

THE HORUS HERESY

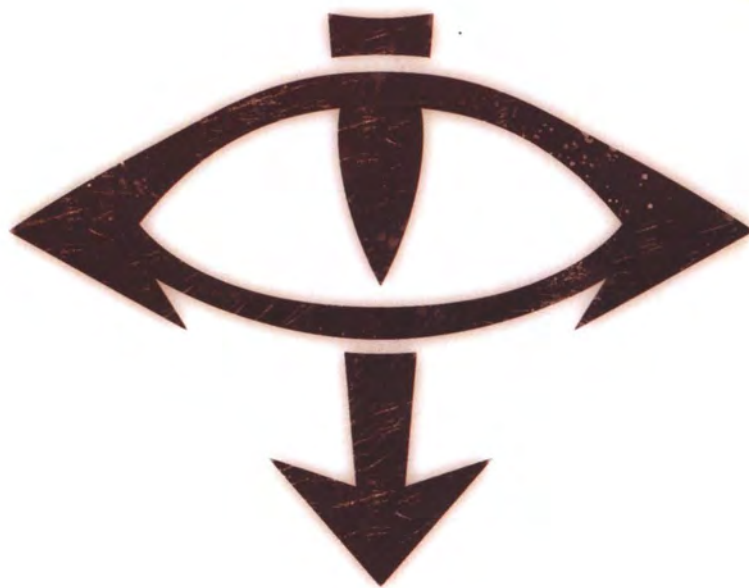
BOOK SEVEN



INFERNO

THE HORUS HERESY[®]

BOOK SEVEN



INFERNO

A SUPPLEMENT FOR WARHAMMER 40,000

CONTENTS

THE FALL OF PROSPERO

The Trial of the Sorcerer	9	The Fall of Tizca	37
The Mustering of the Host	19	The Impossible Battle	55
Prospero in Ashes	27	The Seeds of Heresy	67

FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM

The Space Wolves	72	The Legio Custodes	112
Servants of the Warmaster	100	The Sisters of Silence	122
The Ordo Sinister		132	

THE FORCES OF PROSPERO

The Thousand Sons	140	The Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad	170
Legio Xestobias		178	

THE PROSPERO CAMPAIGN

How the Prospero Campaign Works	186	Mission 3 – Calculated Slaughter	197
The Armies	186	Mission 4 – Reality Burns	198
Campaign Special Rules	188	Conclusion Mission 1 – Out of Time	199
Campaign Optional Rules	190	Conclusion Mission 2 – The Last Bastion	200
The Campaign Phases	191	Conclusion Mission 3 – Cleansing Inferno	201
Deployment Maps	193	Legendary Mission 1 – Spaceport Control	202
Mission 1 – Fear not the Witch	195	Legendary Mission 2 – Canis Vertex	203
Mission 2 – A Brother's Blood	196	Legendary Mission 3 – Apex Predator	204

THE THOUSAND SONS LEGION

The Thousand Sons Legion Special Rules	208	Sekhmet Terminator Cabal	214
Legion Specific Units	210	Khenetai Occult Blade Cabal	215
Legion Specific Wargear	210	Ammitara Occult Intercession Cabal	216
Osiron Dreadnought	211	Ahzek Ahriman	217
Thousand Sons Unique Rites of War	212	Magistus Amon	218
Castellax-Achea Battle-automata Maniple	213	The Primarch Magnus the Red	220

THE SPACE WOLVES LEGION

The Space Wolves Legion Special Rules	222	Grey Slayer Pack	230
Legion Specific Rites of War	225	Geigor Fell-Hand	232
Legion Specific Units & Wargear	226	Hvarl Red-Blade	233
Deathsworn Pack	228	Priest of Fenris	234
Varagyr Wolf Guard Terminator Squad	229	The Primarch Leman Russ	236
The Wolf-kin of Russ		239	

TALONS OF THE EMPEROR

Legio Custodes Special Rules	242	Elites	260
Legio Custodes Wargear	242	Troops	264
Sisters of Silence Special Rules	247	Dedicated Transport	268
Sisters of Silence Wargear	250	Fast Attack	271
HQ	252	Heavy Support	276
Lords of War		280	

MECHANICUM RULES APPENDIX

The Secutarii Titan Guard	286	Secutarii Hoplite Phalanx	291
Secutarii Axiarch	289	Karacnos Assault Tank	292
Secutarii Peltast Phalanx	290	Vultarax Stratos-automata	294
Acastus Knight Porphyron		296	

BATTLES IN THE AGE OF DARKNESS CORE MISSIONS

Playing the Missions	299	Mission 3 – Shatter Strike	304
Deployment Maps	300	Mission 4 – Dominion	305
Mission 1 – Blood Feud	302	Mission 5 – Tide of Carnage	306
Mission 2 – Onslaught	303	Mission 6 – War of Lies	307



Preface

It remains a universal truth that the arrogance of pride will always lead the faithful son astray; a truth which history teaches us, not even the Primarchs could hope to surpass. So it has ever been with humanity that mortal emotions such as pride and envy, wrath and fear should shape the path walked by Terra's children, and so it came to be with those bred from humanity's genome. So it was that the Primarchs would prove subject to Man's primal desire for power and grandeur, and above all, that 'Pride' —as the ancient had it— 'went before destruction' like a herald.

Against the forces of the alien and the non-Compliant, the power of a Primarch unleashed raged as an inferno, leaving naught behind but ashes and the bones of the dead. Yet the truth remains that fire may only be tamed by limitation, and as the Primarch Magnus gorged on forbidden knowledge and powers beyond understanding, the conflagration that followed would know no bounds. Ultimately, the inferno of Prospero would be a fire which scarred all those who entered into it, Space Wolves and Custodians alike, but more than that it would consume Magnus, the Legion which bore his blood and the world which had given him succour. Nothing of what was would remain, and what came after was something born anew from those ashes, a dark phoenix with no father but chaos.

Yet as the inferno raged with the titanic clash of Magnus and Russ, those who stood witness within the Council Chambers of Terra naively believed such a cataclysm would never again blight a united and triumphant Imperium. For hubris and arrogance, ignorance and folly were as much our sins as they were Magnus' in our measure. Contaminated as it is by mortal emotions, the present eye is short-sighted and foolish; only in retrospect does vision clear and the truth tell Mankind that we should have seen Prospero for what it truly was—a grim portent of the future that would befall humanity. Yet, if we could have seen what the future held as the ashes of Prospero began to settle, what could we have done to have halted that wheel which had already begun to turn? If we could have seen the firestorm of Istvan III in those ashes, would we have believed it, or turned our gaze to avoid the truth, or were we all tied already to Fate's wheel, mere pawns for the disport of powers we could not comprehend? View this record then, both of the Burning of Prospero and the shadowed history that went before it, compiled by hands other than my own that sought to find truth in the echoes of history. Study it and perhaps decide where the role lies of hero and villain, the wronged and the perpetrator, and whether what was could have been any other way.

I saw, with eyes then young, and this is my testament. I was there when Tallarn burned and Keoptis drowned in oceans of blood. I witnessed the skies of Terra riven with lightning on the day the Warmaster came and hell followed with him. I heard the funeral bell toll for the Emperor of Mankind and wept.

I remember.





THE TRIAL OF THE SORCERER

'Once destiny's titanic gears have been set to turn with ponderous brutality in their appointed track, it is too late for those insignificant creatures who man the engines to turn them from their path. Their lot is but to pay the bloody price for the ambitions of those whose hands rest upon the controls, for it is the blood of men that speeds the passage of history.'

Manifold Liturgy of the Macrotek clades of Zhao-Arkhad,
Stanza 183

Translated from the Arkhadadine Techna-linguis

The tale of the fall of Prospero begins many years before the first shell was fired, with the machinations of the Warmaster. In later centuries, there have been many who have asked of those few of us who lived through the final days of the Great Crusade and the Emperor's failed dreams of empire, how is it that Horus could set in motion a rebellion so intricately planned and whose web was spread so widely through the ranks of the Emperor's most loyal servants in such a short space of time, and with none of the great sages and generals of the age any the wiser? As with all such questions, the answer is difficult to understand without having lived through that age of darkness. In retrospect, it suffices to say that Horus' fall from grace was neither as precipitous as some would claim nor, perhaps, as predicated on the action of outside influence. For though the Emperor ever counted him as the most trusted of His sons — the first among them to be recovered and who fought longest and strove most mightily at His side — Horus, for all his ability as a leader, the power of his personality and his undoubted charisma, had always been short on trust and was sustained through his long years of adversity and struggle by a great pride.

As is often the case in histories penned long years after the half-remembered events they recount, hindsight shows us clearly these earliest stirrings of discontent and rebellion in the actions spread across the Warmaster's short dominion over the forces of the Imperium and even into the years before.

The careful stockpiling of munitions and resources, the preferential treatment shown to units and commanders who favoured Horus, and the establishment of trade pacts, patronage and treaties allowed Horus and those units in which he placed the greatest trust to operate without the oversight of the Emperor's closest servants. Some of this was no doubt the workings of a general without peer seeking only to further the Great Crusade, establishing appropriate contingencies and rewarding those who fought hard in his name, but that so much would later see him ideally placed to instigate the greatest treachery the human race has yet known is beyond coincidence. Even if at first he did not realise the urging that guided his hand, Horus had long plotted his ascendancy in the darkest corners of his mind and most secret, unadmitted desires. With his actions cloaked in whim and the long tradition of military patronage and honour, he laid many seeds that would draw no suspicion nor bear their poisonous fruit until far later, when other, more malignant, influences would finally open his eyes to the plans he had been laying, hidden perhaps even from himself.

Archival evidence exists for many orders and edicts whose ultimate authority extends from Horus, under his lawful authority as Warmaster, that set the stage for the rebellion that would later tear apart the Imperium. From the long sequence of all but suicidal assignments that saw a number of proud Terran Imperial Army units broken and humbled in the later years of the ninth century of M30, to the Warrants of Imperial Immediacy issued for a number of Knight Households of dubious loyalty proffered only through the direct intercession of Horus himself in M31, to the final assignments of Space Marine Legions such as the Dark Angels and Blood Angels which would despatch them to the edge of the beyond, too far to act when Horus' forces treacherously struck at last. Yet of all the tragedies to which Horus set the warriors of the Imperium on the road to its ruin, there is one which stands above all others in later infamy and horror. For once we had the veil of lies torn from our eyes by the violence to come, here was the true beginning of the Horus Heresy laid bare, the first shot in a war yet undeclared: the murder of Prospero.

THE LAST YEARS OF THE GREAT CRUSADE

- 981.M30 – Alpharius takes command of the Alpha Legion
- 984.M30 – Nostramo is razed by order of Konrad Curze
- 999.M30 – The Pacification of Ark Reach Secundus
- 000.M31 – The Triumph of Ullanor
- 000.M31 – The Fall of Saran Luxor
- 001.M31 – The Council of Nikaea
- 001.M31-005.M31 – The Chondax Campaign
- 002.M31-003.M31 – The Kayvas Belt Campaign
- 003.M31 – The Vespae Incident
- 003.M31 – The Luna Wolves are renamed the Sons of Horus
- 004.M31 – Horus returns to Davin
- 004.M31-005.M31 – The Destruction of Prospero
- 005.M31 – The Signus Muster
- 005.M31 – The Betrayal at Isstvan III – The War of the Horus Heresy begins

THE POLITICS OF CRUSADE

Prospero's death is a tragedy formed not by the workings of a single craftsman. For while its aftermath would serve as ready kindling for the fires of the Horus Heresy and benefit Horus' plans greatly, its inception was the confluence of many sins. Many bear a portion of the guilt, not least among them the custodians of Prospero itself, the XVth Legion, for they played the dual role of victim and instigator of their own apocalypse with consummate ease.

The XVth Legion had ever been outsiders among their brothers. Forged in the dying embers of the wars of Sol's Unification, they were not present for the great battles on Ancient Terra or indeed the re-conquest of the Sol System that moulded their brethren in the other Legions. Even the manner of their creation set them apart, selected by the hand of the Emperor Himself and initiated as His 'Thousand Sons', a sign of favour that many who had bled for their Emperor came to resent as unwarranted. As time passed, they were unified with their Primarch and the Legion manifested its occult heritage and arcane tendencies. Such ill will that already existed among brother Legions only deepened, and while none would openly denounce their success in the Great Crusade or skill-at-arms, few would gladly stand at their side in war or in peace. For their part, the XVth did little to dispel the mistrust that cloaked them. Indeed, there is evidence that while some of the Thousand Sons sought to mend the rift between the Legions, other factions within the XVth seemed to revel in their infamy and flaunted the powers that set them apart from their brothers. So the Thousand Sons turned their new status as outcasts into a banner to carry before them, a justification for the esoteric—and many felt dangerous—arcane research that consumed the Legion and its master. This discontent between the Legions would only fester further, each victory of the Thousand Sons serving to damn them more in the eyes of their detractors, accompanied as each was by the flare of incandescent sorcery.

The Byzantine Oath

Among the many secrets kept by the Thousand Sons that would be revealed in the wake of the destruction of Prospero was that of the occurrences on the distant world of Bezant in 823.M30. It was here that the first of the XVth Legion succumbed to the terrible cost of the powers employed with such abandon during the earliest years of the Thousand Sons Great Crusade campaigns, his very flesh corrupted by the effects of the Legion's psychic manifestations and turned against him. Rather than reveal this damning tragedy to the leaders of the Great Crusade and risk censure, and even perhaps purgation, the captains of the XVth Legion instead chose to hide the event from sight.

The conclave of captains who controlled the Thousand Sons in the years before the coming of Magnus called upon the Legion to swear what became known as the 'Byzantine Oath', to lie to the Lords of Terra and the Emperor Himself, that the Legion might confront this mishap of warped flesh without outside aid or judgement, perhaps deeming no other capable of such a task or simply resenting that others might stand above them. Such was the hubris and the resulting brooding isolation that it created, it consumed the Legion in its days of glory. For just as the distance held by the other Legions protected them from the taint of the XVth becoming known, it also left them unable to influence or aid their faltering brothers and condemned them to the doom that later overtook the Legion.

The Librarius Project & the Taint of Old Night

As the 31st Millennium dawned, there were those within the Great Crusade who believed that the Thousand Sons and their master had simply gone too far down a road long prohibited by the Emperor: the path of sorcery. But what is sorcery? To many, particularly those of superstitious mind, the manifestation of any psychic power might be called such, and there is perhaps some truth to this belief as all psychic abilities, no matter how rigidly controlled or slight in effect, are perilous by their very nature. But the more common definition has always held that 'sorcery', being an arcane and ancient term, was rather more readily applied in the Age of the Imperium to the reckless pursuit of psychic power or mastery over the forces of the Empyrean without due measures of control or caution, particularly where the use of certain forbidden texts and practices of ancient human and xenos origin were concerned. These arts, pursued in order to master forces of terrible power and breadth

without any of the sanction or stricture the Emperor's will and wisdom had enforced on His new human civilisation, were to any sane mind understood to be incredibly dangerous, not only to the individual who sought them out, but to all around them. In short, they were the sins of the past wilfully repeated, and it was of this that the Thousand Sons were generally suspected.

The loudest voices that called for the censure of the XVth Legion for straying from the path of sanity and law were those of the Primarchs Leman Russ of the Space Wolves, Corvus Corax of the Raven Guard and Mortarion of the Death Guard. All three had at various times come face-to-face with the all but unimaginable horrors that could result from the ultimate misuse of psychic power and feared that if left to their own devices, the Thousand Sons would bring such a calamity upon themselves and the worlds of the fledgling Imperium.

