Chimeras to move out.

According to the records of the Departmento Munitorum, General Kleif had been a proud Volscani soldier. It is sad that his good service to the Emperor should now be rendered to nothing by an act of contemptible treachery. Better he had died in his first action, but instead, at his command, a few Chimeras stopped to allow his heavy weapon teams to deploy. A line of Sentinels formed up ahead of them as a skirmish line while a further hunting party moved off wide to the right. The remaining Chimeras formed up in three huge chevrons and wheeled to the left. He would draw the enemy in on his Chimeras, hit them with flanking fire from his heavy weapons and then charge his Sentinels in behind them while disembarking the remainder of his infantry for a frontal attack.

It was now that the blessed Creed dismounted from his Ornithopter and joined his waiting command squad. In accordance with his orders, the 8th Cadian was deployed in three lines, each of five companies. Each company had six platoons, the front line companies had each deployed one platoon as a skirmish line and the centre platoon of each company was made up of elite Kasrkin troops. Banners fluttered over each company. In the gaps between the platoons, the Cadian heavy weapon teams stood ready. On each flank, Sentinel squadrons strutted forward, eager for the fight. At the rear, stationary for now but roaring their readiness, was a group of

THE BATTLE OF TYROK FIELDS

Cadian armoured fist squads and Leman Russ battle tanks. Creed fell in alongside them as Kell unfurled the Banner of the Eighth. The sight of their blessed standard, its eagle a direct copy of the original, touched by the hand of the Emperor himself, caused the loyal 8th Regiment to begin their Imperium Gloriam chant.

The nearest troops saw Creed kneel and make the sign of the aquila across his chest. He placed one hand on the ground and concentrated, veteran soldiers say that Creed was able to sense from the vibration of the ground where and what troops were nearby, although no one was sure whether this was a skill or a sacred gift.

The order went out.

'The Eighth Cadian will advance, fix bayonets.'

This was answered by the sound of over four thousand bayonets being expertly attached as the order was relayed from company to company. The sound brought a grim smile to the Lord Castellan's granite features. He had come to love the calm before the storm.

The Volscani Sentinels bounded forward, their multilasers swivelling hungrily from side to side. But before they could find their range, the Cadian missile launchers, autocannons and lascannons ripped into them.

General Klief's stratagems might have worked on some enemies. Against Ursarkar Creed they were undone in twenty minutes. The Cadian line marched over the wreckage of the Volscani mobile column. Their heavy weapon squads lay in Earthshaker shell craters, where Creed's supporting Basilisks had found them thanks to the Ornithopter-mounted observers high above. The Volscani Sentinels had been devastated by Cadian heavy weapons and then swept away by the Acadian's own Sentinels. Amidst the burning wreckage of their Chimeras, the heretic infantry that remained were overwhelmed by the Kasrkin-led charge of the 7th Company. Creed had halted their charge with a volley from the battle cannons of his Leman Russ tanks and then decimated them with the fire of almost four hundred infantry carried heavy weapons. His command squad caught up with the 7th Company as it overran the last of the Volscani. Jarran Kell paced ahead of Creed, slaying heretics with every stride. He vaulted atop a burning Chimera and skewered the despised General Klief with a downward stab of his regimental banner.

Creed stood next to Kell surveying the battlefield, the banner of the 8th flying the prouder for having dealt death to a traitor. Creed was wise and knew that engaged so closely, the void shields of the Leviathans would protect each other and be nigh impenetrable. The Lord Castellan was undaunted however as he had already made preparations for this stage. He ordered the ranks to be redressed and drew up his sentinels on one flank and his armour on the other. The Cadian soldiery was eager to be at the enemy but none would disobey Ursarkar Creed, even though they could see the hordes of the enemy still attempting to swarm aboard the Leviathans of the High Command.

It was then that Creed's delay was explained. Striding over the Tyrok Fens came three Reaver Titans of Legio Ignatum. The God-machines changed direction to fall in behind the 8th Cadian and the advance resumed. No one should ever forget the majesty of that advance; on the right, Creed's armour roared ahead at full speed, on the left, his Sentinels inclined outward ready to swing around the enemy. In the centre, the 8th advanced as if on the parade ground with banners flying. The Volscani saw them coming and turned every available weapon from their Leviathans on them. Huge gaps were torn in the Cadian ranks by mega-bolters and macrocannon, but they were immediately filled. Behind the Cadians the three Ignatum Titans turned their turbolasers on the Volscani. Focusing on one Leviathan at a time, they ripped through their void shields and began to tear great holes in their hulls. The Volscani infantry thronging by Leviathans died in hundreds with each shot and leapt from the sides rather than be cremated.

Creed's armour was upon them next. Disdaining to fire, they roared around the base of the Volscani Leviathans, crushing the traitor infantry beneath their tracks and breaking up the few ordered formations they had left. The Chimeras then discharged their passengers; Cadian armoured fist squads that rushed to surround the nearest Volscani Leviathan attacked *Exception Castellum*. The Volscani traitors turned to find righteous justice at their backs.

The hammer blows devised by Lord Castellan Creed continued to fall. Led by the Kasrkin and the company command squads, the 8th Cadian struck the line. They swept the heretic infantry aside, clearing the way through to the nearest Leviathans and linking up with the armoured fist squads. Of the nine Volscani Leviathans, two were burning and two more were being cleared, deck-by-deck.

Finally the exalted Titans reached the fray and striding straight up to the remaining enemy Leviathans seized each in turn, tipping them over and spilling Volscani infantry like ants from a crumbling anthill, before turning their weaponry on them.

All that remained now was to execute the richly deserved sentence of death. The 8th Regiment rightly showed no pity and fought their way to the ramparts atop the corrupt Leviathans. They saw things within those defiled vehicles that honest soldiers should not have to. Still they pressed on until they in turn crossed over the boarding ramps to the embattled Cadian Leviathan *Excubitoi Castellum*, which the heretics had boarded. Creed and Kell led the way now and it was they who reached the command deck first and succeeded in preventing the foul desecration of the fallen body of Governor Primus Marius Porelska. The Governor had fallen, as a Cadian should with a blade in his hand and heretics at his feet.

Lord Castellan Creed carried the body of the Governor back to the battlements of the Leviathan, wrapped in the banner of the Eighth. Many more Cadian regiments were now coming upon the scene and a great throng of them gathered around. The Lord Castellan, being a pious man, allowed them to sing their praise to the Emperor and then from his lofty position he delivered his first exhortation to the armies of Cadia, to strive without rest until every disciple of Chaos had suffered the same fate as the Volscani.

The host demanded that the noble Ursarkar should take command. Three times he refused but ultimately he could only accede to the will of the Regiments. As ever, greatness thrust itself upon Ursarkar E Creed and he could but strain to bear its weight.

— Lieutenant Orsani Ruvald, Archivist, 8th Cadian Regiment

(Opposite page) Giant fresco on the Departmento Munitorium building on Cadia. Note the bomb damage.

TRANSMITTED: CADIAN COMMANDS,
SECTOR LEVEL

RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: KASR PARTOX

VOX DUCT: 021/94YT4

REF: GUARDNET/8422/SITREP.

Following the betrayal on Cadia, pleas for aid from forces beyond the Cadian Sector have been despatched to military commands in the surrounding sectors. We expect warriors from the Astartes Praeses Chapters and possibly from the Space Wolves also. Naval assets have been promised from Cypria Mundi and regimental musters have begun in many nearby sectors. Forces are gathering, but only time will tell whether or not it is at a quick enough speed.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

I have seen more activity in this last week than I have seen in my entire career as an officer of the General Staff. Nothing could prepare us for this, yet every man and woman, from the lowest subaltern to the new Lord Castellan himself, throw themselves into the work ahead with such energy that surely the Emperor is smiling upon us in this time of peril. That a major incursion is imminent is now beyond doubt, but the enemy will find us ready, if only we can complete our preparations in time.

Creed has elevated my role in the General Staff; ruthlessly reappointing those officers he deemed ineffectual. Though many resent his brusque manner – and he has undoubtedly made enemies amongst the established officer class – I believe his approach a necessary one, considering the task at hand.

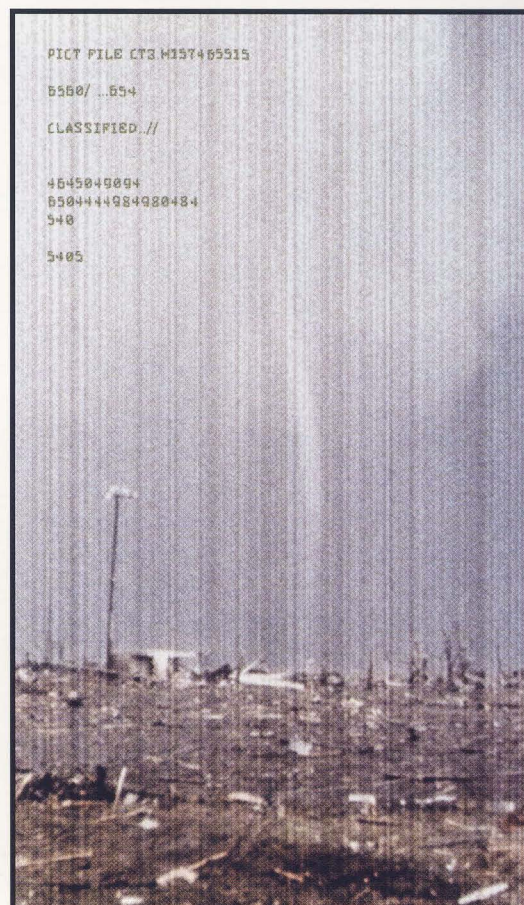
Over the last ten days I have chaired meetings with the senior officers of every major unit based in the Cadian system, receiving reports that millions upon millions of men stand ready and know their duty. Though morale was dealt a terrible blow by the betrayal at Kasr Tyrok, our new commander-in-chief, Lord Castellan Creed, has rallied the officers magnificently. I have seen men who have fought a hundred battles over their careers waver, yet a single word from Creed has galvanised them into action. The man is imbued with fierce resolution, and those under him cannot help but be infected by it.

The work of organising the forces at our disposal goes on. As is standard practice, each world contributing

regiments has organised its forces into battle groups, and we are assigning Munitorium support services to each as they become available. We are fortunate in that many worlds in this region follow the Cadian doctrine with regard to regimental structure, though there are notable exceptions to this rule, with units such as those raised from Finreht and Mordant. With a starting establishment of six to nine regiments per battle group, and at least six such groups forming an army, we have been able to assign a minimum of ten army groups to the defence of every notable world in the region, with the capitals assigned as many as one hundred. Of course, experience shows that these battle groups will soon break down once they are required to redeploy, and staff officers on the ground will need to organise their forces as best they are able. Such is the reality of staff work when one is required to coordinate diverse units over vast distances.

Though reports of raids on outlying sectors continue – we now have confirmation of the involvement of the Night Lords Traitor Legion – with such warriors as Logan Grimnar of the Space Wolves and Commander Azrael of the Dark Angels standing alongside us, we face the uncertain future with hope and determination.

(Right) This pict of a scene of devastation was taken on what used to be the densely populated Hive Dementer. The heroic bravery of the Adeptus Astartes in liberating the Hive was backed up by its fearless civilian defenders.





TRANSMITTED: CADIAN COMMANDS, SECTOR LEVEL

RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: KASR PARTOX

DATE: 5387999.M41

TELEPATHIC DUCT: 043/9904YT

REF: GUARDNET/8743/SITREP.

Calamity has befallen us. While no first-hand corroboration exists, enough circumstantial evidence (along with Astropathic readings that cannot be ignored) points to a disaster at Urthwart. A force more potent than anything we could have foreseen has returned to our Emperor's realms and unleashed a power beyond imagining. A psychic death scream, more piercing than the Astronomican itself, has ripped through the ether from Urthwart.

I fear something terrible has happened.

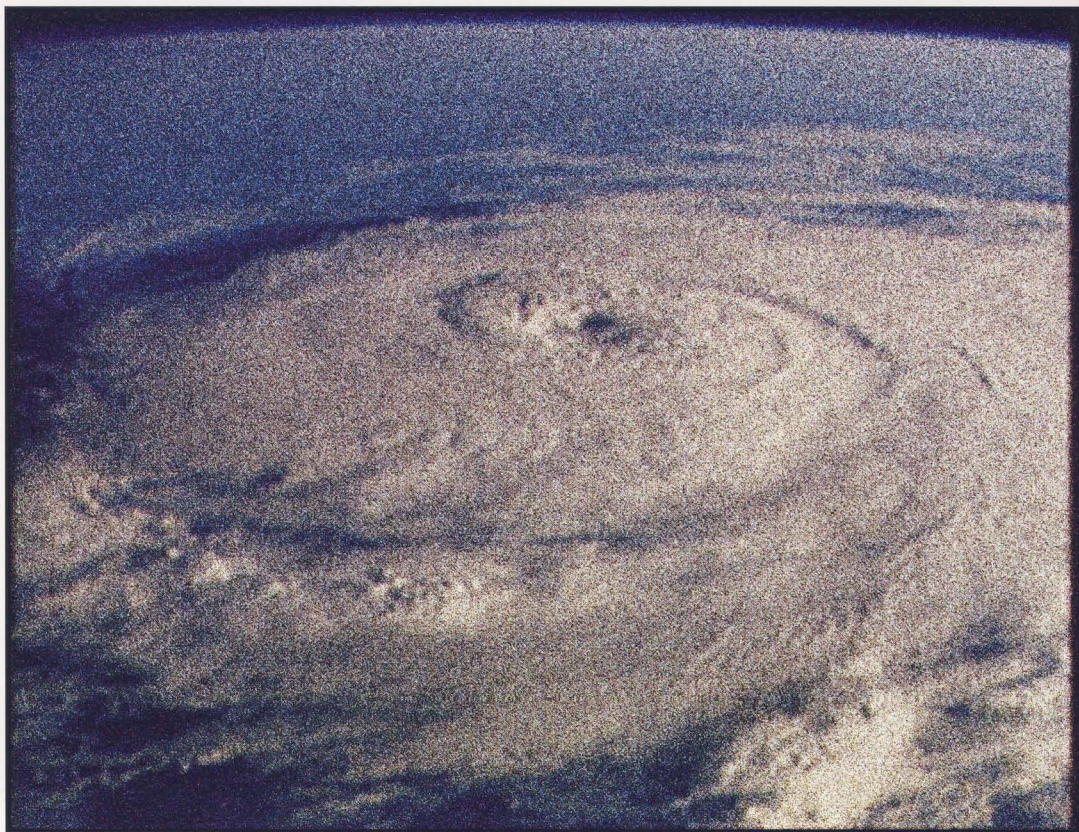
JOURNAL ENTRY:

The invasion we knew was coming is now upon us. Reports are flooding in from every sector, even though persistent Warp storm activity is making our task of forming a clear appreciation nigh on impossible.

In the midst of the chaos of the opening moves, the Lord Castellán led the senior General Staff in prayer. One hundred and sixty officers knelt together in the High Command bunker, Colour Sergeant Kell muting the endless chatter of the vox units and cogitator banks as Creed spoke. He beseeched the Emperor to fill our hearts with courage and resolution and the strength to do our duty. He told us that each of us would be called upon to send untold numbers of men to their deaths in the defence of the Cadian Gate, and although all of us had done so at some point in our careers, we each gained an insight into the meaning of true sacrifice through his words. He ended by telling us that this war would not be over until every last one of the enemy lay dead, or until we ourselves had given our lives to hold back the tide of Chaos. We knew he spoke the truth, and renewed our vows to defend the realms of Mankind with every last drop of blood in our veins, for to fail in this undertaking would be to condemn the Imperium to an eternity of damnation.

Having made his speech, Creed gave his orders. None would rest until the defence was mounted. Intelligence reports were filtered and collated, and within the day a picture began to form. Urthwart had fallen, yet Admiral Quarren had once again triumphed when he led Battlefleet Agripinaa to relieve Admiral Pulaski's force at Ormentep.

(Right) This is an orbital shot of the surface of Prosan in the Cadian system. This massive storm occurred during the vast outpouring of forces from the Eye of Terror. The storm occurred on the side of the planet that faced the Eye and moved to continue facing it as the planet rotated, as if it was a reflection of that terrible place.



PHASE TWO: INVASION

The worlds of the Agripinaa sector had come under overwhelming attack, as had Belis Corona and Amistel Majoris. Plague fleets were discharging their putrid cargoes from orbit, and reports from these sectors were fragmented at best. Creed ordered reserves deployed to these areas, but in the mean time we would have to trust the commanders on the ground, each of which had been given his orders by Creed in person some weeks previously, and each of whom knew the consequences of failure. Each must hold the line, to the last man, if necessary.

We are also receiving reports of activity closer to home. Even now, the vanguard of the enemy is racing through the Cadian system, and we have lost contact with Saint Josmane's Hope. Admiral Quarren has been ordered back to Cadia, for we fear the defences of Solar Mariatus will not hold against the forces closing upon it.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Though I can scarcely believe it, the enemy are at our gates already. Our ground defences are holding, yet we are sorely pressed. Our orbital fortresses have fallen and in the last hour enemy landing craft have made planet fall upon the soil of Cadia. Quarren's forces have been forced to fall back, though the Great Company of Logan Grimnar himself managed to break through the enemy blockade and affect a drop.

The invasion is larger than anything we had ever expected. We commend our souls to the Emperor's care.

TRANSMITTED: CADIAN COMMANDS,
SECTOR LEVEL

RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: KASR PARTOX

DATE: 5389999.M41

VOX DUCT: 056/8Y64HW

REF: GUARDNET/8422/

PRIORITY TRANSMISSION --

THREAT LEVEL OMICRON

TOP LEVEL CLEARANCE REQUIRED

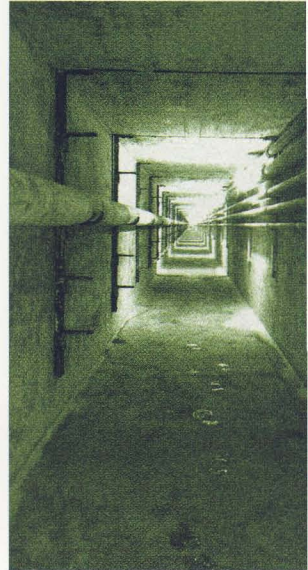
PASSED

Astropaths and forward listening posts (which have since been lost) have detected the emergence into realspace of a Traitor fleet consisting of hundreds of warships and hulking transport vessels.

All are on course for Cadia. Reports indicate that the *Plagueclaw* and *Terminus Est*, along with a massive flotilla of plague hulks, have emerged in the Subiaco Diablo system.

Worse than this, unconfirmed reports claim that two Blackstone Fortresses accompany the Chaos fleet. I find this last fact difficult to countenance, though given the state of the sector in the previous months, I would not discount the possibility.

(Below) Pict of Imperial defence tunnels on Cadia. This was the scene of vicious fighting in the final stages of the invasion.



(Left) The last seconds of a world destroyed by the Planet Killer.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The wave of the Despoiler's invasion had broken across the sectors of the Cadian Gate, and it soon became evident that the Inquisition fortress world of Nemesis Tessera was to be the main target of the first phase of assaults. Quite why the enemy has chosen Nemesis Tessera is, at this stage, a mystery. My best guess is that the system was chosen out of sheer hatred of the agents of the Golden Throne. I do not wish to even attempt to understand the mind of our foe in too much detail.

It first became evident that Nemesis was to be a major focus of the enemy's assault when Chima Lomas was literally smashed aside by Chaos forces. Nereus, the primary world of the system, was taken by enemy forces with contemptuous ease, by our best reckoning not as a target in its own right but merely to secure lines of communication along the Rhoke Conduit. Native defence forces, amounting to seventeen PDF army groups supported by Battlegroup Neth, contested the enemy's planet fall three hundred kilometres south of Nereus Delta. Going by the few reports we have, they held up an invasion force at least fifty times their own strength for a whole day. The last transmission we have from General Neth suggested he was preparing to sell his forces dear, and I pray that he conducted his last battle with honour, for he was a fine warrior as well as a friend, and an example to us all.

Having crushed Chima Lomas, the Despoiler's forces dispersed as they traversed the Kensi Gulf, splinter forces separating to assault Ovaris Gulag. No command communications have been received from that world in over a month. The voyage across the Kensi Gulf was achieved with alarming speed, with all elements of the enemy fleet translating within two AUs and a week of one another – a feat of astronavigation our representatives of the Navis Nobilite attained would only be possible with the aid of the darkest of arts.

Whether or not the Masters of the Holy Orders of the Emperor's Inquisition were quite prepared for the savagery and scale of the assault upon their fastness I cannot judge, and as the world does not fall under the authority of Cadian High Command, I can only speculate as to the ferocity of the battles fought there. That the forces of the enemy regarded the destruction of Nemesis Tessera as of the utmost importance is evident from our observations and from intercepted communications. They invested an epic degree of resources into their attack, and my staff and myself read the dispatches with horror, fearing the worst. Yet, after several

days, it appeared the situation was brought under control. It would appear the Inquisition's fortress is to hold, yet I can only speculate that the icy surface of that grim world must be infested with millions of traitors and heretics who made planet fall upon it. I would estimate that those who do not fall to Tessera's inhospitable climate would soon be hunted down and exterminated by the blessed agents of the Inquisition. I feel no pity for them.

But we soon came to realise that the assault on Nemesis Tessera was to be but a prelude to the storm that was heading towards the Cadian sector. With our orbital defences already breached and the fleet forced into withdrawal, world after world in the system came under attack. Initially we held, even throwing the enemy back at Belisar, Macharia, Vigilatum and especially Xersia and Kantrael. Yet the enemy soon found our weak points, throwing countless thousands of lowborn filth at us so that the real masters, the Traitor Marines, could exploit them. The first to buckle was the prison world of Saint Josmane's Hope, whose inmates are believed to have thrown their lot in with the invaders in the vain hope of being granted freedom. They were granted only eternal damnation, for their liberators turned out to be the renegades of the Violators Chapter. I had not heard of this force until I was invited to a closed session briefing along with the Lord Castellan, where a representative of the Inquisition imparted to us the awful truth of these heretics, so as to be better prepared to combat them. What we were told filled me with horror, for no man, no matter his crime, could surely deserve to have the attentions of these vile creatures visited upon him.

Soon the defences of every one of the worlds in the Cadian system were sorely tested, and despite the efforts of the Commissariat, word spread of the atrocities being committed upon Saint Josmane's Hope. With morale badly shaken, every effort was made to bolster those warzones most affected, with Creed ordering a series of redeployments that rotated out those units whose faith was apparently wavering. Of particular note during this stage of operations are the actions of General Spedal, whose personal intervention at the front line during a particularly fierce assault on Kasr Gallan was truly exemplary.

But our fortune was not to hold. Though we of the Cadian military uphold tried and tested martial traditions, we are all too often reminded that the

PHASE TWO: INVASION

universe we live in, and the realm we fight for, is one governed by powers few amongst us can fathom. Two nights past, our Astropaths reported that their communications with their peers were becoming indistinct and distorted, and that their sleeping hours were filled with nightmares. Yesterday morn, every Astropath I met appeared pale and drawn, as if haunted by waking visions. They warned us that a time of peril far worse than our most pessimistic appreciation was upon us, stating that the 'creatures

of the dark shall be made flesh'. Such portents make my skin crawl, and I have sought the absolution of my Confessor three times in the last day alone.

Now, I am told that a great Warp storm is upon us, touching at the edges of our system and causing grievous disruption to our Astropathic communication capabilities. I can only pray this storm front passes before the crisis we are already mired within takes another turn for the worse.



(Left) Adeptus Mechanicus scan of the Eye of Terror 'blink' that occurred before the main bulk of Abaddon's filth army poured forth. Note the change in energy levels in the second scan.

TO: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND, CADIA
FROM: INQUISITOR LORD
IUSTUS HYBERNICA
SUBJECT: REQUISITION OF TROOPS
PRIORITY: HIGH,
IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED
RECEIVED: 999.M41
MESSAGE FORMAT: TELEPATHIC
ASTROPATHIC DUCT: TRIONORUS RELAY 7

By the power vested in me as an ordained agent of the Holy Orders of the Emperor's Inquisition, I hereby invoke the Juris Inquisitorum and order you as follows:

You are required to render up to the Masters of Nemesis Tessera such men and materiel as they shall deem necessary and sufficient to combat the forces that assail them during this present time of strife. Such forces shall in the first instance consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

Item the First: Twenty-two regiments of foot, each man to be issued with arms at your expense, or to provide his own. Guard issue flak armour is to be worn, as is thermal gear sufficient for extended operations upon the surface of our most blessed world.

Item the Second: Five regiments of armour, to be equipped with approved pattern Leman Russ. No local variants are permitted.

Item the Third: Five Regiments of artillery, not less than one half to be self-propelled.

Furthermore, you are ordered to provide such services and materiel as are required to sustain these forces for a period of no less than six months, and to establish further reserves of replacements assuming 50% losses within one month.

You are required to execute this order as a matter of highest priority, on pain of death.

— Lord Inquisitor Iustus Hibernica

JOURNAL ENTRY:

With Warp storms rendering Astropathic communications erratic, we are experiencing enormous difficulties coordinating command and control of our forces. Communications from the more distant sectors are particularly affected, and I am advised that they are not to be trusted, due to psychodynamic distortion. I have no knowledge of such a phenomena, so I must assume the worst in every case.

A particularly implausible report from the Scarus sector indicates that in addition to Chaos attacks, the defenders there have faced the menace of the orkoid species. After action reports cite Mordax Prime as the initial focus of an ork incursion, and if this were an isolated case I would write it off as misinformation caused by inexperienced troops facing an enemy they have no experience of. However, every major system in the sector has now logged such reports, so I must take them seriously until more detailed information is forthcoming.

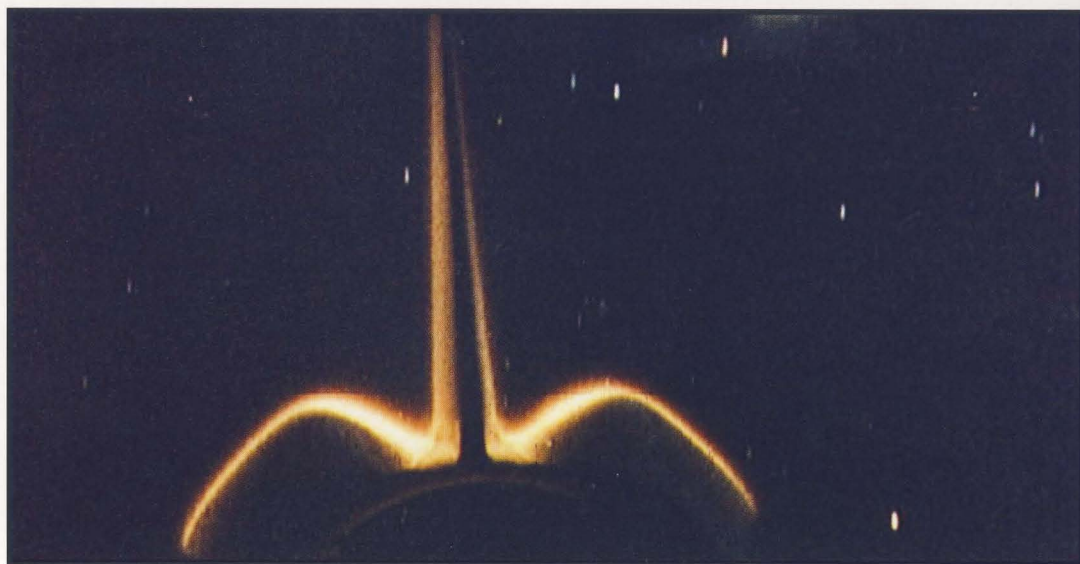
On Cadia, Creed himself led his Cadian 8th (now being referred to as 'the Lord Castellán's Own') on an operation to hunt down and exterminate a group of Volskani Cataphracts who, unknown to us, had escaped the chaos of Tyrok Fields and were attempting to link up with elements of the Despoiler's invasion force. The Lord Castellán has always been known as an officer who will fight at the front line with no hesitation whatsoever, leading his men and setting the standard for his junior officers. The 8th brought the enemy to battle at Kasr Vasan, in the shadow of the pylon that dominates the Vasani Moors. The battle was brief yet vicious in intensity, and not a single traitor was allowed to escape with his worthless life. It later proved fortunate that

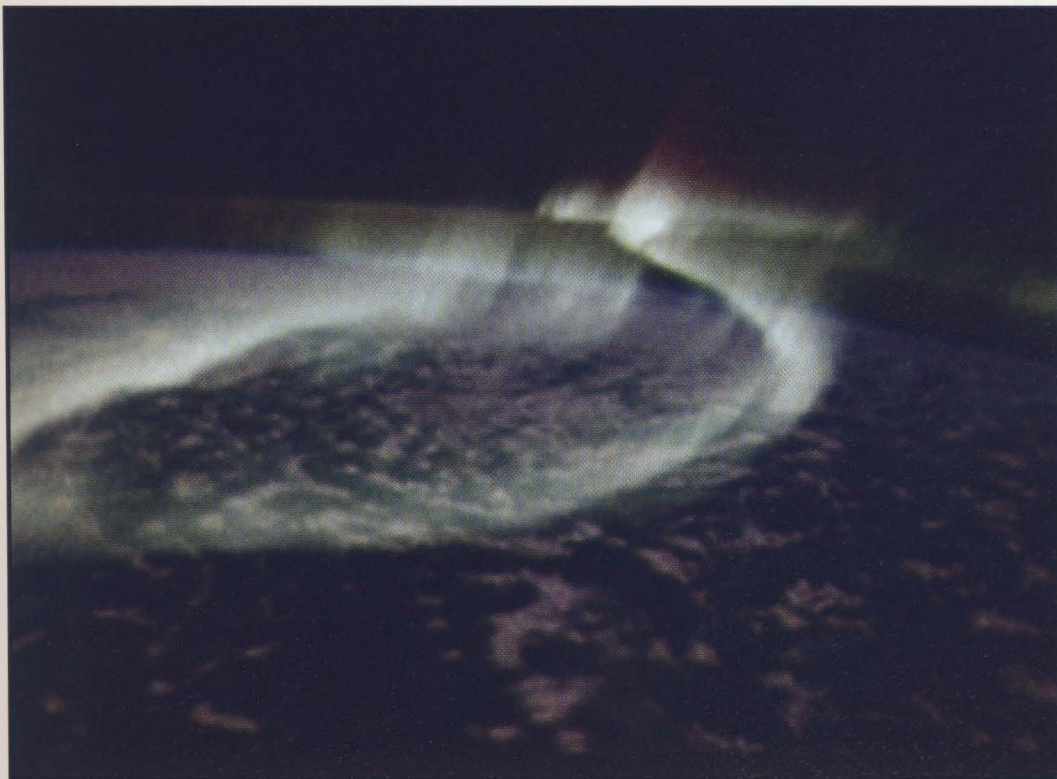
Creed had wasted no time whatsoever in launching his assault, for a Chaos Legions Astartes force, believed to be the vanguard of a larger Black Legion warband, caught up with him as dusk fell, necessitating a hasty withdrawal across the moors. It is said that the true test of a general is the ability to disengage in the face of a superior foe, and the 8th is even now regrouping, to head back out onto the moors to face the Black Legion on more favourable terms.

The last of the reports I have reviewed in the last few hours indicate two further items for which our command has reason to rejoice. Firstly, the fleets of the Iron Knights and Imperial Fist Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes have established contact. Creed is now in conference with the Great Wolf Logan Grimnar of the Space Wolves Chapter, planning how best the Space Marines may be deployed. Though we hold no authority over the Astartes, Creed has indicated his support for Grimnar should he establish himself as nominal head of the Space Marine Chapters operating in our region. Captain Echion of the Patriarchs of Ulixis, commander of the Ultramarines Honour Company has voiced his support for this arrangement.

Lastly, within this hour I have received word from the Adeptus Mechanicus temple at Kasr Gallan that the Ordo Reductor is to reinforce the defences there. I have only ever read of this force, consisting as it does of ancient and venerated siege engines akin to the Dreadnoughts employed by the Astartes. Though the skills of the Ordo Reductor lie in laying siege, rather than counter-siege operations, I can only marvel that such a force is to be counted amongst the defenders of Cadia, and I must confess to a curious longing to witness them in battle.

(Right) This bizarre picture was taken just before the moon of Exeltra Minor was devoured by a Warp storm. No further contact has been made with those there, and opinion as to what these strange bars of light are is divided.





(Left) The sinister tendrils of the Warp reach out to envelop another Imperial world.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The last three days have seen the General Staff exhibiting a somewhat ebullient demeanour, a state of affairs that troubled me considering the enormity of the task before us. Bolstered by local successes, a number of senior staff proffered the suggestion that a campaign medal be struck to commemorate those victories we have won. This state of affairs came to a head this evening, when Lord-Colonel Jaffers-Mandatine proposed a toast to our 'inevitable victory', during supper in the senior officers' mess. I admit to being temporarily struck dumb by the man's presumption. While I remain a pious servant of the Imperium of Man, and know full well the power of faith, I saw in this pompous fool the sin of pride rather than the fervour of the righteous.

Before I could stand to challenge the lord-colonel, Creed entered the room, his colour sergeant at his side. Every officer present fell silent under his stern gaze, except Jaffers-Mandatine, who raised his glass of vintage amesac and repeated his toast.

Creed nodded to his retainer, who stepped up to the lord-colonel, and took the glass from him, casting the priceless Vitrian vessel to the floor.

Creed then proceeded in a low, but deadly serious voice to avail his staff of the truth of the situation. He

told us that we stand upon a critical juncture in history, that should we fail in our duty to the Immortal God-Emperor then all the volumes of glorious victories won by the Cadian regiments throughout the millennia would be as dust. If we should fail, he told us, then we would cast the entire Imperium unto fire and damnation. As he spoke, his voice grew louder, until he took on the aspect of a preacher berating his flock for wayward and immoderate behaviour. At that moment, I saw in Creed what I had glimpsed in him in the wake of the hell that was Tyrok Fields – the man is truly touched by the Emperor, who acts through him to deliver us from the evil of the Despoiler.

Then he used a phrase that truly brought home, to every officer in the room, just what we were facing. He dared name our foe, Abaddon the Despoiler, a name we rarely utter lest it somehow grant the beast power over us. And he described the war as his 'Thirteenth Black Crusade'.

Truly, I can think of no more dire a description of the invasion, for we had all read of the previous Black Crusades, and knew full well that entire worlds have burned to halt them.

Creed spared me a nod, as if pardoning me from the admonition he so forcefully impressed upon my colleagues. They left the officers' mess stronger men for having been shown the truth.

++BEGIN INTERCEPT++

My lord Cardinal, as you will know, the Brothers of the Blessed Enigma have lived a peaceful, contemplative existence deep in the wilds of Trionora for centuries. With the invasion however, comes disturbing news that the Brothers of the order have turned upon the populace of the world that houses them, attacking any and all in a berserk and utterly unexplainable outbreak of unreasoning violence. I hereby request that a Sororitas force be dispatched with all haste to eliminate this rogue element, for I tremble at the consequences for us all should the Ordo Hereticus receive word and take a hand in our affairs.

++END INTERCEPT++

++COMMIT TO FILE OH/CHC>43543417D++

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Having received reports from a number of fronts as to the nature of our foe, I have today presented an appreciation of his capabilities and characteristics to the Lord Castellan, and distributed these facts to those commanders in the field yet to face him. Numerically, it is the traitor and the turncoat that our forces must most commonly face.

The first facet of our foe to consider is his moral and intellectual make-up, for as with any warrior, this is the foundation upon which all other characteristics of an army are built.

The traitors we face are men who have renounced their vows of loyalty and servitude to the Emperor, in the most base of blasphemies. These are not simple deserters or mutineers, they are men who have committed the ultimate sin: that of heresy, and are far less than men because of this.

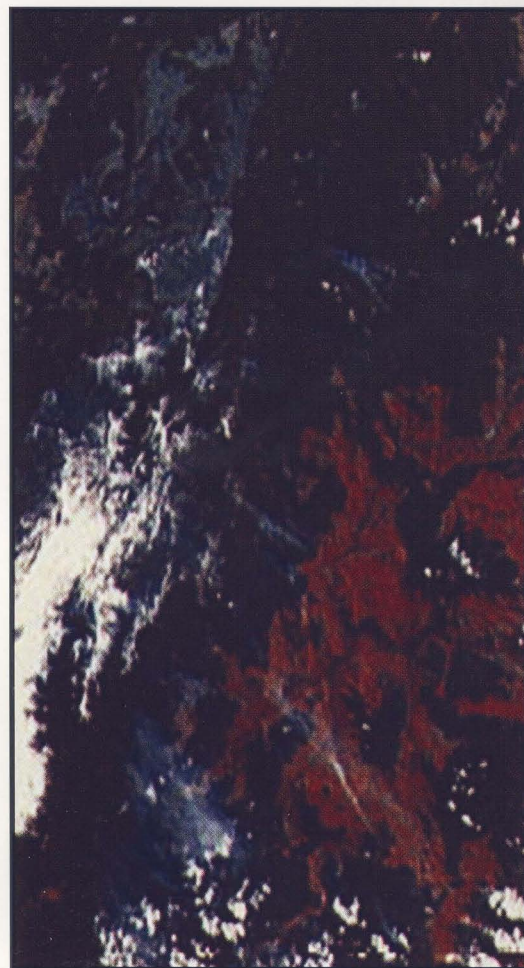
Having reneged on their loyalties, the traitors have thrown in their lot with the antithesis of all that made them men. They have sold their souls to the Great Enemy, and it is this fact that makes them such a dire foe. The traitor has nothing to lose — his life and his soul are already forfeit, for he will find no forgiveness from us, and no sympathy from his new masters. His existence is a haunted one, and he rages against his fate, venting his anger and pain on those he once counted friend. Where the loyal, righteous Guardsman knows his life and freewill are secondary to his duty, the traitor cares not for his own life, or that of his fellows,

for he has nothing to live for, and no duty other than hate and bloodshed.

Yet the traitor also offers a contradiction, for upon the field of battle he is want to display berserk fury one moment, and brazen cowardice the next. He perceives the ebb and flow of battle very differently to us, gauging his fortunes in terms no sane man can fathom. One moment he may stand in the face of overwhelming firepower, yet the next he may flee. Often, his fear of his dark masters is greater than his fear of death, yet at other times his selfish and capricious nature, that which led him to turn against his fellow man in the first instance, reasserts itself and he will flee for his sorry life. This hypothesis is confirmed in that it has been observed that his resolve is bolstered exponentially by the presence of traitor Adeptus Astartes, who he evidently fears and admires in equal measures.

The best advice we can issue to field commanders with regard to defeating the traitor is to sever his leadership. Focus your strength on destroying his masters, and his resolve will disappear, allowing you to destroy him, at your leisure.

(Right) Orbital pict shows the advance of Chaos forces on Ormantep. Imperial scribes inked in red the land that fell into the clutches of the enemy.



PHASE TWO: INVASION

AVAILABLE PDF AND OTHER NATIVE FORCES - LELITHAR
ADJUSTED FOLLOWING GOLGOTHA LANDINGS AND SUBSEQUENT DEFECTIONS

LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (LIGHT)	934 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (MECHANISED)	124 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (ARMOURED)	52 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR PLANETARY DEFENCE FORCE (ARTILLERY)	45 REGIMENTS
GOVERNOR'S OWN MOUNTED GUARD	3 COMPANIES
LELITHAR WILDERNESS PATROL REGIMENTS	2 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR VOLUNTEER RESERVE	53 REGIMENTS
LELITHAR CITIZEN'S MILITIA	474 REGIMENTS
OFF-WORLD SETTLERS' VOLUNTEER REGIMENTS	27 REGIMENTS

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The situation on Lelithar has taken a drastic turn for the worse. In an attempt to bring to ground the heretic calling himself the 'Voice of the Emperor', the Legio Ignatum, the Death Spectres and the Jouran Dragoons have laid siege to the world's capital. Soon after the arrival of these forces a large proportion of Lelithar's native defence forces and populace rebelled and took up arms against their government, slaughtering the governor and his staff in an orgy of bloodletting. The siege has ground on now for many weeks, but more bad news has recently reached us.

While inspecting the troops of his world, the newly instated Imperial governor's motorcade was ambushed by traitors armed with crude rocket launchers, who disabled the vehicles of his bodyguards and murdered the governor in cold blood. Security forces reacted with commendable speed, breaking up suspected cults and anti-Imperial organizations, but once again, Lelithar is plunged into anarchy. It concerns us greatly that we are unable to control Lelithar. Even with the presence of a Titan Legion and a Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes, the rebels continue their actions and the Voice broadcasts his lies across the region. I pray Lelithar slips no further into anarchy and ruin, for we can ill afford its loss.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

The native volunteer reserve and citizens' militia units were affected most by the defections, while the off-world settler volunteers were almost completely unchanged and able to absorb what defections they did suffer with no adverse ramifications to their Orders of Battle. Further note that the governor's personal guard remained steadfast throughout the

initial defections, and paid the price for their loyalty in blood. These facts should be born in mind when planning the integration of native units with Guard forces on other worlds where defection is considered a serious possibility.

TO: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND
FROM: INTERGATOR SHAE
SUBJECT: CIVIL UNREST - AGRIPINAA
PRIORITY: HIGH
RECEIVED: -
MESSAGE FORMAT:
ASTROPATHIC/CYPHER EXACTUS
ASTROPATHIC DUCT: YAYOR/SUB-SEVEN
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:
BEAT YOUR THOUGHTS
TO THE MOULD OF YOUR WILL

Skilled demagogues and rabble-rousers are inciting civil unrest throughout the smaller hives of the Agripinaa system. Their evil words are taking root, for the walls of the hives are becoming covered with Chaos graffiti. The tendrils of the Great Enemy have spread far enough that soon entire continents may defect. With every uprising we crush, another cult seems to declare for the enemy.

My master, Inquisitor Balentine is dead, slaughtered at the hands of a cannibal cult masquerading as nobility. I myself have not the authority, so must phrase this as a request rather than as an order. Should our purges fail and these hives fall irrevocably to death and anarchy, key into my transponder and destroy them from orbit. Plasma warheads are, I fear, the only way to ensure the destruction of the foes we face.

Message ends

(Below) Standard ration packs issued to all fighters throughout the campaign. Chaos forces dropped tainted packs onto Imperial lines. The penalty for consuming these corrupted products was death.



(Opposite page)

Blasphemous portrait of Ursarker Creed, distributed by the so-called 'Voice of the Emperor'. A parchment was also dropped over cities which said: 'People of the Imperium, heed the words of the Voice of the Emperor. Creed is your enemy, not your saviour. Join us, and cast him down!'

JOURNAL ENTRY:

These last days have seen my staff engaged in the labour of analysing Traitor Legion Astartes attacks. This task was ordered directly by the Lord Castellan, and has brought about a degree of conflict within our high command, for Commander Azrael of the Dark Angels Chapter heard of our endeavour and ordered us to cease, stating that the actions of the traitors are the business of the Astartes themselves, and are of no concern to other units. Creed rejected this assertion as patently ridiculous under the circumstances of the current crisis, and Logan Grimnar agreed with him. Azrael has withdrawn what cooperation he was prepared to offer. I have ordered the General Staff to carry out Creed's orders regardless of Azrael's objections, though I have no desire to become involved in the internecine quarrels of the Astartes.

Of all the incidents logged with High Command over the period in question, the greatest amount has involved the Night Lords Traitor Legion. Our analysts have reached the conclusion that this Legion has been employed in a vanguard role throughout the early stages of the invasion and it has been extremely effective in its mission. The Night Lords are notorious for the cruelty of their assaults, for the predilection for inflicting wanton cruelty on all they encounter. We believe the enemy to have employed the Legion in this role with the hope that our civilian populations will be thrown into panic by the nature of the attacks, fearful that they will be next to suffer. To date, we have been successful in containing the effects of the Night Lords' raids, thanks at least in part to the nature of our plague containment protocols. Simply put, word has not spread because people have not spread.

If the Night Lords are being deployed as terror troops then the Alpha Legion are employed as infiltrators. This particular force is one that High Command has been briefed on by the Ordo Malleus, who considers their activities of dire import. For some time we have been receiving scattered reports of deadly attacks upon key facilities, though these often paled into seeming insignificance considering the overall scale of the invasion. However, our own analysis coupled with the information supplied by the Inquisition leads us to believe that these attacks represent the work of the Alpha Legion, and as such we must move to determine their exact purpose and objective. Initial findings indicate a number of rear echelon supply and communication facilities are amongst the targets hit, and I cannot help but wonder if their objective is to hinder movements of reinforcements into the region from further afield.

30

JOURNAL ENTRY:

All commands are now on high alert, for we have recently received the most alarming news since the beginning of the war. The *Planet Killer* has been sighted.

Few are aware of the existence of this monstrous ship for it was thought lost at the Battle of Kharlos II, during the Gothic Sector War. The origins of the vessel are unknown, but many amongst the Adepts of the Machine God attest that it could only have been fabricated within the Eye of Terror, so blasphemous to all the laws of nature is its construction. The ship served as the Despoiler's command vessel during the Gothic War, but it is its main armament that makes it the most feared ship in the galaxy.

The *Planet Killer's* main ordnance is the aptly named 'Armageddon gun', a monstrous weapon capable of directing a focussed blast of what is hypothesised to be the very stuff of the Warp. This weapon is capable of bringing about the destruction of worlds, for its blast is powerful enough to bore through the crust of any planet, causing catastrophic instability within the core, literally ripping it apart.

Naval experts are plotting worlds likely to be chosen as targets for the vessel's attentions. Intelligence gathered during the Gothic War indicate that the *Planet Killer* is a ponderous vessel, and the Armageddon gun takes a great deal of time to power up and exert its effect upon a world once it is functional. It would hold true then that the vessel is likely to be accompanied by a large fleet, which would be employed to subdue and distract our own Naval forces until the *Planet Killer* deploys. All available Naval assets have been tasked with locating such a flotilla, and system defence pickets are on high alert for any signs of one approaching our worlds.

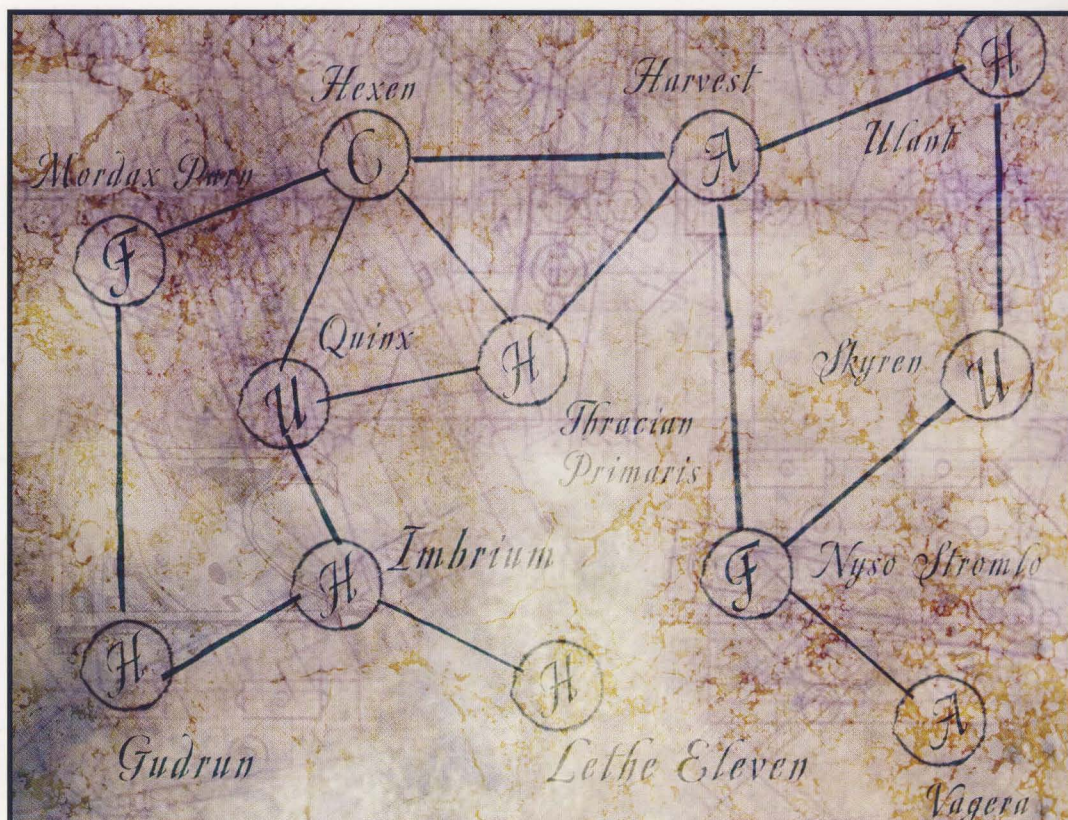
Senior Naval Strategos believe that, if the *Planet Killer* has returned, the Despoiler may utilise it against our outlying systems in the first instance. They believe this will be an attempt to incite panic in our forces (although panic is already rife in our command staff), causing us to divert our Naval battle groups to these distant systems in an effort to bring the *Planet Killer* to battle. This would be a grievous mistake, for it would leave our key worlds undefended and open to destruction. And so we are stuck between the daemon and the cold black void: should we allow outlying, low-value worlds to fall, then panic spreads, but if we oppose their destruction we surely invite ruin. I pray the *Planet Killer* is a myth.



CREED THE KILLER

HEED THE VOICE!

(Right) Maps of the Scarus, Scelus, Cadian, Belis Corona and Agripinaa Sectors, from the archives of the Illuminati Cartographicus.



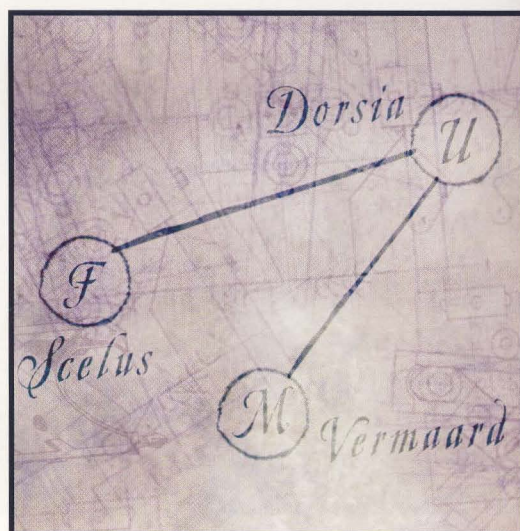
Naval High Command has today briefed the General Staff on the status of their units across the region. While the war goes badly upon the surface of many worlds – in particular Saint Josmane's Hope and Solar Mariatus – the war in space is being fought more on our own terms.

With regards to grand strategy however, we are presented with a quandary. Orbital space around many worlds is held firmly by the enemy, though even in these areas we are able to deploy new units, for no blockade fleet could hope to envelope an entire planet. Control of intra-system space is held more firmly by Imperial Navy forces, which are able to traverse system-wide space lanes with relative freedom, as the enemy's efforts are by necessity focussed on the worlds they are assaulting. Thus, Admiral Quarren has been able to conduct a highly mobile style of warfare, conducting hit and run attacks upon enemy lines of communication, withdrawing when reserves are deployed in reaction. The inter-system and inter-sector space lanes are being patrolled in force by Navy vessels, which have yet to face serious efforts to take them. We have been warned however, that although our forces can be said to control deep space, actually bringing enemy forces to battle in these areas is difficult in the extreme, for the enemy is far more intent upon avoiding our forces there than facing them. So, while our control of the space lanes is hardly threat-

ened, this is little help to the troops fighting the enemy on the ground, where the war will ultimately be decided.

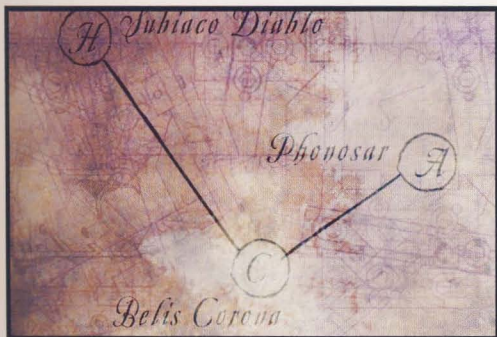
SCARUS SUB-SECTOR

The Scarus sub-sector is of vital importance to the Imperium, and its loss will not be countenanced by High Command. It's Hive worlds are amongst the most productive in the entire region and its fleet and guard units amongst the most respected and capable. To let the region fall would be to hand the enemy a vital prize, and Battle Fleet Scarus has been bolstered by a great number of reinforcements to ensure it prevails.



SCELUS SUB-SECTOR

Our control of this system has steadily increased throughout hostilities, as it appears the enemy's actions here are largely unfocused and ill-disciplined. Our greatest concern in this region are the actions of the renegades known as the 'Sons of Malice', a traitor Astartes unit thought to have been wiped-out some years ago. The feral world of Scelus itself has to date been the targets of their attacks, and intelligence suggests that the world's value to the traitors is symbolic only. Naval High Command rates the Vermaard system of greater value to us, and so three Naval battle groups have been deployed to defend it.

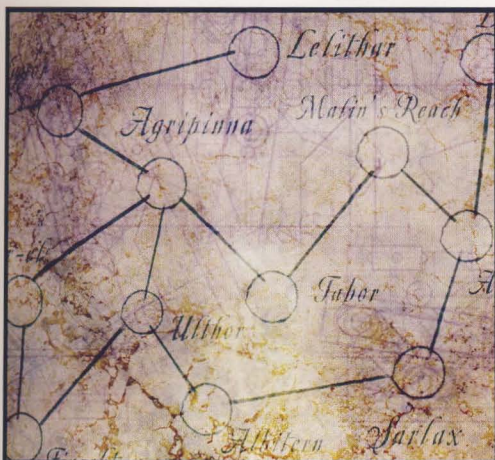


BELIS CORONA SUB-SECTOR

The situation in the Belis Corona sector is currently judged to be largely under control, and the Navy have been able to deliver sorely needed aid and reinforcements to the beleaguered forces on Subiaco Diablo. Reports indicate that the activities of the dreaded Plague Fleets appear to have lessened in the area, though Navy units maintain the highest degree of alert lest they should return.

AGRIPINAA SUB-SECTOR

In the initial stages of the Despoiler's invasion, a great deal of his efforts were directed towards contesting

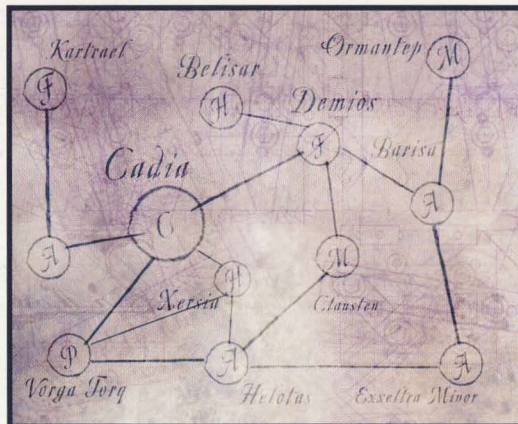


++DISPATCH PD/24/D2411++

Be advised: situation on Saint Josmane's Hope approaching untenable. Casualties unsustainable; reinforcements unavailable. Recommend activation of order C/44/22424/Epsilon. Advise immediately, before enemy overwhelms us.

++END TRANSMISSION++

control of the space lanes of the Agripinaa sector. The Imperial Navy has made great inroads into opposing the great number of enemy fleets active in the area, and further reinforcements have been despatched to increase our grip of the area. In the last few days however, enemy activity has increased noticeably, with Chaos fleets making assaults upon a wide variety of strategic targets in support of their ongoing ground offensives on Albiter, Bar-el and Dentor. With the hunt for the Planet Killer such a high priority, few vessels can be spared to aid the forces engaged in the defence of the sector's space lanes. None the less, the strategic situation across the sector is a positive one for the forces of the Emperor's Imperial Navy.



CADIAN SUB-SECTOR

The Cadian system has been the focus of the Despoiler's fleet actions, and our fortunes there change from day to day. The situation is highly fluid and our forces are stretched to exploit those victories they have won. Although our fleets cannot hope to oppose those of the enemy in and around orbital space, we are holding on to control of the inter-system space lanes. We cannot under any circumstances afford to let our guard waver here, for it is upon one of these routes that we hope to bring the Planet Killer to battle. To let it past is too terrible a failure to contemplate.

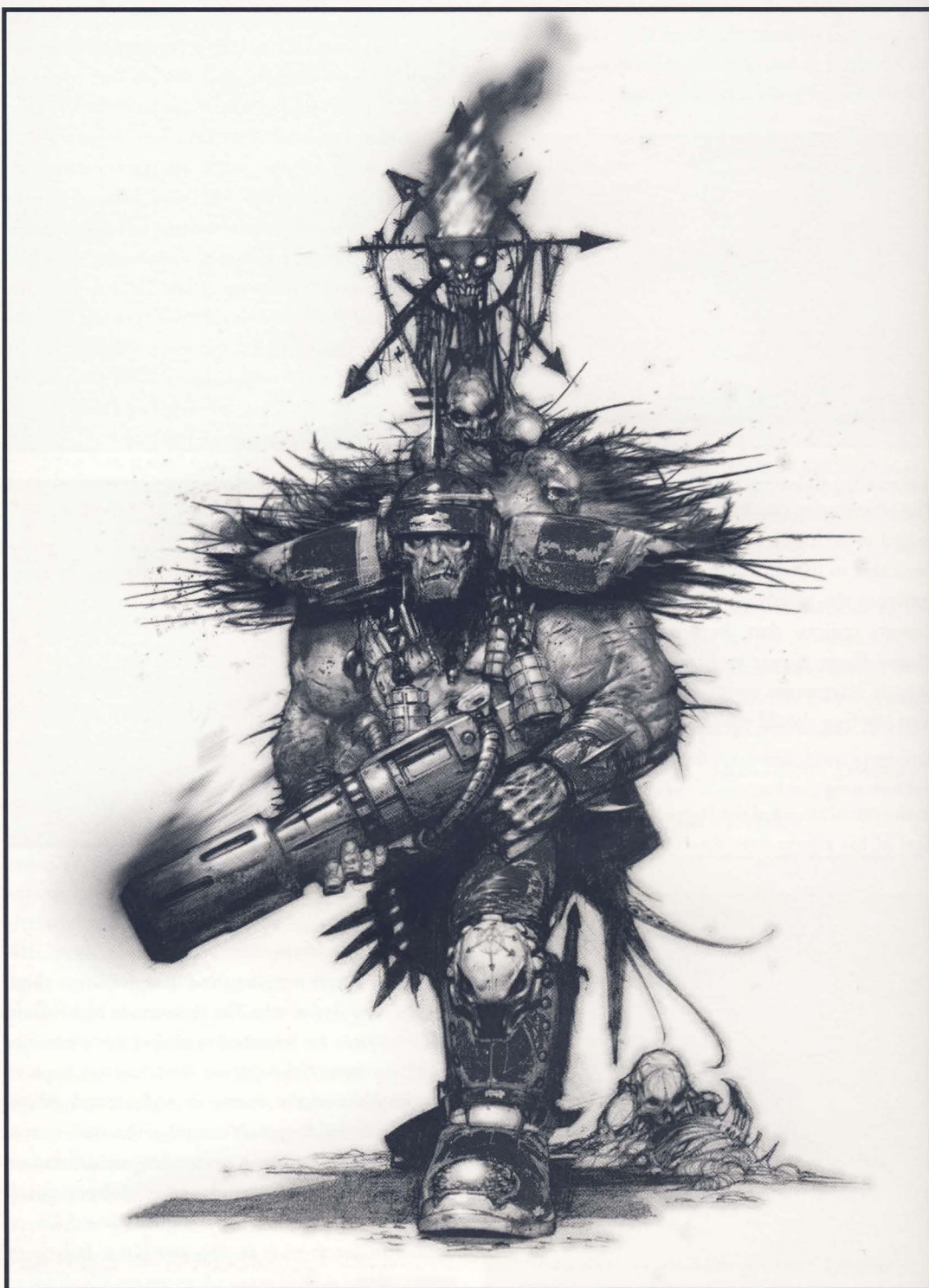
PHASE TWO: INVASION

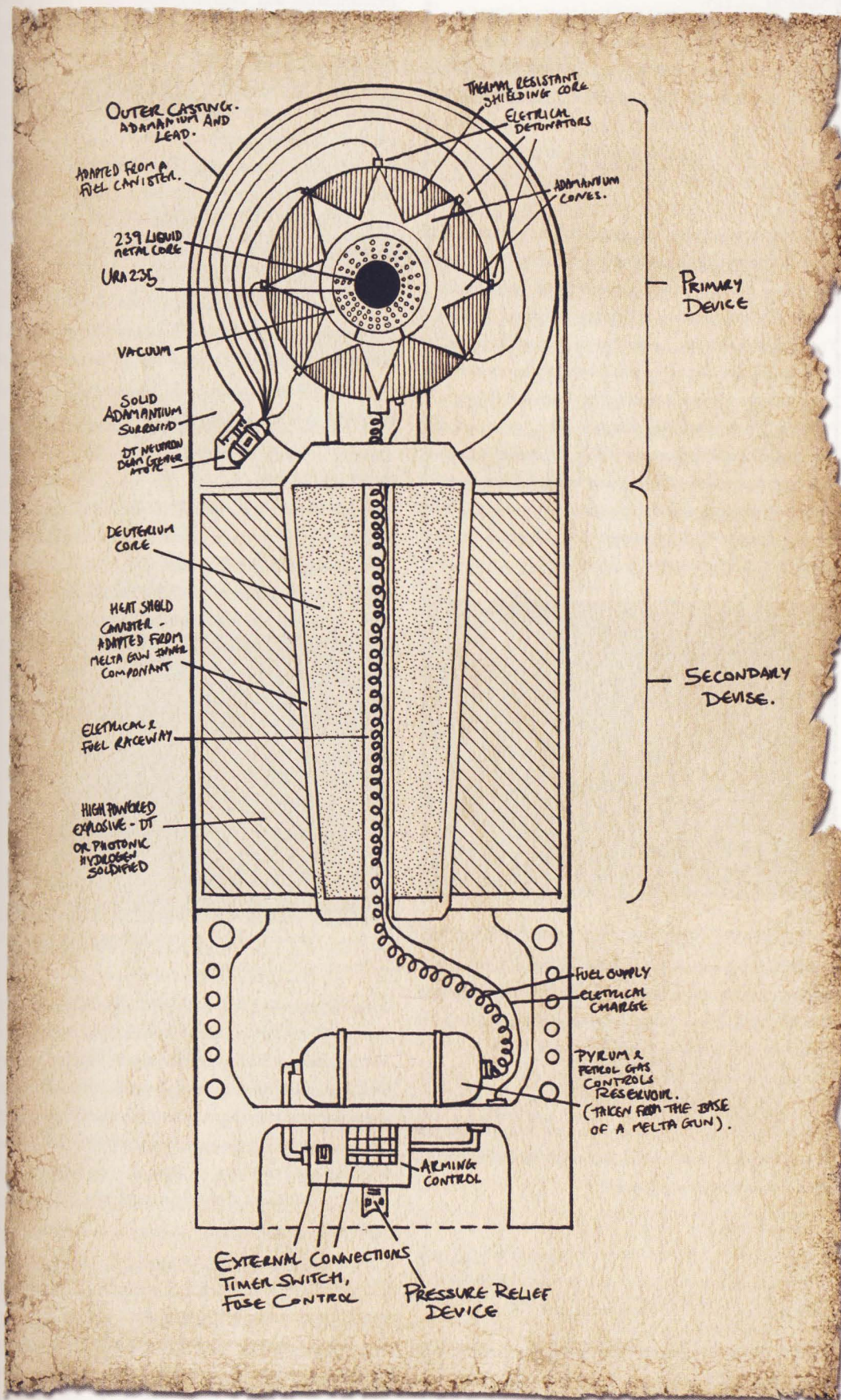
++DISPATCH PD/24/D2593++

Imperial Adeptus Arbites conducting routine searches have uncovered plans and materials for smashing security on St Josmane's Hope, along with lists of prisoners worth recruiting to the cause of the enemy. Hundreds of arrests have been made, primarily among members of the Corrective

Rehabilitation Movement. This supposedly charitable organisation had portrayed itself as being committed to giving the criminal classes a last chance to serve the Emperor and atone for their sins. Forewarned, we plan to smash this treacherous organisation before it can put its plans into effect.