This opinion had behind it the weight of history, for the Old Night that had consumed human civilisation and brought about the long Age of Strife was often considered to have had its origins in the proliferation of powerful and unrestrained psykers. Indeed, many of the worst warlords to have laid waste to Old Terra before the Unification Wars and turned other, once shining worlds of humanity into charnel houses had wielded the same dark powers, born from unchecked psychic mutation and the pursuit of terrible lore no mortal mind could control. Moreover, the Imperium itself had always distrusted the wielders of such powers, and while it relied upon the likes of the Navigators and the astrotelepaths of the Astronomican for its existence, it rigidly structured and controlled the nature and scope of these organisations and the psykers who made up their ranks, laying on them a heavy yoke of servitude and the strictures of Imperial law.

From the Great Crusade's outset, the Emperor Himself had created the Order of the Silent Sisterhood and set upon them the duty to cull the numbers of uncontrolled and unsanctioned psykers in the ever-growing Imperium, yielding them over to the Divisio Telepathica for either draconian testing and indoctrination, forcible subjection to techniques designed to channel and limit their powers, or simply committing them to eternal incarceration or death as needed. But as with all humanity, psykers existed within the ranks of the Space Marine Legions also, and with the biological might of the Legiones Astartes to house these abilities and their bellicose skills to hone them, such Space Marine battle psykers were terrifyingly powerful warriors, and from the beginning this raised questions.

To their detractors, such as Russ and Mortarion, psykers in the ranks of the Legiones Astartes were fundamentally suspect. This was because they often had none of the overt limitations imposed upon the Scholastica Psykana and little direct oversight as was found elsewhere in the Imperium. This was doubly the case with the Thousand Sons, a Space Marine Legion who by its gene-seed's influence at its core formed one of the greatest concentrations of psykers ever encountered, and as time progressed, suspicion grew of the outsider XVth Legion, its hidden ways and its arcane secrets.

Yet the use of psychic powers within the Imperium's armed forces was not without its vocal advocates, for Sanguinius of the Blood Angels and Jaghatai Khan of the White

Scars both adamantly supported the use of such uniquely gifted warriors within their own forces, imposing upon them their own structures and controls, however ad hoc they may have been. There is also the immutable fact that the Emperor Himself was a psyker of unprecedented power, although the scale of His psychic might was such that He was beyond the perils of the Empyrean, and that He Himself had no doubt deliberately made the Thousand Sons what they were, at least in inception. Furthermore and with greater discretion, Alpharius of the Alpha Legion, Fulgrim of the Emperor's Children and the Night Hunter —Curze himself was a potent psychic oracle by some accounts— all made active use of psykers within the ranks of their Legions, though perhaps with more reservation and less fanfare.

These Primarchs had all supported a proposed scheme of structured training within the Space Marine Legions that would allow psychically talented Legionaries to employ their powers safely and in a directed and regimented manner—an initiative that would become known as the Librarius Project during the mid years of the Great Crusade. This was an experiment, with the Emperor's backing, that sought to prove the safety and usefulness of Legion battle psykers within Space Marine ranks. The inclusion of the Librarius in the Space Marine order of battle was at best a mixed success in retrospect. Its pattern, developed from existing structures originating within the Blood Angels, was embraced by some Legions, but paid only grudging lip service to by others.



In truth by fluke of genetic intake and predilection, certain Legions simply didn't have a sufficiency of potential psykers in their ranks to make a full-scale Librarian possible, while others who had the required biological resources were set back by their temperament or prevailing culture from embracing what many still saw as a perilous and unpredictable force. As the Primarch Perturabo of the Iron Warriors is quoted to have said, *"A blade without a hilt; as dangerous to the grasp as to the intended victim"*. To the Thousand Sons however, the Librarian Project was both a balm to outside suspicion and a justification of their own special nature, and was folded immediately into their existing structures, or perhaps more accurate to say, subsumed by them and used as an outward-facing front for the Legion.

Ultimately, the Librarian Project and its attendant measures served only to delay the outcry against the Thousand Sons' perceived tampering with forbidden powers rather than negate it. In the wake of the Emperor's imminent withdrawal to Terra and the elevation of Horus to Warmaster, those of the Primarchs opposed to the Librarian called upon the Emperor to make a final judgement on the matter before He returned to His Throne World. Such was the power of Russ' and Mortarion's arguments that eventually many within the brotherhood of Primarchs were swayed, and even the eternal rivalry of Rogal Dorn and Perturabo paused as the two grew to support the calls for an end to the Librarian and to openly condemn the actions of Magnus, Sorcerer of Prospero.

This hour of judgement was to take the form of the Council of Nikaea, a specially convened conclave hosting representatives of all of the Space Marine Legions and many of the grand institutions of the Imperium. Its ostensible purpose was for the Emperor to hear from the gathered representatives of the various Librarian and those who had witnessed their actions in battle, and to cast His judgement on their continued existence. However many, both at that time and in later years, saw the council not as a closing act of the great experiment that had been the Librarian of the disparate Legiones Astartes or a final assessment on an experimental program by its creator, but instead as the trial of the Thousand Sons and their Primarch, Magnus the Red.



THE COUNCIL OF NIKAEA

Ordained by the highest echelons of the *Magisterium Imperialis*, the Council of Nikaea took the form of a consistorial court presided over by the Emperor Himself as final arbiter of justices, though He took no part in either the debate or the voting that followed it. Of the many great offices of the Imperium's bureaucracy and chambers militant of the Great Crusade, a vast throng of delegates attended, with perhaps more than 10,000 souls bearing witness to the proceedings. First among these were the Primarchs of the *Legiones Astartes* and the High Lords of the Terran Council, as well as representatives of the *Martian Mechanicum* and the various *Ordos Telepathica* and *Scholastica Psykana*. It also included many representatives of lesser Imperial institutions—including the author of this record—and many thousands of other servants and functionaries of the courts of Terra, and it was rare indeed for any meeting on such a scale to be convened outside of the *Segmentum Solar*. Such was the pomp and ceremony that accompanied the Council, few could mistake the importance of the gathering, and the opening ceremonies alone lasted for several days and cost the Imperial treasury a sum equal to the tithe of an entire sector.

As with all such gatherings of the great and mighty, the Council of Nikaea was much more than a simple venue for the discussion of a single issue, even one so weighty as the fate of battle psykers within the vast armies of the Imperium and the *Legiones Astartes* in particular. In attendance were the lords of planets and sectors upon whom the weight of evidence bore, the directors of vast bureaucratic empires, and masters of hungry armies and far-voyaging fleets, all brought together in one place for a brief and momentous time. As the spectacle of the opening ceremonies unfolded, agreements were struck and webs of patronage woven in the shadows, and as the foremost lords of the Imperium sat in judgement over the *Librarius* and by extension the *Thousand Sons*, wider alliances were bought and sold in the distant galleries of the hall. Indeed, in the wake of the Council and the departure of its guests, as the host of servitors and menials began the month-long cleaning operation afterwards, no few corpses were discovered in discrete corners of the halls of Nikaea, testament to rivalries settled and grudges laid to rest.

Though a full listing of those who attended this momentous gathering and the many far-reaching implications of their individual actions is beyond the scope of this treatise, it may be considered useful to some readers, especially those who did not experience firsthand those glory days of the Imperium, to have at their disposal a concise list of the most important of those who made their voices

known during the Council at Nikaea: the Primarchs and those of full consular rank of the Terran Court or higher present, and their respective positions which they took on the central debate. For the sake of completeness, also noted separately are those Primarchs of the *Legiones Astartes* who were not present and their known or believed stance on the issue of battle psykers in the Legions:

THOSE PRESENT AT THE COUNCIL OF NIKAEA'S KNOWN STANCE ON THE USE OF PSYKERS IN THE LEGIONES ASTARTES

- **The Emperor:** Even in these latter years, it is frowned upon to speculate at the Emperor's hidden plans, and it is impossible to accurately guess His intentions for the conclave.
- **Malcador the Sigillite, High Proconsul Imperialis:** Unknown
- **Kelbor-Hal, Fabricator-General of Mars*:** Vehemently against
- **Lords Militant Tabor Ludovicia and Haldane Ma'lon, Muster of the Imperialis Auxilia:** Openly favoured neither side
- **Grand Admiral Constansa Suati-Falkan, Imperialis Armada:** Vehemently against
- **Occulex-Magister Jalisco de Jerichos Huerta, Ordo Astra Telepathica:** Avowed neutrality
- **Constantin Valdor of the Custodian Guard:** Favoured neither side
- **Magnus, Lord of the XVth Legion*:** Adamantly in favour
- **Leman Russ, Lord of the VIth Legion:** Vehemently against
- **Fulgrim, Lord of the IIIrd Legion*:** Proponent of their use
- **Sanguinius, Lord of the IXth Legion:** Proponent of their use
- **Mortarion, Lord of the XIVth Legion*:** Vehemently against
- **Corvus Corax, Lord of the XIXth Legion:** Favoured the censure of Magnus
- **Rogal Dorn, Lord of the VIIth Legion:** Known not to favour their use, but priorly on record as not strongly opposing their use in other Legions than his own – known however to favour Magnus' censure

**These leaders later threw their support behind Horus during the dark years of the Horus Heresy.*

THOSE PRIMARCHS NOT PERSONALLY PRESENT AT THE COUNCIL OF NIKAEA'S KNOWN STANCE ON THE USE OF PSYKERS IN THE LEGIONES ASTARTES

- **Lion El'Jonson, Lord of the Ist Legion:** Openly favoured neither side, but known to favour Magnus' censure
- **Perturabo, Lord of the IVth Legion*:** Against
- **Jaghatai Khan, Lord of the Vth Legion:** Supported their use
- **Konrad Curze, Lord of the VIIIth Legion*:** Supported their use
- **Ferrus Manus, Lord of the Xth Legion:** Did not favour their use
- **Angron, Lord of the XIIth Legion*:** Vehemently against
- **Roboute Guilliman, Lord of the XIIIth Legion:** Less vocal proponent of their use
- **Horus, Warmaster of the Imperium:** Openly favoured neither side
- **Lorgar, Lord of the XVIIth Legion*:** Supported their use
- **Vulkan, Lord of the XVIIIth Legion:** Supported their use
- **Alpharius, Lord of the XXth Legion*:** Supported their use

**These leaders later threw their support behind Horus during the dark years of the Horus Heresy.*

THE TESTIMONY OF NIKAEA

Much has been made by various scholars of the testimony of those who spoke before the Emperor, of the brevity of the council itself and the final judgement handed down by Him at its close. Dubious rumours of conspiracy and tangled webs of lies fuelled by misguided hindsight and now fragmentary records of the event itself now serve only to cheapen the drama that played out at Nikaea. In truth, there were many who came to present their testimony to the Emperor, speaking both for and against the open use of psychic powers within the ranks of the Imperium's armies and the Space Marine Legions in particular. Of these, it is clear that some came explicitly to damn Magnus and his warriors as a dire threat to the Imperium, while others to extol their virtues as warriors. At the end, Magnus himself rose to counter the vitriol of Mortarion with eloquence and reason, and yet it was not enough.

It is pointless to speculate on the mind of the Emperor and His reasons for choosing to condemn Magnus, the Thousand Sons and all the Librarians of the eighteen Legions. His is a mind fathomless to mortal man, and one whose perception of space and time, cause and consequence, we cannot understand. In truth, all the torturous theories proposed in the wake of events yet to pass when Nikaea occurred cannot hope to chart its currents, serving only to obscure what few facts are known. The fundamental truth remains that the Emperor chose to rule against the continued use of psychic powers within the Legiones Astartes, and pronounced the immediate disbandment of the various Librarius across all of the Legions without exception. To those who dared defy His decision He promised, *"I will visit such destruction on him and all his followers that, until the end of all things, he shall rue the day he turned from my light"*.

THE BEGINNINGS OF TREACHERY

The shock of Nikaea was felt throughout the forces of the Great Crusade, but by none more than the Thousand Sons, or at least it should have been so. Following the Council of Nikaea the Thousand Sons returned to the Great Crusade, the Legion humbled, that is save for Magnus himself, who ensconced himself within the great libraries of Prospero, turned to some purpose he kept hidden from his brothers and even from his own sons. For nearly three years the warriors of Prospero

prosecuted the Emperor's wars in the ways of old, with bolter and blade, and made no open use of the powers they had once gloried in. Despite the absence of Magnus and the 'sorcery' he taught, new campaigns were fought by the Thousand Sons during this period and no few worlds brought into Compliance by them in this brief calm, and at the time many saw the successes of these latter actions of the Legion as a sign of the Emperor's wisdom bearing fruit. In later years however, many have yet asserted that the practice and employment of psychic arts persisted as an open and acknowledged secret within the Thousand Sons, that the Legion defied the Emperor's edict almost from the beginning; such claims cannot now be verified, and are made inconsequential by the later actions of the Thousand Sons.

Regardless, the tragedy that followed is impossible to deny, though its ultimate blame is more difficult to ascertain, for surely Primarch and Legion, and perhaps the Master of Mankind, must all bear their share.

The Configuration of Guilt

Of Magnus' final crime, the act that brought about the fall of Prospero, there is little real information that can now be gleaned. The inherently secretive nature of the XVth Legion and the utter destruction visited upon Prospero in its wake have served to obscure much, and the Emperor and His closest councillors have never consigned such secrets to available record. What is known is that some three years after the Council of Nikaea, Magnus summoned the greater part of his Legion back to Prospero, gathering together the most learned of his captains and those of his sons once skilled in the forbidden arts. It has remained unknown to any, save perhaps the Emperor Himself, precisely what occurred in the depths of the Prosperine temples. Some rumours among the mighty speak of a great ritual that laid bare the nascent treachery of Horus or even of a pact sworn between the Thousand Sons and the baleful denizens of the Warp, while other theories hang on some misguided attempt to prove his father in error by a demonstration of wondrous power, or even of some abortive psychic attack stabbed at the heart of the Imperium itself.

It is, however, a matter of record that in 004.M31, shortly after the Thousand Sons convened on Prospero, the Imperial Palace complex was struck by severe ground shocks and a wave of unnatural manifestations of the kind linked in history to a disastrous psychic event of cataclysmic force. Across the packed hab-blocks of the vast palace-city complex, beleaguered Imperialis Arbites outposts were inundated with spontaneous riots and reports of strange phenomena, gruesome 'murders and other violent crimes, while power grids were overloaded and fires and other calamities ran rampant. Entire sub-sectors of the Terran metrocolony were plunged into chaos for days before order could be restored. In total, the ordinators of the Imperial Chancellery would later estimate casualties from these phenomenon and the resulting civil disruption in the hundreds of thousands, and repairs to sections of the Imperial Palace would not be completed fully for years, subsumed at last into Dorn's strategic fortification program before the great siege.

Though no official condemnation was ever issued regarding the perpetrators of this atrocity, records buried deep within the sealed archives of Terra show that the Emperor was to issue proclamations of the censure of Magnus within hours of its occurrence. That the most secure city on Terra, and the seat of the Emperor's power, was reduced to frantic chaos on the same day that one of his own Primarchs was condemned for the misuse of forbidden powers and summoned to Terra to receive judgement can be no coincidence. What Magnus the Red, Sorcerer King of Prospero, could possibly have hoped to achieve by such an affront upon the Throne World can only be guessed at, but its repercussions would shake the very foundations of the Imperium.





y the Word and the Will of
the Master of Mankind,
Imperator, Imperatoris, Terra Regnum,

It is hereby decreed that Magnus, Primarch of the
XVth Legiones Astartes, be bought forth in censure
and bound by law to stand before the Throne
Imperial of Terra, there to answer for his actions
and those of his gene-sons.