(Right) Artist's rendition of an enemy trooper, issued to frontline commands.





(Left) Schematic of improvised ordnance uncovered during Arbites raids on the Corrective Rehabilitation Movement.

PHASE TWO: INVASION

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Following a week of disastrous events upon the penal world of Saint Josmane's Hope, the Lord Castellan has issued an order the likes of which I never believed I would be required to enact.

The world of Saint Josmane's Hope is to be destroyed.

The order was issued in closed session at 22:20 local time: late last night. Present at the meeting were representatives from all major arms and services operating in the Cadian system, including the Lord Marshall, Procurator General, Lord Provost and Comptroller Majoris of the Departamento Munitorum, representatives of the Commissariat, the Imperial Navy, the Adeptus Mechanicus, the Adeptus Ministorum and the Adeptus Terra. Furthermore, Lord Grimnar attended, having returned from his actions against the traitors of the Alpha Legion, as did two agents of the Holy Orders of the Emperor's Inquisition. I was present in my capacity as senior general staff officer.

(Right) Pict capture of the remains on St Josemane's Hope, now nothing more than an asteroid field.



The meeting began with my appreciation of the strategic situation in the Cadian system. Our enemy was assaulting every world in the system with unprecedented fury, with Solar Mariatus faring particularly badly. In my opinion, Saint Josmane's Hope – which was all but lost to us – was being used as a staging point for Chaos forces. Should it fall entirely from our control it would soon be used in this role, so that the flow of enemy forces and material into the system would become an unstoppable tide.

Recapturing the world was, I concluded, a fool's errand. Creed proposed its destruction. Though none in the united council took such a proposition lightly, the approval to proceed was unanimous.

And so the business of the murder of a world was debated. Of the options open to us, each in turn was discussed at length, and each in turn was rejected.

Exterminatus was beyond our resources in the time available to us; the agents of the Inquisition confirmed this and said that their ships that carried such weapons were many weeks distant. Grimnar too confirmed that none of the available vessels of his fleet carried cyclonic torpedoes, and neither did any Astartes ship within range. The Navy put forward the plan of instigating a massive nova cannon bombardment of the world, in the hope of causing a degree of tectonic instability, but all available intelligence suggested that the enemy fleets blockading Saint Josmane's Hope's orbital space were too strong. The bombardment vessels would not survive to launch a single shell, let alone the hundred or more required to complete the task.

It was this last suggestion though that set in motion the train of thought that led to the eventual plan for the destruction of the world. The representative of the Adeptus Mechanicus, Adept Gaul, expounded the notion of creating the tectonic instability in another manner. Overloading the generatorium grid of its main prison complex could pierce the world's crust, causing the meltdown to 'sink' through the outer crust and into its mantle. Should the meltdown be triggered in the correct manner, fatal tectonic movement could be triggered, thus causing the crust, followed by the mantle, to tear itself apart.

The drawback was that such an objective would need to be completed by a team of operatives on the ground, for it could not be attempted remotely. These operatives would need to be highly skilled, and they would need to be infiltrated directly into the heart of the Chaos-ridden main prison complex. I doubted such a party could be assembled in time, until the Inquisition took a hand.

In short order, the team was assembled, and given the moniker 'Strike Force Herald'. It was an unlikely mix, including Marines of the Space Wolves, Howling Griffons, Subjugators and Iron Knights Chapters, three squads from three different Imperial Guard regiments, a cultist-assassin, five techpriests and a number of additional personnel I cannot even begin to categorise, in addition to the unnamed pair of Inquisitors themselves.

This small force was assembled in under an hour, and has now left for Saint Josmane's Hope. Twenty-four hours before it is due to achieve its objective, the evacuation order shall be issued to those few forces we still command there. I pray they get out in time, although I doubt all will.

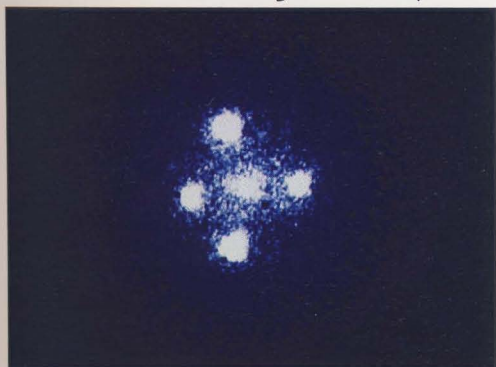
JOURNAL ENTRY:

We have just this hour received confirmation that Strike Force Herald has made planet fall upon Saint Josmane's Hope. The evacuation order is given. The Emperor Protects.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

It is done. May the Emperor forgive us, it is done. Our plan was successful and Saint Josmane's Hope is no more. Of the heroism enacted to make it so we may never know, for none of Strike Force Herald have returned to Cadia.

Following the issue of the evacuation order, our forces upon the planet began a fighting withdrawal worthy of the greatest of commanders. Truly, I have never heard or read of such heroism as was displayed during the desperate rearguard actions of that day. Regiments laid down their lives so that entire armies could escape to their transports. Even as those transports departed, men stood their ground at the overrun landing areas and fought to the death rather than board the escape vessels, so determined were they that their comrades should live to fight another day.



At 23:57 Cadian standard, the plasma grid was overloaded, causing exactly the effect Adept Gaul predicted it would, though to imagine it and to watch the picture captures are two entirely different prospects. The grid's meltdown caused the world's mantle to erupt as a volcano, the tectonic plates splitting as their mass shifted. Within hours, an ocean of magma was visible from space, centred upon the former site of the main penal colony. Hours later, the world's crust was no more, having been swallowed whole by the seas of lava and vaporised by self-sustaining plasma storms. Soon the world was convulsing, great gobbets of plasma and magma arcing into space before freezing in the cold of vacuum and crashing back down to earth. These impacts stirred the ruins of the world still further, and Saint Josmane's Hope literally disintegrated as our troop ships fled for safety.

```
++AUGUR SIGMA ENGAGED 23.50++
++TRIGGER = ALL FREQUENCY VOX NET,
PRIORITY CRIMSON++
++AUTH EPSILON GAMMA 12++
++OVERRIDE GUARDNET++
++OVERRIDE NAVAL STS RELAY++
++INTERRUPT ASTARTES...PENDING...
...PENDING...INTERRUPT CONFIRMED++
++BROAD SPECTRUM ENERGY SPIKE
DETECTED - PROXIMA SCALE 1,283++
++COORDINATES RECEIVED - PENAL
ALPHA, GENERATORUM CONTROL++
++INCOMING VOX...RELAY TO MAIN BANK
TRANSCRIBER...
++VOX TRANSCRIBE FOLLOWS...
22:55: 'THIS IS SAINT JOSMANE'S (STATIC)
TO ALL IMPERIAL FORCES. REPEAT, THIS IS
SAINT JOSMANE'S HOPE TO (STATIC) IMPE-
RIAL FORCES. IF YOU CAN READ (STATIC),
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, IF YOU'RE ON (STA-
TIC) SURFACE OR IN ORBIT. GET OUT. GET
OUT NOW.'
++VOX TRANSCRIBE ENDS++
++AUGUR SEVEN TRIGGER ACTIVATE++
++READING ENERGY SPIKE...PROCESS-
ING...ESTIMATE SEISMIC EVENT GREATER
THAN PROXIMA SCALE 50,000++
++FILTER ENGAGED++
++FILTER OVERLOADED++
++SELF-REPAIR FAILURE++
++SYSTEM EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN
ACTIVATED++
++AUGUR OFFLINE++
```

(Far left) Adeptus
Mechanicus scan of the
destruction of St Josmane's
Hope.

Even now, our fleets scour the newly created debris field for survivors. The enemy lick their wounds and we are granted a brief respite to gather our forces.

I pray we were right, for the destruction we have wrought upon Saint Josmane's Hope is all too similar to that caused by the *Planet Killer* upon our own systems.

I know we are right, for, as the proverb says, 'In the battle for survival, there can be no onlookers'. Perhaps survival is one step closer thanks to our actions this day.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

With every world in the Sectors Oculus now embroiled in a war that has already claimed countless billions of lives, a new and unexpected faction has taken a hand in events. The ever-elusive ships of the eldar have been

PHASE TWO: INVASION

sighted by the crew of Imperial Navy vessels, and by troopers on the ground across at least a dozen sectors.

In the depths of interstellar space, these ships have reportedly intervened in battles between the Imperial Navy and the Chaos invaders, on occasion providing aid to Imperial ships and allowing them time to escape when overwhelmed, but at other times attacking them without provocation. Other, darker eldar prey on the lesser worlds of the Cadian sector and have even taken slaves on the feral world of Medusa. It is even rumoured that a legendary eldar faction referred to by our Ordo Xenos allies as 'Harlequins' have been sighted on the battlefields of Agripinaa and Scelus. As ever with the mercurial xenos, their motivations are as alien as they are unpredictable.

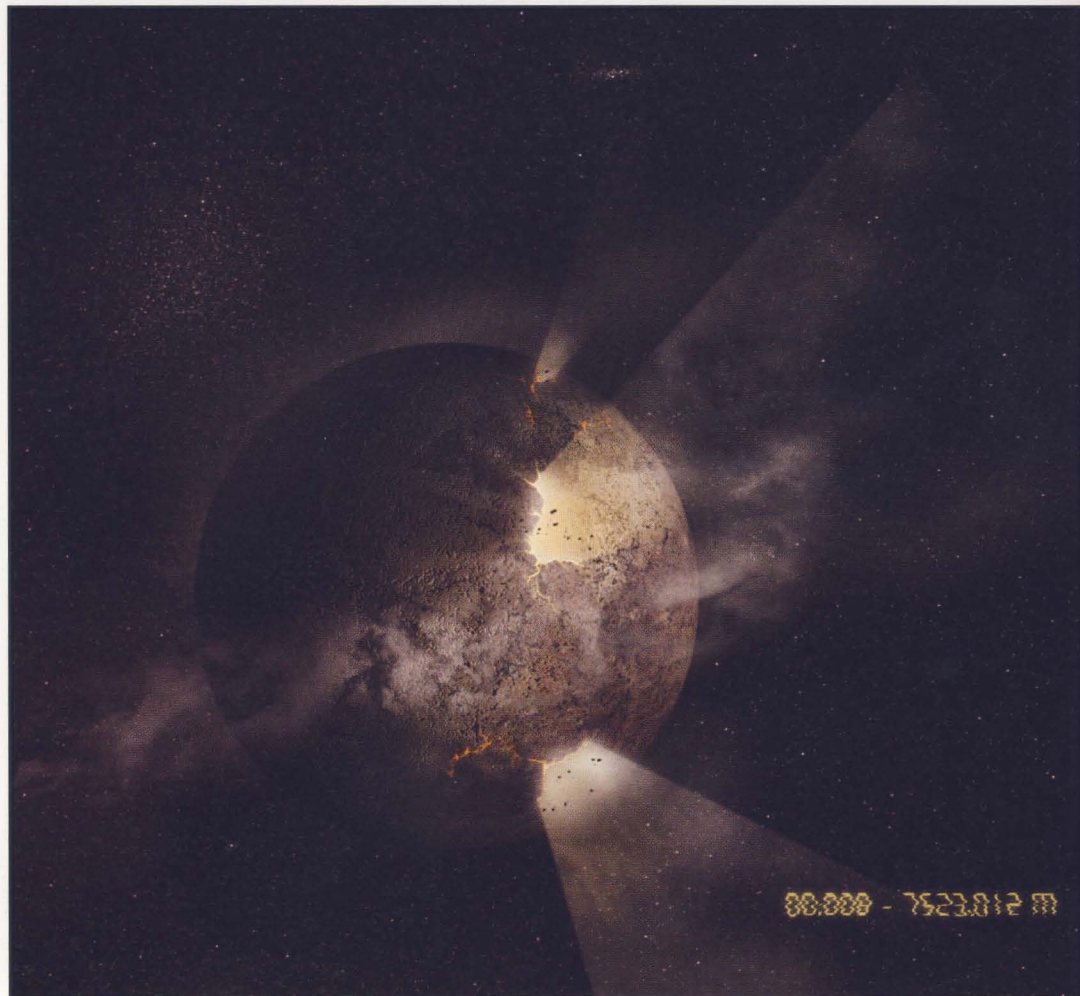
We have long been aware that the eldar of the Ulthwé craftworld maintain a strong presence in the vicinity of the Eye. Though little is known of their ways, it is widely believed that they ultimately work towards the downfall of the Great Enemy. This opinion has been reinforced by the appearance of small

numbers of black-clad eldar turning the tide of battle in crucial battle zones before disappearing once more into the ether.

The eldar have been sighted upon the worlds of the Cadian Gate as well. The Black Guardians of Ulthwé have taken a hand in a number of battles, appearing unexpectedly and without any warning upon the surface of planets thought distant from any eldar activity. Upon Belis Corona, eldar Strike Forces have freed Imperial Navy ground crews from the Chaos legions closing in on them. Although there are reports from the Cadian system of the eldar falling upon themselves in fits of madness, and from the Agripinaa sector of their attacking the warriors of the Ultramarines Honour Company, and also of their ghost-ships harbouring fiendish beasts of the Warp.

We view these aliens with extreme mistrust, yet despite this, and though the motives of the eldar remain unknown, many within our upper echelons pray that their actions tip the balance in this, humanity's darkest hour in many thousands of years.

(Right) Pict capture as St Josmane's Hope breaks apart and dies.



PHASE TWO: INVASION



JOURNAL ENTRY:

The entire galaxy, it seems, is going insane. I have spent the day in conference with a representative of the Ordo Xenos called Inquisitor Goreden, who informs me that an alien race, who he called the 'necrontyr' are active in the Sentinel Worlds. Over the course of my career I have had mercifully few contacts with any xenos creatures, and have certainly never heard of or encountered this one. He would furnish me with few details, and beyond those facts I require to combat them, I have no desire whatsoever to learn more.

Goreden did tell me that he suspects these xenos to have been present upon the Sentinel worlds for many years, even centuries, hinting they have laid dormant in some manner of stasis. How an entire race could slumber under our noses I have no idea, but now they have awoken we must do all in our power to combat them. Goreden believes that the necrontyr are in some way reacting against the activities of the Despoiler, and expounded at length his theory that the necrontyr are in some manner the very antithesis of the Warp, and are stirred into activity by its waxing power.

In practical terms, this means that we can expect the newly awakened xenos to oppose the forces of Chaos. However, this does not mean that we can or should treat them as allies, even in the loosest sense. This race, Goreden warned, are anathema to us — they are death incarnate to our entire species.

I have enacted Creed's orders in this regard. Our forces are to stay clear of those of this race, and to allow them to engage the forces of Chaos wherever it is their

intention to do so. However, our armies must not, under any circumstances, render aid to these xenos, even if to do so would be to the detriment of the invaders. We will tolerate their presence in our space so long as expedience dictates. They may be the enemy of our enemy, but that does not make them our friend.

Further to Inquisitor Goreden warnings regarding the necrontyr, he briefed me on a number of other factions. As reported earlier, the eldar are once again active in and around the Sectors Oculus. Inquisitorial forces are attempting to ascertain their intentions, for their actions appear contrary and mercurial — one moment actively aiding our forces, the next slaughtering them. Having once in my career actually met an eldar, I hold no illusion that they fight for anyone other than themselves, and will proceed with planning accordingly.

The orks it appears are increasingly active in the Scarus sector. Inquisitor Goreden believes the xenos there have been building up to an invasion for some time, lurking in the unexplored depths of wilderness space and launching their attack with a low cunning few would expect of these barbarous aliens.

Lastly, the Inquisitor warned me to be alert for seemingly incongruous reports of alien infiltrations in the Subiaco Diablo area, particularly attacks coming up from below the galactic plane. He would not expound further on this, but insisted I inform him should any such attacks materialise.

I left my meeting with Goreden imbued with a sense of righteous indignation. If every damned creature in the galaxy is ranged against us, we shall take them all with us if we fall.

This is the long-range patrol vessel *Wrote for Luck* hailing all Imperial forces in the Void Worlds region. Repeat: this is the *Wrote for Luck* to all Imperial vessels within range.

Our squadron has just witnessed an unidentified ship of apparent xenos manufacture break orbit from TX-2144/c1.

The vessel is of capital scale, and accompanied by numerous smaller escort-sized ships. Am transmitting telemetry and preparing to track. *Wrote for Luck* out.

Last transmission of the Falchion class escort vessel *Wrote for Luck*.

(Far left) Grainy pict capture of necrontyr warrior construct, Sentinel Worlds.



(Above) Parchments containing popular sayings and thoughts for the day, to raise moral and spread good advice among the citizens and fighters of the campaign.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Truly we face an enemy whose deceit is without limits. Erebus, a war leader (called a 'Dark Apostle') of the Word Bearers Traitor Legion has risen in the Malin's Reach system and his forces are causing great damage to our efforts there. This enemy is of a particularly insidious nature, as he styles himself a prophet of the Ruinous Powers, seeking to convert as much as to slaughter.

This Erebus has spread his corruption far and wide, and in so doing has manipulated our allies of the Ultramarine Honour Company into an attack upon the world of Thasia, the fourth planet in the Malin's Reach system. The company hoped to draw Erebus to battle within the dark, methane shrouded groves of the world, but found that the Dark Apostle had instead drawn them into a trap. The Word Bearers were far from Thasia by the time the Ultramarines arrived, who instead found a force of eldar waiting for them at the site of one of the xenos planet-bound Warp transit portals.

Upon making planet fall, Captain Echion, the leader of the company, ordered his force to make ready for battle, but not to launch an assault upon the xenos immediately. He had been advised by my command that the eldar have on occasion aided our forces, and though he knew well the duplicity of these xenos, he nonetheless afforded them the opportunity to retire without the need for bloodshed.

But, unfortunately for us all, the malicious xenos were of a mind for war, and launched an unprovoked attack upon Echion's force. The battle that ensued was a prolonged and vicious one, with running combats being fought through the dark, vitrified forests. Death would come by stealth for both sides, and both sustained terrible levels of casualties. In time, Echion ordered his diminished force to regroup at its

drop-zone for one last assault upon the duplicitous foe, but in doing so, found the enemy's positions abandoned. Upon coming to the eldar portal, his librarian, Lestus of the Sons of Guilliman, advised him that the xenos had fled through their 'webway', and were working to seal the portal from afar.

Judging that many of his brethren had been slain for little gain, Echion washed his hands of the eldar, determining never to give them the benefit of the doubt again. Were that the only ill consequence of this sorry saga, things would have been bad enough, but it later transpired that Erebus had not only drawn two of his foes to waste precious time and lives fighting each other, but he had made use of the distraction to launch an attack elsewhere: upon the primary world of the Malin's Reach system.

For three days and three nights the world of Malin's Reach was subjected to hell. First, localized and focussed Warp storms flared into being around the planet, shrouding its three moons behind a sickly violet haze. Waking nightmares wracked the population, as the stuff of insanity was made real. Many took their own lives, so terrible were their visions, and many more roamed the streets enacting wanton acts of carnage and madness. On the third night the traitors' landing craft streaked from the tortured sky, securing a drop-zone scant kilometres from the Ministorum district of the world's capital of Ruskin City.

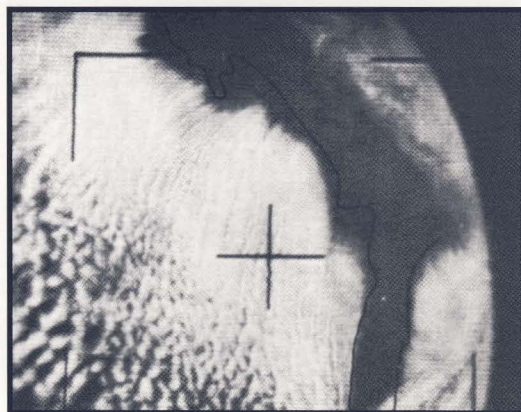
Debilitated by the ordeal of many hours of psychic torture, the defenders of Malin's Reach could offer scant resistance in the face of the assault. Falling upon Ruskin Cathedral, the Word Bearers committed such blasphemies that I am forbidden from recounting it, even here, where only highly ranked individuals will ever read of it. How they accomplished it I do not know, nor have any desire to understand, but they summoned forth the very creatures of the Warp into the ruined cathedral, before returning to their craft and leaving. Our own forces stationed on Malin's Reach were sorely pressed for many days containing the incursion, and the beasts unleashed there were only banished when Captain Echion's force arrived in orbit and obliterated the entire site with an orbital bombardment. It was, he recounted, the only way to be sure.

A great many of our own forces were lost in that barrage, along with the greater part of the city. I sincerely believe that it was a merciful end for them. Such is the price of protecting the Emperor's domains from the servants of the Ruinous Powers.



(Above) Standard ration biscuit, affectionately named 'trench-filler' by the troops. It contains high levels of protein, gluten, sugar and carbohydrates.

(Right) Orbital pict of Warp storms scouring the surface of Malin's Reach



LORD EREBUS



(Left) Artist's impression of Lord Erebus, Dark Apostle of the Words Bearers Traitor Legion.

My Lord,

I bring dire news of our former compatriot Van Hel. You will be aware that the learned Inquisitor has for many decades walked the path of the Horusian, convinced that the power of his will would overcome the pitfalls which we alone know of. He was wrong.

He is lost to us, and our efforts must now be directed to taking him down. To this end, I have ordered the recall of Brother Captain Arkus from his mission on Kasr Holn, and Canoness Preceptor Resetta has allowed us the services of a commander of her Sororitas. I regret that the reassignment of these forces will adversely affect the war effort elsewhere, but I am sure you will concur that only the enemy can benefit should Van Hel be allowed to practice his diabolical doctrines freely.

I have attached a document my cell retrieved from Van Hel's retreat. I entreat you to study it, but not to attempt to decode it. It is clear from only a cursory reading that Van Hel has dabbled in forces entirely anathema to his calling, and cannot, under any circumstances, be allowed to live.

I remain as ever, your obedient servant,

Inquisitor Franco





(Left) The heretical daubings of Van Hel seal his guilt.

(Right) High-density radio-scan of a Chaos vessel entering orbit around one of the Sentinel Worlds. It was blasted out of the sky by brave Imperial pilots.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

The good Inquisitor Goreden has chosen to take me into his confidence, for this evening he paid me a visit, accompanied by one Interrogator Ferdan Kieras, a pupil of Inquisitor Czevak.

I have never before encountered this Czevak, but it is clear to me now he is a man of vital importance to all we hold dear.

Goreden and Kieras presented me with a transcript of a remote scrying (see opposite page), a ritual enacted by those sanctioned to use the psyker's art for the good of Mankind. The contents of this scrying shocked me, for though I have served with sanctioned psykers in the past, I have never felt entirely at ease with their skills.

The transcription told of a man, a savant in the service of Interrogator Kieras, seeking knowledge of a foe of his order, a sorcerer in the service of the Despoiler known as Ahriman of the Thousand Sons. I could scarcely believe the end of the transcript, but the good Inquisitor assures me it is accurate. This Ahriman penetrated the savant's cell, using some dark art only a servant of the Ruinous Powers could utilise, and murdered him.

Upon discovering this deed, Kieras determined that Ahriman, the long-standing nemesis of Czevak, had finally caught up with his master and, acting upon his standing orders, contacted Goreden.

At this point I was trusted with knowledge few will ever share, and I can only recount a summary of it here. Czevak is a unique individual, for he is trusted by the xenos eldar with access to their other realm, the

webway. I have heard they utilise the webway to travel from one end of the galaxy to the other. Deep within the webway, the eldar have constructed a repository of the darkest secrets of the universe. Referred to by Goreden and Kieras as the 'Black Library', this archive contains the accumulated knowledge of eons, and Czevak, rarest amongst men, is trusted by the eldar to partake of its secrets, the better to combat the great enemy.

But Ahriman covets the knowledge held within the Black Library, for with it he hopes to challenge the powers of the Warp and gain mastery over Chaos. He wishes to become as a god, and through Czevak aims to penetrate to the heart of the webway and breach the secrets held within.

And this is where I come into the story. Though I am but a man, I can set in motion the vast engine of war that is the Emperor's army, and so do all that I can to aid the Inquisition in any way I can. Though he could merely have ordered it, the Inquisitor Lord Goreden has requested that I aid him through my own free will, and aid him I will. So far he has requested the aid of the 34th Gudronite Rifles, and this I happily grant. But it is clear that over the course of the defence of our realms, I shall be required to divert troops from the main, obvious war effort, to aid the Inquisitor in his hunt for Ahriman. Though many may lay down their lives to aid the hunt, never knowing the service they do Mankind, the burden of ordering their sacrifice must lie with me, for I have been judged worthy of such a duty, and will enact it, no matter what the cost.

(Opposite page) Transcript of the remote scrying which reveals fresh dangers.

PHASE TWO: INVASION

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT: COMMIT TO REMOTE PROGNOST/37/tt/F
[CROSSFILE 673/#DM*]

Knowing he has little time, the savant hurriedly taps his thirty-seven digit identifier into the ancient cogitator. He glances at the door, ensuring it is locked, and turns back to the machine as the green light of its brass framed pict slate dances across his anxious, hooded face.

Accessing archives that fewer than a score of men in the Imperium could penetrate, the savant begins his search, pulling together scraps of information, reports, logs, anything linked to the subject of his inquiry: Inquisitor Czevak.

He soon finds that all mention of Czevak has been purged from every Imperial database, but he has not spent over five centuries hunting down blasphemers and traitors without learning something of the nature of information. Where the arrogant believe they can purge the networks of the taint of a name, the enlightened know that information strives to be free, as a virus seeks to replicate. So it is that a scrap of data will lurk in the darkest corners of ancient logic stacks. Sometimes they will become physically isolated from the vast logistariums of the Imperium as they are archived in hard form, only to be retrieved by a servitor or acolyte many years later, and unknowingly released once more to spread throughout the networks.

'The information is here,' mutters the savant with another nervous glance at the door. 'I know it's here.'

Lines of text speed across the pict slate, the savant's implanted cyber-engrams absorb it all at a rate no normal human could hope to match. His hands dance across the keys as he isolates certain scraps of information, and requests entry to deeper and deeper levels of the archives. Soon he can see a picture emerging. First comes a transcript of Inquisitor Czevak's address to the Conclave of Har, in which he claimed to have penetrated the secrets of the legendary Black Library. Next, an oblique reference to The Stern Codex, a body of knowledge Czevak clearly has an interest in. So too, it seemed do others, and soon the Savant senses a taint within the information; like a sheen of oil on the surface of a stream, an almost indiscernible hint that something is not as it appears.

Pausing briefly and cracking his knuckles before him, the Savant takes a deep breath, glancing around before connecting a multi-stranded, purity-sealed cable from the socket at his temple, to the cogitator. Closing his eyes, he mutters a prayer to the Emperor before diving head long into the polluted logister stream.

The candles in the chamber flicker, though no breeze penetrates its sealed environs.

Fully immersed in the omniscient logister network, the savant is almost overwhelmed by the weight of ten millennia of raw, unprocessed information. The data he seeks comes to him in a flood now, events and names filling his consciousness: The Black Library, the xenos eldar, the Traitor Legions. He halts the flow when he discovers mention of an incident on the outskirts of the Eye of Terror ten millennia past. Movements and incidents in the vicinity of the Eye come into sharp focus; a pattern is emerging.

Diving deeper, he uncovers another vein that causes him to halt in shock; the arch traitor, Rbaddon the Despoiler, a beast, who had caused the Imperium untold grief since he first led his Black Crusades from the Eye of Terror ten millennia past. Movements and incidents in the vicinity of the Eye come into sharp focus; a pattern is emerging.

The candles are extinguished, though the savant is too deeply immersed to pay them any heed.

Czevak is a key; he is possessed of knowledge that another craves. One searches for him, a schemer, a manipulator, and a servant of the Changer of the Ways. With a start the savant sees the eldar webway, through which the Black Library may be entered, and he sees that one is working to gain entry to it. This manipulator stands at the side of Rbaddon the Despoiler, assisting him in some great, terrible endeavour, though he does so purely to further his own ends.

In a moment of clarity, the savant sees the ruin of the Imperium in sharp relief. He unplugs the cord, becoming suddenly aware of the cold, dark chill that has entered the chamber.

'The Gate; the Despoiler. The Fields of Unbelief; the Traveller. The Hidden Way; the Manipulator. Oh God Emperor, protect us...' he whispers.

Behind him, a multihued shimmer appears in the air, resolving itself into a massively armoured, humanoid form.

The savant turns, and meets the gaze of the figure, knowing instantly that this is the being whose machinations he glimpsed behind the tainted data flow.

Ahriman.

The figure raises an archaic pistol, and a single shot fills the chamber with its thunderous report. The savant slams back against the cogitator, the bolt round passing straight through his frail body, exploding the machine in a shower of sparks. Every surface of the small room runs with the savant's life-blood as his failing eyes take in the sight of the intruder standing over him. Before he dies, he hears a distant, echoing whisper as the figure dissolves, and is gone.

'The way is indeed hidden old man, but no longer to me.'





(Left) Devotional painting entitled 'The Last Man Out', by the noted war artist Samuel Basch.

PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY

JOURNAL ENTRY:

With the number of attacks by eldar raiders increasing alarmingly, the command council has ordered a number of forces tasked with the specific objective of challenging them. It appears that it is the so-called 'kabalite' eldar, the darker kin of the xenos that reside on the craftworlds, and though we hold the entire race in due contempt, it is this faction which we have decided to target in an effort to teach them the lesson that the might of the Imperium, although slow to react, is impossible to avoid forever.

Aid came from an unexpected quarter. The Dark Angels Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes, so long having pursued its own ends throughout the war, has extended its full cooperation in this effort.

Acting upon intelligence passed to High Command by the Ordo Xenos, and relayed by us to Commander Azrael of the Dark Angels, four entire companies of the Chapter, and three of a number of its Successor Chapters — collectively known as Taskforce Shadowguard — staged upon the outlying mining world of Ex Lucan VII. There the composite force lay in wait within the hollow mountains of the Kyran Range, every vehicle powered down lest their energy signatures betray the force's presence to enemy augurs. Sure enough, a substantial force of eldar raiders arrived upon the world, appearing out of nowhere through the portals the race makes such deviant use of.

The xenos wasted no time in launching an attack against the scattered mining settlements of the Kyran Range, splitting their forces to attack each simultaneously.

As the first moves of the raids were made, Taskforce Shadowguard revealed itself, powering up its engines of war and flooding out of its hiding place. The first force of eldar raiders was taken entirely by surprise, and by all

reports stood not a chance against the righteous fury of the Dark Angels and their allies. Exploiting the momentum of the victory, Shadowguard executed a manoeuvre that smashed aside a second xenos force, and swept up the gorge to the enemy's staging point, their eldritch portal, their only means of escape.

The eldar threw themselves upon the hastily organised battle lines set around the portal. But the attacks were made piecemeal, and not once did the xenos coordinate their assault in order to force a breakthrough.

The result was an outstanding victory for the forces of order, and what we pray will prove a devastating massacre for the eldar. With luck, we have taught these deviant xenos a lesson that they will not forget in a hurry.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Our war against the kabalite eldar, though nothing more than a distraction from the maelstrom of the Despoiler's invasion, is going well. Another force of raiders has been defeated, on this occasion by the Relictors Chapter of Adeptus Astartes upon the world of Xersia.

The Relictors have not acknowledged the authority of Grimnar's council, and appear to have launched this attack upon their own initiative, not as a response to command council directives. We believe the xenos's slave raids simply attracted the Chapter's attentions, and the raiders certainly paid for their crime.

Xersia is a well-garrisoned system, and so many of our forces witnessed the Relictors' assault. It is said that the Chapter slaughtered three entire kabals, purging the system and hunting down every last xenos before slaying him without mercy. The Chapter's officers are said to bear arms of terrifying potency: swords able to spew cleansing flame, and axes that suck the essence of the Emperor's foes, leaving nothing but a dried husk behind. So do they march under arcane banners and icons of tangible power, the followers of their enemies scattering before them. Truly, the Relictors deliver the Emperor's Wrath wherever they pass.

A number of officers on the ground at Xersia attempted to contact the Relictors' Chapter master, Commander Artekus Bardane. But the Chapter refused to acknowledge their communications.

Subsequent to this action, the Relictors have appeared at Cadia. Upon their arrival in-system,



(Above) Pict capture from a retreating Imperial vessel of another victim of the Planet Killer.

++BEGIN INTERCEPT++

[FRAGMENT MISSING] Morten's Quay has been infected by [FRAGMENT MISSING] cult known as the Cult of the Red Cyclops. They [FRAGMENT MISSING] Ninth Hour they will be joined by the Feathered God incarnate and his [FRAGMENT MISSING] will pour forth from the Labyrinth Dimension. That hour [FRAGMENT MISSING]. Send help. I beg [FRAGMENT MISSING] help.

++INTERCEPT BLOCKED++



(Left) A glimpse of the webway, perhaps a scrap from the Black Library itself.

Grimnar issued orders that the Chapter should reinforce Cadia itself. Bardane refused to acknowledge the Great Wolf's orders, and his fleet has now departed the system, headed, by best estimates, for Fremas. Grimnar is furious that the Relictors have refused to submit to his command. He has refused to speak to even his most senior officers for some days

now. In a fit of rage, he has ordered his most elite scouts to track down the Relictors and discover their mission. This grizzled band of veteran Space Wolves departed mere hours ago.

I do not pretend to fathom the minds of such men as the Astartes. I only thank the Emperor that they fight for the Imperium.

TO: LIEUTENANT GENERAL ALEXIS GRAIL
FROM: INTERROGATOR KIERAS, CLEARANCE OMICRON
SUBJECT: AHRIMAN OF THE THOUSAND SONS
PRIORITY: HIGH
RECEIVED: CADIA
MESSAGE FORMAT: ASTROPATHIC
ASTROPATHIC DUCT: ORTENES

The dark sorceries of Ahriman and his Thousand Sons are twisting the thin tunnels of the webway over the Chinchare sub-sector, ripping vast lesions

in the fabric of the webway dimension and rendering entire sections unusable. Several Strike Forces of Ulthwé eldar are plunged into limbo, or worse, into the Warp itself. I have penetrated the Sentinel Worlds and have found indications that Ahriman has breached the webway through a portal somewhere amongst the Void Worlds. I am preparing to track him there. I ask that you dispatch three regiments to Ortenes, and one to Setvan, to launch diversionary attacks as soon as is possible. Upon receiving your confirmation that their attacks have begun, I shall make my move.

May the Emperor watch over you, Kieras.

NOTE — HERE FOLLOWS THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE FIFTH DEGREE AUTO-SEANCE ENACTED BY ADEPT AMARDUS. MAY THE EMPEROR WATCH OVER HIS IMMORTAL SOUL.

The Guardians are desperate; [UNDISCERNIBLE] masters of runes cast further the webs of fate. The [UNDISCERNIBLE] see the way before them, and walk between worlds. The Master of the Black Place calls to them, and Ulthwé [UNDISCERNIBLE]. The Master places the runes of closing [UNDISCERNIBLE] the palm of each [UNDISCERNIBLE], and to each is entrusted the way. A portal is [UNDISCERNIBLE] opened, where none should stand, and the Guardians pass through the halls of eternity. But eternity for them is [UNDISCERNIBLE], and the [UNDISCERNIBLE] granted egress to the worlds of men. They bring blood to flow. They carry fire to burn. They whisper the words of ages past, and the scions of darkness are cast to the abyss. [UNDISCERNIBLE] Rejoice for their acts, for they bring joy to our hearts. They bring [UNDISCERNIBLE].

(Below) Pict of the ruins of a city after the depravations of Chaos had reduced it to ruin. The evacuation of citizens was ordered and relatively calm, in the face of the most ferocious foe.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

The Imperial Navy, for long weeks forced to fight a desperate holding action against the seemingly endless waves of Chaos vessels, has been reinforced. A fleet the size of which has not been seen since the end of the Gothic War eight centuries ago has arrived from Cypria Mundi, and is now staging at Belis Corona in preparation for a massive counter-push into the Cadian Gate.

The reinforcements have been split into independent battle groups, each tasked with bolstering the defences in a specific sector. The regions around the Eye of Terror encompass many millions of cubic light years, and only by the concentrated application of resources in those areas in most desperate need can the Imperial Navy hope to make inroads and slow, stall and eventually repel the Chaos fleets plaguing the region.

If the Imperial Navy can gain the upper hand in the conflict, it is hoped the enemy will soon find his forces cut off from aid and reinforcement. Although ork mercenaries have reportedly joined the fray and the eldar fleets have mysteriously been drawn away, the iron fist of the Imperium is slowly being brought to bear. Ancient defence laser batteries upon Demios Binary combined with programs of orbital

bombardment on Laurentix and Setvan are set to harass the servants of Chaos wherever they are to be found. Admiral Quarren himself has succeeded time and time again in defeating Chaos fleets many times the size of his own, allowing reinforcements to enter the fray around the fortress worlds. A massive influx of reinforcements in the Scelus sector has penetrated the Chaos blockade of ships and minefields, and in the Belis Corona system the entirety of Battlefleet Gothic has stormed into the fray. Infernal mines sewn across the battlefield accounted for only a few of their number, and now the fleet has the opportunity to avenge the losses it suffered in the Gothic War at the hands of the Despoiler's own fleet. If the relentless momentum of the invasion can be slowed for just a short time, then the defenders on the ground will have a real chance of victory.

The Imperial Navy has gambled all on this sector-wide retaliation and should it fail, Battlefleet Obscurus will be so weakened that only the redeployment of fleets across the whole Imperium will hold any hope of holding back the Despoiler's invasion.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The activities of the xenos eldar, those of the craft-worlds at least, have suddenly ceased. For weeks now the ships of this race have been active, in most instances hitting the enemy, though on occasion attacking our own for no discernable reason. Now, it is as if they have simply disappeared.

Entire staffs of savants, seers and Strategos have been assigned with the task of tracing the activities and objectives of the eldar, and we are in constant communication with the Ordo Xenos in this regard. Long-range scouts have caught brief glimpses of movement, but as we have learned, when the eldar wish to remain hidden, there is little even our most skilled crews can do to find them.

On the subject of xenos, the orkoids are putting intolerable pressure on a number of worlds in the Scarus sector, notably Lethe 11 and Mordax Prime. The Magos Biologus of the Adeptus Mechanicus believe these foul creatures to be working alongside the Despoiler to further their own ends, though they do not consider to be any alliance as such. More likely the orks are taking advantage of an opportunity granted by the Despoiler, through which both find an advantage and we suffer because of it.

PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY

TRANSMITTED: NAVAL FLAGSHIP
GATHALAMOR

RECEIVED: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

DESTINATION: LORD CASTELLAN CREED

TELEPATHIC DUCT: 793/DEMIO
BINARY

REF: IN/SO/414J/SITREP.

My dear friend Ursarkar,

I have to report that my force is now at sufficient strength to begin the counter-offensive. This day has been long in coming, but finally the hour is upon us. Myself, my officers and my men are chomping at the bit to deliver such a kick up the invaders backsides that they're sent yowling back to the cosmic cesspit that puked them up in the first place.

I have planned a series of feints, designed to distract and confuse the enemy whilst the main body of my fleet penetrates the Hyperios Veil. Once the enemy is committed by the false pushes, I plan to withdraw the raiders to draw more enemies across the Desemera Gulf, where his lines of communication will be stretched to the limit. There, my approach shrouded by the celestial phenomena raging within the veil, I shall fall upon them with the largest fleet to muster in Segmentum Obscurus for centuries.

I almost pity the bastards.

Yours, Quarren, Gathalamor, Demios Binary

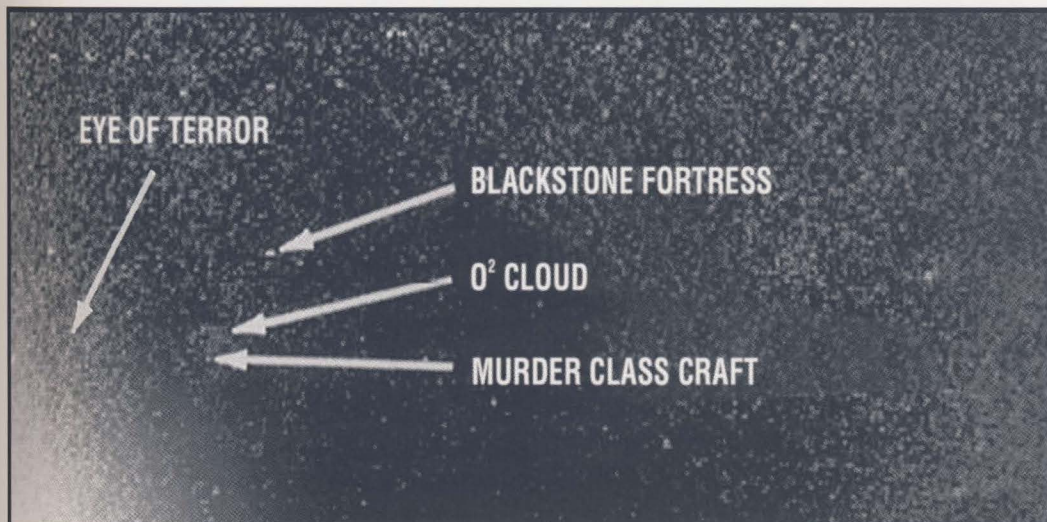
The situation on these worlds is grim indeed. In particular, Mordax Prime cannot be allowed to fall into xenos hands, for it is a Forge World of prodigious output and its loss would hit us. More to the point, we dread to imagine just what monstrosities the orks may turn the production lines to creating, but know it can only mean desecration of all that the Machine Adepts hold sacred.

At present, fifteen Guard army groups and five legions of Mechanicus troops hold Mordax Prime, yet clearly such a large body of men is insufficient to stem the green tide engulfing the Forge World. I am drawing up plans to send a further thirty-five to forty regiments, drawn from the regional reserve.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Progress has been made on the matter of the sudden disappearance of the eldar fleets. One of our scout vessels managed to record traces of eldar activity in system XT90304/G, an empty system in the wilderness space thirty light years to the galactic north east of Belis Corona. On the outskirts of the system, he picked up readings of a vessel of prodigious size, executing a single pict-capture before being detected.

The pict-capture confirms just why the eldar have redirected their efforts. The forces of the Despoiler are in possession of a Blackstone Fortress, an engine of destruction not seen since the end of the Gothic War. As if the presence of the *Planet Killer* in the Sectors Oculus were not dire enough a threat, now we must contend with this. If the notoriously aloof and uncaring eldar are prepared to throw their all into combating the Blackstones, the threat must be terrible indeed.



(Left) Deep-space multi-ether scan showing suspected location of Black Fortress.

PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY

JOURNAL ENTRY:

With the situation on the ground in the Cadian Sector increasingly tenuous, the Lord Castellan has ordered the redeployment of troops defending the Scelus Sector to bolster the defence here. Scelus is firmly under our control following the efforts of Lord Marshall Attica and a number of Astartes forces. The problem has been the blockade which the enemy fleets have put up around Scelus itself, in order to prevent our forces from redeploying.

To expedite the breakout, I planned a push upon enemy forces at Vermaard, hoping that vessels of the blockade fleet would be drawn off to oppose it. Simultaneously, a battle group upon the surface of the mining world launched a sudden frontal assault upon enemy positions, with the intention that the blockade fleet would be forced to ferry ground troops from Scelus to Vermaard, thus complicating their departure.

This ruse was successful. In fact, it was too successful, reminding us that the reactions of the servants of the Ruinous Powers can never be anticipated.

The Vermaard assault was a complete success in that it caught the enemy unawares. It appears the hordes of cultists forming the Chaos presence upon Vermaard were engaged in some form of mass ritual, the culmination of which was disrupted by our attack. The cultists were caught unprepared to defend their positions and were cut down with negligible losses to our own forces. As anticipated, the enemy began to move troops upon the surface of Scelus up to orbit, and their battle fleets waited for the transfer to be completed before setting off for Vermaard.

At this point, Lord Marshall Attica made his breakout, leading 40% of his force to their own transport ships and running the gauntlet of the remainder of the blockade fleet. Though a number of his troop transport ships did not make it through the enemy lines, a great many did; enough, in fact, to render that portion of the operation a success. Indeed, we could not possibly have hoped that such a great number of Chaos vessels would be pulled out of the line, for had more remained; Attica's breakout would have been far less of a success than it proved.

However, three days later the enemy reinforcements reached Vermaard. So great were the number of troops ferried there that our forces stood next to no chance against them. History may never recount the sacrifices made at Vermaard so that Attica's force could reach Cadia. It appears we stirred up a veritable storm by

interrupting the mass ritual there, but I cannot help but wonder what evil may have transpired had we not.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

These last few days have seen a dramatic increase in Warp storm activity. Though such celestial phenomena are commonplace throughout the Sectors Oculus, in particular those sectors in contact with Warp storms *Germanicus* and *Hippocrene*, given our enemy's propensity for dark sorceries I cannot help but conclude that such an increase is far from coincidental.

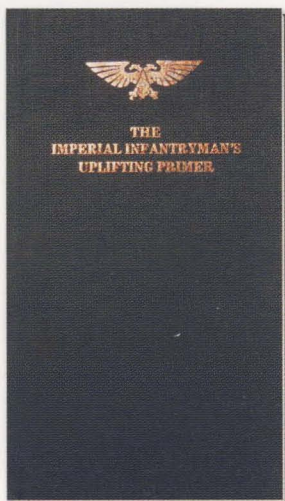
The potential for disruption to our efforts is huge. In the first instance, astropathic communication is rendered unpredictable at best, and completely unreliable at worst. Even an apparently minor storm surge can play havoc with communications. The effects of time distortion are amplified significantly, so that messages transmitted from even nearby worlds may not arrive for many weeks. On three occasions messages have been received that appear to refer to events that have not yet taken place, and I am told by the master adepts that such an effect is want to manifest during particularly disrupted storms. Unfortunately, such messages from the future are of no use to us, for we cannot trust that they are not the work of the enemy set to disrupt us still further, and the missives have been ordered sealed by the agents of the Ordo Malleus.

++DISPATCH 820/GF/54++

Be advised that battle group Sovsky successfully broke through enemy lines at Laurentix, as per mission statement of Operation Mortis Supra. Upon achieving upper atmosphere orbit, the bombard vessels *Son of Iacare* and *Basilica* achieved confirmed target locks from ground beacons and initiated a 45 second bombardment. A total of 22,000 tonnes of ordnance was released within the allotted fire mission window, 90% of which was standard pattern barrage bombs, the remainder melta torpedoes targeted at enemy Titans. Initial ground relayed reports estimate a total of 500,000 enemy casualties and only 50,000 friendlies. Two enemy Titans were confirmed destroyed, and a further 5 seriously damaged. Five hours after the bombardment the fleet withdrew, and are now en route for resupply at Belis Corona. The mission is judged a 100% success.

++DISPATCH ENDS++

(Below) The Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer. Standard issue to all Guardsmen, it contains much useful information on rules, regulations and how to fight and survive under fire.



PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY

And it is not only our communications that are threatened by these increasingly volatile storms. Our shipping too is put in grave peril. A vessel caught in a Warp storm is likely to find itself in a dire predicament indeed. At best, the crew and passengers will be subjected to terrible waking nightmares, and should these be inflicted upon the passengers of a troops transport ship, those warriors suffering such a psychic assault may be all but useless as fighters upon their arrival at their destination. At worst, the vessel may be delayed for many years, or lost entirely.

My duties as senior staff officer are made difficult to say the least by these conditions. If I am unable to

receive accurate information from our commands, then I am unable to form an accurate appreciation of the progress of the war. The task of coordinating fleets and armies across such a vast segment of space is a demanding one at the best of times, but in situations such as these it approaches the impossible. It is fortunate indeed that the commanders on the ground are as competent and capable of independent action as they are, for ever has it been the way of war in the Imperium that a battle group dispatched to a warzone has had to consider itself isolated and independent. However, with the forces of disorder apparently so well organised and coordinated, our own efforts must be focussed at the segmentum level, or we shall surely fail.

(Left) Warp storms ravage the worlds of the Sectors Oculus, even attacking the surface of some planets.



(Opposite page) Sketch of the famed stained glass window in the Emperor's Chapel on Cadia. Many witnesses claim that the Emperor began weeping tears through the glass, as the Eye of Chaos formed behind him. This reputedly happened when the first Chaos drop-ships entered the upper atmosphere.



(Above) The cities of the Imperium burn, but the spirit of the servants of the Emperor will burn forever with vengeance!

JOURNAL ENTRY:

One of my many duties as senior staff officer of Cadian High Command is the evaluation and dissemination of critical battlefield intelligence to our commands. I have recently issued an appreciation of the war machine known as the 'Defiler'.

This dread engine of war is not unknown to us, but its appearances in battle have proved mercifully rare since its discovery over six centuries ago. With the Despoiler's invasion bringing the forces of death and anarchy to every world in the Sectors Oculus, these machines are suddenly everywhere, accompanying every Traitor Astartes unit and a great many of the hordes of traitors and mutants that assail us.

In appearance, the Defiler is an armoured behemoth, its means of locomotion are four piston-driven legs sheathed in armoured cowling. A further two appendages are affixed to its front section, ending in monstrous, crab-like claws, large enough to tear apart a battle tank or crush a man. Atop its base unit is mounted a turret, from the front of which juts a large bore cannon protected by a mantlet crafted into a leering bestial face. Upon either flank of its turret is to be seen a weapon mount, which may sport any number of configurations. The machine is covered on every facing with spikes, chains and barbs, and decorated with blasphemous icons no sane man of the Emperor can bear to look upon.

But most terrifying of all the Defiler's characteristics is the fact that it is not crewed by mortal men. What fearsome anima guides this engine of destruction I do not know, but every report I have viewed leads me to this conclusion. That the twisted artificers of our enemy have perhaps corrupted a Sacred Machine Spirit is a possibility. Other possibilities strike me too. But I will not utter them.

Many post-action reports have spoken of this war machine, and it has deservedly become an object of fear

'Rightly is this monstrous creation known as a Defiler, for its blasphemous existence churns the ground where it walks and leaves nothing alive where once was verdant nature. Wherever one of these accursed machines has trod, corruption and rankness are all that remain.'

HERIACLIS FREOM — INQUISITORIAL SAVANT

(Overleaf) Schematic of a Chaos Defiler, with author's notes on its construction and design.

amongst front line units. Witness accounts speak of the Defiler as a rampaging thing of frenzied destruction, moving and acting more like a deranged creature than a vehicle of steel. Reportedly, it hungers for battle, and attacks with an almost tangible desire to rend men asunder. Few can be expected to stand in the face of such a beast, but somehow, we must discern a way to combat it.

In the course of compiling my appreciation, I came across an individual who I believed knew far more than any other on the subject of the Defiler. Magos Decimar, an adept of the Machine God, agreed to provide me with at least a portion of the information he had gathered during the course of his studies.

I received three communications from the Magos, each detailing certain technical details our forces would benefit from on the field of battle. He confirmed what many reports had already stated: that the Defiler is able to ignore hits that would ordinarily stop a battle tank dead in its tracks, though he stopped short of detailing exactly why this may be. The most useful information provided by the Magos was the location of a number of weak points upon the beast, the successful targeting of which will at the least incapacitate it.

'It hit our lines like a stampeding carnosaur, burning and crushing everything around it. It killed Commissar Vaulant with one of its giant claws and the colonel a second later. I shot it, but it didn't care, it just kept on killing. Wherever it looked, death followed in a hail of bullets, a jet of fire, or the snap of its claws.'

SERGEANT YERNEK, 384TH JOURAN DRAGOONS

After the third communication from Magos Decimar, I received no more word from him, and assumed that the course of his duties had led him to turn his attentions to more pressing duties.

I heard no more on the matter for several weeks, and kept the file open while I continued with my other duties. Then, an agent of the Ordo Malleus, one Inquisitor Rothenburg, paid me a visit.

Rothenburg warned me against the dissemination of any intelligence regarding the Defiler. He warned me in no uncertain terms. I can only obey.

TEARS OF THE EMPEROR



CHAOS DEFILER

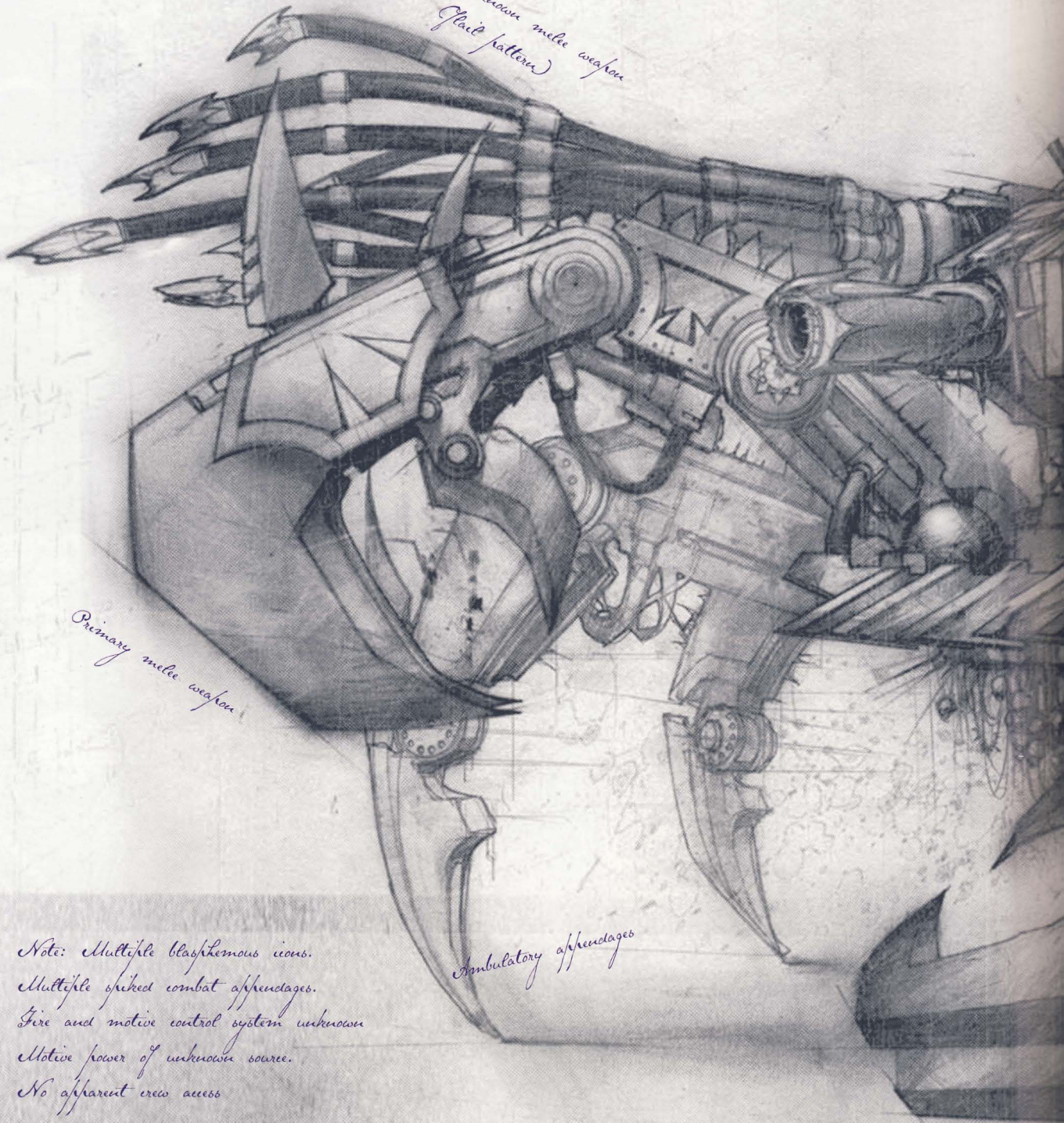
The Defiler, Bane of the Holy Omnibiah

*Unknown melee weapon
(flail pattern)*

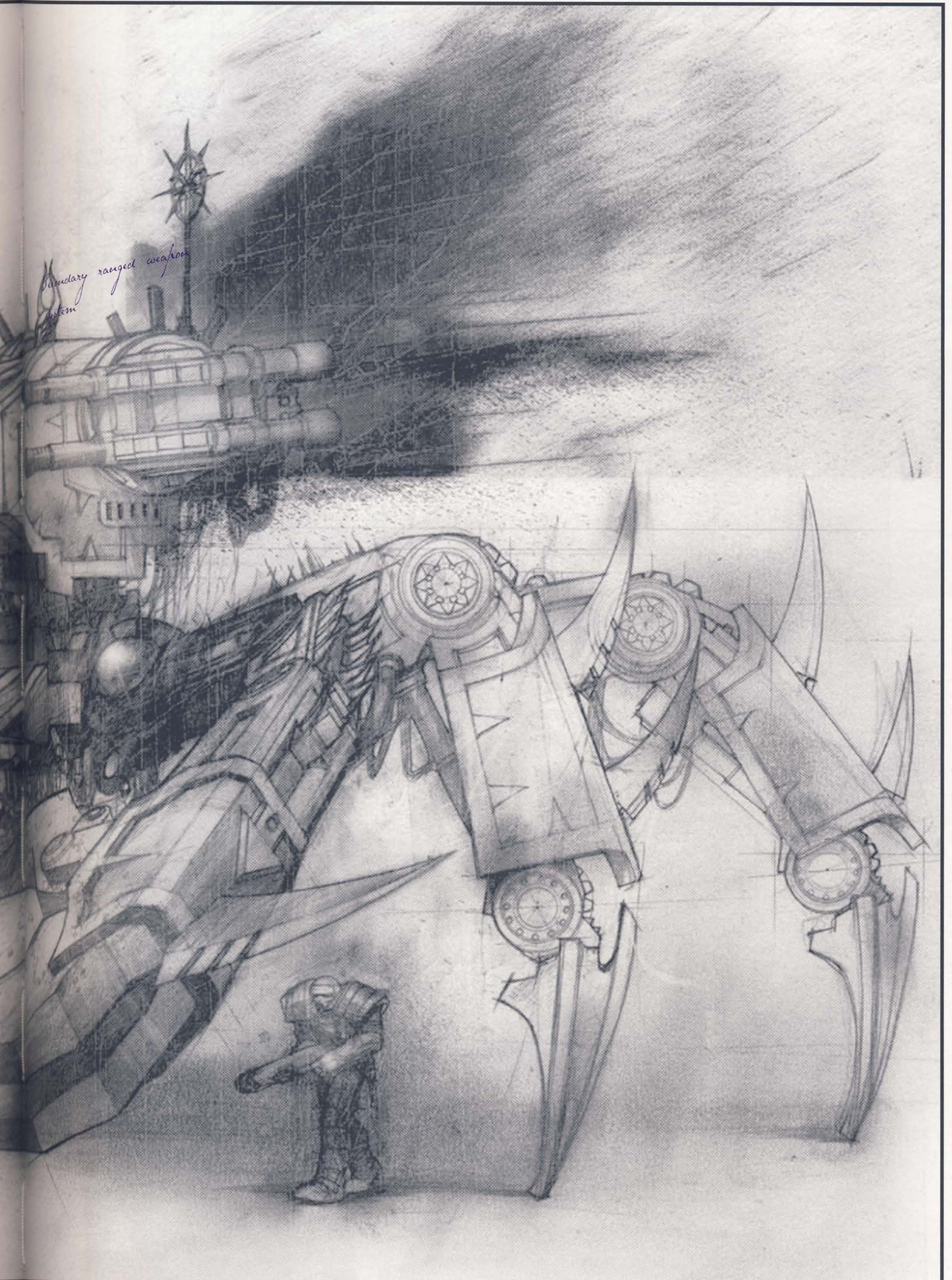
Primary melee weapon

Ambulatory appendages

*Note: Multiple blasphemous icons.
Multiple spiked combat appendages.
Fire and motive control system unknown.
Motive power of unknown source.
No apparent crew access.*



CHAOS DEFILER



JOURNAL ENTRY:

Last night I stood upon the ramparts of Kasr Holn and looked into the mouth of hell. The Eye, that ever-present reminder of the tangible power of the Great Enemy, flared and swelled to engulf the entire night sky. As it did so, a terrible wailing rose up from all around, ten thousand souls stirring from troubled sleep and crying out like helpless foundlings.