To this end is Leman Russ, Primarch of the VIth
Legiones Astartes, so charged upon the deliverance
of his brother, by any and all means he may
find needful, without limit in law, sanction or
imposition of attainder, unto the limitless void and
the last day.

So it is written, so it shall be.



THOUSAND SONS VETERAN LEGIONARY OF THE GREAT CRUSADE

VETERAN LEGIONARY INTEP PRADES

GYAL-5 CIRCLE OF THE SECOND FELLOWSHIP

TACTICAL DEPLOYMENT, SERISTANUS CAMPAIGN

Following the bloody prosecution of the Kamenka Troika by the Thousand Sons Legion, recently come under the direction and program of renewal masterminded by their Primarch, Magnus the Red, the XVth were formally reorganised into a system of Fellowships and swiftly their form and panoply were altered to a state recognisable for the rest of the Great Crusade era.

Depicted here in the shape of one of its battleline Legionaries, Intep Prades, here recorded as part of the Seristanus Campaign taskforce, offers a visual manifestation of those changes: the MkII 'Crusade' pattern power armour which was still in general use by the Legion at this stage was redressed in Prosperine crimson, while pauldrons and helm have been refashioned or replaced with so-called 'Achean' pattern modifications by the Legion's own artificers. The symbolism and decoration of these draws both from the culture of Prospero in which their Primarch had long been steeped and the lore of its temples, with the crown of the helm echoing reliquary adornments of ritual significance. Likewise, a tactical marking upon the pauldron has been replaced with one of the many variations of the scarab emblem which would become swiftly associated with the Legion, almost as much as the solar glyph which would become the Thousand Sons' official armorial icon. In this case a white scarab, a symbol of the attainment of higher learning, is used in particular to denote Veteran status within membership of the Second Fellowship of the Legion during this era.



Great Crusade Era Thousand Sons Second Fellowship Veteran Armorial



THE MUSTERING OF THE HOST

'A sword has but a single use: it ends lives. When you draw a sword, you unleash death upon the world. You may claim to wield your weapons in the name of peace or justice, but death is the inevitable consequence, and once unleashed he is rarely easily satisfied.'

The Admonitions of the Wolf King, from the archives of the Remembrancer Order

With Terra's astropathic choirs in temporary disarray following the psychic maelstrom that had struck the Imperial Palace, it would be several weeks before word of the judgment issued upon Prospero and the Writ of Censure issued by the Emperor would reach its twin destinations: Fenris and the court of Leman Russ, and the council of Horus, Warmaster of the Imperium. Many records of this period remain fragmentary, both because of the tumult later visited on Terra during the great siege, and also because long before then a veil of secrecy

had been drawn over matters that none but the Emperor's hand might have lifted. What can be said is that responsibility for the dread task of censure fell initially to the Captain-General of the Legio Custodes, Constantin Valdor, and by his command was a force assembled on Terra for the prosecution of the Emperor's will at Prospero, though it was to be Leman Russ, Primarch of the Space Wolves, who was given overall command of the Censure Host, as the combined fleet was to be named. Only a Primarch was to be given power over a Primarch.

The Emperor's Talons

Valdor, whose martial power stood second only to the Primarchs themselves, had long held the Emperor's favour and carried the Emperor's own judicial seal—the Magisterium Maxima—whose rank set him upon the highest circles of the Imperial Court and war councils of the Great Crusade by right. But despite his undoubted personal authority, Valdor had long studiously maintained a position of careful neutrality among the myriad factions of the Imperial Court and Great Crusade, intervening only



where he believed it was his duty to do so. In that the Emperor's chief bodyguard was given command of this mission to Prospero can perhaps be seen the hand of the Emperor's first councillor, Malcador the Sigillite. It is likely that a lesser man than Valdor would have quickly fallen afoul of political division and rivalry within the Imperium's hierarchy, and the Censure mission itself turned to the service of one faction or another, and it is also perhaps true that any other than Valdor as court emissary would simply

have been too weak to face down a Primarch on his home soil. Few, however, among the newly forged elite of the Imperium would dare impede the grim lord of the Legio Custodes, and Valdor undertook to assemble a force to carry out the Emperor's will exactly as it was recorded upon the Writ of Censure.

Lord Constantin Valdor would have had little trouble in securing troops for his task, for though it had been near two centuries since the wars of Unification had ended and the Sol System pacified, Terra remained the greatest

fortress within the Imperium. Here, at the centre of humanity's galactic domain, a vast host of warriors from worlds both near and far waited for the Emperor's command, from lesser forces such as the Legiones Astartes warriors of the Crusader Host, to the millions strong Terranic Auxilia regiments of the Imperial Army, and all manner of exotic fighting men inbetween. Of these Valdor chose a mixture both of the most powerful and arcane, as well as some of the most resplendent to serve as a fitting guard of honour for the disgraced Lord of Prospero on his return to Terra, for such an event would serve as both punishment for Magnus and a message to the entire Imperium. At the forefront of the host stood a detachment of the Legio Custodes themselves, the most fearsome of the gene-warriors created by the Emperor and a stirring sight gathered in their gleaming golden war plate and repulsor craft. The bulk of this Terran force was to be composed of several regiments of the Imperial Army, including the proud warriors of the 3rd Terranic Auxilia, bearing potent arms and armour from the forges of secretive Luna, and eight full cohorts of the fearsome Tyrian Exo-guard which had been serving as part of the Throne World's rotating garrison, each warrior clad in the lacquered void armour of that distant world.

Unknown to most observers at that tumultuous time, another contingent was to join those units that embarked on the ships of the Censure fleet at Terra, a group that would be seen at none of the glorious parades held along the vast processional avenues of the Palace complex before departure. Three vigils of the Silent Sisterhood, led by Vigil-commander Krole, along with a small flotilla of the black-hulled null-psi stalker ships for which the Order was renowned, were to join the fleet, along with an entire maniple of the Ordo Sinister—a still relatively new institution beholden only to the authority of the Throne and a specialised Titan sub-Legio headquartered in secret vaults within the Imperial Palace. The Ordo Sinister was a force of dark renown as befitting its name, dedicated to the suppression and destruction of alpha class psyker threats and the violent civil disorder which often accompanied them. Such additions as the Silent Sisters and the Ordo Sinister speak of the Emperor's determination to have His errant son returned to Him by any means necessary, should the need arise, though the secrecy of their deployment would imply that such dread means were not the preferred method of the crisis' resolution.



THE CENSURE HOST, TERRAN CONTINGENT

Being those units that were assembled on the Throne World of Terra to prosecute the Writ of Censure issued by the Emperor's hand in 004.M31 and decreeing that Magnus the Red, Lord of Prospero and the XVth Legion of the Legiones Astartes, be brought in disgrace to Terra, there to face the judgement of his father.

Senior Officer Cadre

- Constantin Valdor, Captain-General of the Legio Custodes – granted the Emperor's Seal and the right to mete High Justice within His realms.
- High Marshal Markas Rhone, Commander of the 3rd Terranic Auxilia and senior officer of the Excertus Imperialis.
- Jeneria Krole, Senior Vigil-commander of the Silent Sisterhood.
- Dominus-Xelatcus Thrane Esmark, Commanding Princeps of the Chamber Occidentalis of the Ordo Sinister.

Main Contingent

- The Legio Custodes – 982 warriors constituting 91 separate Sodalities of the Legio Custodes.
- The Silent Sisterhood – Estimated 3,000 Sisters-militant, constituting three full Vigils of the Silent Sisterhood.
- 3rd Terranic Auxilia – 5,000 Terran troopers of the Terranic Auxilia, known informally as the 'Ironsides Regiment', recruited primarily from Old Albia.
- Tyrian Exo-guard, Cohorts Siris, Asag, Rabisu, Asakku, Kur, Edimmu, Siduri and Atra – Each cohort consisting of 600 void-armoured Exo-guard and 100 helot auxiliaries.
- 9th Solar Auxilia Cohort – One of the renowned Saturnyne Rams regiments, 4,000 void hoplites and support vehicles.
- 10th & 42nd Sarcosan Voltigeurs – Recent arrivals on Terra in the wake of the Dark Angels campaign to bring their home world to Compliance. Each regiment comprised approximately 3,000 light infantry with a small detachment of Terranic overseers.
- Charonid Sentinels, Third Fane – A full detachment of the dour, heavily augmented watchmen of the outer Terran system, replete with their full panoply of otherwise proscribed weaponry. The Third Fane numbered slightly more than 2,000 men-under-arms.
- Sydonian Taghmata Elements Ekriss, Norne and Ifrem Taghma – A small force of Mechanicum warriors, attached to the Censure Host as observers and to affect the inspection and potential dismantling of any Mechanicum assets or prohibited technology present on Prospero. [Note that the inclusion of this force seems to have been in response to a late and direct request from the Fabricator-General of Mars]
- The Chamber Occidentalis of the Ordo Sinister - Five Psi-Titans of the Ordo Sinister, all Warlord Psi-Titans machines.
- Secutarii Sinister – Approximately 1,000 Secutarii of the Ordo Sinister, attached to the force as support troops for the Chamber Occidentalis.

remained those always ready to believe the worst of the Crimson King, while Valdor himself was a being to whom caution and preparedness were not just virtues born of duty, but the very stuff of his existence. Atharva, as principal informant of Constantin Valdor's plans, was granted Exemptus status, sundered by decree from any of his Legion's sins both past and future, and remanded to the custody of the Crusader Host, to remain within the bounds of its Preceptory until the matter was resolved.

With the calming of the Æther and the finalisation of their plans, the Censure Host left Terra bound for the mustering grounds of the Beta-Garmon system, hoping to rendezvous with the Primarch of the Space Wolves, Leman Russ, and his forces. Meanwhile, the astropathic choirs of Terra, now matters had been set in motion, were tasked with the promulgation of the Writ of Censure, broadcasting in the most emphatic meme-code to all major Imperial sector capitals—there was to be no sanctuary for one whom the Emperor had condemned for the grievous sin of subversion of Imperial edict, no hidden corner of His empire to which he might flee. Yet, most urgently, the astropaths strove to reach the distant lord of the Space Wolves to whom the Emperor had given the onerous task of warden of the Emperor's justice and whom Constantin Valdor awaited at Beta-Garmon.

THE WOLF KING

Leman Russ and his Wolves were not sat idle while events progressed on Terra; the chronicles of the Great Crusade make mention of at least seven separate war zones and Crusade fleets with a considerable complement of the VIth Legion present at the time of the disastrous trigger of Magnus' censure. The Lord of the Space Wolves himself was known for taking an active role in the harshest combat operations assigned to his Legion and, according to record, was embroiled in the bloody eradication of a Skarik xenos infestation in the strife-torn wilderness space around Cypra Mundi, known as the Æther Metus, vital to the stable warp channel linking the resource-hungry sectors of the inner Segmentum Solar to the recently conquered expanses of the galactic west. Due to the nature of the VIth Legion, there are few accurate reports of the reception that the announcement of the Writ of Censure found with the Wolf King, though the haste with which he made an end of his prior commitments and recalled his forces before departing for Prospero hints at the fervour with which Leman Russ received

Departure

Despite the urgency of the Emperor's orders, it would take several months for the Censure Host to be fully assembled, equipped and properly fêted before its final departure. This was as much due to the after-effects of the psychic storms that had struck Terra as the solemnities that accompanied the departure of such an assembly of renowned warriors on so momentous an order. As the various regiments attached to the Censure Host were mustered, its appointed commanders were to spend much time sequestered in the reclusiam levels of the fortresses of the Divisio Militaris, there reviewing the scant

records held on Terra of the distant world of Prospero. It is also recorded that Atharva, the sole Thousand Sons representative within the Crusader Host, was brought before Valdor, Malcador and others, where he surrendered up what information he had on the activities of his Legion and disposition of forces and defences upon the world of Prospero. This information was to form the basis of Valdor's contingency plans, for while many among the councils of Terra saw little chance that Magnus would resist the Emperor's call for him to return to Terra, much less that he might lead his Legion in open rebellion against the Imperium, there

the Emperor's command. Whether this zeal stemmed more from devotion to his Emperor or disgust at his brother's actions, history does not speak.

Upon receiving word of the Writ of Censure and the Emperor's command to arrest Magnus and return him to Terra, the Wolf King is known to have had at close hand some two full Great Companies of his Space Wolves—approximately 20,000 Legiones Astartes warriors. These were the First and Seventh Great Companies of the Space Wolves; the First being composed mainly of the elite huscarls of the Wolf King's bodyguards and the main force Cataphractii Terminators currently in service with the VIth Legion, while the Seventh included a heavy presence of the Black Cull, an informal name referring to the Deathsworn and the Destroyer corps of the VIth Legion. Despite, or perhaps because of, the urgency of the Emperor's orders, Leman Russ did not immediately quit the field at the war zones of Cypra Mundi, instead abandoning the previous strategy favoured by the Admiralty and Imperialis militia regiments present—that of a careful and methodical sweep across the infested planetoids—and leading the assembled warriors of the Imperium on a strike directly targeting the most heavily infested world, known to be the source of the xenos foe. In short order the Space Wolves had reduced the shadow-shrouded xenos nest to phosphex-drenched ruins, and cut the heart from the infestation spreading across nearby worlds, but they paid a high price for their victory, leaving several thousand of their brothers slain on the field. Judging his task complete, the Wolf King withdrew his Legion after the sundering of the Skarik lair-world, despite the complaints of the Imperial Army commanders left behind to finish the fighting and secure the sector for rebuilding. In response to these complaints, the Wolf King is known to have said; *"When the Emperor seeks to destroy, He sets loose the wolf. He keeps caged and blood-hungry at His side; the death wolf knows but one path, and those who seek to place a collar on such a beast and place it as sentinel about their homes court only ruin."*

It is recorded that after the Space Wolves departed, the regiments of the Imperial Army they had abandoned to finish the work fared badly, and though Leman Russ had ended the greatest part of the threat, it would be many years before the remnants of the Imperium's forces, despite later reinforcement, could finally eradicate the outlying strongholds of a foe that while shattered, was now hell-bent on vengeance.

The Wolves Gather

Ignoring any further dissent, Leman Russ and his Space Wolves abandoned the war zones of Cypra Mundi and made best speed for their ice-shrouded sanctuary at Fenris. The Fifth Great Company, which was at that time in the process of resupply on the Legion's home world, was added to the Wolf King's growing host. From his forbidding lair within the fortress known as the Fang, Leman Russ issued an astropathic summons, calling upon all those units of the VIth Legion within striking distance of Prospero to assemble at Fenris or Beta-Garmon and await his arrival. Though the records kept by the Space Wolves are notoriously difficult to interpret by outsiders with regards to details, it is unlikely that Leman Russ remained at Fenris for more than a Terran standard month, for his journey to Beta-Garmon and rendezvous with Valdor forestalled any attempt at an over-long delay. As a consequence, there would be little time for

the depleted ranks of the First and Seventh Great Companies to be reinforced, or for those Great Companies at war in the furthest reaches of the Imperium to make their way to Fenris in answer to their lord's call in time.