At the chime of my vox-link, I hurried back to the command centre to be greeted by a scene reminiscent of the culmination of the final act of Van Fel's *Conflagration*. I was mobbed by a gaggle of junior staff officers, barely controlled panic evident in the babbled reports they spouted at me. It took a goodly while to assimilate the data, but in due course the awful significance in the flaring of the Oculus became clear to me.

The Despoiler has unleashed a new and calamitous phase in his invasion. One of his allies, the infamous iconoclast and blasphemer Erebus, Dark Apostle of the Word Bearers Traitor Legion, has unleashed the foulest of forbidden magicks upon the loyal subjects of the God Emperor of Mankind. Upon the world of Ibrium, that glistening jewel of the Ecclesiarchy, he has ordered the building of immense 'cathedrals' to the powers of the Warp. That these monstrosities exist upon such a world is profanity beyond words, but, according to these reports before me, they were constructed at the expense of a million souls; souls promised to the Emperor. Upon the completion of these dark

monuments, so I am informed, he ordered the ritual execution of every last innocent that still drew breath at the completion of their labours.

A million innocents! My mind can scarcely comprehend the depths of the evil done to us this day, yet the Dark Apostle's sins do not end at mass slaughter. The rites by which the peoples of Ibrium were sacrificed have drawn forth the full fury of the Empyrean, unleashing its anger upon the domains of Man. Now, seething Warp storms that threatened to cut us off entirely from outside aid wrack our space lanes, and the Eye throbs with malevolent purpose above our heads.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The sheer scope of the Dark Apostle's machinations is beginning to be made clear to us now. Astropathic communications from vessels caught in the flaring of the Oculus and at least three Warp storms in the immediate region lead us to conclude that Erebus intends to isolate our forces by making Warp-travel all but impossible to us. It would appear that, to a degree at least, he has succeeded, though by the grace of the Emperor we are still in contact with the majority of commands by way of Astropathic relay. Moving troops and material is another matter entirely.

For a time we were rendered completely blind and deaf as our astropaths endured the psychic feedback brought about by the turmoil in the Eye. Even those such as myself not touched with their 'gift' were wracked by the deepest feelings of despair and

(Right) The last moments of the *Saphrican Lady* as Warp Storm Baphomael swallows her.



PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY

TRANSMITTED: SOVEREIGN OF XERSIA; STATION KEEPING, CONDUIT OMEGA IV, SAINT PHONOS CORRIDOR

AUTHOR: REAR ADMIRAL FALKONBURG

SUBJECT: WARP STORM ACTIVITY IN THE SAINT PHONOS CORRIDOR, AGRIPINAA SECTOR.

It is with great regret that I must report the loss with all hands of the *Saphrican Lady*. The *Lady* was providing rearward cover as my fleet traversed the corridor to the Omega IV jump point, when a spur of Warp Storm Baphomael flared out directly towards us. Being the last vessel in the convoy, the *Lady* was caught in an X48-rated surge.

I swear that I have never, in my eight decades as master of this ship, seen such a thing. I will take the sight with me to my grave. The Warp storm reached out for the *Saphrican Lady* and pulled her to her doom, as if guided by some gargantuan, malevolent will. I cannot begin to describe the horror I felt as I listened to her last transmissions, helpless to intervene.

I attach a pict-capture of our last sighting of the *Lady*, recorded 7.2 seconds before she was taken from us.

I must report that prevailing stellar conditions have now reached a level where I am forced to withdraw my fleet beyond the Saint Phonos Corridor.

I respectfully await further orders.

Your ob't servant,

Rear Admiral Falkonburg

helplessness. For long hours we awaited word of the wider situation. All the while Creed prowled the command centre cursing the perfidiousness of our foe, even Kell's sage council unable to temper his wrath. Unwilling to allow such a malaise to afflict my staff, I ordered Pator Gorsovnik to lead a mass for the command centre staff. The blessings of the Emperor were upon us, and our doubts were lifted. Even Creed's mood lightened after the service.

Throughout the course of the day our isolation was slowly lifted as reports at first trickled, and then flooded in from all fronts. Most disturbing of all these communications was a transmission from a Planetary Defence Force Major upon the world of Tabor, whose

account of the last hours of his garrison makes for gruesome reading. If this report is to be believed, none other than Kharn, the so-called 'Betrayed', has fallen upon that world and shed the blood of its brave defenders in the name of his unspeakable patron.

Despite the arrival of this devil, our forces have made gains upon Tabor and across the Agripinaa Sector. Our position there is certainly far stronger than in recent weeks. If we can but contain this madman's rampage, the strategic situation in that region will be if not good, then at least acceptable.

++INTERCEPT LOGGED 05:02.01 CADIAN STANDARD++

++PSY-TRACK ENGAGED++

++SIGNAL AT 48%++

++TRANSCRIPT BEGINS++

05:02>Orbital track engaged, looks like we've got inbound. Dalk, you reading this? <FRAGMENT MISSING>

05:14>Confirmed we have enemy forces on incoming drop, ground zero estimated at 3 kilometres south-west of your position. Confirm? Damn it, I'm only reading positional.

05:48>Command? Command if you're reading this, I have visual on thirty plus, repeat, <FRAGMENT MISSING> plus enemy drop vessels. They are headed directly at Captain Dalk's position.

06:01>I've had a runner in from Captain Dalk's position. They're being overrun. He was incoherent <FRAGMENT MISSING> red power armour, chainaxes <FRAGMENT MISSING> at least half his company dead already. I'm sending Lt Seybek's platoon to <FRAGMENT MISSING> just hope they can help.

06:37> Malk's dead. Saybek's dead. They're <FRAGMENT MISSING> way. <FRAGMENT MISSING> my position is all but lost and I'm in danger of being pocketed. Having consulted with Commissar Nemin <FRAGMENT MISSING> die here. Command, if you're <FRAGMENT MISSING> this, pass it up the chain. We're facing a worse <FRAGMENT MISSING> than we have in weeks. He's <FRAGMENT MISSING> my soul to the Emperor.

++INTERCEPT ENDS++

(Below) Orbital pict taken of the defences of Kasr Partox. The whole area is lit by the fires of destruction from the advancing Chaos forces, and the reflection from the beams of energy unleashed by the Blackstone Fortress above. The Imperial retreat was in motion within hours of this pict being taken.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

The Warp storms grow more intense with each passing day, and our command and control capability is stretched to the limit. We have lost contact with entire worlds, armies and fleets, and must trust to increasingly compromised astropathic communications for each scrap of information we can garner.

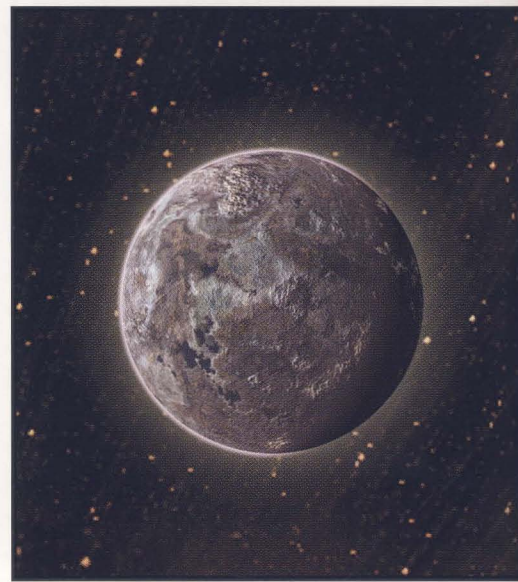
The feeling in the command centre is one verging on despair. Not for despair that the forces of the Great Enemy may overcome the Defenders of Cadia, for we are Men of Faith and defeat in this venture is anathema to us. Rather that the staff corps is made up of men and women trained and dedicated to command huge fronts, and many feel deep frustration that they are unable to execute their duties in the face of the affects of the enemy's blasphemous machinations. We thrive in times of adversity, but curse the witchery that befalls us.

Creed has requested the benedictors of the Ecclesiarchy bless our work, and to this end the command centre is now, so much more than ever, a site of prayer as much as command. Votive scripts flutter from every station, and sacred cherub-creatures wheel and dive in the air, sweet-smelling incense trailing from swinging censers.

Where previously storm and stress ruled supreme, now hush and sanctity encompasses all. Through the blessing of the Holy Mission, we go about our work that much closer to the Holy Body of the Emperor, and feel His benedictions bestowed upon us.

Though the enemy gained temporary advantage over our forces at Vermaard, we are now firmly in control at

Scelus. Though up to date intelligence is, as everywhere else, difficult to come by, a number of cross-substantiated Astropathic communications, each originating from a different Choir Chamber and routed through a different Astropathic relay, confirm that the situation there is positive. Creed has ordered a further 20 regiments from Scelus made ready for transit to other warzones, and this will be executed if and when the Warp storms ease.

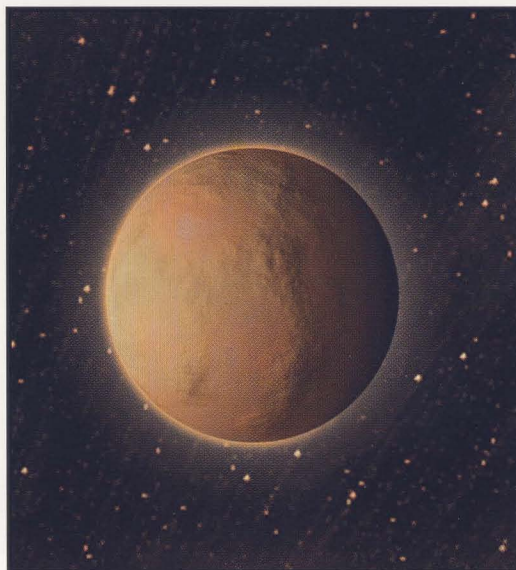


The entire sector of Scarus was silent to us for long days, until late last night when the ether was penetrated by a single message. Scarus fares ill, and the defenders beg that we dispatch reinforcements with all haste. Only Thracian Primaris stands before the tide of orkoid menace and Chaos filth, and with each day another world slips further from our grip. Of particular chagrin is that the orks have seemingly set their sights upon the Forge World of Mordax Prime, broadcasting their designs for the planet they refer to as 'MoreDakka Prime' on every channel. Were it not for the fact that Mordax Prime is the sovereign preserve of the Adeptus Mechanicus, I would seriously consider petitioning for Exterminatus before its vast resources fall to the enemy. The Ordo Xenos may still consider such recourse, and Emperor knows they have the authority to execute it, should even the Mechanicus try to obstruct them.

Being located somewhat nearer to Cadian High Command, we have had more contact with the defenders of Belis Corona than with many other warzones, though I am counselled by the Adepts of the Astropathicus against any assumption that such prosaic logic is applicable to the medium of the Immaterium. It appears that Belis is suffering at the hands of the enemy,

(Far right) Pict capture of factory planet Agripinaa.

(Right) Pict capture of Naval centre, Belis Corona.



++DISPATCH 3-W/23439++

Battle group Eclipse has halted the predations of an inbound dark eldar fleet. Despite being severely outmatched, we caused catastrophic damage on the weakling ships of the dark eldar, many giving their lives in the process. These xenos evidently employ some manner of cloaking device, for at first we believed them to be a previously unknown Chaos fleet. That we defeated this attack is cause for great celebration, but we must increase our vigilance tenfold against further such incursions.

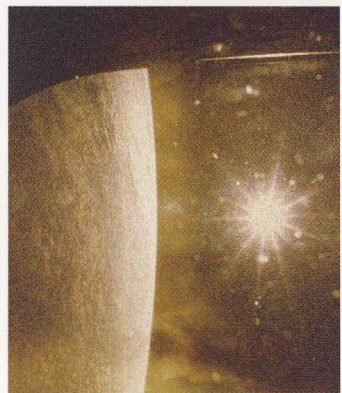
++END++

and even the Imperial Navy is having a hard time of it in the region. Plague afflicts Subiaco Diablo and reports have been received of an unidentified attacker engaging long range patrols from deep space, rather than the established Warp routes. If and when conditions improve, we plan to dispatch significant reinforcements to the area, and I have already identified thirty battle groups newly arrived to the Sectors Oculus that shall be deployed there as soon as is practical.

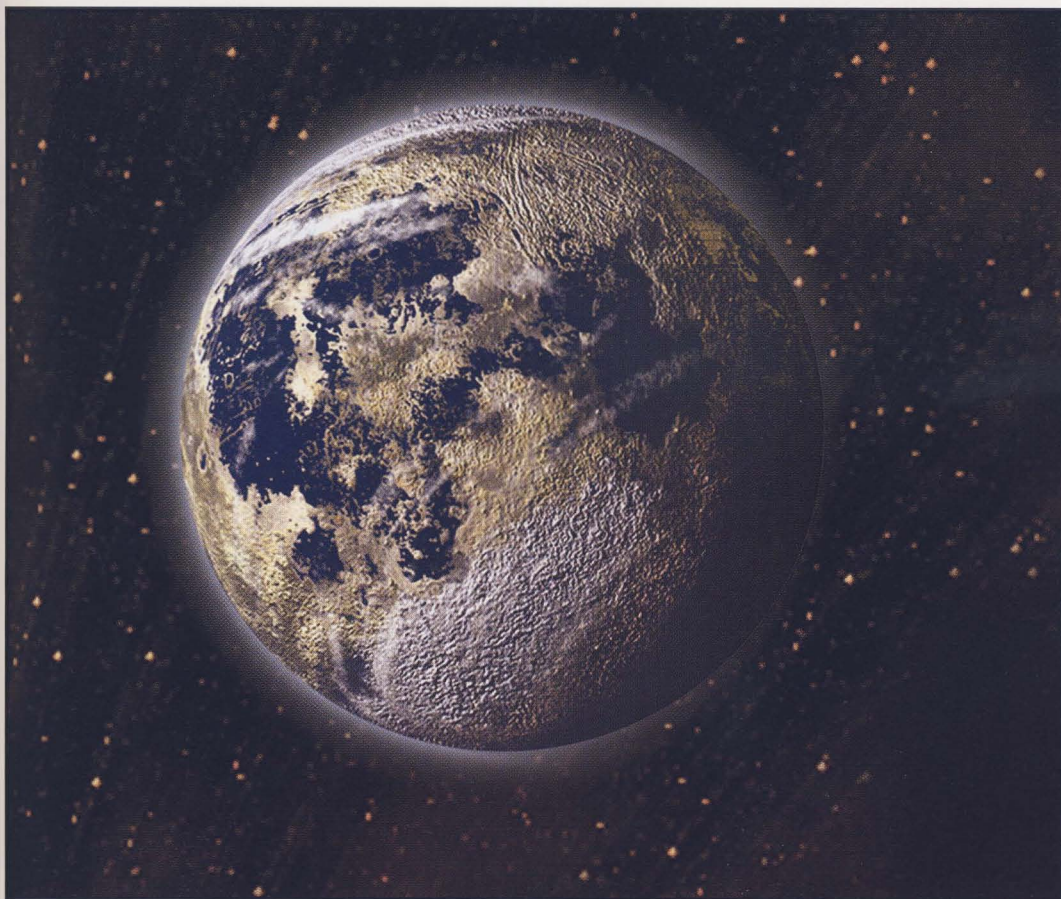
Contact with the commands of the Agripinaa sector is sporadic at best, and the picture we have compiled is a grim one indeed. We know the defence of Aurent goes well, but, it appears, every other planet it appears is hard pressed indeed. Estimates suggest that the region should in fact be capable of raising the reserves necessary for the defence of its worlds, yet I am forced to order the planning of significant troop movements into the area. Exactly what we send these troops into I have little knowledge of. I only pray they are sufficient.

Cadia these last weeks has rallied somewhat, and our forces have clawed back many areas lost to the forces of the Despoiler in the early stages of his invasion. News of our successes has been disseminated as far as possible given the state of communications, but the Commission for Morale Truth and the Office of Historical Revision has performed sterling work ensuring every Guardsman knows that he fights a war he can win, he must win, and he is winning. The road will undoubtedly be a long one, but the strategic situation in space and on the ground is a positive one for the blessed forces of the God Emperor of Mankind.

(Below) Pict capture taken from *The Grand Admiral* of the surface of Agripinaa as the Chaos forces plundered the planet.



(Left) Pict capture of Cadia, fortress world of the Imperium.





PHASE THREE: THE WAR IN THE WEBWAY



(Left) At the height of Abaddon's invasion, the Eye of Terror opens, and great storms of destruction are unleashed upon the domains of man.

PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

JOURNAL ENTRY:

I was awakened at 04.25 local time by an astropath, he was in quite a state of animation, and he bid me follow him. So accustomed have I become to dire news that I prepared for the worst. Another disaster needing my attentions, I thought. I dressed and followed the lad to the command centre.

The third watch was on duty, as I expected it to be, but I had also expected to be confronted by staff officers engaged upon facing another in a long line of crisis. To my surprise, all was calm, and every head in the place turned to me as I entered. A junior officer appeared at my side and indicated the master pict slate upon the main wall.

It took me a moment to decipher the information scrolling across it. It took me a moment more to look again. I was stunned. Battlefleet Solar, the home fleet of Blessed Sol had arrived. Early. Impossibly early.

I ordered the staffer to awaken the Lord Castellan.

Some hours later, I chaired a council of the United Command. Admiral Wesen, navigator liason to the Lord Castellan, gave his appreciation, couching the situation in terms such men as us might understand. The tides of the Warp, he explained, are twisting and unpredictable. Each navigator perceives them in a manner unique to himself, as a product of his own psyche and imagination. One might guide his ship as an insect piercing dense morning dew, another as a walker treading a path in a deep, dark forest. Still others may have the strength to perceive the Warp as the

roiling maelstrom it truly is. Such men, Wesen explained, are few and far between, and are truly the greatest of the Navigator houses. For much of a journey, malicious eyes pierce the gloom to either side of the path, and dread howls fill the night. At times the beast behind the eyes may leap on to the path ahead, or reach out from the canopy with slashing claws and gibbering maw. At such a time, the Navigator may have no recourse but to choose a different path, perhaps one previously untrodden. At times, the situation may be so drastic that the Navigator dives from the path entirely, risking all to pierce the forest in the desperate hope that he may intersect another path before the beasts of the dark converge.

For any but the most proficient of Navigators to attempt such a manoeuvre is, Wesen explained, to invite death and damnation, not just for the Navigator, but for every soul aboard his vessel. Battlefleet Solar, we were told, is navigated by such men as these, and when the ships of the relief force came under attack within the depths of the Empyrean, the lead vessel performed the desperate manoeuvre Wesen described. That one vessel should succeed in this is staggering. That the Navigator of every other vessel in the fleet did likewise is simply unheard of.

And so Wesen explained to the council why Battlefleet Solar had arrived many weeks before we had even hoped to have received word that it was even in the Segmentum. Upon diving off of the path, it had found another. And as one might sometimes stumble upon an unused trail within the depths of the wood,

(Right) Pict capture of a full broadside attack against the foe, from one of the ships in Battlefleet Solar.



and discover that trail to be in fact a shortcut to ones intended destination, Battlefleet Solar emerged at its destination early, and with its formation intact.

Wesen recounted to the council that we are to all bear witness to this event, for it shall be recounted upon Terra when time permits, and entered into the histories of the Navigator Houses. Already, the talk is of a miracle, for whom other than the Emperor Himself could have made such an event possible? Truly, we feel the hand of the divine at work amongst us, guiding and protecting us in our hour of need.

In truth, the members of the council could scarcely believe that such a large contingent of Battlefleet Solar had been dispatched to our aid, and it humbled every man and women present to consider that a single vessel be removed from its most sacred of duties guarding the Sol system. That the High Lords would send so many ships to our aid is testament, if any were needed, of the dire threat the Despoiler's invasion represents. Should we fail here, the way is open for the Great Enemy to strike towards Holy Terra, and no one able to draw breath will for even a moment consider such a possibility.

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++SUBFILE QQ-4/802 -
DEPLOYMENT PHASE DXXI++
++RESUME PRE-DEPLOYMENT STATUS++

13th Garlatan Drop Legion - COMPLETE
Cadian 32nd - COMPLETE
Asarkin Mobile Infantry - 90%/PENDING
Solus 13th - UNKNOWN
477th Cadian - COMPLETE
32nd Catachan - SUPPLYING - BELIS CORONA
101st Elysian Drop Troops - NO CONTACT
Aurellian XIV - 78% - CONFIRM
Patrol Group Aquil - MUSTER COMPLETE,
REDEPLOY PENDING
Ishan 5th - COMPLETE
The 21st Sonnen Guard - 64%
[NOTE - UNDERSTRENGTH?]
Vastadtian 32nd - COMPLETED [EXEMPLARY]
51st Kynskite Dragoons - 97% COMPLETE
Cadian 47th - UNKNOWN
Battlegroup Tempest - COMPLETE
Rimini 54th - NO CONTACT - INVESTIGATION
PENDING
42nd Mykran Rifles - COMPLETE
101st Amalgamated Regiment - 87% COMPLETE
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With Battlefleet Solar inbound, the council went about the task of assigning its battle groups to the multitude of tasks ahead. Many possibilities were discussed, ranging from allowing the fleet free reign to pursue the hunt for the *Planet Killer* or for the Blackstone Fortress that had been sighted but once so many weeks previously. Should the fleet be given the task of enforcing control of the intra-sector routes, or should it assume an immediate frontline role? After many hours, it was decided the fleet should seek to engage the Grand Fleet of the Despoiler, to draw it to battle while the initiative is with us. The senior officers of the fleet are to confer with us at their earliest opportunity, and indications are they are eager to begin the hunt. From their communications, I can't help but conclude they relish the prospect of frontline duty, and regard a battle against the Despoiler as a means of settling the account he and his master opened 10,000 years ago during the Siege of Terra.

The council concluded with Creed's decree that news of the fleet's arrival should be disseminated to all commands, at all levels. Such a boost to morale is surely overdue, especially on the ground, where the enemy continue to pressure our forces upon every front. The commissioner for morale truth approved such a plan, and the Commissariat concurred. In a moment of uncharacteristic frivolity, the Lord Castellan, normally an abstentious man, ordered the liquor rations of every regiment of Cadia doubled on the morrow. My heart leapt, until I remembered that it would be the task of my logistics staff to enact such an order.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The Lord Castellan has determined to take advantage of the Warp storms raging around the Cadian system to shift troops from planet to planet with little fear of new enemy forces attacking the worlds he strips of defenders. He plans to then launch a series of offensives that will catch the forces of disorder off balance. My staff are working around the clock to plan such huge movements of men and material, for it is the largest single redeployment since the great mustering at the beginning of the war. Early indications are that forty-two million troops are to be moved over a period of three weeks, from a total of twenty-three worlds. A spirit of measured optimism pervades the High Command, for, though the end is still far away, we feel for the first time that we are in control of our destiny, and that the influence of Chaos shall soon wane.

(Below) Pict of an Imperial-held defence platform orbiting Hydra Minoris. When the viral quarantine was enforced the crew were left to die on board. May the Emperor keep them.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The enemy is hitting us hard across the entire region, and my attention has been consumed with the defence of the Cadian system itself. Kasr Holn has borne the brunt over the past days, with wave after wave of frenzied mutants assaulting the walls of the Fortress World's capital. Fifteen regiments man the defences there, and an entire legion of the Adeptus Titanicus are deployed. Were it only the seemingly endless cohorts of ill-disciplined mutants attacking the capital, we may have been able to contain the enemy there, but the assaults are led by none other than the Black Legion – the praetorians of the Despoiler himself.

The Black Legionnaires are content to allow many thousands of mutants to crash against our defences, aiming, I believe, to wear us down and deplete our material stores through sheer attrition. Some of these mutants are massive brutes, able to withstand lasbolt after lasbolt before finally going down. Others are little more than twisted masses of warping flesh, so damned are they by the so-called 'blessings' of Chaos. Each wave to date has been repulsed, but only at the cost of many brave defenders, and with little or no appreciable affect on enemy numbers.

And just when the attackers are sent once more into undisciplined rout, the Black Legionnaires are wont to launch their own attack. These attacks cost us dear, though to date none have penetrated the lines. Each time though, only a handful of enemy are killed, but the butcher's bill for us is intolerably high.

Creed has moved his HQ to Kasr Holn to counter the crisis rapidly developing there, and I am confident his presence will make the difference of several regiments. He has led in person a bold counter-attack at the head of the Cadian 8th against the latest assault, sallying forth once the mutant wave had receded, and striking at the Black Legion before their own assault could develop. The counter-attack was a resounding success, and as he returned to the walls at the head of the 8th, the entire length of the eastern wall erupted with the cheers of many thousands of men. It was a sight I shall remember for the rest of my days.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The battle at Kasr Holn has taken on a new and unanticipated turn, one that I would scarcely believe had I not seen the evidence with my own eyes. At the height of the latest assault upon the eastern wall of the primary fortress, at the moment when it appeared as if the

Black Legion would force a breach, the 13th Company appeared from behind their lines and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them. I heard with my own ears the atavistic howl of their warriors, even though I was at my station some distance from the fighting. The sound chilled me to the core, and by all accounts had a similar affect upon our troops at the wall. Fortunately, the affect upon the enemy was greater still. The vile mutants fled first, turning their backs and fleeing in an instant. Their Black Legion masters attempted to forestall the rout, firing upon the mutants in an effort to render them more terrified of their own retribution than they were of the 13th Company. But their efforts were wasted, and many Black Legionnaires were trampled as the mutants stampeded from the walls.

Soon, the Black Legionnaires were themselves assaulted, and those not cut down from the rear were forced to quit the field, an event unheard of to date. The 13th Company's attack was over almost as soon as it had begun, and they withdrew, we know not in which direction, making, as they did, no attempt to communicate with our forces.

Inquisitor Asmorales was on the scene within hours, and his first action was the quarantine of those defenders who had witnessed the event. Creed objected in the strongest possible terms to such treatment of these brave men, and though the inquisitor's orders were not rescinded, he has issued written assurances that the men shall be released with no further ramifications once he has concluded his investigations.

The crisis at Kasr Holn has been averted, for the present at least, and Creed and the staff are returning to High Command upon Cadia. The inquisitor has yet to complete his questioning of the defenders of the eastern wall, and Creed has ordered I keep an eye on the situation there.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

During our return journey from Kasr Holn, we discovered the situation around Cadia had developed during our absence. A sizable fleet of Chaos vessels had broken through the Naval cordon and were inbound for upper orbit around Cadia itself. This fleet's scout vessels and a number of escorts, detected our convoy, and a cruiser squadron peeled off from the armada to attack us.

Many of Creed's staff believed at that moment we were doomed, for the enemy vessels vastly outmatched our own escorts. Creed, however, would hear none of

(Below) High-density radion-scan of Malin's Reach as Warp storms flared on the surface. Within two hours of this pict being taken, the arch-enemy's forces were raining down onto the planet surface in drop-pods.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

it. Before he would permit a distress transmission, he led his staff in prayer. I was struck at that moment by the sheer piety of this man who leads us, for he is a puritan of the highest order, and his faith in his own manifest destiny is unshakable. And his faith was not found wanting, as we were about to discover.

The leading Chaos vessel was upon us, a monstrous brute of a ship of the Despoiler class. Its first salvoes collapsed our shields and inflicted fearful damage upon the starboard drive cluster. With our engine capacity reduced by at least half, we simply waited for our end. All except Creed that is, who stood upon the command deck, glowering at the enemy vessel as if his will alone would send it running.

A junior naval officer reported the enemy vessel powering up its batteries for the kill shot, but Creed ignored him, taking a slow draw from his cigar.

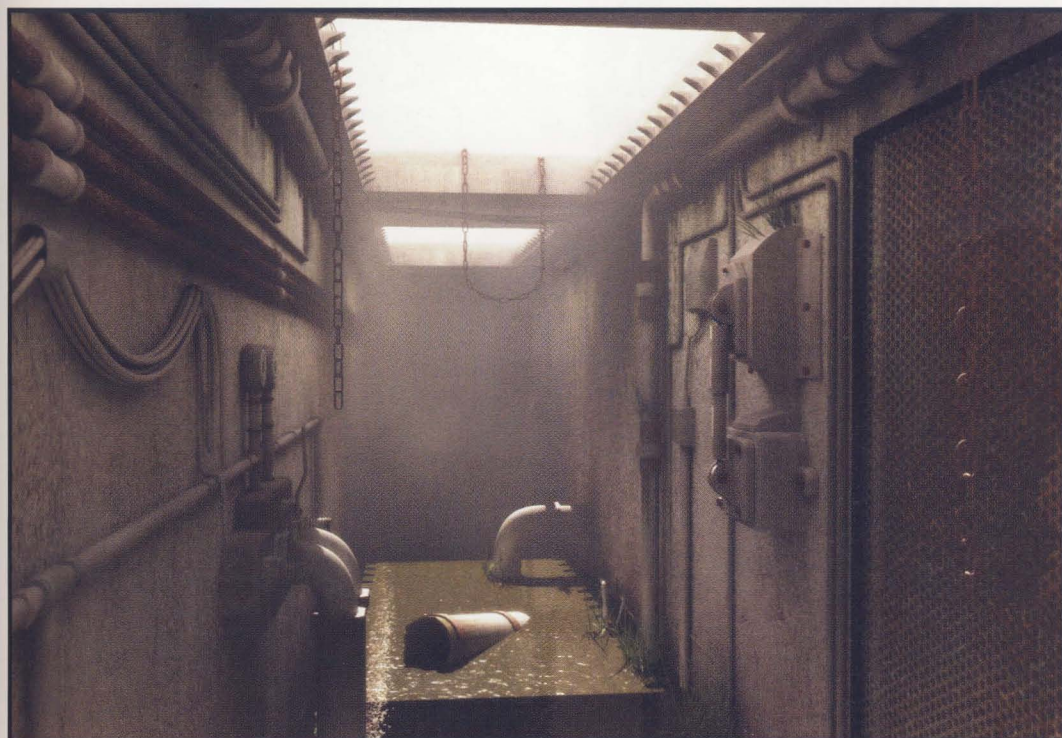
At that moment, blossoming sheets of energy obscured the Despoiler, and I saw with my own eyes its shields collapse, one after the other. The bridge came alive as the command staff shouted reports of another vessel engaging our attacker from the rear. Then more ships appeared, and we soon had confirmation of their identity. It was Battlegroup Roark, the *Duke Lurstophan* at its head, and they put the Chaos fleet to rout within hours.