Of the few concrete facts that can be isolated in the complex oral sagas which the Space Wolves use to codify their operations, is that before leaving Fenris, Leman Russ would be joined by the warriors of the Fourth, Eighth and Twelfth Great Companies, as well as small detachments of the Thirteenth and Second. However, many of these units were to come directly from the field of battle in answer to the Wolf King's call, and as the Space Wolves were rarely committed to campaigns that expected victory to come without a high toll, many were in need of time to resupply and redress their ranks, despite being more self-reliant than most Space Marine formations thanks to the VIth Legion's perfected methods of warfare.

THE BITTEREST HATE

What could have caused a Primarch, especially one as renowned for his single-minded loyalty as Leman Russ, to act in less than full accord with the orders of the Emperor? Much has been made in past treatise of the persuasiveness of the newly anointed Warmaster, seeking to place the blame for this corruption of the fleet's orders on his shoulders alone. Such revisionist theories ignore a number of other potential causes, seeking favour with the courts of Terra by idealising those Primarchs who would later fight on the Loyalist side, and are a dangerous conceit for a scholar. It is well recorded in the records of those near-forgotten years that Leman Russ bore little love for his learned brother, whose 'sorceries' he saw as a potential threat to the Imperium. Indeed, the two had quarrelled on a number of occasions, and at the Council of Nikaea Russ been one of Magnus' most vehement detractors. Not only this, but it was an open secret within the ranks of the Divisio Militaris that the Space Wolves had served many times not just as one of the vanguards of the Great Crusade, but also as one of the Emperor's preferred weapons against traitors and turncoats. It was a task for which they were eminently suited as they stood apart in many ways from their fellow Legions and the hosts of the Imperium alike, courting neither comradeship nor ties of direct fealty save to the Emperor Himself. Building no nations and garrisoning few worlds, they were not the ones to raise fortresses or offer martial example to others, directing armies or standing proudly in the heart of the fires of battle. Instead they remained—as their common name implied—a predator prowling the outer darkness, beholden to but one master. The Space Wolves Legion was truly a force that had been moulded for a single purpose—to destroy utterly any threat deemed dangerous enough to warrant their attention.

The deliberate selection of Leman Russ and his Space Wolves as the core force of the censure might be seen by some as tacit approval from the Emperor for the destruction of Prospero, a means to remove a threat while remaining outwardly benevolent, despite the wording of His official order. To others it seems simply the prudence of selecting a force that would not balk at any order, however bloody or unthinkable, even one to slay brother Legiones Astartes. The fact remains in any case that having commanded a number of expeditions to remove threats from within the Imperium whose details yet remain hidden to this day, the implications of the Space Wolves' selection for the Censure force is something that Leman Russ cannot fail to have understood.

This was unfortunately time the Wolf King refused to spare, and his departure from Fenris was at the head of approximately 50,000 of his sons, though many bore the marks of fresh battle and were in sore need of provender. Departing from Fenris, the massed fleet of the VIth Legion, comprising some of the sleekest pursuit craft of any of

the Legiones Astartes, faced but a short sojourn in the depths of the Warp before reaching the vast marshalling fields of Beta-Garmon, both the tides of the strange Æther seas of the Warp and Fenris' proximity to that vital locus of the Great Crusade seeing that it was Leman Russ and not Valdor who would arrive first.

The Will of Horus

At Beta-Garmon, Russ was met not only by those warriors of his own Legion who had heeded his call, namely the battle-scarred warriors of the Third, Ninth and Eleventh Great Companies, but also by a detachment of warriors in the sea-green armour of the newly anointed Sons of Horus. At

Historia Terra Regum

THE CENSURE HOST, BETA-GARMON CONTINGENT

Being those units assembled on Beta-Garmon to prosecute the Writ of Censure issued by the Emperor's hand in 004.M31 decreeing that Magnus the Red, Lord of Prospero and the XVth Legion of the Legiones Astartes, be brought in disgrace to Terra, there to face the judgement of his father.

Senior Officer Cadre

- Leman Russ, Primarch of the VIth Legion, Lord Regent of Fenris, Commanding General of the Censure Fleet – granted the Emperor's deferment over his brother Primarch Magnus, and the right to mete High Justice within his realms to meet this end.
- Overseer Boros Kurn, Commander of the 16th Independent Assault Battalion, XVIth Legion and Emissary of the Warmaster.
- Princeps Senioris Maldis Drane, Commanding Princeps of the Legio Mortis.

Main Contingent

The VIth Legion, the Space Wolves – comprising an approximate total of 73,200 Space Marines, including contingents previously on detached duties in proximity to Fenris or Beta-Garmon, and recalled for the campaign. [Companies are noted here using both the numerical designation used by Divisio Militaris records and the more archaic titles used during available recitations of the Saga of Prospero – additional notation of current observable operational factors from Beta-Garmon data included]:

- Great Company One, The Breakers of Rings – 3,000 Space Marines, primarily formed of 'Varagyr' Huscarl units equipped with Terminator armour and fighting as bodyguard, and also comprising additional Legion command elements.
- Great Company Two, The Thread-cutters – 800 Space Marines, believed comprising veteran infantry units relieved from special duties with attached Dreadnought contingent (approximately 60 individual armours of varied patterns).
- Great Company Three, The Eagle's Keepers – 9,800 Space Marines, mostly close assault infantry and support armour (noted in extemporaneous data as being proportionally high in initiate-status Legiones Astartes).
- Great Company Four, The Blood-worm's Masters – 8,600 Space Marines, comprising heavy infantry and self-propelled artillery, including a large number of breacher and assault units (ref. 'Bloodied Claw' tactical formation sub-type).
- Great Company Five, The Blood-ice Storm – 10,000 Space Marines, comprising a mixed infantry force with light support armour, assigned while on Fenris for resupply.
- Great Company Seven, The Wight-flame's Wiielders – 5,200 Space Marines, comprising mostly of warriors of the 'Black Cull' and destroyer and immolation units.
- Great Company Eight, The Slaughter-fire Heralds – 9,500 Space Marines, comprising principally reconnaissance and infiltration units (ref. 'Pale Hunter' tactical formation sub-type).
- Great Company Nine, The Serpents of the Battle-moon – 7,800 Space Marines, comprising infantry support units and notably heavy weapons units, including rapier weapons platforms.
- Great Company Eleven, The Sea-flame's Bearers – 9,200 Space Marines, comprising veteran infantry, believed to include a large proportion of early-induction Terran recruits.
- Great Company Twelve, The Shield-gnawers – 8,700 Space Marines, comprising close assault infantry with strong contingents of ground assault vehicles.
- Great Company Thirteen, The Corpse-renders – 600 Space Marines, comprising pursuit units and light assault infantry.
- The XVIth Legion, the Sons of Horus (formerly the Luna Wolves) – comprising a single reinforced battalion of approximately 5,000 Space Marines. Equipped primarily as a line of battle unit.
- The Legio Mortis – Twelve Battle Titans of the Death's Heads, forming two full and one demi-maniple, including the Warlord class Titan *Aeterna Virtus* as its command element.
- 19th Cthonian Headhunters Regiment – Slightly less than 9,000 assault infantry raised on Cthonia, infamous within the Imperial Army for their savage and belligerent temperament and tendency to mutilate the dead for trophies.
- 3rd Ydranian Seekers Regiment – Light infantry from the Ydran Cluster (notably a sector of the human-occupied space devastated by rogue psykers prior to Compliance at the hands of the Death Guard). Organised into three cohorts of 4,000 soldiers each and believed equipped with a variety of non-standard psi-warding technologies – the effectiveness of which was deemed dubious by the Mechanicum.
- 73rd & 75th Echelons of the Host of Brass – Heavy infantry. Notably recruited from the sub-tech world of Brass, whose feudal lords have long indoctrinated the population against the potential threat of 'sorcerers' and other psychic phenomena. Numbering 8,000 per echelon and equipped with a variety of primitive but effective close assault weaponry and chemical slugthrowers.

the behest of the Warmaster himself these warriors were pledged to aid the Wolf King in his dire task – their leader, Overseer Boros Kurn, bore personal communications from Horus to his brother, Leman Russ. The exact contents of these missives have never been made available to scholars of the later Imperium, indeed it is highly likely that no one other than Leman Russ and Horus themselves will ever know what arguments were brought to bear. But what is known now by the dire events which were to transpire on Prospero is that after viewing the contents of the message and hearing the words of his brother, Leman Russ let it be known among his sons that he no longer intended simply to capture Magnus, but instead to see him slain.

To that bloody end Horus had sent not only the warriors under the command of Boros Kurn, some 5,000 Sons of Horus bearing the finest panoply of arms and armour afforded the warriors of the Imperium's Warmaster, but also twelve battle Titans of the Legio Mortis from Beta-Garmon's Titan-fanes and a number of regiments of the Imperial Army selected by the Warmaster himself to aid in the assault on Prospero. Horus also sent commands to the various Imperial Seneschals and Magos Domini who orchestrated the logistical campaigns of Beta-Garmon's industry that gave Leman Russ and his warriors unfettered access to the vast arsenals that covered the planet, barring not even the most restricted of vaults or most prohibited of weapons. It is from the detailed records of these overlords of Beta-Garmon, that account in exacting detail the arms withdrawn by Leman Russ and his Space Wolves, that much of the Wolf King's strategy can be inferred. While much of the munitions and equipment claimed is of the standard pattern and likely intended to return his battered Great Companies to better fighting strength in materiel if not manpower, other acquisitions point to darker motives. Before leaving Beta-Garmon, a quantity of phosphex equal to that consumed commonly by a full system-wide life purge campaign was transferred to the Space Wolves ships, along with a variety of Exterminatus grade capital ship munitions, including several bio-alchemical warheads of a classification previously deemed too dangerous to be used within the borders of the Imperium. These and other acquisitions speak of the Wolf King's new intentions for Magnus and the people of Prospero.

THE HAWK AND THE WOLF

Constantin Valdor was renowned throughout the Imperium as both a warrior of sublime skill and a paragon of honour. By contrast, Leman Russ had done little to gainsay his reputation as a barbaric killer who led other barbaric killers. The two seemed an unlikely pair, and some among the higher echelons of the Divisio Militaris expressed some concern over their selection as commanders of the Censure fleet, yet it is evident from a variety of sources that both commanders held a deep respect for the abilities of the other. Despite this, the early stages of the Prospero campaign were to open a rift between the two champions of the Imperium, ironically due to the iron-clad loyalty of both commanders. For where Russ had concluded that to best serve the Imperium Magnus must die, Valdor would not deviate from the Emperor's orders to take the Crimson King alive. While Valdor would eventually defer to Russ as the Emperor's chosen commander of the Censure fleet, relations between the two commanders would remain strained during the fighting on the Thousand Sons' home world of Prospero.

By the time of the arrival of the Terran contingent of the Host under Valdor nearly a month and a half later, the Space Wolves and those units attached to the command of Russ were not only battle ready, but arrayed in wargear fit to brave the harshest of hell worlds—a stark contrast to the more lightly armed Terran contingent. As a number of prominent members of the Remembrancer Order accompanied the Censure Host as far as Beta-Garmon, there are a wide variety of records of the meeting of Russ and Valdor, and while the artistic preferences of each account ensure that no two are identical, all note in some way the concern of the Custodes Captain-General when faced with the belligerence, and in some cases outright blood-lust, evinced by many of the troops under Leman Russ' command. Many also note that several of the strategic planning sessions that followed saw the dismissal of the higher command staff as the two leaders of the Censure Host continued a private disagreement regarding the intent of the fleet. The content of any such disagreements has never been made part of common record, but both the Writ of Censure and later orders of battle for the Censure Host have always noted Russ as the Emperor's proxy and ultimate commander of the fleet, and it is unlikely that a warrior as renowned for his loyalty as Valdor would allow such disagreements to interfere with a mission issued by the Emperor. Tellingly, those of the Remembrancer Order who had accompanied Valdor were dismissed and returned to Terra under Russ' orders long before the fleet departed on the final leg of its journey.

The Die is Cast

Despite the revisions to the combined fleet's planned approach to Prospero demanded by Leman Russ and the work needed to incorporate both contingents into a cohesive whole, the Censure Host was soon ready to depart Beta-Garmon. From that world travel to Prospero required a series of warp jumps against the prevailing ætheric current cutting past the more well-travelled channels taken by military fleets. This path was considered more difficult—though no real threat to vessels guided by the hands of the finest Navigators available to the Terran fleets, but much faster than turning about and approaching Prospero from the galactic south, a route favoured by Navigators for its more predictable currents. Also, the route selected would bypass most obvious patrol stations for vessels under service to the Thousand Sons, affording the Censure Host the element of surprise and giving the Thousand Sons no time to consolidate their forces. Their plans thus set, the warriors of the Censure Host boarded their transports and set forth arrayed for battle to the world of the Sorcerer King, Prospero.



PROSPERO IN ASHES

'The greatest tragedies and triumphs of Man are reflected in the Great Ocean, forming raging storms. Yet, unlike our own realm, these reflections are not bound by our limited appreciation of causality, for often times the unwary æthereal traveller may be caught in storms formed by malign events that they have yet to experience, and in their struggling they find themselves inexorably drawn to that fate.'

Excerpt from the Book of Magnus

Long before the Censure Host embarked upon its transports and began the long journey towards Prospero, Magnus the Red, lord of that doomed world, was aware of their approach. Those fragments of his own writings, as well as those of key officers within both the XVth Legion as well as the civil authorities of Prospero, later salvaged by the Legio Custodes, demonstrate a pattern of orders that clearly indicates foreknowledge of the approaching fleet. Yet rather than preparing his world to resist the coming scourge, Magnus seems instead to have attempted to ease its approach to Prospero. Where he could have concentrated and reinforced his defences, he instead chose to disperse the fleet of the XVth Legion, sending the various squadrons to anchor at distant outposts of the Thousand Sons and other unknown courses from which they would play no part in the coming confrontation. Those bases maintained by the Thousand Sons along the route later taken by the Censure fleet, monitoring stations and honour guards alike, were all abandoned on his direct orders. All astropathic communications were interdicted and the

choirs themselves removed from their orreries and held within the Great Pyramid, all at the order of the Primarch of the XVth Legion. Yet at the same time, he gathered unto Prospero all those of his Legion that could be reached, save only those whose distance would mean that their arrival at Prospero would occur after the point at which the Censure fleet would arrive—though such information cannot have been available to the Crimson King.

Where some might assume that the latter action would prove Magnus' intent to resist the coming storm, those recovered records of the XVth Legion show that no information regarding the Censure fleet, or even of the Emperor's displeasure, was ever disseminated to the Legion. As the combined armada of Lemn Russ and Valdor drew ever closer to the world of Prospero, the Thousand Sons busied themselves with mundane maintenance and their own esoteric training, oblivious to any threat. No attempt was made by the XVth Legion or the various regiments of the Prosperine Spireguard to fortify any of the key defensive positions

within the city of Tizca, the only large-scale urban settlement on Prospero to survive the Age of Strife. In several cases, there are even reported disappearances of key Legion and civil personnel who appear to have stumbled across information related to the fleet's approach and then been silenced, with the evidence at hand suggesting the use of potent memory-altering telepathy to quell any unrest at the sudden disappearances, a feat few within even a Legion such as the Thousand Sons were capable of.