Accompanied by the cruisers of the Battlegroup, we limped home to Cadia. Captain Roark himself accom-

panied us to High Command, where he was received as a hero for his timely intervention. Without his actions, a sizable portion of the High Command's most senior staff, including of course the commander-in-chief himself, the Lord Castellan of Cadia, would have been lost and a great blow struck against the Imperium. The captain is to be commended in the highest possible manner, and has our eternal gratitude for his courageous actions.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

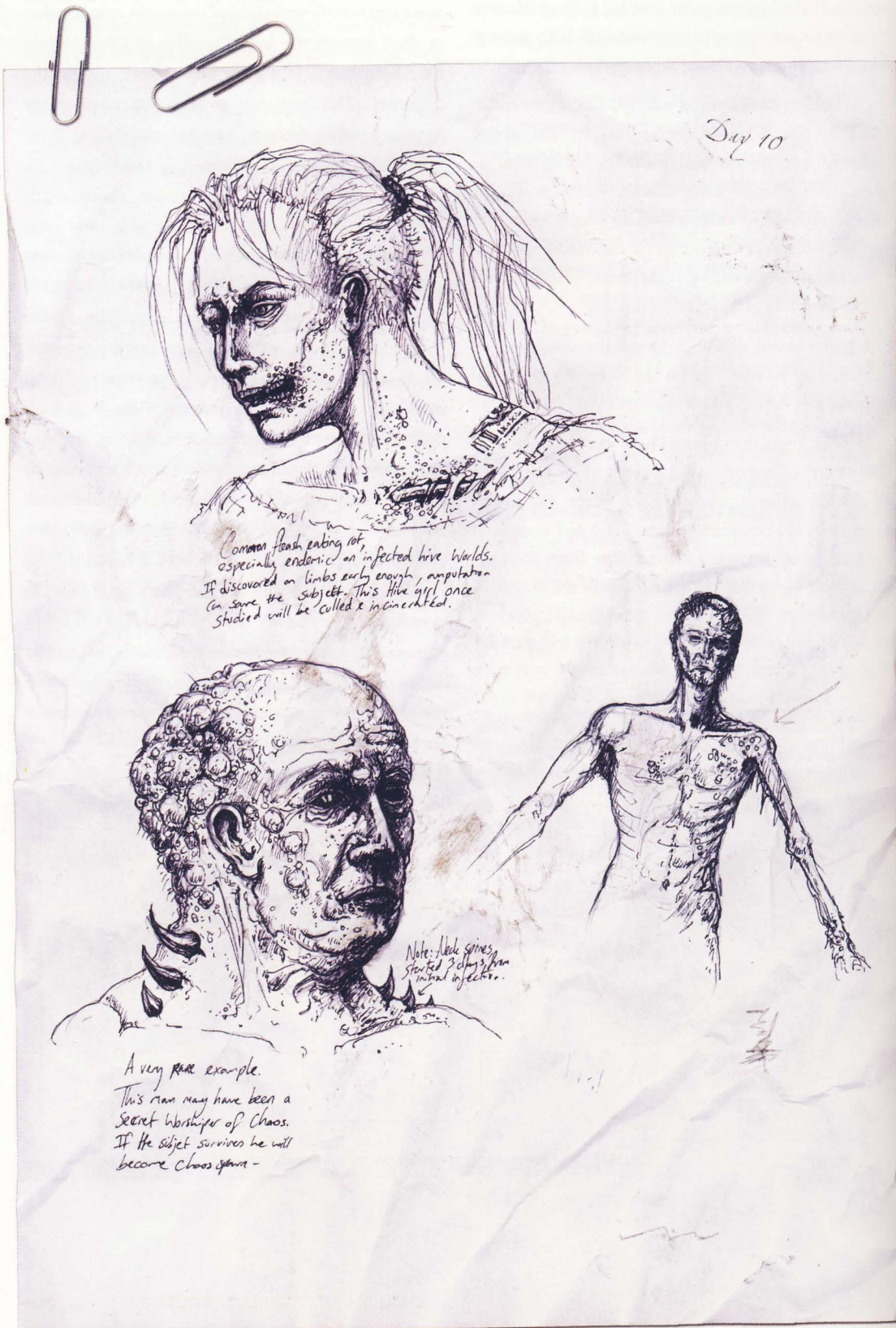
A veritable mountain of reports awaited me upon my return to High Command, and I have spent many hours reviewing the situation across the Sector Oculus. Of gravest concern to me are the reported actions of the eldar, who, it seems, have engaged with more than one Blackstone Fortress. Eldar ships have engaged the enemy wherever they may be encountered, desperate, by all accounts, to attack and destroy these hideous engines of destruction. They refuse all contact with our representatives, and will not share the information they evidently hold. I have seen the classified reports into these machines logged after the events of the Gothic War, and have detailed our forces to seek out and engage them, at all costs. If the eldar are so determined to destroy them, then I can see no reason why we should not also deploy every resource at our disposal to do likewise.



(Left) Pict of an Imperial trench. Cadia is riddled with such defences, many hastily improvised as the attack gained momentum.

PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

(Right) Excerpt from the private journal of Sister Rosa of the Orders Hospitallar, tracking and studying the course of mutations amongst persons exposed to Chaos.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT



Varia or 'Zombie' rot. The Subject becomes quickly covered in a branch like swelling under the skin and loses all body fat. Loses speech movement in 2 weeks.



Eyes move
fast to rot.

Skin the bone
eaten away



Rip like leather in skin



Stomach growing
over eyes, nose, nose.



Bone flesh fused.

PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The Warp storms so prevalent in the region over the last weeks show signs of reducing in level and ferocity, and so the war enters another phase. The enemy has been afforded the opportunity to move vast numbers of troops. But so too have we.

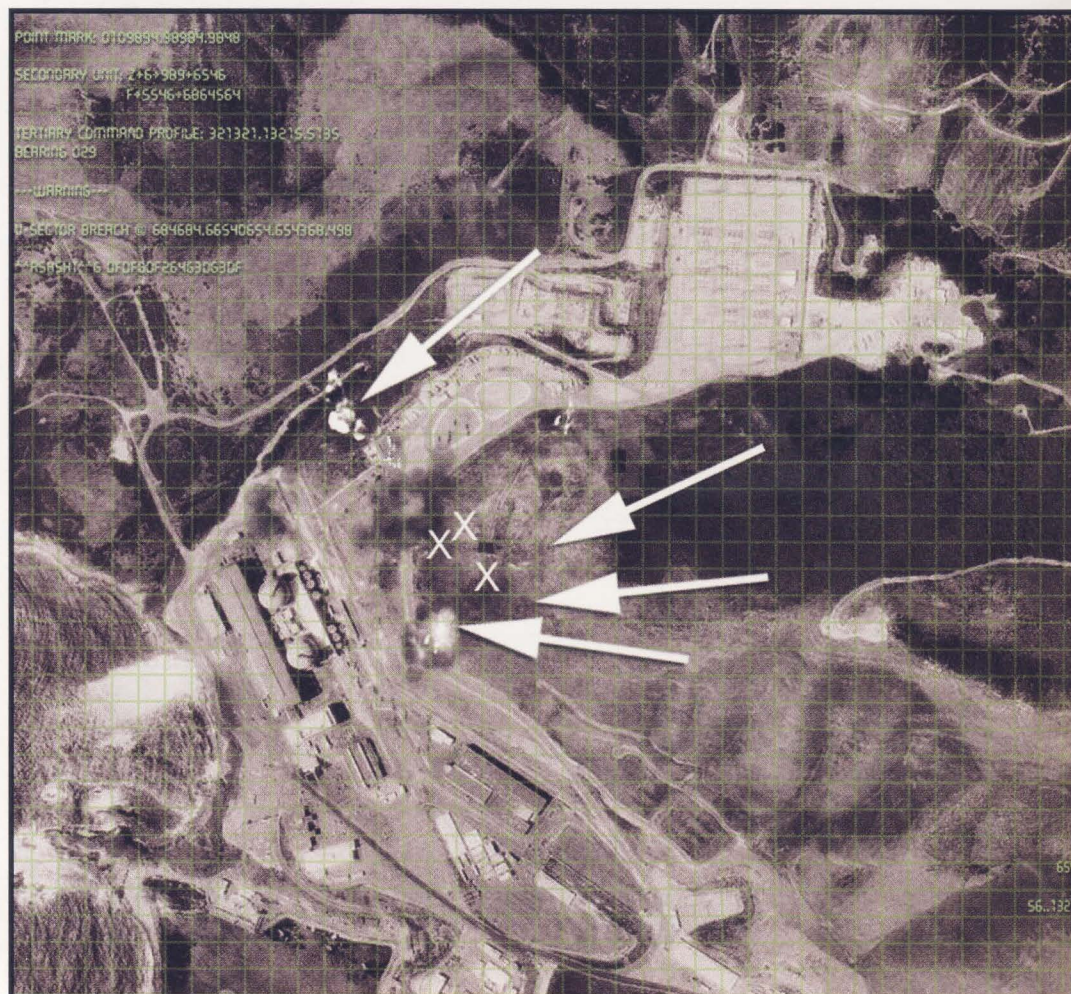
Creed has ordered a massive counter-attack, and as his chief of staff, it falls to me to organise and plan this operation, codified Operation Chrysos. In a matter of scant weeks, many millions of troops will be in position to strike a hammer blow against the forces of the Despoiler, and if successful, we stand a chance of halting the seemingly inexhaustible tide of Chaos overwhelming Cadia. If we fail, we may not gain another chance to even try again.

My first task was to attempt an audit of those forces at our disposal. Such a duty would be far from simple at the best of times, but at present is a statistical and logistical nightmare. High Command has long since lost track of the number and status of regiments operating in the Sectors Oculus, for thousands have

answered the call to arms that went out so many long months ago. Communications are still disrupted by Warp storms, and so we have few reliable means of ascertaining the status of many of our forces. Some regiments, indeed, some armies, are likely to have ceased to exist altogether, while other newly arrived forces may have taken their place. I suspect that it will be many years before history penetrates the veil of confusion and even begins to record an accurate account of those that stood before the Despoiler.

After many long days of staff work, High Command has gathered a force of many thousands of regiments. A majority of these units conform to the Departmento Munitorum standard for classification as Type 18(v) M41 Light Infantry, though only 40% of these are estimated to stand at close to establishment strength. Approximately 10% of available units are heavy armoured, conforming in the main to the Type 36 M41 standard, and the bulk of the remainder are Mechanised Infantry of the revised 454.M41 standard. In addition to these forces, we can draw upon many specialised units, such as drop, infiltration and close

(Right) Satellite pict of the land where the armoured might of the enemy met with the grand Imperial Guard during Operation Chrysos. The arrows denote the main thrust of the Imperial counter-push.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

assault types, though these conform to such a variety of types they are to be considered army group reserves and will not be integrated into first line formations.

Each army group has at its disposal the full range of Munitorum support services, including engineering, technical and logistical units. In addition, High Command has thirty super-heavy artillery regiments under its direct control, any of which may be called upon to provide Army Group-level support.

This vast body of men has been organised into ten army groups (Army Groups I to X) as follows:

Army Group I under Lord General Folk
Infantry, Types 12(y) to 21 M41

Army Group II under Lord General Nadurus
Infantry, Types 10 to 18(v) M41

Army Group III under High Marshall Isban
All arms

Army Group IV under General Osterbel
Light Infantry, Types 18(v) to 19(k) M40-41

Army Group V under Lord Colonel Merlon
Light Infantry, Type 18(v) M41 only

Army Group VI under Lord Dorff
All arms

Army Group VII under Castellan Iedel
Heavy Infantry, Types 21(k) to 24 M41

Army Group VIII under Marshall Holdtt
Mechanised Infantry 454.M41 standard

Army Group IV under Lord General Malson
Mechanised Infantry 454.M41 standard

Army Group X under High General Grenwik
All arms

Army Group reserve under Lord Commander Sidra
Armoured, Types 36 to 51(q) M39-M41

The task of mustering these vast formations was performed by my staff with commendable efficiency, and was completed to the Lord Castellan's satisfaction within three weeks. Considering the number of units shipped in from offworld, this is a staggering achievement, one I am quite sure will not be exceeded within the lifetimes of any present.

With several million men now in position, Operation Chrysos is ready to begin.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Chrysos is underway. Following a bombardment lasting 48 hours, Creed gave the order to advance. The latest orbital scans show the enemy moving to meet the attack head on, as we had anticipated they would. So vast is the concentration of enemy forces that they are quite clearly visible from orbit as a vast stain upon the surface of Cadia.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

A week into Operation Chrysos and I have barely slept. I swear Creed has not at all. The Lord Castellan divides his time between High Command and the front lines, where his presence at a stalled advance is sufficient to bolster even the most terrified troopers. When not actively leading our forces, Creed is directing the operation from the command bunker, or leading the staff in prayer. The defenders love him, and many have come to speak of him as a saint. He will tolerate nothing of such talk, but it persists nonetheless.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Chrysos is nearing a conclusion, and although enemy troops continue to pour onto Cadia, we feel we have achieved something few will ever emulate. Not since the great Commissar Yarrick rallied the defenders of Armageddon has one man made such a mark on a war.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Chrysos is grinding to a halt, its energy momentum all but exhausted. Of the ten Army Groups that started the action, three have been amalgamated. Lord Commander Sidra's forces are reduced to a quarter of their original number, but still his tanks thunder across the mores, crushing all before them. Our casualties are astronomical, but those of the enemy must surely be worse. By our best estimates, three million traitors are dead, slain by the righteous fury of the Armies of the Emperor. A resounding victory indeed.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

At 09:15, Creed called a halt to Operation Chrysos. We have simply run out of steam. High Command has declared the action a success, for without such a bold counter-attack across Cadia, the enemy would have taken total control of those areas he occupied at the beginning of the offensive. Though in the grand scheme of the war, Operation Chrysos may prove but a brief respite in the tumultuous conflict; much has been achieved for which we shall ever remain proud and thankful.

(Below) One of the escape tunnels used by the Imperial Guard and members of the General Staff to escape the last assaults of the invading hordes on Cadia.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

JOURNAL ENTRY:

With enemy forces still reeling from Operation Chrysos, we are now able to consolidate the achievements of that campaign with a vengeance. After many long weeks of beleaguered, stubborn resistance, the combined forces of dozens of Space Marine Chapters have reinforced the defenders of the Cadian Gate. This crusade has been gathered from the most distant regions, answering the call to arms issued when the forces of the Despoiler first commenced their invasions.

The Space Marine crusade has been greeted with adulation and joy by the battered and bloody defenders. Those Space Marines who have fought at the gate since the beginning have been joined by their brethren, and now stand ready to take the fight to the enemy with the courage and conviction that only a Space Marine can display.

One such Chapter was the Black Templars. Upon their arrival in the region, the Chapter's first action was the relief of Thracian Primaris, which had sustained heavy assaults by the forces of Chaos for some weeks.

The bulk of the force consisted of Brethren previously embarked upon the hunt for Ghazghkull Mag Uruk Thraka, the ork warlord who had unleashed such devastation upon the Imperial world of Armageddon, and their participation in the action on Thracian Primaris left the pursuing crusades severely under strength.

The Templars scattered the poorly led and deployed Chaos fleet in short order, breaking through the blockade to make an uncontested planet fall at the Departamento Munitorum Logistical Support Complex at Hive Demeter. The Brethren were welcomed as liberators by the beleaguered populace, but chose not to remain at the hive world for long, moving on to drive the forces of Chaos back towards the Eye of Terror.

The Ultramarines Honour Company has already distinguished itself with a bold, space-borne counter-assault against Abaddon's fleet as the *Planet Killer* closed on the agri-world of Lortox on the outskirts of the Agripinaa sector. The action bought the world's Planetary Defence Force time to evacuate a significant proportion of the population before the world was destroyed by the Despoiler's horrific weapon of planetary destruction.

In the aftermath of the Lortox Evacuations, the Honour Company redeployed to Cadia and the surrounding systems, launching a series of operations to hinder Abaddon's forces as they assaulted our positions. These attacks included a series of highly successful boarding actions against the lumbering space hulks being used to transport vast hordes of enemy troops to reinforce the Despoiler's siege of Cadia. In total, three hulks were disabled on the outskirts of the Cadian system, stranding an estimated 600,000 traitors, mutants and cultists to freeze in the cold depths of interstellar space. A fourth hulk, codified

(Right) The famous bunker IV was used by the last remnants of the Grantian XI in their last ever action. They were slaughtered by Chaos Space Marines, Chapter unknown.



PHASE FOUR: THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

the *Herald of Grief* was destroyed as an Honour Company boarding force succeeded in activating a seismic detonator deep within its core, causing the hulk to splinter into a hundred fragments and killing every one of the estimated 200,000 enemy on board.

Medusa, the homeworld of the Iron Hands Chapter, lies close to the Eye of Terror, and was subject to constant attacks from the forces of the Despoiler from the earliest phase of the Black Crusade. Given that Medusa is the only world from which the Iron Hands recruit new brethren, they were forced to defend it above all other considerations. Though at least two Iron Hands Clan Companies are known to have fought elsewhere in the defence of the region, the greater part of the Chapter confined its actions to their homeworld, where they fought a gruelling war to stem the tide of Chaos filth.

At the height of the defence of Medusa, the gargantuan tracked fortress monasteries of the ten Clan Companies came together to face an armoured assault launched by traitors of the excommunicated Haradni 13th Heavy Armoured Regiment. The dark, polluted landscape of Medusa was host to one of the largest gatherings of armoured might since the Battle of Tallarn during the Horus Heresy, with over ten thousand traitor tanks arrayed against the Iron Hands.

The ensuing battle reportedly raged for five days and nights, as armoured echelons consisting of thousands of tanks swept across the barren plains towards the mobile fortresses of the Iron Hands. When the fortresses' guns opened fire, it is said a hundred enemy battle tanks were destroyed, each Clan Company commanding the equivalent firepower of one of a Centurio Ordinatus of the Adeptus Mechanicus. At the height of the battle, on the fifth day, the enemy managed to break through the Iron Hands' lines, a single traitor armoured company outflanking one of the massive mobile fortresses and unloading round after round of ordnance upon its more vulnerable rear from nigh-on point-blank range.

The Iron Hands launched a furious counter-attack, assault squads armed with meltabombs launching themselves from the crenulated towers of the monastery to land atop the massed tanks. Many Iron Hands lost their lives in the counter-attack, shot down by the tanks' pintle-mounted weapons as they swooped in, or ground beneath their tracks as they made near suicidal charges against them in defence of the monastery.



(Left) Orbital pict capture of the aftermath of the destruction of the Helios hydro-dam on Medusa. Vast amounts of equipment and stock were wiped out as the water burst out of the valley.

Despite the Iron Hands' losses, the counter-attack succeeded, disabling or destroying the majority of the traitor armour, and sending the remainder into a disorderly retreat. The Iron Hands then launched their own armoured assault on the traitors, massed formations of Predator Annihilators running down the enemy tanks and finishing them off with deadly-accurate lascannon fire.

With so many Space Marines now bolstering the defence, the forces of the Traitor Legions have not been idle. The Chaos rearguard joins the fray, engaging the Space Marines in every theatre of war. Those who turned upon their master and their kin from ten millennia past are consumed with hatred for their erstwhile brothers, and have thrown themselves at the new arrivals with wanton bloodlust. With such legendary warriors as the Blood Angels, the Black Templars, the Imperial Fists, the Howling Griffons, the White Scars and many more chapters now standing before Abaddon's invasion, we can at long last see a real chance of turning back the Thirteenth Black Crusade.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The World of Malin's Reach has been deemed tainted beyond redemption. Inquisitor Lord Coteaz, upon his arrival in the system, has ordered the ultimate sanction upon the blighted world without a second's hesitation. The plague of unbelief has spread its tendrils throughout each of the hives, and the stain could never truly be eradicated. Malin's Reach has been subjected to a sustained barrage of cyclonic torpedoes that has totally annihilated all life on the planet.

(Below) Raging firestorms desecrate the surface of Medusa, which was the scene of fearsome battles.



(Opposite page) Visions of the Great Enemy. As the Eye of Terror flares, the touch of the God of Change is felt across the Sectors Oculus and within the webway.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

Though I am not privy to the details, the Space Wolves and the Dark Angels Chapters appear to harbour a great mutual rivalry, and this is causing severe disruption to our efforts in the defence of the Sentinel Worlds area. The two forces have been operating in the same region for several weeks, yet their refusal to coordinate their actions is harming the ability of Imperial Guard commanders on the ground to act, for they can rely upon the aid of neither Chapter.

The situation has recently changed however. The Dark Angels have abruptly left the area in search of renegade individuals they refuse to identify. The Space Wolves too have departed, reportedly heading for Nemesis Tessera in search of an artefact of their Primarch, Russ. Though seemingly trivial incidents, I cannot help but feel compelled to comment on them, as they may yet have far-reaching effects upon the strategic situation.

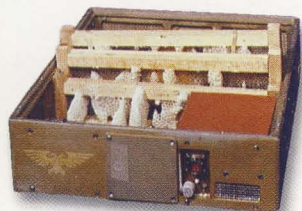
Intrinsically linked to the actions of the Dark Angels have been the reports of a shadowy figure calling himself the Voice of the Emperor, and operating out of Lelithar. The Voice is evidently acting as the figurehead for an extended network of anti-Imperial cultists and insurgents, and his heretical teachings have spread across half of the Agripinaa sector, millions being turned to his cause. The Dark Angels have launched a number of strikes against this figure, but on each occasion found that the pressures of constant attacks upon the hallowed ground of the Caliban system have forced the hasty redeployment of their forces. Whenever a Dark Angels force has managed to close on the suspected location of the Voice, it always found it recently vacated, heretical graffiti taunting their efforts the only evidence of his recent presence there.

The Dark Angels harbour an intense hatred for this individual, and their actions in this regard have still to be accounted for by my staff. The Voice's heretical teachings and proclamations frequently make mention of the Unforgiven and the origins of the Dark Angels Legion. The Voice has transmitted a number of all-channel vox-casts throughout the war, each making reference to the events surrounding the Legion's earliest history, and making some quite astonishing claims about Lion El'Jonson, the Legion's Primarch. The Dark Angels and their successors have been vehement in their rebuttal of these blasphemous tracts, answering them with bolter and chainsword rather than mere words and facts. Their fury is something to behold, so eyewitnesses have said to me.

Some say the teachings of the Voice contain an element of truth, and that he is intent upon some course of action that will see the Dark Angels and the Unforgiven take their part in some yet to be revealed plan. It is evident from the Unforgiven's relentless pursuit of this heretic and his followers that they have no intention of allowing this to happen.

Being the first Chapter Master to muster at Cadia, and being recognised as the most experienced Space Marine of those that followed him, Logan Grimnar was elected by his peers as nominal head of all the Space Marine commanders defending the Cadian Gate. Some Chapters, notably the Dark Angels and their successors, as well as the Relictors, refused to submit to his authority, pursuing their own agendas instead, and taking no part in his plans.

Having re-established contact with the other chapter masters fighting in the region, Grimnar has dictated that all their efforts should be focussed on the Cadian, Belis Corona and Agripinaa sectors. Now that contact has been made with those chapters newly arrived at the Sector Oculus, a coordinated attack has been launched that is set to sweep away the invaders in one fell swoop. I only pray that two of the greatest Astartes Chapters to serve the Imperium, the Dark Angels and the Space Wolves, will put aside their internecine disagreements for long enough for their efforts to bear fruit.



(Above) This ingenious comms device was constructed by the civilian defenders of Mordax Prime. It was used to transfer vital information to the fighters by using varying sound waves that could be decoded into key words and phrases. This aided their efforts to rout the foe.

Such tactics were rewarded; the Emperor watches over the faithful.

TO: CADIAN HIGH COMMAND

FROM: INQUISITOR REMAS, ORDO XENOS

SUBJECT: ELDAR ACTIVITY BEYOND THE CADIAN GATE

RECEIVED: CADIA

MESSAGE FORMAT: ASTROPATHIC/CYPHER

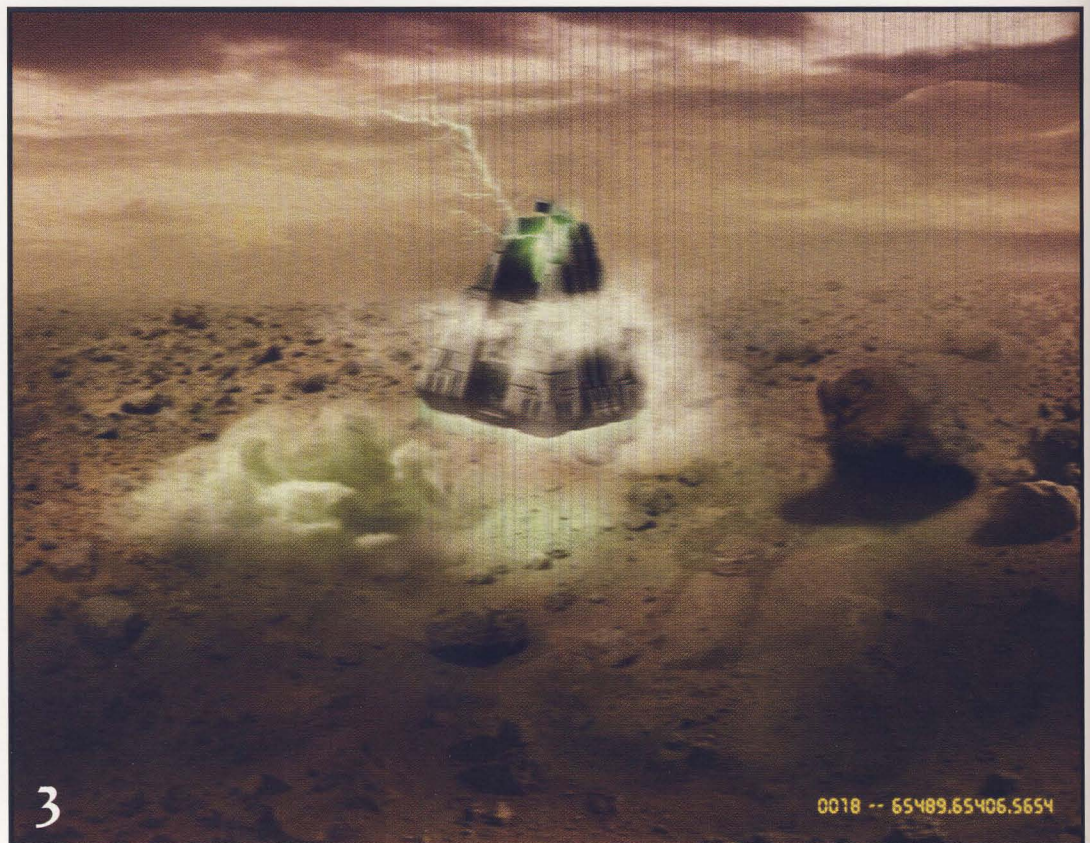
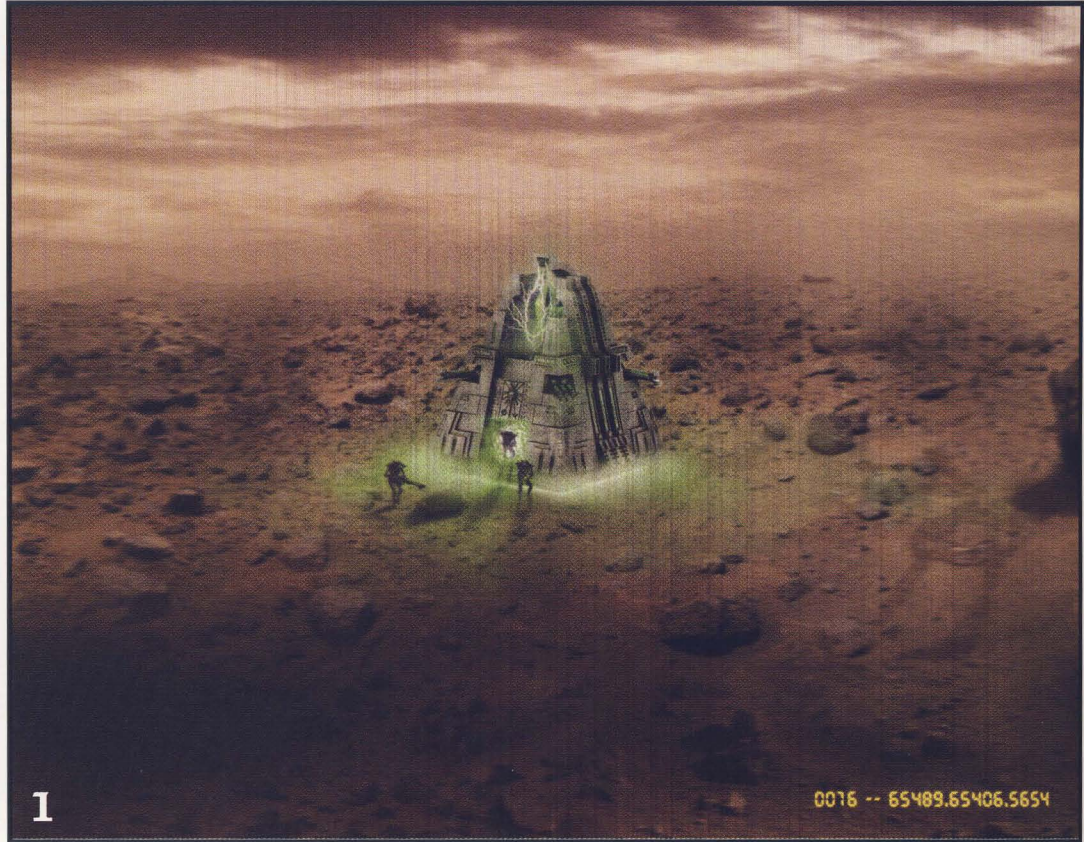
ASTROPATHIC DUCT: XYLEN RELAY

I have long been engaged upon the matter of the eldar fighting within the very Eye itself. My Seers, engaged upon the most perilous of vision quests, have witnessed a miracle. A shattered, withered husk of a craftworld has drifted into orbit above a long-dead world, delivering hundreds of pallid eldar warriors wearing the colours of a long-dead craftworld onto the field of battle. Their attack on the servants of Chaos is as unrelenting as it is unexpected. I shall continue my investigation.



SIGHTING OF THE NECRONTYR

(Right) Sequence of pictures from an Imperial scout unit. It is believed that this machine is of necron construction. After engorging its warriors, it dissipates in a most unnatural fashion.



SIGHTING OF THE NECRONTYR



(Right) Falling towards the planet of Solar Mariatus in the Cadian system is a huge Chaos munitions device. Millions were dropped onto the planets of the Imperium. Those that were not destroyed by the planetary defence platforms and ground to air guns wrought much destruction.



(Below) An Imperial surface-to-air missile, used to destroy Chaos munitions as they fell from orbit.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The diabolical magics enacted by Erebus of the Word Bearers Legion so many weeks past have now come to fruition. Through the sacrifice of a million innocents, the Warp has vomited through the thin skein of reality to burst across the domains of Man. The entire region is wracked by Warp storms so intense that inter-system travel is now impossible. As the last reinforcements gather in those sectors still barely accessible – Cadia, Agripinaa, Belis Corona, Scarus and Chinchare – it is clear to us all that the war has entered its final stages. Exactly what the future holds, no one can see, but none can deny that a terrible time of reckoning is upon us.

Our forces are set against those of the enemy across the warzones of Cadia, Scarus, Agripinaa, Belis Corona and even Chinchare. Each is intent upon nothing less than the total and utter destruction of the other. These five warzones are to form the battleground for the final conflict of this Thirteenth Black Crusade, as those forces committed to other areas are hastily redeployed or simply forgotten amongst the confusion and anarchy that has befallen us.

We have long since lost track of the number of troops operating in the region, but estimates suggest that the forces now engaged are beyond anything seen in many hundreds of years. Thousands of Imperial Guard regiments, scores of Space Marine Chapters and hundreds of Titans stand alongside the combined conscripted militia of a hundred systems. Against these heroes of the Imperium are set the Traitor Legions, rebel Imperial Guard, mutant hordes and cultists beyond measure. Millions give their lives in desperate last stands and vicious deadlocks as Imperial preachers exhort the faithful to ever-greater peaks of bravery and bloodlust.

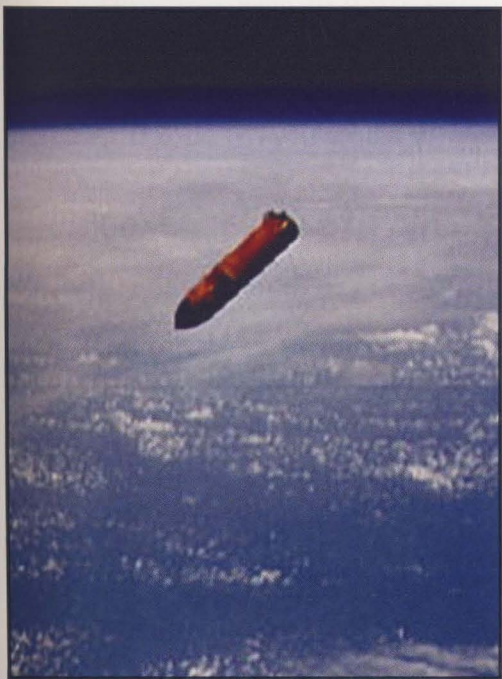
The skies above the warzones now burn with the falling of orbital ordnance and the chants of a billion lunatics resound in our ears. The tread of mighty battle Titans shakes the earth and fighter craft scream overhead.

The last days of the war are surely upon us. Creed has issued the order: 'Let none falter in his duty to the Emperor, for to do so is to surrender Humanity itself unto the eternal pyre of damnation and ruin.'

PHASE FIVE: THE WARP UNLEASHED

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The Dark Angels and the Space Wolves appear to have set aside their ancient vendetta long enough for Supreme Grand Master Azrael and the Great Wolf Logan Grimnar to come to a mutual, if temporary, understanding. The two Chapters have taken to the field together, intent upon proving to the enemy that the combined forces of the Space Wolves and the Dark Angels Chapters are far greater than the sum of their parts.



The exact circumstances and details of this arrangement have been kept from all who are not from either Chapter. Many believe it may have been the result of the mediation of an individual who arrived at High Command only days before the Warp flared and cut us off from outside contact. I know not the identity of this man, though he is clearly well connected on Terra, for his clearance is as high as any within High Command.

I have borne witness to the fruits of this pact, for I was present during an attack upon the walls of Kasr Tyrok when a force of enemy infiltrators broke through to our headquarters. For a brief period I was forced to take part in the fighting, the first time I have had to do so in many years. Our headquarters' security detail put up a bold resistance to the mutant scum attempting to penetrate the command centre, but was cut down to a man by the claws and whip-like appendages of the enemy. I gathered my staff around me and led a counter-attack, but soon found we were horribly out-matched. We prepared to sell our lives dearly.

At that moment, a combined force of Space Wolves and Dark Angels smashed into the rear of the mutant mob, cutting them down without mercy. I can truly say that the might of these two Chapters is a terrible thing to behold, and the brothers of each seemed to enjoy a comradely banter as they fought, seeking to outdo one another in their skill at arms.

Only as the last few mutants were dispatched did this banter turn less comradely, and soon insults filled the air. Though a victory was won, I fear the Sons of Russ and the Sons of the Lion may never fight side by side as true comrades.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

It was a fool's dream to hope the *Planet Killer* could be found before it was brought to bear upon us. Without warning, it appeared in orbit over Macharia and though I can scarcely believe these words as I write them, the world exists no longer. It is gone, and with it millions of loyal and faithful subjects of the Emperor.

Utter dread has now descended upon High Command. Despite the successes of the early weeks of the invasion, many have now come to believe that this war may not be won in the short term. Where at first we fought to repulse the Despoiler, to deny him footholds upon our worlds, now we fight to keep him from overwhelming us entirely. This is a grim paradigm, and one we are not ready to accept.

We believe Abaddon dare not destroy Cadia, as its Pylons are reckoned intrinsic to the state of the Cadian Gate. So we will stand here, no matter the cost.



(Far left) Pict capture of a Chaos munition. Those on the surface had little idea what to expect from such weapons: viruses, diseases, explosions, chemical attack, Chaos taint. The list is a long and terrible one.

(Left) This massive bomb was dropped from an orbiting Chaos vessel. It contained enough contamination to destroy the entire population of the plateau. The area is now quarantined.

PHASE FIVE: THE WARP UNLEASHED

(Right) The parchment that Creed read during his passionate address to his officer cadre.

Gentlemen, I wish to address those who have stood by me throughout these long months, for I may never see you all assembled in one place again. Indeed, none here may survive the coming days, and so I say this with pride. You all, every last one of you, have served with faith and conviction. You are all true servants of our Emperor, and it has been my honour to serve alongside you. You all know the true cost of command - you have looked into the eyes of your men as you order them to their deaths, and you know that the memories of those men and the sacrifices they made will live with you for the remainder of your days. But you know now the true cost of this war. You know the price of failure, for it moves against us even now, in the skies far above. You have all seen the price of failure. You all know that to fail here is to open the Gate and usher in the damnation of Mankind.

I know that not a single man here is prepared to let that happen. Go then. Take your places alongside your men. Show not your fear, though I know it will gnaw at your soul. Know instead that your fear signifies you live yet, and while you live, the enemies of Mankind will tremble, for even in death shall you serve.

Die well men of Cadia. Die well.

(Below) Night-vision pict of the surface of Cadia, taken from an Imperial defence platform. Note the bright light caused by the Chaos orbital bombardment.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

Our strongholds fall one by one. The Viklas and Cadus lines buckle under the relentless hammering of uncounted enemy. We have been engaged upon a mobile defence, Creed marshalling our regiments to meet each enemy salient and cut it off before an unstoppable assault develops. But such are the numbers of the enemy that the strategy is proving increasingly untenable. Hordes of mutants, traitors and cultists smother the moors from horizon to horizon. We are forced onto the defensive, and we have begun to fall back to Kasr Partox.

I have seen more combat in these last days than I have throughout my entire career. I am a staff officer, and proud to serve in that capacity. Three days ago, I stood with the Cadian 8th at Kasr Gehr. As I looked out from the ramparts I saw an entire Traitor

Titanicus Legion marching in line across the horizon, framed against the blazing sky as millions of tons of ordnance fell from orbit. I saw a horde of mutant things swarm under the Titans' feet, sacrificing themselves to the twisted god-machines. I saw living artillery that stalked the battlefield, spewing shells the size of tanks. I heard the chanting of a million madmen and I almost wept for the fate of Cadia.

But then I turned from the wall to see the men of the 8th arrayed in companies across Kasr Gehr's parade ground. I saw pride, courage and honour writ large upon the face of each and every trooper. Not for nothing are they called the Lord Castellan's Own.

Creed addressed the men. We would fight a rearguard back to Kasr Partox. I looked upon the men's faces as he made his address, for I knew he was consigning many of them to their deaths. He knew it. They knew it. They were proud to know it.

That night the enemy launched their assault. It was presaged by a terrible, chilling wailing that bit deep into each man's sanity, but none wavered. Then a thunderous artillery barrage rained death and destruction upon the walls, but still the 8th would not falter. Then on came the first waves, and the 8th opened fire upon them. A blazing wall of lasfire sprang across the rapidly closing gap before the walls, and the enemy fell by the thousands. I exhausted my lasgun's charge in what seemed mere moments, and was reaching for a second when Kell bellowed Creed's orders for every second company to stand down from the walls. The rearguard would assemble, and the retreat begins. I resumed my position at the ramparts and reloaded my weapon. I felt a hand upon my shoulder and turned, finding myself looking into the face of Creed's colour sergeant, Jarren Kell. With a curt motion he indicated the waiting command Chimera, and I turned to see Creed pause as he strode up its ramp. His eyes met mine for an instant. He nodded and then motioned me aboard.

++BEGIN INTERCEPT++ TQW/7244/

The Ultramarines Honour Company has succeeded in crippling the *Planet Killer*, am attempting to track it but I believe it has enough power to limp to safety. I believe its main weapon is disabled, repeat, the *Planet Killer's* main weapon is disabled. Acknowledge Partox? Do you hear me Partox? Does anybody read this?

PHASE FIVE: THE WARP UNLEASHED

The last I saw of Kasr Gehr was the sight of its central keep aflame as we sped across the moors. Some ten companies had held to the last to allow the remainder of the 8th time to fall back. These brave three thousand were to abandon their positions at the last possible moment, but something went wrong. They were encircled, cut off, and fight as they might, they were overrun and captured.

A day later we learned of the fate of the men captured at Kasr Gehr. They were ritually disembowelled before our positions on the Viklas line. We could do nothing for them, and word soon got out. The effect upon morale has been utterly devastating, and it is all the commissars can do to contain the air of defeat that has settled over many units.

After the retreat from Kasr Gehr, Creed was forced to issue a harsh missive to his commanders. His words to the colonel of the Thracian 34th in response to a request that his regiment be rotated out of the front-line were relayed to all commands of Cadia, for they applied to every man upon the planet.

'Let me make one thing clear, gentlemen. We are now in the fight of our lives. The Archenemy has come to our home, with greater force and fury than ever before. All that stands between him and victory is us. Us, gentlemen. It is we who must stand before the enemy and turn him back. Why? Because we're here and there's no one else to do it for us. So if any man here believes he cannot do his duty to the Emperor, then he should present himself before the regimental commissars and stop wasting my time.'

The Emperor protects us but fate has heaped yet more woes upon our heads. We have received word from Captain Rameia of the Wrath of Hellaine that a Blackstone Fortress has been identified in amongst the

debris field of Saint Josmane's Hope. It is heading towards Cadia.

It is too late for evacuation. We must await our destiny and die like men of the Emperor.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

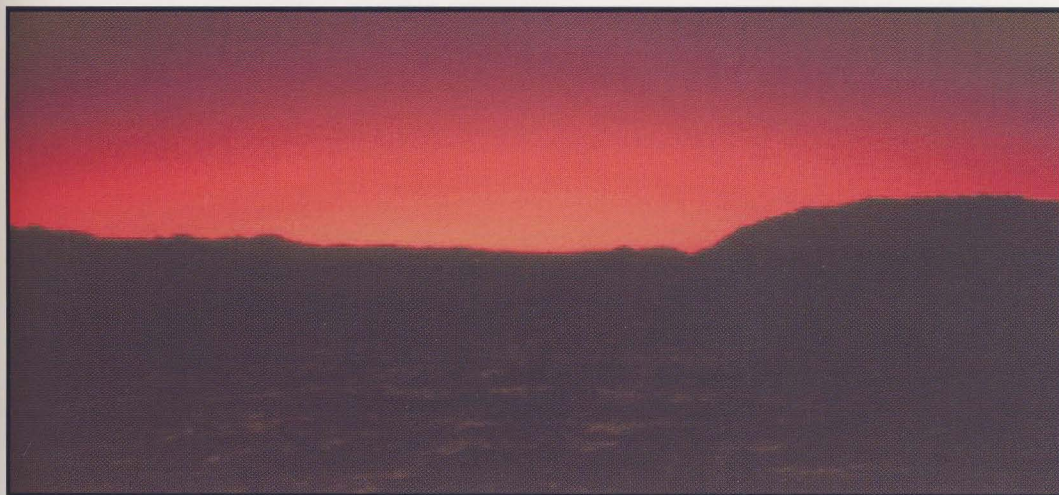
Events are now moving with such pace that I can barely record them. Within hours of receiving the news of the Blackstone approaching, the leader of the xenos eldar of the Ulthwe craftworld contacted us: the Farseer Eldrad Ulthran. He stated he had a plan. Creed agreed to meet him upon the plains before Kasr Partox.

As Creed's chief of staff, I accompanied him to this council. With us came a cabal of psykers, scant defence against the witcheries of these aliens, but the best we had against any such duplicity. The xenos appeared from some form of arcane portal, and I witnessed for the first time their alien, yet disturbingly familiar form. My head ached with the pressure of witchery, but I focussed on the message this Eldrad Ulthran bore us.

He told us that he would destroy this 'Talisman of Vault' as he put it, meaning the Blackstone Fortress. But to do so, he would require the aid of every vessel we had in the Cadian system. By the way he put it, he would require the sacrifice of every vessel we had in the Cadian system, but we had no choice but to accede. Creed shook hands with the Farseer, who then disappeared in the manner he had arrived.

We returned to the command bunker. The time for planning was over. We would stand, and perhaps live, or we would fail, and most assuredly die. It galled every last member of the command council to trust the lives of so many to the actions of a race as duplicitous as the eldar, but as the Farseer had said upon his parting with Creed, 'None of us has a choice any more.'

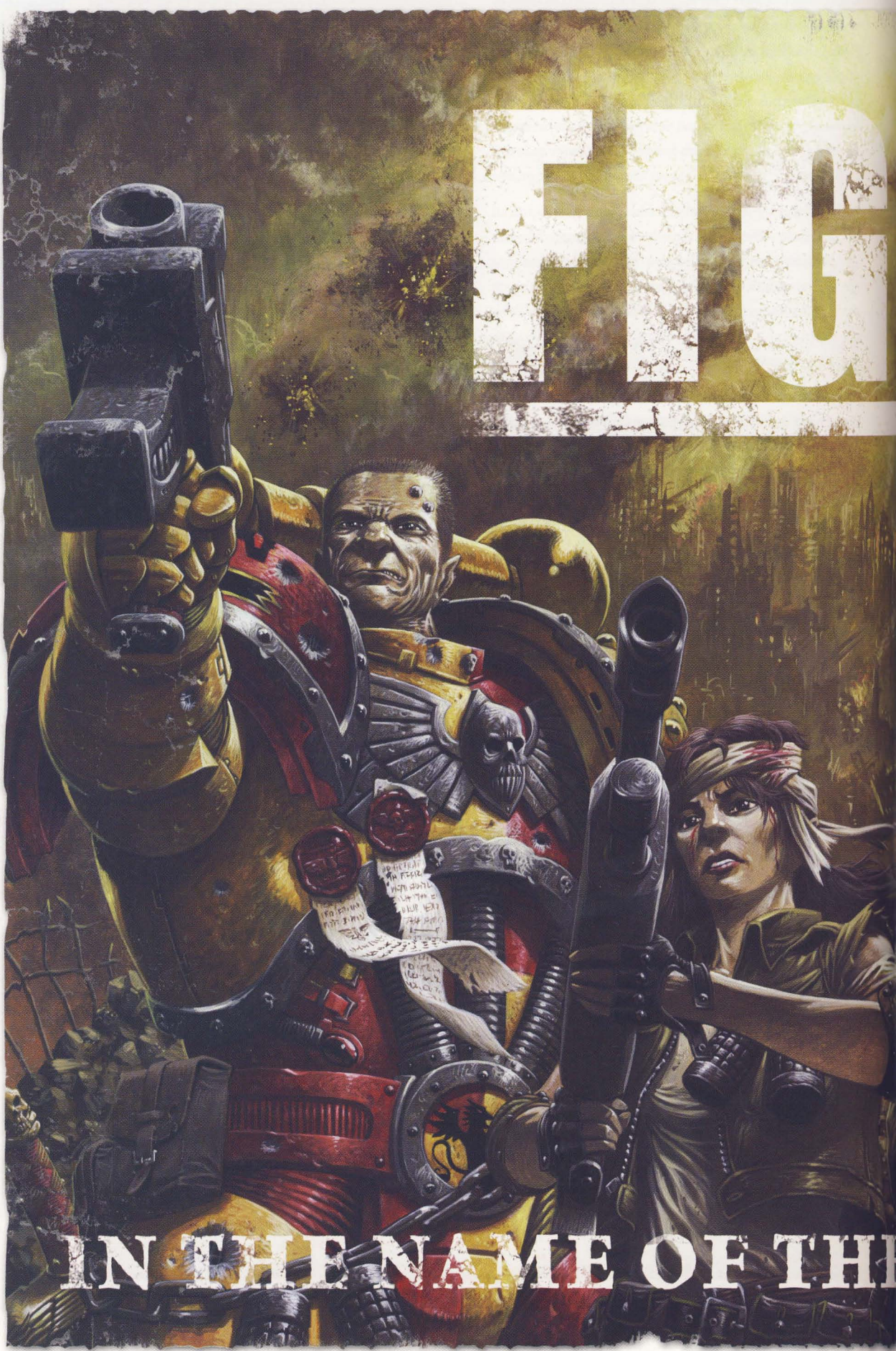
(Overleaf) Propaganda poster published across the Sectors Oculus, exhorting the faithful to resist the invasion. Featuring left to right: a Battle Brother of the Howling Griffons, citizen's militia member, Cadian shock trooper and Battle Sister of the Order of Our Martyred Lady.



(Left) A rare moment of calm across the Cadian moors, south of Kasr Gehr.

IMPERIUM, UNITE!

FIG



IN THE NAME OF THE

IMPERIUM, UNITE!

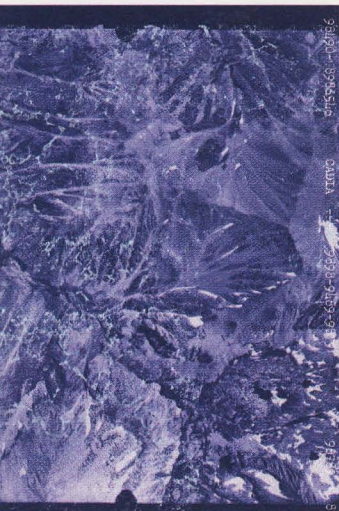
HT!

EGLOIOUS EMPEROR

(Opposite page) The blasphemies of the Warp are heaped upon the holy places of the Imperium. This sketch was drawn by a psyker who fell into an unholy trance.

(Right) The last pict taken of Macharia, showing the reflection of the Planet Killer's energy beam just before in vapourised the seas and utterly destroyed the planet. May the Emperor have mercy on their souls.

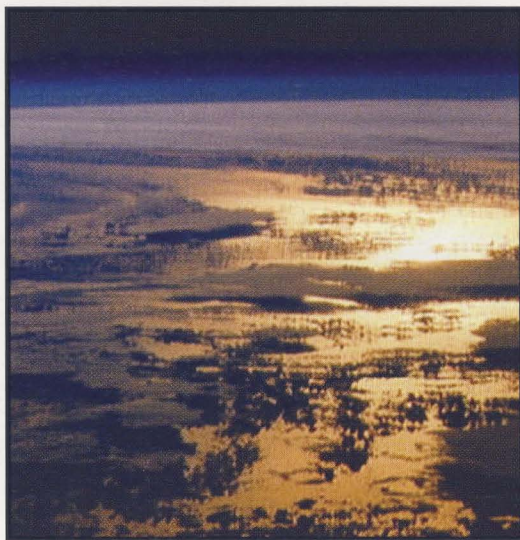
(Below) Satellite pict of the surface of Cadia. Clearly discernable are the valleys and gorges used by the enemy to advance on Imperial lines undetected.



JOURNAL ENTRY:

I write this as I stand upon the ramparts of Kasr Partox and look out across mile upon bloody mile of hell. My work as a staff officer is all but done; I am but one man, with one rifle, amongst literally millions of the faithful.

Our fate now is held in the hands of others. The fleet are gathered for their final stand, determined to gain time for the eldar to board the Blackstone Fortress and disable it from within. If they succeed, we live to fight another, perhaps only one more day. Should they fail, this world and all who stand upon it shall be scourged by the very power of the Warp unleashed upon its surface by the Blackstone Fortress moving into orbit above us even now. This was the Despoiler's plan all along; it has all led to this moment.



If I could recount the name of every man who stands before the gates of Kasr Partox, such a list would be equal in number to the names of the martyrs inscribed upon the Golden Gate. Merely listing the names of their regiments would take many days. Within the fortress stands 23 Cadian regiments, the men of each determined to uphold the honour of their world, and ensure their names a place in the long and proud history of this world. Beyond the walls stand a further 200 and more Cadian regiments, their banners standing proud and a prayer upon every lip. Alongside the regiments of Cadia stand a host of units from worlds near and far. Each has answered the call to arms; each has sacrificed all to be here, now. Knovians, Gudronites, Mordant, Thracians, Jourans and a thousand more. Many are from worlds I have never before heard of, and may never hear of again, but each has earned their place in the annals of the glorious histories of the Imperial Guard, earned it through blood and sweat and sacrifice.

At our sides too are to be found the brethren of the Adeptus Astartes. Space Wolves, Dark Angels, Ultramarines, Doom Eagles and many more I cannot name. To have such warriors as these at our side is an honour in itself. To know they are prepared to die here, with us, is tribute indeed to the task at hand.

Many more servants of the God Emperor of Mankind are here too. Sisters of the Adepta Sororitas, the mighty Grey Knights, scores of Inquisitors and their personal armies, the siege dreadnoughts of the Ordo Reductor, the mighty God Machines of the Adeptus Titanicus and their Skitari servants.

And amongst it all, the confessors of our great faith move, admonishing each and every man to hold true to the Emperor. They tell us such a battle as this is a battle of faith versus faithlessness, of purity versus heresy. Though we may die, we do so in the service of the Emperor, and no man can ask for more. We are filled with the spirit of martyrs passed, secure in the knowledge that we shall soon stand in the company of the Emperor, and the circumstances of our martyrdom shall guarantee every one of us our place in eternity.

But our numbers are dwarfed by those arrayed against us. Even from atop the mighty walls of the Castellum, I see not a single square metre of ground that is not held by our defenders, or trod by the enemy. It occurs to me now that every twisted denizen of the Eye of Terror must surely have converged here, before the walls of Kasr Partox. Yet I know that is a ridiculous notion, for surely such a scene as this is played out across every warzone of the Sectors Oculus.

And so, as the battle is joined, we wait.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

We have received word that the battle in orbit is underway. True to their word, the eldar fight side by side with our ships. But the toll being taken upon our forces is fearsome indeed. Now is not the time to count costs however, for this endeavour is surely worthy of the greatest of sacrifice.

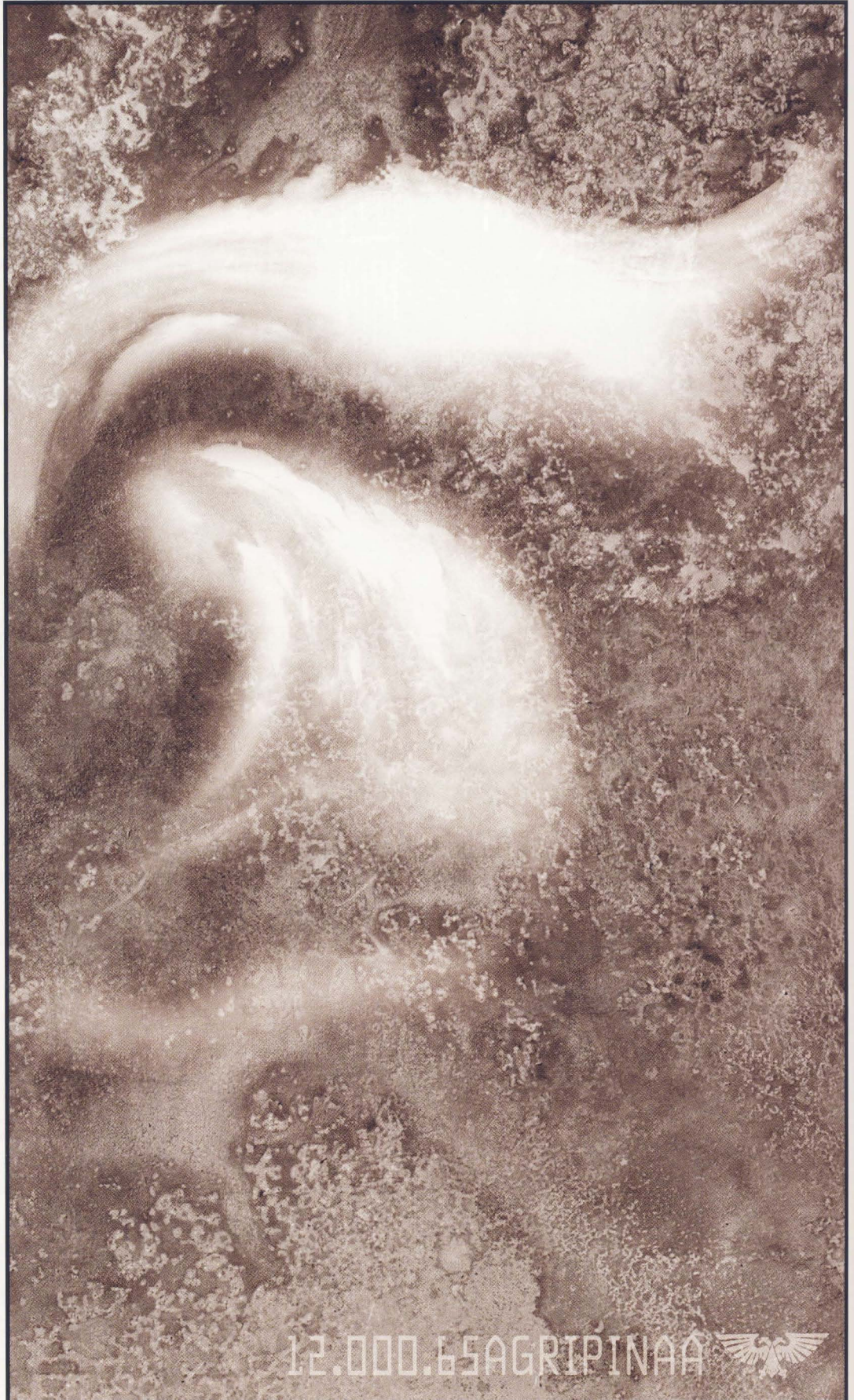
JOURNAL ENTRY:

A great pillar of searing destruction has penetrated the clouds and fallen upon the forces of the enemy before us. The screams of a thousand incinerating heretics assail our ears each passing minute and the lexmechanics state it is moving towards us. It will be upon the Kasr within the hour.

We are finished.



(Right) Satellite pict of the surface of Agripinaa. The surface of this planet was ravaged by Chaos forces, leaving behind a barren wasteland not fit for human life.



12.000.65AGRIPINAA



JOURNAL ENTRY:

The last days are upon us. We have abandoned Kasr Partox and are retreating towards the Caducades Sea. If we make it there we shall make our stand at Kasr Gallan. We have to make it there first.

How to recount the last day of Kasr Partox. I can barely begin. The eldar succeeded in halting the Blackstone Fortress, though not before it destroyed Kasr Partox. That once-proud Castellum is now no more than a blasted slagheap of molten adamantium and rockcrete, the charred corpses of ten thousand brave defenders scattered for miles around it.

We are still attempting to piece together the details of the battle in orbit that saw the Blackstone defeated. Admiral Quarren reports that the bulk of his fleet is destroyed, many vessels having paid the ultimate price to ensure the Farseer of Ulthwé the time to complete his mission. It would appear that the Farseer's vessel, the *Isha'ra* penetrated deep through the Chaos lines, many of its sister ships being destroyed in the action. Once close enough to do so, Ulthran boarded the station, and has not been seen or heard from since.

At the height of this battle, it is reported that a fleet of Necrontyr vessels appeared as from nowhere and assaulted the Fortress and the Chaos fleet both. So confused and incomplete are our records of this engagement that we may never piece together the true details. Regardless of their reasons for doing so, the Necron ships forced the Blackstone Fortress to disengage, and contact with it was lost soon after. The last we know of the so-called Talisman of Vault was reported by a psyker attached to the general staff, Lieutenant Fortuna, who was struck down with a vision of the Farseer trapped within a shimmering crystal, his soul-scream echoing throughout the Warp. No doubt our seers and savants will be looking to unravel this mystery for many years to come.

Yet, though the Blackstone Fortress and the *Planet Killer* both are gone, the forces of the Despoiler are seemingly endless and unstoppable. With Kasr Partox fallen, our command and control structure is non-existent, at least until we can evacuate across the sea to Kasr Gallan and set up a new headquarters there.

The retreat from Kasr Partox saw the most intense fighting of the war. Many thousands gave their lives that the bulk of the army might escape, and at first we were actually aided by the blinding beam of Warp-spawned destruction being projected from the Blackstone Fortress. Yet when it fell silent, the enemy

surged forward and were upon our rearguard in moments. The savagery with which they fell upon those brave men shall haunt me for the rest of my days, and the honour with which our men fought shall remain with me too.

I have lost count of the number of times the enemy threatened to overtake us during the evacuation. On each occasion I fought alongside the men of the Cadian 8th, Creed leading them from the front as ever. Though it has been many years since I last saw front-line combat, I can almost say I have acquired a taste for slaying the foes that would defile our world so, and have lost count of the number of mutants, heretics and traitors I have slain. And I shall go on slaying them while I still draw breath.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

I stand upon the shores of the Caducades Sea. Behind me I see nothing but smoke and flame on the horizon, and the advancing ranks of the invaders. Before me is the grey, windswept expanse of the sea, and across it, beyond the horizon, is Kasr Gallan, where we shall make our stand.

Here with me are a million men and more, the survivors of the fall of Kasr Partox. Yet they are but a part of the whole that stood scant days ago at Partox: many more are now dead, their bodies defiled by the blasphemous bastards that pursue us.

We are to board our transport ships here, and fire the port in our passing. We are forced to abandon the bulk of our heavy equipment; everything from battle tanks to heavy weapons must be left behind so that the warriors may escape, for what good are guns without the men who bear them? No matter, for we shall leave nothing of value behind us, all shall be wrecked and ruined to deny the enemy.