Even if no overt attempts were made to reinforce the garrison of Prospero, save for the recalling of much of the XVth Legion to its home world, it remained a mighty fortress. The majority of that then-verdant globe was covered in broken hills and dense forests, its ancient cities little but time-scoured ruins with only heavily fortified Legion outposts, small migratory settlements and the largely subterranean enclave of the Zhao-Arkhad forge of the Mechanicum to be found outside of the capital city of Tizca. Yet this was no weakness in the world's defences, for the wilderness that was Prospero, though lush in



appearance, was known to be infested with a sickening variety of xeno-fauna; the most infamous being the deadly pseudo-insectile Psychneuein parasites, beings whose life-cycle extended into the fabric of the Empyrean, making them all but impossible to bar or exterminate. The hidden predatory swarms of these strange creatures would have made any attempt to achieve landfall in the wilds impractical, even for such a host as that gathered by Leman Russ and Constantin Valdor, leaving them no secure foundation from which to make a more conventional siege of Tizca from without.

In addition to the harsh terrain and deadly fauna of Prospero, Tizca itself, the renowned 'City of Light', presented yet another formidable obstacle to any attacker, geographically bounded as it was on all sides. To the north rose the sheer peaks of the White Mountains, studded with enclosed defence laser emplacements and fortified bunkers manned by the soldiers of the Prosperine Guard, and to the west lay the Valperine Sea, whose deep turquoise waters served to ward off conventional

assault. Lastly, to the south and east, were the alabaster walls constructed at the city's furthest edge, one hundred metres tall and reinforced with embedded Geller-frequency field generators to keep all of the storied terrors of the Prosperine wilderness at bay.

During the period before the Council of Nikaea ruled against their unsanctioned use, Tizca had also been protected from the air by a vast psi-tech-generated telekinetic (or 'kine') shield maintained and boosted by the adepts of the Thousand Sons, presenting a defence as formidable as battleship class void shield generators at the very least. This was a defence which Leman Russ insisted on factoring into their plans despite the fact that its use had been banned by direct order of the Emperor Himself. Even within the walls of Tizca, the temple-arcologies of the great Cults of the Thousand Sons formed the perfect strongpoints from which to resist any assault and the maze-like streets of the Old Quarter and other urban centres would prove costly to properly secure, and what strange and esoteric defences they held, no outsider might guess.

These strengths in the position of the Thousand Sons were compounded by the inherent nature of the Censure Host, particularly its Terran component, for it had initially been conceived as little more than a reinforced honour guard to accompany Magnus on his return to Terra, and only as an actual invasion force should all other options fail. Though the manipulations of Horus had seen the strength of the Host swell, it was still in retrospect ill-equipped to prosecute a more traditional planetary assault, lacking as it did the heavy artillery assets and numerical superiority usually required for such endeavours. Based on what intelligence had been previously available from the stewards of Prospero, who had little prior need to conceal their strength, the forces garrisoning that world were closer in potency to those ranged against them than any attacking commander might have liked when the benefits of prepared defensive positions and local familiarity were taken into account, with the mental powers of the Thousand Sons remaining a dangerously unknown quantity should they wilfully scorn the Emperor's edict.





++PICTREF//744893-DELTA++

++PICTLOG//
TIZCA:ORBITALVIEW++

++OVERLAY//CIVBOUND++
++ADD//ANCILLARYOBJ++

++OLD TIZCA++

A> Naval Port Facility

++THE AZURE DISTRICT++

B> The Valperine Bastion

C> The Sanctuary Mount

D> Tizcan Orbital
Transfer Yards

++CENTRAL TIZCA++

E> Occullum Square

++THE SILVER DISTRICT++

F> The Argent Bastion

++SOUTHERN TIZCA++

G> The Great Sesostrian Canal

++SITES OF NOTE++

H> The Palatinate Mansions
and Preserve

I> The Acropolis Magna



++TIZCA, THE CITY OF LIGHT++

++CARTOGRAPHICA IMPERIALIS, VOLUME XVIII++

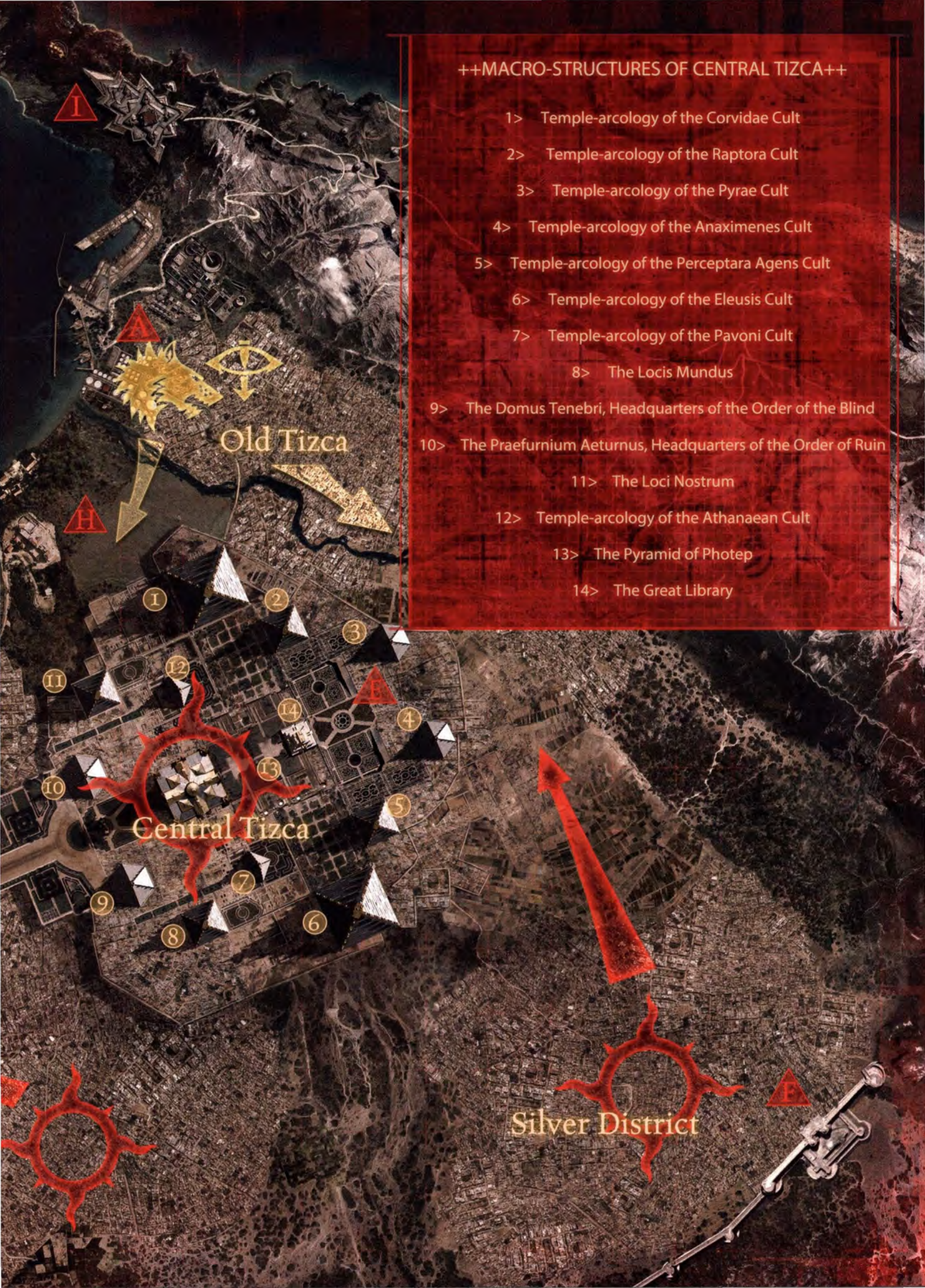
++CAPITALS OF THE ULTIMA SEGMENTUM++

++This being a record of those cities of Man to be found within the borders
of the Ultima Segmentum judged to stand as exemplary examples of the skill,
tenacity and ambition of the Imperium of Man++



The Azure
District

Southern Tizca



++MACRO-STRUCTURES OF CENTRAL TIZCA++

- 1> Temple-arcology of the Corvidae Cult
- 2> Temple-arcology of the Raptora Cult
- 3> Temple-arcology of the Pyrae Cult
- 4> Temple-arcology of the Anaximenes Cult
- 5> Temple-arcology of the Perceptara Agens Cult
- 6> Temple-arcology of the Eleusis Cult
- 7> Temple-arcology of the Pavoni Cult
- 8> The Locis Mundus
- 9> The Domus Tenebri, Headquarters of the Order of the Blind
- 10> The Praefurnium Aeturnus, Headquarters of the Order of Ruin
- 11> The Loci Nostrum
- 12> Temple-arcology of the Athanaean Cult
- 13> The Pyramid of Photep
- 14> The Great Library

THE DEFENDERS OF PROSPERO

Being a roster of those military formations and notable leaders known to have stood in defence of Prospero during the assault of the Censure Host in 004.M31. All those here named are declared *Traitoris Extremis* for the base act of raising arms against the rightfully empowered agents of the Emperor of Mankind, and all rights of sanctuary or redress under Imperial law forfeit.

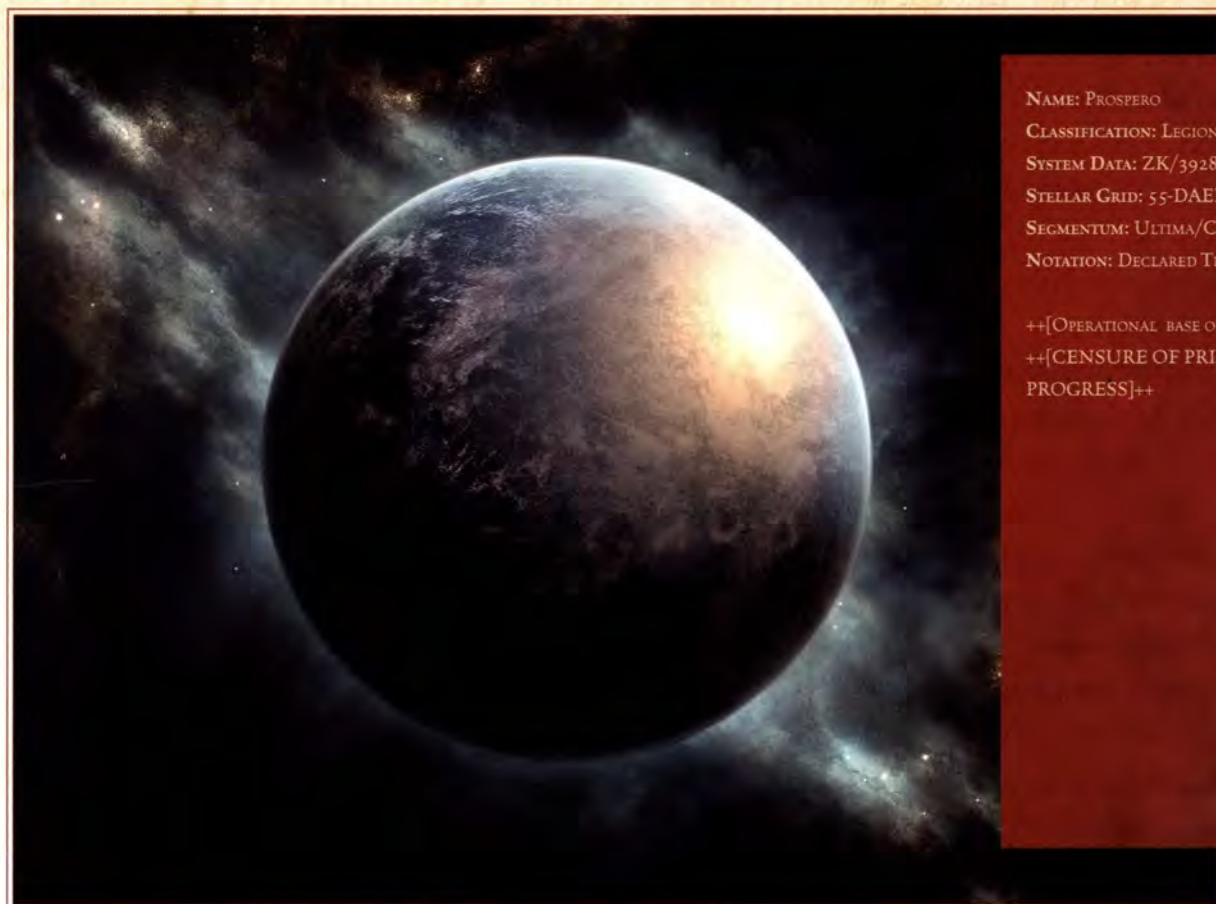
Senior Officer Cadre

- Magnus the Red, Lord of the XVth Legion, Warden of Prospero – Deemed to be in violation of the Conventions of Nikaea and the Emperor's decree.
- Lucretia Elunnirai, Seneschal Prime of the Prosperine Guard and commander of the yeomanry of Prospero.
- Magus Prime Tacitus Proctor, Forge-domini of the Prosperine Zhao-Arkhad enclave and Eminarii Order, declared *'heretek in absentia'* by the assembled conclave of the Martian Orders.
- Calvar Ibranum, Princeps-warden of the Legio Xestobias Prospero Vigil.

Main Contingent

The XVth Legion, the Thousand Sons – Known to be on Prospero at the time of the Space Wolves' assault were representatives of all of the various Fellowships of the Legion, as well as the commanders of all except the Fourth Fellowship. In total, it is estimated that of the Thousand Sons' known total strength of perhaps 80,000-90,000 *Legiones Astartes*, there were approximately 62,000 present on Prospero by judgement of after-action reports (many of which are contradictory), either within Tizca or one of the smaller outposts elsewhere on the planet. Those Fellowships and Orders known to have at least a portion of their number present for the battle are recorded here:

- **The First Fellowship** – 9,000 Space Marines, comprising the majority of the Thousand Sons Terminator units and recently returned to full strength.
- **The Second Fellowship** – 7,800 Space Marines. As with most of the Fellowships, this comprised a mix of unit types divided along Cult and Order lines.
- **The Third Fellowship** – 8,200 Space Marines, reinforced from recent campaigns to near full strength.
- **The Fourth Fellowship** – 200 Space Marines. Only a small honour guard of the Fourth Fellowship was present on Prospero at this time.
- **The Fifth Fellowship** – 6,200 Space Marines, reduced in strength after recent campaigns and with some companies operating on campaign.
- **The Sixth Fellowship** – 4,000 Space Marines. It is believed that a full half of the Sixth's active strength was deployed to the sectors around Zhao-Arkhad in the galactic south.
- **The Seventh Fellowship** – 7,200 Space Marines, reduced in strength after recent campaigns and with some companies operating on campaign.
- **The Eighth Fellowship** – 8,400 Space Marines, reinforced from recent campaigns to near full strength.
- **The Ninth Fellowship** – 7,900 Space Marines, reduced in strength after recent campaigns and with some companies still active that were beyond recall range.
- **The Order of Ruin** – 1,900 Space Marines and 800 Battle-automata. It is believed that approximately half of the Order of Ruin was attached to Thousand Sons detachments operating on campaign across the galaxy or dispatched in the holds of the fleet.
- **The Order of the Blind** – 888 Space Marines. It is believed the entire complement of the Order had heeded Magnus' recall, arriving on Prospero via mysterious means before most other units.
- **The Order of the Jackal** – 604 Space Marines, divided into detachments attached to each Fellowship and contingent on Crusade.
- **The Prosperine Guard** – Comprising three distinct bodies: the Spireguard, Airguard and Expeditionary regiments. The Prosperine Guard regiments were outfitted to various standards, but in all cases were considered well trained and equipped. Estimates place some 85,000 soldiers within the various barracks and training facilities of Tizca and smaller outposts scattered across Prospero at the time of the invasion.
- **Zhao-Arkhad Taghmata** – The defence forces of the autonomous Zhao-Arkhad collective were present within their enclave in the wilderness of Prospero as part of a treaty for the supply of the Legion. Consisting mainly of various combat-automata and other mechanised units, numbering perhaps 8,000 warriors and automata. Almost none of these were present within the city of Tizca and dwelt within the subterranean Geller-barrier screened fane.
- **Legio Xestobias** – A full Vigil of the Legio Xestobias was stationed within the Zhao-Arkhad enclave, comprising some twelve Titans of varying marks. As with their Zhao-Arkhad overlords, the Prospero Vigil of the Legio Xestobias was stationed outside the city of Tizca, ensconced in vast underground bunkers in their enclave.
- **Citizen Militia Regiments** – In theory, a large percentage of the adult population of Tizca could be marshalled for war and issued arms from the reserve armouries scattered throughout the city, creating a force of men-at-arms numbering in the millions. However, in practice such a force was of negligible strategic value considering its lack of training and effective leadership.
- **1st Helikon Legion & Magdan FreeKorps** – Both of these regiments of the Imperial Army had been re-routed some months prior to the attack on Prospero to resupply and layover at Tizca awaiting pick-up and redeployment after their completion of the Tigarth Pacification. The off-world regiments were stationed in general barrack blocks on the outer edge of the city designed for such transiting forces, and were effectively cantoned there without access to the city. These two regiments, one of mechanised assault infantry and the other of lightly equipped skirmishers, shared little in common save that both originated from newly Compliant worlds whose governors bore little personal loyalty to the newly appointed Warmaster. In both cases, the orders that saw them transferred to Prospero at such short notice came from officers assigned to the Warmaster.



NAME: PROSPERO

CLASSIFICATION: LEGIONES ASTARTES HOME WORLD

SYSTEM DATA: ZK/3928//PLB

STELLAR GRID: 55-DAEN/RI-44

SEGMENTUM: ULTIMA/COREWARD

NOTATION: DECLARED TRAITORIS PERDITA

++[OPERATIONAL BASE OF XVTH LEGION]++

++[CENSURE OF PRIMARCH MAGNUS IN
PROGRESS]++

The Eve of Destruction

Save in these general terms, we know little of the activities of the Thousand Sons in their final months, for the destruction yet to be wrought upon Prospero would not leave much for later investigators to sift through. Of the reasons for those strange occurrences that we know of and the apparent ignorance of the Legion to the unsuited approach of the Emperor's appointed champions, we can only speculate. Some have posited that it was Magnus himself who occluded the eyes, both mundane and esoteric, of his sons, perhaps seeking some form of redemption in martyrdom. Others have placed the blame on the Legion's own overweening pride or even the interference of outside influence. Within the official histories of the Terran Court, compiled in the aftermath of the Horus Heresy, it is recorded that it was by the will of the Emperor that Magnus and his traitorous children were blinded and unable to discern the approach of His wrath, though as with much of the history of the wars that saw the birth of our stunted Imperium, it is unlikely the full truth will ever be known.

After leaving Beta-Garmon, the Censure Host was to translate to Thardia and then three further systems in the slow cross-current warp-bound trek, a journey of several months that taxed the prowess of the Navigators attached to the fleet. The logs of

the Censure Host record no encounters with picket craft of the XVth Legion in the entirety of their journey, though the fleet remained at combat readiness throughout the approach to Prospero, entering each system in carefully staggered warp-breaches that would allow it to effectively engage or retreat should it encounter enemy ships. The arrival of the Censure fleet in the Forzare System, where Prospero hung in silent orbit of its primary star, was no exception, with lead elements of the fleet, composed primarily of Sisterhood Anathema class pinnacle and Space Wolves interdicator craft, entering the outskirts of the system long before the heavy assault craft breached the Immaterium.

These scout squadrons would report a near-complete absence of void craft in the system, with only merchant craft and a few wallowing system patrol boats to be found. Of the Thousand Sons fleet there was no trace, not even a single sentinel squadron—a situation which caused much concern among the leadership of the Censure Host, whose records indicate that the XVth Legion were preparing an ambush of some kind. Their concerns delayed the initial attack on Prospero as nearby systems were probed for signs of hidden void squadrons and several missions were undertaken to seize departing merchant craft, surrendering their crews to the mercies of the Silent Sisterhood for interrogation.

That Magnus himself had already dispersed the Thousand Sons fleet (for reasons which still remain occluded to this day), clearing a path for the Censure Host to his very doorstep, was unthinkable to Leman Russ and the other commanders. Yet with no clear sign of any trap, the Imperium's fleet had little choice but to begin the approach upon Prospero itself. Acting on the information gathered by the initial incursions into the system, the Prosperine patrol craft were swiftly neutralised by Space Wolves boarding rams, while the main body of the incoming fleet translated directly into high orbit of Prospero, into the midst of the planet's dense constellation of defensive stations and Mechanicum kill-sats.

Capitalising on the disruption caused by their sudden arrival, the heavy cruisers, gunships and dreadnoughts of the Censure Host spread across Prospero's orbital space, crippling the satellite network, using information culled from interrogations and the data held in Imperial surveys to target the command stations and render those weapons platforms slaved to them inert. A number of civilian craft were also captured, including several scheduled Mechanicum cargo arks operating under the aegis of Zhao-Arkhad, which had been left in the dark by Prospero's masters of the oncoming storm, their crews seized and swept for potentially important captives.

The Capture of the Tempest

Two dozen system patrol craft constructed under treaty by the Zhao-Arkhadian enclave on Prospero remained in-system. These craft were not warp capable but carried an ample armament of magnetically-driven macro cannon and kinetic torpedo batteries as well as multi-layered void shield banks, and possessed a largely thrall and servitor crew numbering almost 1,000 – each led by a Prosperine-native command cadre. Though not a match for a true warship, they were still considered capable of disrupted planetary operations if not neutralised. Under Leman Russ' plans of engagement, capture was deemed superior to destruction, as any surviving crew might divulge valuable military intelligence upon interrogation.

The capture of the *Tempest*, one such of these vessels, can be considered typical of the operations that targeted these craft during the attack on Prospero. Initial contact with the *Tempest* came as it moved to investigate the sudden arrival of a Space Wolves strike cruiser in the outer reaches of the system—whereupon the cruiser, the *Hrunting*, disgorged several squadrons of Caestus assault rams and began a bombardment of the patrol monitor intended to cloud its augur banks and distract its crew. Striking directly at the engine decks and bridge superstructure, the warriors of the VIth Legion quickly dispersed from their initial entry points, butchering any security teams they encountered with clinical efficiency and avoiding contact with major concentrations of the crew. Within thirty minutes of boarding the craft, both the engine room and bridge were under the control of the Space Wolves, with all crew in those sections having been dispatched, including the captain and many of the senior officers. The commanding officer of the Space Wolves detachment then utilised the internal vox system of the ship to matter-of-factly inform the remaining crew that if they did not surrender then life support would be terminated to all sections of the ship. Shortly thereafter, the crew of the *Tempest* was transferred to ships of the Silent Sisterhood for questioning and disposal.

In all, the operation lasted slightly more than eighty-two minutes and incurred a total loss of sixty-four members of the *Tempest*'s crew and a single Space Wolf, slain by a charnabal cutlass wielded by the ship's captain. These operations stand as a marked contrast with the VIth Legion's reputation as bloodthirsty savages, for although they displayed no lack of zeal for combat, the tactical acumen and efficiency of their actions argues that the commonly held opinion of these *Legiones Astartes* is far from true.

Encirclement

Such a bold strategy as employed by the Censure fleet quickly saw Prospero's outer defences overwhelmed, with orbital space falling into the hands of the Censure Host in a matter of a few hours, and with those on the surface still unaware of the true circumstances of the chaos occurring in the skies above them. That an Imperial world of Prospero's stature, equipped with all the defensive arts the Imperium could endow it with, might find itself stripped of all defence in such a short span of time is all but unthinkable. Indeed, such a victory is only possible due to the information held on

Prospero's defences in the Imperial archives on Terra and the data-vaults of Mars, as well as the complete absence of the Thousand Sons fleet. Regardless, Prospero was now laid bare of defences other than those on the surface, which according to those same records amounted to little more than a handful of defence laser batteries.

On the planet below, the initial attacks had caused considerable chaos in civil government, disrupting communications hubs and leaving a rain of debris to fall upon the surface. Several regiments of the Prosperine Guard began to muster, assuming an invasion was underway, while at the same time Tizca's emergency search and rescue battalions deployed to counter some unknown orbital catastrophe, both only intensifying the confusion spreading throughout the command echelons of Tizca's government. The Thousand Sons themselves were silent, their Fellowship commanders locked in council, and their warriors refused to move without orders.

The Hour of Execution

In orbit, despite the insinuations of Horus Lupercal, Leman Russ conceded that he would not unleash the full destructive capabilities of his battle fleet without at least allowing his brother a chance to explain his apparent madness. Broadcasting from the grand flagship of the *Legio Custodes*, the *Oriflamme*, the *Vox-Imperiosa* —the sanctioned voice of the Silent Sisterhood and the Emperor's council of Terra— proclaimed the writ borne by the fleet and called upon the Thousand Sons and upon Magnus himself to answer for the crimes of which they were accused, to render himself unto the fleet or face the wrath of the Emperor.

Yet, there was no answer. The fleet waited as Valdor entreated for further time with Russ on behalf of the accused Primarch to await a reply, but as Russ' fury steadily grew and as the ships of the fleet sat idle in space, still there was no answer. After almost a standard hour without word, neither to ask forgiveness or to threaten resistance, nor even to acknowledge the fleet's presence, Leman Russ called an end to the efforts at diplomacy. Incensed that Magnus would offer such an insult to his own brother, Russ gave the word and unleashed the firepower of the assembled Censure Host's fleet against the helpless planet below.

Prospero burned.

A Silent Death

There has been much speculation regarding the silence of Prospero and its lord in the face of utter destruction. Despite the sudden assault of the fleet and the later efforts to contact the planet, there was no attempt to reply—not even in anger at their impending destruction. The logs of the Imperium's fleet show that not only was there no attempt to reply, there were active attempts from the surface to block communications to the fleet, both technological and psychic. Many theories have been put forward to answer this conundrum, ranging from conspiracies within the Thousand Sons to the intervention of unknown xenos entities, but few manage to provide a coherent explanation for the events at Prospero. The one issue almost all such theories fall afoul of is that there was only one entity on the planet known to the Imperium that could possibly orchestrate the failure of all communications off-world: Magnus himself.





THE FALL OF TIZCA

'In war, it is only the truly foolish who seek conflict and death purely for its own sake; the sword is a tool of the warrior-scholar just as is the pen, and neither should be wielded without first understanding that which the wielder seeks to gain from their actions.'

Wisdom graven on the steps of the Great Library of Tizca

FIRE FROM THE SKIES

06:32:48 734004.M31

Leman Russ commanded his vessels to apply the utmost sanction to Prospero; to salt the earth of that damned world with the most fell toxins and devastating explosives available to them, to leave no stone upon stone and to grant a swift death to its inhabitants. For almost an hour the warheads rained down from the carefully positioned void craft above, and the green wilderness of Prospero vanished in a storm of superheated ash and fire. Yet, when the augurs of the ships above cleared from the feedback of the fleet's assault, Tizca still stood; a solitary point of colour in a sea of grey ash, protected by a scintillating shield of psychokinetic force. However, that which had been their saviour also served to damn them further. For such a shield, standing unmarked when even the multi-layered void shields of an Imperial battleship would have been hard taxed, could have had but a single origin. That the Thousand Sons would deploy a psychic phenomenon of such magnitude, despite its apparently benign purpose in protecting both the Legion and people of Tizca, was incontrovertible evidence of their defiance of the judgement issued at Nikaea.

Among the command elements of the Censure Host it had always been assumed that some fraction of the Thousand Sons would survive any attempt at orbital barrage, and that Magnus would almost certainly have shelter that would see him pass through such destruction relatively unscathed. That the entire city of Tizca might weather the might of their guns and bombs all but intact had not been predicted, and rather than a short mopping-up action against the shell-shocked remnants of the Thousand Sons, the Censure Host now faced a protracted campaign against a dug-in opponent whose numbers were dangerously close to their own. Even as the augurs of the ships above watched, the men and machines of the well-equipped Prosperine Guard began to issue forth from the Acropolis Magna and other fortified bunkers, and small air superiority craft began to circle in the ash-wreathed skies beneath the rippling telekinetic barrier. The bombardment had dispelled any doubt as to the intent of the Censure Host and Tizca stood ready to defend itself, save for the warriors of the Thousand Sons Legion, of whom no sign had yet been seen.

However, despite the defiance of the city's civil governors and military tribunes, the bombardment had been far from ineffective. Although the 'kine' shield had sheltered

the vast metropolis itself from any harm, it had not been able to stop the shellfire from pummeling the flanks of the White Mountains, smashing the batteries of defence lasers positioned there and sending vast avalanches crashing into the edges of Tizca's Old Quarter. Worse still were the gigatons of explosives that struck the waters of the Valperine Sea, vaporising vast quantities of sea water and sending great scalding cloud banks and huge tsunami waves inland against the city's meagre coastal defences. Even as the Seneschal-prime of the Prosperine Guard attempted to deploy her troops across the city to combat the inevitable invasion, crowds of panicked citizens swarmed the streets, and civil defence units scrambled to co-ordinate evacuation, rescue and damage control operations. Chaos reigned in Tizca, and the silence of Magnus and his sons only heightened the catastrophe.

Elsewhere across Prospero the damage was far worse, unprotected from the destructive force unleashed from above, there was little left but ash and vitrified stone. Those outposts outside of Tizca had largely vanished, save those few buried deep enough beneath the ground to survive the initial impact, and those were silent in the wake of the barrage. Even the great subterranean enclave of the Zhao-Arkhad Mechanicum had fallen silent beneath the fury of the fleet's guns, with no sign of life in the ruins of its surface facilities and no signals received by those manning Tizca's vox relay stations. The only source of resistance left was Tizca, and little point now remained in any landing outside of the city, with the Strategoi Imperialis attached to the Censure Host calling for a direct drop en masse into Tizca itself. However, Leman Russ had sworn a binding oath that he and his sons would be the first of the Censure Host to bring war to the surface of Prospero, to his brother's city, ordering the balance of the Host's men-at-arms to remain on their ships while he gathered about him his huscarls and the most ferocious of his assault troops to bring war to the City of Light.

A Wolf among Sheep

07:58:09 734004.M31

Within the cavernous holds of the Space Wolves Legion warships marshalled the warriors of the First, Second, Third, Eighth and Twelfth Great Companies, those among their kin most renowned for their bladework and fury in the deadly arena of urban warfare. From the hulking cataphracts of Leman Russ' own Varagyr Huscarls, to the scores of Grey Slayer war-packs, armed and equipped for

close-quarters warfare, to the sleek Mark IV armoured Seekers of the Eighth, each warrior of the Space Wolves committed to the landing was a veteran of untold wars, a pure-bred killer with few equals. Here, at the eve of madness, when all that remained was to kill or be killed, there were perhaps no better suited warriors in all the wide Imperium to the task. The Wolf King had a purpose in ordering all other forces in the Host be held in reserve until his initial landing had fully engaged the Thousand Sons. For he wanted none to hinder the killing fury of his Wolves in the critical opening moments of the battle, and counted it a point of honour and sworn duty that the first blow dealt upon the traitors be made by brothers and not by strangers. To Russ' mind, and indeed that of his Legion, oath breakers the Thousand Sons were and deserved death, but they were also Legiones Astartes and deserved that death dealt face-to-face, by blade and bolter. Honour demanded no less.