Even now, I am reluctant to board my transport, for steady streams of men are still arriving. I do not wish to leave until all are safely aboard their ships; I wish to be the last to leave, though I know that shall not be.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

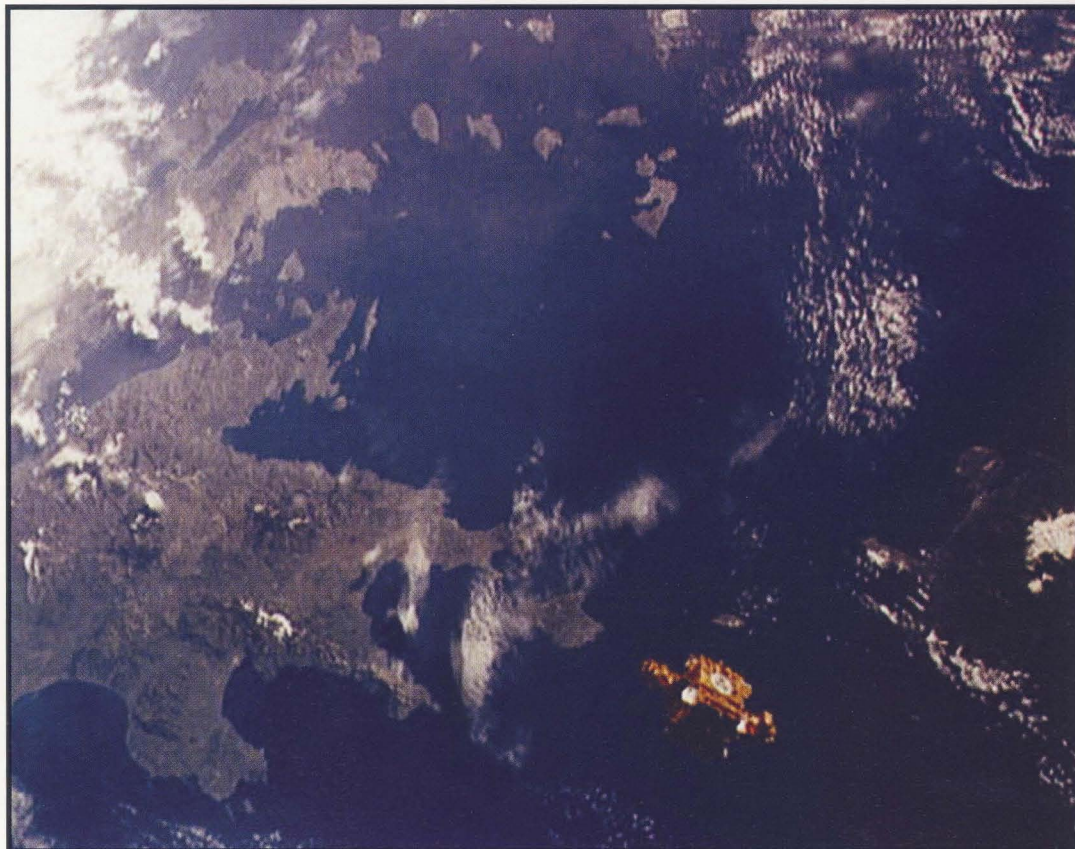
The bulk of those forces that took part in the retreat from Kasr Partox has now embarked upon the voyage across the Caducades Sea. The operation to dispatch them was a gargantuan one, but to their eternal credit, the Munitorum officers oversaw the process with utmost professionalism. The provosts and commissars were hardly needed; discipline was kept despite

(Below) Pict taken from an Imperial fighter as a Chaos bomber (top left) deploys two rockets against ground defence targets. The Imperial pilot managed to destroy only one of the rockets.



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

(Right) This image was captured by the defence platform *Shieldwall*, shortly before its destruction. The craft is of a design yet unknown, but is obviously of the forces of Chaos. Orbital tracking stations lost its signal when it reached the ground.



the air of crushing defeat that had settled over our troops.

One of the last groups to leave was the ecclesiarchal delegation, whose thousands of preachers had attended to the spiritual well-being of our forces throughout the fighting withdrawal from Partox. Some of these remain in the port now, determined to preach the word of the Emperor until the very end, and their sonorous chants at times drown out even the thunderous explosions of enemy artillery.

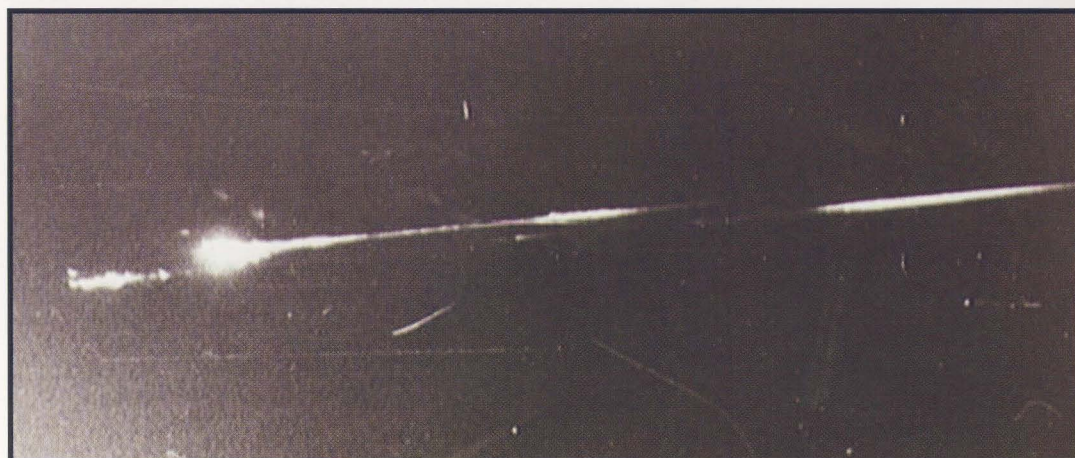
A company of Space Marines remains here at our side. The Subjugators, whose numbers are so

reduced as to threaten the very survival of their Chapter, have chosen to make a stand here. Truly, the Astartes are as gods amongst men, and I count myself honoured to serve alongside them. They have vowed to evacuate only when all else is lost.

Only a few thousand warriors remain now, and the enemy draws near.

I have volunteered to stay with the engineers to ensure the munitions planted at the heart of the port are detonated. Such a task is essential, and I shall relish the chance to time the destruction with the enemy's taking of the port. Throughout this war,

(Right) This image was taken by an Imperial Guardsman manning the air defences on Kasr Partox. These brave defenders have stemmed the might of the enemy as best they can, against almost insurmountable odds. Here we see a Chaos bomber being blasted with pinpoint accuracy by a Hydra battery.



THE BEGINNING OF THE END

I have done my duty as a staff officer of the Emperor's armies, a duty I am proud to have performed. My place is no longer at the plotting slate or the logister station. It is here, at the frontline, in harm's way. I welcome such a duty.

Enemy fighter craft are strafing our positions, oblivious to the flak of the Hydra units of the Cadian 463rd Armoured that have volunteered to stay behind. Shells rain down amongst our positions, fired by those terrible living engines. I swear, of all the sights I have witnessed these last months, it is these that shall haunt me for however long I have left. They are evil incarnate; they are a blasphemy against all that we hold dear, for all that we fight for.

The Enemy's troops will soon be upon us. I can hear their chanting. The sound of it pounds within my skull, so I raise praises to the Emperor and drown them out. I see their icons and banners from here. They gather around them and give corrupt praise to their twisted patrons. Here, a group of blood-soaked maniacs thrash at each other with flails, there a procession of naked and tattooed cultists of some obscene power of the Warp raise their shrill voices in blasphemy. None of this shocks me; it serves merely to redouble my faith in the Emperor, for the Despoiler would see all of humanity debased thus. I will be no part of such degradation. I shall die to see it crushed utterly.

I have fixed my bayonet and I will keep recording as long as I am able. It cannot be long now.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

The enemy is upon us. The headquarters security platoon is under heavy pressure from an assault developing from the south-eastern quarter. The flak tanks of the 463rd are now engaging ground targets, and the sound of their cannon is as ripping silk amplified a thousand fold. Hundreds of mutants and cultists are cut down as crops by a scythe, yet still more pile forward. The crew will not abandon their vehicles, for they are surrounded already.

I must wait until the chaos filth are within the central storage yards before ordering the detonation. My finger hovers at the vox-unit, but I shall stay my order until the moment is upon us, and not a second before.

JOURNAL ENTRY:

We are surrounded. The security [FRAGMENT MISSING] is overrun and I have heard no word from the engineers. I fear they [FRAGMENT MISSING] are slain. I have but one chance to ensure the detonation of the port and the death of a thousand heretics. I am [FRAGMENT MISSING] to set off the charges from here. May the Emperor guide [FRAGMENT MISSING] hand.



(Left) Pict taken from the *Vengeance Bringer* transport ship, en-route to Cadia at the outset of hostilities there. The object on the right is a Chaos boarding pod, three seconds before it smashed into the hull. Note the Warp storms raging on the planet below.

APPENDIX

(Right and opposite page)

Initial roll of honour,
detailing units involved in
the Crusade. The current
task of rallying troops and
taking an inventory of
equipment is mammoth.

AGRIPINAA HOME GUARD 2nd, 65th and 197th Regts listed MIA
BLITZEN HEAVY ARMoured file DS/88364b Achieved 81:1 Kill Ratio at Relief of Jeckenburg:
CADIAN SHOCK TROOPS 'Ward of Cadia' awarded to 912 Officers in 3 weeks
CADIAN YOUTH ARMY 'Order of Ollianus Pious' awarded for the first time in
seven centuries
CADIAN KASRKIN 19 Companies commended for Conspicuous Gallantry
THRACIAN GUARD 81st Thracian suffered 98.2% casualties at Operation
Alexis
GUDRUNITE RIFLES Held Operation Alexis Beachhead: file DR/834122g
NARMENIAN TANK BRIGADES 'The Armistice V Salient': file DY/22522z
CTHONIAN ARMoured CAVALRY 26th Squadron commended by Inquisitor Jexen
MORDANT 303RD 'ACID DOGS' 'The Occassio Counter Strike' file WQ/43962ly
DROOKIAN FENGUARD Commended for specialised actions in 12 noxious warzones
NARSINE YEOMANRY Severe losses, conscription now at 81%
KELLERSBURG IRREGULARS 2nd Regt. purged (by 7th Regt.) after unsanctioned
contact with mutant forces. 7th Regt. decorated.
FENREHT HIGHLANDERS Combined action with Xenos Kroot held Prosan City for 8
days
KNOVIAN GHARKAS 1st to 57th Regts combined after heavy losses
ZENONIAN FREE COMPANIES 'Defence of Disean Line'; commended
BARELIAN PENAL LEGIONS Outnumbered 200:1 at Barrelia
AVELLORN FIELD REGTS 'Siege of Cadia': only non-Cadian regt recommended for
'Ward of Cadia'
JOURAN DRAGOONS 383rd lost at Hydra Cordatus: file GM/SOI/1841542342

+++CONTINUED: FILE HD67/KKD/117353h+++

GREATER ORDERS
ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE Canoness Superior Charlotte commended
ORDER OF OUR MARTYRED LADY Honorary membership of the Knights of Cadia
ORDER OF THE EBON CHALICE Canoness Superior Cleopatra declared MIA
LESSER ORDERS
ORDER OF THE DIVINE LAMENTATION Refused reinforcements despite 83% losses.
ORDER OF THE ERMINE MANTLE Self imposed penance after loss of Order Banner
ORDER OF THE SILVER LILY Canoness Astra noted for loyal service during the
defence of Subiaco Diablo
ORDER OF THE SUBLIME ADORATION Rescued 188th Cadian at Crimson Fell
ORDER OF THE WOUNDED HEART Purged 366th Barissa Native Auxillia
ORDER OF THE MAURDLIN COUNTENANCE Canoness-Preceptor Dorothea Commended for
defence of Sancho Panza

+++CONTINUED: FILE AS67/UDD/739333r+++

HOUSE KRAS
HOUSE LAKAR Commended for holding 33rd Parallel
HOUSE AROKON Severe losses (file unavailable)
LEGIO VULCANUM I Supported Operation Alexis
LEGIO VULCANUM II 7 confirmed Titan kills
LEGIO METALICA 'Defence of Griffon Bridge': file GY/512092h
LEGIO IGNATUM Unconfirmed losses at Hydra Cordatus Legio Honourus awarded

Dernhelm 9th
107th Cadian
12th Methuselan Infantry
(Mechanized)
Thracian 290th
Framlingham Rifles
Cadian 3rd
Ritzos 12th
Praetorian 5th
Hadleys Hope XI Rifle Regiment
Cadian 9th Armoured
10th Mordian
Valhalla 54th
Bakka Sector Task Force
41st Elysian Drop Troopers 'Angel
Guard'
Battlegroup Nemesis
23rd Krieg
79th Britan Armoured
Reconnaissance Regiment
43rd/65th Heidrun
153rd Desert Devils
Pretorian 35th
352nd Sturm Pioneers
Hyrkan 6th regiment
Catachan XII
Flotte Coloniale XXI
Battle Group Imperatis
Phobos XVI
Darillian XVII
204th Cadian
7th Valhallan
121st Bifrost Regiment
17th Jopall Indentured
23rd Mordian
Cadian 47th
Battle Group Primus
Cadian 23rd
181st Wolfpack
Sons of Mjolnir
8192nd Kandorian Light Infantry
122nd Bushrats
Lunari 23rd Orbital Strike Group
1st Thunderers
Volpone 50th
Strikeforce Belarius
Cadian Old Guard IV
81th Regiment of Phyruss
Vanth Defense Legion
Cadian 8th
Mordian 113th
Cadian 121st
XXXI Victorian Tank Regiment
Mulsarian VII Army
Krieg 88th
Alderia Royal Guards
Orthos XIIth
Catachan 181st
Castellians 13
506th Tallern Desert Raiders
Mordian 667th
125th Dterian Regiment
329th Catachan
Telluride 39th Armoured Battle
Group
282nd Light Colonial Guard
Ionis XXII
4th Grey Phantoms
Mercutian 141st Armoured
Phrygian III
4th Arxan Rifles
Istanian 3rd Infantry
41st Armoured Hussaria
Task Force Perdius
223rd Camden
Tanner IV 26th Regiment
Mortimer IV
Carothian 313 regiment
Cadian 148th
112th Catachan
13th Praetorian
7th Garithe Armoured Cavalry
Regiment
Keltaxan 113th
Coban III
7th Cambreadth
Danko's 114th
9th Ilionian Dragoons
Grinnuth 27th
404th Morloc
22nd Cadian
Nimbus 2nd

Cadian 131st
Corican 101st
33rd Cadian
Corvus 23
Azin 2nd
11th Fleet, Emergency Response
Element
City Rats of Miskolc Prime
Cadian 39th
Turas 18th 'Orphans'
Peraxxian 101st Dawn Breakers
95th Sidoneon
Nomulan Wolves
264th Turian Regulars
8th Rygarian Army
Supremacy Force Marchon
Serennian Irregulars
131st Cadian
The Guardia 4th
Darien 54th Volunteer Infantry
Jarhardy Shock
Janus 1st
Dalarian 3rd
47th Cadian
32nd Cadian
XXIV Arkaddian Irregulars
Cadian 95th
New Crobuzon Militia
Elysian 156th
Madeus 3rd
Cadian 27th
Rardonian 104th
Frumunda 23rd Armoured Infantry
Iberian 1st
Irridian XIV Ironlords
Elisabethgrad Hussars
Jyhaddic 9th
Catachan 501st
Strike Force Crimson
187th Wahatian Guard
Corthasian Expeditionary Force
Cadian 20th
43rd Vitrian
Charon 492nd Mechanized
13th Munispice Fusiliers
23d Arcturan Regiment
206th Forax binary mobile infantry
Krieg XXVII Grenadier Guard
451st Valhallans
1st Molovian Guard
Cadian 379th
Golokov 3rd Armoured Cavalry
501st Uriah
Ulantii XIV
Attredan 5th
Calax VIII Regiment
The Royal Volpone 23rd & 50th
The Octavis 3rd
XII Holding regiment
Cadian 69th
Crinan IVth
9th Vandeen Guard
The Noctus 4th
Praetorian 303rd
Catachan 37th
Pheonix 49th
213th Mistian Para-Troops
93rd Lost Hope
20th Rigan Rifles (mechanized)
Erawan Freelancers
Epsilonian Guard
Falterravan Armoured
Zantinian 3rd Infantry Regiment
Cadian 3rd
194. Parsus III
Katakurika First
Fists of Chonthan
Battlegroup Deitweiler
3rd Khorporovka Crusade Army
Bethus 28th Light Expeditionary
Force
Ambrosian 35th
Cadian 7th
Cadian 10th
Vittrian Dragoons
Utican IV Desert Foxes
The Raiders of Ar Rustaq
Amaquan 1st
223rd Cadian
5th Alloran
Silar VII Sentinel Company
Carolyn Guards

Mordian 16th
Cimmerian 6th Regiment
Cadian 122nd
Janus XII Garrison Force
Phyrussian 10th
Elysian 158th
Torlean Armoured Guards
Mordian 7th
Kaylen Lancers
584th Firestarters
Arborean Prime
Cadian 135th
Cadian 12th
Chudian 1st Armoured
Vittorian XVII
71st Varseen Enclave Heavy
Drop-Legion
Cadian 102nd
3rd Carthago
The XXXVII Boroal Regiment
17th Catachan
Royal Hernovan Grenadiers
14th Lieran Rifles
Khymer 14th
Comagran 1st
Razacks Roughnecks
137th Hadris Rift Company
Tantris 1st
32. Lanthan Drop Troops
Abyssian IX
17th Glavian Skirmishers
Taskforce Damocles
Pyotorgorsk 292nd Arctic Rifles
Kreigars 3rd
Sphinxium Diamonds
New Phraxian 42nd
Talan 1st
132nd Caracan Armoured
122nd Tuigan Marksman
Valhalla 301
4th Tralian
Elysian 16th
1st Manninan Rangers
Cadian 377th
Vandorian 23rd
25th Skarran Guard
Mycenean 1st Off-World
Cadian 131st
Cadian 75th
Agrapinaa 67th Armoured Rifles
Cadian 123rd
14th Gleastonian Rifles
Calmonian 198th
23rd Steel Legion
Keldian Light Infantry
14th Mandalay
Cadian 121st
Jopall 114th Rifles
Polaron Defence Force
Rantaran 6
Catachan XV
Knovian Gharkas 14th company
Bavarian 6th Army
13th Cadian
3rd Mirra Nomads
Armageddon 37th
17th Bolshev Guard
Cadian 23rd
Teryaskian Red Guard
Tarentum XXVII
556th Cadian
Kalevala 15th
14th Cadian
12th Imbrium Dragoons
121st Patrian Light Infantry
Yontisgrad Volunteers
Cadian 173rd
Barbarossan 125th Infantry
Regiment
31st Lucian
Cadian 45th
Vastadt 71st
Macharian 24th
Cantera IV
25th Daltigoth Irregulars
Erland 22nd motorized
Cadian 734th
The Soran 8th regiment.
XII Diddiane Dragoons
Cadian 52nd
122nd Drookian Fen Guard
Iron Tower Regiment

Cadian 42nd
Strike Force Antares
9th Balakovo Guards
39th Chelsean
Kruegers Reapers
Saharian XLV
4th Carillian Armoured Infantry
13th Pinolus V Task Force
5. Augusta
Hyperion Guard
43rd Gudrunite Rifles
4th Alba Highland militia
Cadian 120th Armoured
5th Yamin
1st Combine Replenishment
Battalion
Kyschakkian 21st penal legion
13th Studka Rifles
Cadian 4th
1st Sempexnox
Baraduun Keep
Phrygian 32nd
2nd Ardelan Rangers
Durellian 4th
425th Heliothrix Combine
9th Dominicus
Catachan 22nd
Drepanan 212th
Vednikan 47th rifles
Nebian 3rd
13th Praetorian
Kirdian 5th
Weylond 71st Fusiliers
Battlegroup Maxima
Khumium Militia
23rd Phyruss Rifles
Utica IV
17th Alasia Prime Mobile Infantry
1st Heronian Battle Group
Seced 13th
1st Uthman
Cadian 366th
19th Grey Lancers
102nd Prosan Devils
The Vannheim 8th
Cadian 69th
Volcanica 1st
Karis 12th
73rd Reserve Fleet
1st Terratus Strike Regiment
Cadian 9th
Aldariss 1st
48th Valdian Rifles
13th Garlatan drop legion
Cadian 32nd
Asarkin Mobile Infantry
Solus 13th
477th Cadian
32nd Catachan
101st Elysian Drop Troops
Aurellian XIV
Kortoth
Patrol Group Aquila
Ishan 5th
Keldian
The 21st Sonnen Guard
Vastadtian 32nd
51st Kynskite Dragoons
Cadian 47th
Battlegroup Tempest
Rimini 54th
42nd Mykran Rifles
101st Amalgamated Regiment
Cadian 99th
Gracian 1st
Polisian 43rd
323rd Catachan
XIII Aurech Irregulars
Mordant 303rd
Bakkan Battlegroup Hydrax
Dogs of KaBahh
97th Eisen Irregulars
Calexian 7th
Battlegroup Gael
137th Hadris Rift

'For every battle honour, a thousand heroes die alone, unsung and unremembered'

Though Abaddon's final goal of smashing through the Cadian Gate has proved ultimately unsuccessful, the advances made by his forces have gained him much more than was initially imagined. His retinue of Chosen, led by Devram Korda, the Tyrant of Sarora, has returned to his side, bringing with him two individuals who had journeyed to the centre of the Eye of Terror. Together with the sorcerer Ygethmoir the Deceiver, they presented Abaddon with the Heart of Chaos, a power that Whiston, sorcerer of the Deceit and long claimed could not be broken. That Ygethmoir had information torn from the mind of the Emperor to breach the fastness of the close to fruition of the Harlequin's plan, which hand, which a

d long claimed could r
 that Ygethmor n
 hand, wh
 a

Ahriman himself ripped open the walls of the webway with
 information torn from the mind of Inquisitor Czevak. His plan
 to breach the fastness of the Black Library came dangerously
 close to fruition, but the combined forces of the mysterious
 Harlequins and the Ulthwé Strike Force held him from its gates.
 In a daring move, the Harlequinade of the Red Masque freed
 Inquisitor Czevak, though what they have since done with him
 is, at present, unknown: at present it is believed by Imperial
 Astropaths that he may be incarcerated by the elder within the
 webway. Though his ultimate goal was thwarted, Ahriman's
 star has since risen in its ascendancy with his Daemonic
 Primarch, so perhaps some other, unfathomable objective was
 achieved that remains to come to light.

Throughout the opening phase of the Order of the Ermine at terrible cost, against the shut height of the invasion, something. Defenders on the outlying tyrannid organisms - at first with tyrannid organisms - at first isms such as Lictors, but soon entirely and Hormagaunts. A splinter fleet of tyrannid fleet known to be attacking plane, was taking advantage of the invasion to gain a foothold in space. Faced with both the pustular Guard, and the voracious hordes of tyrannid the human defenders, immune to the Plague the forces of the Imperium were hard pressed vital worlds of the sector. It was first the eldar of the Ulthwé craftworld and then the ment of Laurentix that allowed the forces to fight back, despite the disastrous ambush of Battlefleet Solar at the Bairsten Prime junction days of the war, it was only through the efforts of a number of Adepta Sororitas Ordained at the Belis Corona sector, thanks to the renowned Canoness Astra.

at the invasion, only the con-
Mantle held out, though
ing hordes of undead. At
ing truly unexpected oc-
systems reported contact
individual vanguard-organ-
broods of Genestealers
Hive Fleet Leviathan, a
up through the galactic
mass destruction initiated
strategically vital Impe-
forces of the Death
oids who were, unlike
que God's blessings,
essed to defend the
intervention of
the orbital bombard-
of the Imperium to
forward elements
ump point. In the
the coordinated
ers that the line
the actions of

Kroo
Black Te
defence mounted by the Salamanders Chapter and
many other Space Marine contingents.

The Farseer Eldrad Ulthran, most gifted prophet of the eldar
ce, found that the twisting forests of possibilities through which he
t will were denied to him, blinding his exceptional seering abili-
me certainty was that darkness stood ready to engulf him
en his homeworld. At the formation of the Ulthwe
s Eldrad divided many parts of his consciousness into
s and, after many weeks of guiding his troops through
austed and spent when the eldar of Ulthwe's last
controversial member of the Seer Council as
with his Warlock brother, a desperate
ul of one of the desperate

The Dark Angels and their suc-
cessor chapters have hunted Cypher
for ten thousand years. Though
it is not known whether he was
encountered directly during the
war, unconfirmed reports suggest
that the chapter's Interrogator
for Chaplains captured as many
as eight Fallen during the battles
around the Caliban system, more
than have been captured in such
a short period in many thousands
of years. Further reports link
Cypher to the mysterious Voice of
the Emperor, who, it is rumoured,
was captured by the Dark Angels
during the fighting, but whose cell
was found empty upon the prison
ships' return to the tower of
Angels.

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in favour
activity in
ing upon these
ated several
ting across the

landscapes

(Right) The last entry in the memoirs of Adjutant General Alexis Grail.



I survived the assault despite grievous wounds. My position was attacked, and I took a glancing head wound that would have prevented me from detonating the charges, had not a group of brethren of the Subjugators Chapter come upon me and routed my attackers. My last act was the destruction of the port. Ten thousand heretics died in the pillar of nuclear fire. I would have happily laid back and died at that moment, for I judged my duty done. But it was not. The Subjugators, seeing my rank and station, evacuated me to their gunship and delivered me to the Kyr Gallan Medical centre, where I lie now.

I am collating my journal entries so that other officers may learn what happened during the fall of Cadian High Command and the desperate retreat to Kyr Gallan. I dedicate this work to the memory of those who died in the defense of Cadia, may they rest at the right hand of the Emperor for all eternity.

Darkness has fallen across a hundred worlds, and for the defenders of the Cadian Gate, the pure light of day now seems but a distant memory. Abaddon's hordes have gained a foothold upon the worlds of Man, and not one of us can see them being repelled for many years to come. Abaddon and his council of three have outmanoeuvred and out fought us at almost every turn. Corpses litter the battlefields in their millions, yet millions more still stand beleaguered, against a foe that knows no mercy and whose only goal is the utter destruction of all who stand before them.

Cadia still stands. But she stands alone, a failing beacon flickering against the encroaching night. Total war is come to Segmentum Obscurus, and all hopes of repelling the invaders are now dashed. We must now consolidate our grip upon those worlds we still hold, and prepare to fight a war that will not end within the lifetime of any of us. While Cadia still stands, humanity has reason to hope, but Abaddon the Despoiler has finally achieved what he has failed to do on twelve previous occasions, over ten thousand years- he has breached the Cadian Gate, and none can now hold back the inexorable tide of Chaos unleashed upon the Imperium of Man.

(Left) Creed's rallying call to the defenders of the Cadian Gate, rendered in stone, so they will be remembered forever.

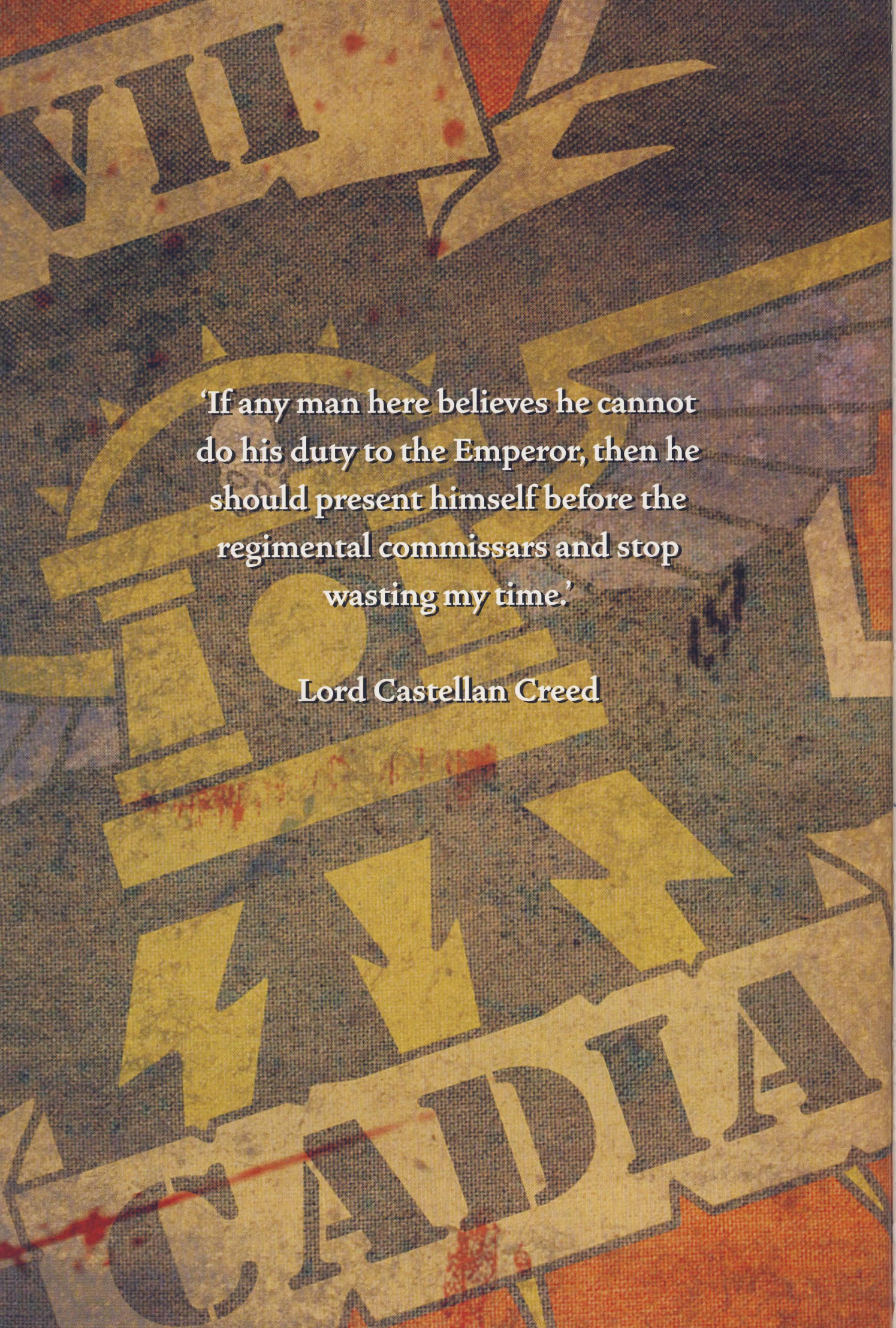


'Soldiers, I speak to you to tell you to keep faith with the God-Emperor. We have a sacred duty greater than any of us. We are Cadians, we bar the gate to hell; if it is breached, we will seal it.

'Wherever you are, recruit, recruit and train. Seek out pious men and bring them under your colours. While the Shock Troops march toward Cadia hope, remains. Know that we will never cease the fight while our world lies desecrated and burned. March on my soldiers, march on, till we are together again, tomorrow, on Cadia.'

Ursarkar E Creed, Lord Castellan of Cadia.





'If any man here believes he cannot
do his duty to the Emperor, then he
should present himself before the
regimental commissars and stop
wasting my time.'

Lord Castellan Creed



Andy Hoare works as a Games Developer in Games Workshop's Design Studio in Nottingham, UK. Projects he has worked on include the fourth edition of the Warhammer 40,000 rules, as well as the Necron, Chaos Space

Marines, Imperial Guard, Eye of Terror and Witch Hunters Codexes. He was part of the team that ran the global Eye of Terror campaign throughout the summer of 2003, making him the obvious choice to write this book.

The defining moment of the campaign came when Andy Chambers canvassed his opinion on whether the prison world of Saint Josmane's Hope should be destroyed. Having been brought up on a diet of big-budget sci-fi movies, there was only one possible answer...

The 13th Black Crusade is his first background book.

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"Die well, men of Cadia. Die well."

Lord Castellan Creed



Abaddon the Despoiler has returned for the 13th time. Now, the fate of the Imperium truly hangs in the balance. After dire portents and dark warnings, the Eye of Terror, that gateway into hell, opened like a fanged mouth.

Uncountable hordes of Chaos Space Marines, mutants and traitors poured out, seeking to break the redoubtable defences of the Cadian Gate. Caught by surprise, the forces of the Imperium rallied desperately, knowing full well that the fate of humanity was in their hands.

This book is the official Imperial history of this most terrible and dramatic passage of history. The backbone of the text is taken from the journals of one man, Alexis Grail, Adjutant General to the Cadian High Command, who was there from the start, and to the bitter end.

Learn here what happened in the 13th Black Crusade, but remember, the fate of the Imperium is as yet undecided.