Deploying directly from orbit in squadrons of Sokar class Stormbirds, Thunderhawk gunships and a host of lesser craft, the Space Wolves dropped from the skies of Prospero like the angels of death, plunging through the thick swirling clouds of ash and lightning that swept the planet in the wake of the bombardment. Levelling out of a dive that would have been impossible to sustain for merely human warriors, the Space Wolves approached Tizca metres above sea level, roaring through the monstrous waves that were born from the bombardment's fury without pause as they sought to land at the port facilities along the city's north-western border with the Valperine Sea. Their dangerously low approach to avoid anti-aircraft fire was unnecessary, for the Prosperine Guard had been unable to assemble more than a handful of defence platforms near the port and the Space Wolves only met resistance from scrambled interceptor squadrons of the Prosperine Airguard flying modified Lightning and Thunderbolt fighters whose bases had been protected by the shield.

Striking at the transport craft at high speed, the Prosperine Airguard pilots made the mistake of treating the Space Marine transports as helpless, and a number of their fighters fell victim to the accurate fire of Space Wolves gunners, with one exploding after a head-on collision with a Stormbird, the Legion craft continuing its approach all but undamaged. One pass was all the brave but foolhardy pilots of the Airguard would get, for as they turned to re-engage, several



squadrons of slate-grey Xiphon fighters fell upon them, augmented by a handful of Legio Custodes Equinox class interceptors whose involvement, as they would not set foot upon Prospero, did not violate the oath sworn by Leman Russ. Though skilled flyers and equipped with some of the finest aerospace craft available to the Imperialis Auxilia, the Prosperine Airguard pilots quickly found themselves vastly outclassed. Working in tightly co-ordinated packs, the Xiphons cut the Prosperine vessels off from their supporting wingmen before eliminating the vulnerable fighters with bloody and methodical precision, while the Equinox interceptors of the Legio Custodes manoeuvred at blistering speeds, cutting a path through squadrons of enemy fighters as though they were untouchable. The shrieking of an Equinox's engine pods was the last sound heard by many of the Airguard, and logs taken from the Airguard's central command hub in the aftermath of the battle note that the pilots swiftly came to call the sound the 'Angel's Scream'.

With the Airguard fighters now locked in a deadly battle for survival, the bulk of the heavier transport craft made for the pre-determined landing site without further interference. The larger Stormbirds grounded in standard Legiones Astartes beachhead formation, using their overlapping void shields to form a protective envelope for the infantry within to deploy from, easily deflecting the scattered mortar fire and other light artillery attacks from those elements of the Prosperine Spireguard that had managed to move out in time to oppose the landings. As he had sworn, the first warrior of the Censure Host to set foot upon the ancient terraces of Tizca was Leman Russ. He did so with no prophetic words of wisdom as some of his brother Primarchs might have, but with a roar that echoed through the battered streets, for the Emperor's Wolves were loosed in Tizca and they had not been created to spout wisdom for future generations to ponder, but to spill blood and end lives.

Behind the Primarch came the massed ranks of the Space Wolves assault force, over 30,000 in number and bearing the brutal but efficient tools of close-range warfare that they preferred: from Terran bolters that had seen near two centuries of warfare, to plasma guns wrought on Mars' great forges, to the simple efficiency of Fenrisian pattern-welded blades. Acting on the long established patterns of war and command intrinsic to the VIth Legion, the Space Wolves quickly

separated into dozens of smaller warbands, most of only a few hundred Legionaries and each led by a veteran warrior whose long history of glory and violence emboldened his kin. These warbands each moved to secure those sections of the city that bordered the initial landing zone of the Censure Host. Known to its inhabitants as 'Old Tizca', this section of the city, which stretched from the edges of the White Mountains to the ornate squares of Tizca's monolithic city centre, predated the arrival of Magnus and the technology of the Imperium. It formed a maze-like warren of alabaster stone buildings, with tight streets, overhanging balconies and ornate columned squares—terrain in which a cunning defender could easily prosecute a costly campaign of urban warfare, especially one who knew the layout of the streets well. Worse yet for those invading it, this section of Tizca was densely populated and had only just begun its evacuation of civilians to safe shelters and as a result, any attacker executing a standard assault would likely be slowed by the density of targets, the potential need to process prisoners and to correctly identify military threats in the mass of bodies.

Here in the Old City, the soldiers of the elite Northern Palatine Guard regiments of the Spireguard under the command of Katon Aphaea, reinforced by several citizen militia companies, had dug in to resist the initial attack. Forewarned by the bombardment, they had managed to emplace a number of support weapons and light artillery pieces, and used their intimate knowledge of the city's layout to place a series of choke points, ambush sites and fallback positions that would allow them to enact a rolling defence. Commander Aphaea intended to hold the attackers long enough to allow the main contingent of the Spireguard to mobilise and deploy from the fortified main barracks of the Prosperine regiments situated on the far north-western tip of the White Mountains, and buy time for the further entrenchment of forces around the old fortress of the Acropolis Magna. His defences were organised swiftly and with precision and skill, his soldiers well-equipped and determined, but the Space Wolves broke his lines and scattered the Northern Palatine Guard in less than two minutes.

The Wolves of the Cold Stars

Tactics intended to defeat conventional troops were of little use against the warriors of the Legiones Astartes, for their armour proofed them against anything but the most concentrated of small arms fire and their

training saw them advance where lesser troops would baulk and run. In the case of the Space Wolves, this innate resilience was amplified by the sheer speed and ferocity of their infantry attack, which was conducted at a tempo and with a fury that was literally more than human. Kill-zones and ambushes set against them were swiftly turned into desperate holding actions, as the Space Wolves advanced into fields of fire that would have decimated a lesser force and tore their foes apart. Veterans of near two centuries of war against the most vile creatures ever encountered by humanity, the Space Wolves had honed their unique killer's craft like no other. Even the likes of the Prosperine units, easily a match in training and equipment for the highest examples of the Imperialis Auxilia, could not prevail against them, monstrous as they were in their violence, unstoppable and terrifying. In the tight confines of the streets of Old Tizca, the Palatine Guard had expected to trap and bleed their foe, confident of their abilities, and yet now they swiftly realised that it was they who were trapped and unable to disengage from battle.

The Palatine Guard in this sector was a spent and broken force within minutes, and yet the slaughter went on for nearly quarter of an hour as the Space Wolves hunted the survivors among the streets of Old Tizca. They offered no mercy to those they found armed and drove the civilians before them, sending vast throngs of terrified citizens and bloodied soldiers streaming south-east into the central sections of the City of Light. It is estimated that in total some 10,000 soldiers died in the first fifteen minutes of the battle for Prospero, with thousands more civilians caught in crossfires or trampled in the panic to escape the advancing Wolves, or caught in between the two armed forces. The once-pristine alabaster streets of Old Tizca were swiftly drenched in arterial red, their fine colonnades and artful squares broken and rent asunder.

Though to those on the ground the Space Wolves assault must have seemed wild and anarchic, a frenzy of blood and violence with little direction or control, little could be further from the truth. Leman Russ was no simple barbarian reaver; the discipline he and the culture of Fenris had brought to his warriors meant that they fought savagely but with focus according to the constraints of a complex plan, whose initial step required the bloody dismemberment of whichever foe faced them first to plant the seeds of fear in the defenders. To take

a great city the likes of Prospero without a significant advantage in numbers was a difficult task, and Russ' Legion could not afford to become bogged down in protracted house-to-house fighting, especially with the Thousand Sons as yet uncommitted to the fight. To this end he pledged the lives of his warriors in a frontal assault intended to break the spirit of the defenders before any resistance could become entrenched, risking the overextension of his beachhead in order to do so. His gamble initially paid off, with the Space Wolves failing to hit significant resistance until they had reached the gates of the Acropolis Magna to the north-west of the city and the banks of the River Lehmsa to the south.

The Lehmsa stretched from the bay at which the Space Wolves had made planetfall to the outskirts of the city's centre, forming a natural border to Old Tizca. Securing this easily defensible line was a priority for the VIth Legion, for they knew a counter-strike from the Thousand Sons must fall eventually, and intended to blunt it there. However, the Space Wolves were to fall afoul of unfortunate circumstance, for Tizca was host not only to those loyal to the Thousand Sons, but also to several regiments of the Imperial Army rerouted to the planet for resupply upon the orders of agents of the Warmaster. Within the confines of the ancient Palatinate Mansions — a relic from Tizca's ancient dynastic rulers which sat on the opposite side of the Lehmsa from Old Tizca — the veteran soldiers of the Magdan FreeKorps had been encamped. Hailing from one of the earliest worlds brought to Compliance, the Magdan regiments were known for their staunch loyalty to the Emperor, but were utterly unaware of the circumstances surrounding the assault on Prospero. Similarly, the commanders of the Censure Host had not been warned of their presence and as the Space Wolves' rapid advance met the outer picket lines of the FreeKorps', blood was soon spilled. Yet, unlike the Palatine Guard, the FreeKorps were veterans of the Great Crusade and knew well the futility of trying to take out Space Marines head-on. Instead, while overmatched by the Legiones Astartes man-to-man, they sought to use the fact that they were equipped with the full panoply of weapons available to the Imperial Army to their advantage. As the Wolves overran the infantry pickets at the river's edge, squadrons of fast-moving Malcador battle tanks took position among the ornamental fields of the Mansions' expansive grounds and temporarily halted the advance with a barrage of explosive shells.

At the gates of the Acropolis Magna, an ancient fortress hastily pressed into service whose disposition and strength were well known to the Space Wolves, no such obstacle was encountered—for such was the press of wailing citizens and shell-shocked survivors at its gates that many of the guns placed there could not be brought to bear on the attackers. It is here that Lemman Russ himself is first recorded as joining the fight in the myth-structured poetic sagas of the VIth Legion: *'...and so did the King of Wolves come upon the servants of his Warp-touched brother. Finding them sealed within the iron hearth that served as their lair, where the raven's friends could not reach with their bright sea-flames, the ring-breaker of the VIth took hold of the hearth's maw, his mighty thews straining at the effort, and pried it asunder, breaking the jaws apart. Across the smashed gullet of the fortress, the steeds of midnight, the Sons of Fenris, came howling for the blood of the foe and within the span of heartbeats, there was left only food for the crows. Looking upon the work of his children, the broken corpses of the foe, the Wolf King judged it well and good.'*

With the gates of the fortress torn apart, the warriors of the First, Second and Twelfth Great Companies came forth from the city's edge in a thunderous wave of violence and death. Many of the gunners along the wall of the Acropolis Magna panicked and opened fire, indiscriminate in their terror and ignoring the mass of civilians in their lines of sight, desperate to bring down the advancing Space Wolves. The sudden heavy barrage of weapons fire reaped a toll of the VIth Legion in terms of lives, but could not halt the Space Wolves' swift advance, and once within the fortresses' walls, the brutal close-quarters abilities of the Legiones Astartes quickly turned the battle once again into a slaughter. Some few units of the Spireguard, led by Seneschal-prime Elunnirai, escaped in good order to the far side of the White Mountains, along with several thousand civilians. It was a withdrawal bought at the cost of many brave soldiers who staged a dogged resistance at the Acropolis Magna's northern gates. Those units unable to escape were hunted down by the Space Wolves, some choosing to make defiant last stands within the fortress, while others simply fled in panic and died as they ran. One command of almost 200 soldiers barricaded the doors to the armoury vault and managed to hold out for almost ten minutes against the Terminators of the Space Wolves First Great Company, detonating the munitions within as a final act of defiance when the hulking cataphracts breached their defences.

Yet, no matter how they chose to meet it, death came for all of those taking shelter within the Acropolis Magna. From the Valperine Sea to the edge of the great pyramids that marked the centre of Tizca, the Space Wolves strode now all but unopposed, their armour coated in the blood of the slain and the streets littered with corpses and the dying. The few redoubts still held by the scattered units of the Prosperine Guard were choked with refugees herded to them by the advancing Space Wolves and effectively neutralised. The Airguard was all but destroyed and the fighter craft of the Space Wolves and Legio Custodes ruled the sky above Prospero. Meanwhile, the Acropolis Magna burned like a pyre atop the White Mountains. At the mouth of the bay, above the blasted inlet of the Valperine Sea, the few pieces of heavy ordnance to land with the Space Wolves' first wave focussed their fire on the towering statue of Magnus the Red that looked out across the city, blasting great chunks of masonry loose until the huge effigy toppled into the sea. Lemman Russ looked on, impassive as the vast likeness of his brother sank beneath the churning waves, for he knew that this was but the beginning of their fight, and until the Thousand Sons themselves joined the battle, little had been decided.

Brother against Brother o8:21:32 734004.M31

With the fall of the Acropolis Magna, the Space Wolves had succeeded in securing much of Old Tizca, granting them a clear road to the temple-arcologies which housed the various Thousand Sons divisions and municipal headquarters within the city's central districts. Some small pockets of resistance still fought on within Old Tizca — isolated and demoralised units of the Spireguard — and the shell-scarred grounds of the Palatinate Mansions had become a battleground with elements of the Space Wolves Eighth Great Company's 'Bloodied Claw' shock assault formations, supported by Predator tanks and other fast moving armour, allowing the well-equipped Imperial Army regiment no chance to join its strength to that of the Thousand Sons. Meanwhile, attempts by the FreeKorps officer cadre to negotiate a ceasefire were ignored.

Despite these minor setbacks, the attack had proceeded apace and Lemman Russ continued to refuse requests from Constantin Valdor to bring the remainder of the Censure Host into the battle. It was a decision that some have criticised in later years, but it was not motivated by a hunger for glory, as some

scholars posit, but a need to keep his full strength and disposition hidden from the potent scrying skills of the Thousand Sons.

Drawing out Magnus' sons was perhaps the key objective of Leman Russ' initial assault; to force them to engage the Censure Host in the open and outside the fortified temple-arcologies, where the advantage belonged wholly to the fearsome occult powers wielded by that renegade Legion. With little intelligence of the deployment, or even accurate reports of the number of Thousand Sons Legionaries on Prospero at that time, the most obvious route to attain that goal was to force them into the open by direct provocation. As such the assault

continued, with the Space Wolves expanding their attacks along the northern edge of the city towards the soaring fortifications of the Argent Bastion and into the nearest edges of the central districts of Tizca.

Those warbands at the forefront of the advance encountered little resistance beyond scattered units of the citizen militia, desperate men and women trying to defend their homes and families with ancient small arms, or decimated units of the Spireguard. These isolated pockets of resistance were quickly and efficiently crushed; no Tizcan who raised arms against the Space Wolves was left alive, those who offered no resistance were simply ignored or allowed to flee, and as

the advance covered more and more ground, their rapid progress quickly began to stretch the limited forces that comprised the initial wave of the assault.

Soon, the furthest Space Wolves warbands advanced as far as the great aqueducts which fed the gardens of the lower steps of the White Mountains, only a few kilometres from the Argent Bastion. Amid the colonnades of the aqueduct, one of the last holdouts of the Northern Palatine Guard had been trapped by the rapid advance of the leading Space Wolves Grey Slayers war-packs and jetbike squadrons, defiant but hopelessly outmatched by the warriors of the Legiones Astartes ranged against them. Yet as the



grimly armoured warriors of the VIth Legion massed for a final charge, it was not a band of desperate human soldiers that met them, but a fusillade of bolt shells, tendrils of writhing flame and invisible blades of force which tore through their ranks.

The Thousand Sons had at last joined the battle, having completely encircled the Space Wolves' position using a means at that point unknown to the Imperium's forces, and were intent on extracting a heavy toll for the destruction those they had once called brothers had inflicted upon Prospero. Simultaneously across Tizca, at key points along the Space Wolves' advance, the Thousand Sons executed a series of

devastating ambushes. On the outskirts of the central districts, the warriors of the Third Great Company lost hundreds of warriors at a stroke as the huge building complex they were clearing of Spireguard was deliberately collapsed on top of them, the foundations crushed by the biomantic powers of hidden Thousand Sons coterries, and the rubble driven down and compacted with the force of an orbital strike. As the city shook with the roar of the collapse, the Seekers and assault squads of the Eighth Great Company, operating along the western edge of the advance, found themselves suddenly drawn into a hit and run war with detachments of Thousand Sons who vanished whenever the Space Wolves sought to engage them,

only to reappear in new ambush positions moments later. Even within the fortified and shielded perimeter of the landing zone, Thousand Sons infiltrators clad in crimson and lapis blue armour. These have since been identified as belonging to the Order of Blindness. These forces staged a surprise assault on the Space Wolves command elements, and were turned back only by the savage counter-attack of Grimnir Blackblood and the core of Varagyr Huscarl Terminator Cataphracts entrusted with the defence of this key position.



The Wrath of the Sorcerers

All across the northern reaches of Tizca the Thousand Sons now struck almost at will, with the Space Wolves unable to either predict or prevent their assaults. Striking in areas long since cleansed of combatants and declared clear or under the very noses of

Space Wolves' positions, the Thousand Sons had clearly thrown off even the pretence of following the strictures of the covenant of Nikaea and turned to the unalloyed powers of sorcery and the psyker's gift to gain the strategic advantage. Some of their warrior-adepts utilised psychic abilities to obfuscate

their movements, notably the Order of Blindness whose acolytes underwent arduous training to develop such talents, while others hurled raw bolts of power at their grey-clad invaders, having become living artillery in their killing rage, drawing down psychic force which imperilled them body and soul in their efforts to destroy. Still others, less directly gifted in the arcane, used the network of portal gates that criss-crossed Tizca, inert and hidden in plain sight until now. These structures were relics of more ancient times, reworked and refined by the Sorcerer King himself, each taking the form of a great stone doorway or arch, often large enough for even small armoured vehicles to pass through, and when activated through the efforts of the Thousand Sons' Temple-magisters, they allowed near-instantaneous transit to another of the portals through corridors cut into the tenebrous realm of the Warp. Housed within many of the larger buildings across Tizca, the Thousand Sons used these gates to deploy entire detachments of warriors unseen by those ever-watchful Space Wolves who prowled the streets of Tizca's northern districts.

Caught in a storm of deadly ambushes and a sudden tempest of empyreal force, the Space Wolves' steadily advancing front lines quickly dissolved into a confused morass of warriors, some attempting to advance into contact just as others were falling back from ambush or manoeuvring to flank the elusive Thousand Sons who seemed to appear and disappear at will. Simultaneously, the more commonly used Legion vox bands were flooded with a blizzard of static signals, the Thousand Sons knowing only too well

The Forsaken Council

Many have wondered as to the apparent inaction of the Thousand Sons during the early stages of the Battle for Tizca. Some scholars suggest this was simply a ruse to draw out the enemy, although if this is true, it resulted in more damage than might have occurred had they simply opposed the initial landings openly. Also, these theories do not explain the absence of Magnus and a number of other senior officers of the Legion for the majority of the battle—that such respected leaders and vaunted warriors remained absent while their home burned speaks of a more profound motive than simple misdirection. What few records were carried from the burning ruins of the Thousand Sons temple-arcologies hint at the turmoil at the heart of the Thousand Sons' silence during the initial landings. Several recovered fragmentary vox recordings and pict archives speak of a council held within the heart of the Great Library even as the bombs fell upon Tizca, of a meeting of the Legion's most talented leaders and influential warriors.

At this council it appears that Magnus urged his sons not to resist the coming judgement of the Imperium, and to allow their Primarch to be carried away to distant Terra shackled, perhaps seeking to predispose the Emperor and his chosen champions to mercy or simply to avoid the destruction that all-out war between two Legions would bring. The reasoning behind such a mind as belonged to the Sorcerer King of Prospero cannot be easily perceived, yet it was this council that stayed the hand of the XVth Legion, leaving its leaders mired in disbelief and doubt as the Space Wolves took their first steps on Prospero. Though the bulk of the council's transcripts were destroyed in the chaos of the aftermath of the assault on Prospero, it is clear that the Thousand Sons were divided by their Primarch's request. For while the vast majority wished to fight to defend their home, few were eager to disobey him. In the end it appears that a coterie of the senior officers, led by Azhek Ahriman, convinced the vast majority of the Legion to fight, leaving the dissenters to await the end within the Great Library.

the vulnerabilities of Legiones Astartes equipment, and though the Space Wolves managed some limited communication using high-band signals and las-vox units, they were unable to match the co-ordination of the Thousand Sons' attacks. This may have crippled another Legion more used to tight cohesion and reliant on highly co-ordinated planning, but the Space Wolves warbands were autonomous enough that while this sudden anarchy caused them great damage, it could not alone defeat them. With details of the exact disposition of many of his units uncertain, Lemman Russ could discern only a few concrete facts at this stage in the battle: firstly, that he had succeeded in luring out the Thousand Sons, and secondly that his front lines were under threat of imminent collapse. As was the wont of the Wolf King, he did not allow the momentum of battle to stay with his opponents, and where other commanders might have withdrawn to consolidate their forces, he trusted to his Wolves to hold their positions and ordered the reserves to push on the central district borders, aiming for the temple-arcologies of the Pyrae and Corvidae. If these two immense macro-structures could be seized swiftly, the Space Wolves would have a secure base from which to regroup and push on to the Great Pyramid of Photep itself, at the centre of the city in Occullum Square.

The Temple-arcologies of Tizca

Towering above the minor pyramids and other lesser structures of Tizca were the eight temple-arcologies. Five of these immense structures housed the vast training facilities, libraries and barracks of the largest of the psyker-Cults of Prospero, as well as the living quarters of the throngs of lesser adepts, servants and extensive defensive fortifications and weapon emplacements. One of the true wonders of the City of Light, each temple-arcology was a city unto itself, as well as a private fortress where each of the great Cults of the Thousand Sons had perfected their individual doctrines and rituals far from the prying eyes of outsiders. Almost ten per cent of the total population of Tizca lived within the precincts of one of these temple-arcologies, and in case of a city-wide catastrophe, they could provide shelter for a far larger share of the civilian population. Within their cavernous halls were stored enough supplies and munitions to sustain the Legion and its dependents for several years, and the layered districts within their armoured cores would prove all but impossible to take by storm. Any attacker targeting Prospero would need to neutralise these structures quickly or face the prospect of a lengthy and costly siege.

The ninth of these structures stood at the centre of the city, within the sculpted boundaries of Occullum Square. Unlike the other eight, there were no civilians or companies of the Thousand Sons in residence here. A complex of ancillary buildings and lesser pyramids sprawled across the square at its feet, which housed the collected wisdom of Prospero and the Thousand Sons. These structures comprised the Great Library, the most hallowed treasure of Prospero, and the ninth temple-arcology was the Pyramid of Photep, the sanctum of Magnus the Red himself. Few other than the most trusted of the Thousand Sons officer corps and the elite warriors of the First Fellowship ever entered those halls and witnessed the hidden labours and experiments of the Sorcerer Primarch. In the wake of the utter destruction wrought by the Space Wolves, none will ever know what secrets he uncovered within its halls.



THE SECOND WAVE

Massing his reserve forces, the brutal Varagyr of the First Great Company and the Pale Hunter warbands and armoured squadrons of the Second and Third Great Companies, Russ unleashed them upon the outlying districts of central Tizca. Yet where they expected to meet only scattered resistance, thinking the majority of the defenders dispersed across the city and embroiled in combat with the first wave of attackers, they met heavy resistance. The Space Wolves encountered squadrons of unbloodied Spireguard Templars fighting from prepared positions within the spires and dense walkways of the inner city, the elite of the Prosperine Spireguard bearing crackling sickle-headed axes. They accompanied fresh detachments of the Thousand Sons—many of whom bore the same markings as those previously spotted during ambushes of Space Wolves units, backed by strangely fashioned and powerful Battle-automata of a type unknown to the attackers. Vicious fighting erupted across this new front, fighting driven by hatred and zealous fury where both sides held nothing back and the sheer ferocity of the Space Wolves was met by a maelstrom of psychic destruction unleashed by the Thousand Sons. Such a battle was something never before seen within the Imperium as warriors of the Legiones Astartes met one another in open conflict on a massive scale. Leman Russ had committed nearly 20,000 of his Space Wolves against a force of Thousand Sons nearly equal in size, and in their struggle they tore Tizca apart.

Fighting now engulfed the northern quarters, and its once pristine streets and colonnaded squares were reduced to broken rubble. The Space Wolves had left the great theatres and libraries in flames and hounded its people, while the Thousand Sons in their eagerness to punish the attackers had turned the few intact buildings into shot-ridden redoubts and blood-soaked fortresses. In Old Tizca, warriors from the Eighth and Twelfth Great Companies were soon engaged in a fresh game of ambush and counter-ambush with the elite psychic-infiltrators of the Order of Blindness—a few hundred Thousand Sons keeping almost 10,000 Space Wolves occupied. Along the edge of the Palatinate Palace grounds, more of the Space Wolves were engaged in the assault upon the FreeKorps soldiers there, bringing war to the loyal soldiers of the Imperium for the sin of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Where once the streets had rung to the sound of laughter and celebrations, they now resounded to the screams of the

dying, the sharp crack of boltguns and the mad panoply of gibbering and keening that echoed in the wake of the sorcerous powers of the Thousand Sons. No mercy was shown by either side, nor restraint or any other contrived courtesy of war. In the streets of Tizca, warriors who had once been brothers grappled to their last breath, seeking only to drag down their foe in death alongside them, each giving no thought to survival.

Nowhere to Run

Driven to the edge of destruction, the Thousand Sons had by this point abandoned all hope of redemption and turned loose the full untapped potential of their psychic powers, unleashing upon the Space Wolves all the horrors they had previously thought to contain. Dark lightning speared down from the sky, arcing between the warriors of storm-cloud grey, and burned them through. Great waves of green flame surged down the narrow streets seeking after the Space Wolves like some incendiary serpent. Where the crimson clad locked with the grey, invisible blades of force sheered through power armour with ease, scattering broken bodies in their wake, and blood was set to boiling death unspilled in its possessor's veins. But despite all this, the Space Wolves' assault did not falter, and many spat defiance in their killer's eyes as they died. Such was the outpouring of psychic force that the very ground of Prospero began to tremble, and alabaster walls cracked and tumbled as dark clouds gathered in a whirling and unnatural vortex centred over the City of Light. An unnatural pall fell, a sense of dread that even the indoctrinated psyche of the Legiones Astartes warriors could not shake.

Valdor's Intervention

With the main force of those Space Wolves on the planet fully engaged in combat and the reserves committed to a full-scale assault, the warriors of the first wave were dangerously overextended. Even as Leman Russ and his Varagyr were held at bay by the raw psychic fury of the Thousand Sons forces who blocked his path, more battalions of the crimson-armoured warriors gathered on his flanks by means of the warp portal network, hoping to cut off Russ and slice the head from the beast ravaging Prospero. This plan had not gone unnoticed, as high above on the flagship of the Legio Custodes, the *Oriflamme*, Constantin Valdor had analysed the data from the fleet's orbital scans, which had suffered severe degradation from the ætheric static building up around Tizca, and noted the potential danger. Unable now to directly contact the Space Wolves Legion

Primarch, or the small Legio Mortis maniple despatched to the wreck of the Zhao-Arkhad fane, the stern commander of the Emperor's guard measured Russ' orders to remain in orbit against the potential failure of the initial landing and concluded that his duty to the Emperor outweighed Russ' commands, and ordered the Legio Custodes, Sisters of Silence and the attendant Imperial Army regiments to prepare for combat operations. Yet in deference to the Primarch who led the invasion, Constantin Valdor assigned his second wave not to reinforce Leman Russ directly or immediately, which would make plain the failings of his initial assault, but to strike at Tizca's orbital transfer docks and thus draw the Thousand Sons forces away from the Space Wolves to contest this new line of attack.

Alongside their own gunships, the warriors of the Legio Custodes turned to the bulk landers of the Imperial Navy for the initial stage of their assault, as many of the Strategoi feared the possible interactions of the Thousand Sons 'kine' field and the psyker-storm with any attempt at a teleport assault. Three dozen Sodalities, the loose warrior-fraternities in which the Custodes were organised, would spearhead the assault alongside the 9th Solar Auxilia forces, whose void hoplites had participated in innumerable orbital assaults, as well as cadres of the Silent Sisterhood.

The first sign given to the defenders of this new offensive was a sudden aerial blitz upon the orbital transfer yards in Tizca's western districts, with a wave of Xiphon and Equinox interceptors sweeping the skies clear of the few Thousand Sons *Primaris*-Lightnings that remained airborne. Following the fighter craft were the landers, slab-sided and ponderous. Their pilots made the most of the chaos wrought by the fighter assault, struggling to bring down their craft on the wide grey expanse of the landing fields as quickly as possible in the gathering turbulence and the warp-fused static which all but blinded their augurs. Yet despite their skill, several of the 9th Solar Auxilia's giant drop craft were struck by streams of heavy autocannon fire and searing lascannon beams from ground-based defence platforms; repeated strikes scoured great wounds in the flanks of the vast ships and sent several to explosive deaths, and left many more badly damaged as they made groundfall.

Despite the loss of nearly 1,000 of the Solar Auxilia and a handful of warriors of the Legio Custodes attaining a landing, the assault force

did not pause, assuming from the encounters of the first wave that the Thousand Sons would quickly redeploy to counter their attack. Emerging from the gaping holds of their landers in disciplined phalanxes, the void hoplites of Saturn moved first against the gun emplacements and defence bunkers that ringed the transfer fields, relying on mobile batteries of Rapier weapons platforms to break open their armoured skins and suppress the troops within. Crimson-uniformed soldiers in gear that matched that of the Solar Auxilia deployed to meet the Imperium's assault; these were the Western Palatine Guard, their lines bolstered by Malcador heavy tanks and squadrons of the Spireguard Templars wielding their great sickle-headed power axes. While the soldiers of the 9th Cohort took out the defence posts with concentrated fire, the Legio Custodes made a rapid advance on the orbital control tower that loomed over the landing fields. Their golden Coronus anti-gravity transports burst from their landers' holds at full speed, dodging and weaving through shellfire with expert skill as they approached their target, while the escorting Legio Custodes Pallas attack skimmers placed meticulously aimed blasts to clear formations of enemy troops that blocked their path.

Swiftly reaching the control spire, its crystal-faceted apex now broken and shattered by shellfire and wreckage, the gold-clad warriors of the Legio Custodes strode forth from their transports to do battle. Taller even than the Legiones Astartes and majestic in their intricately-worked golden armour, the Custodians threw back the Spireguard warriors that opposed them like Titans battling mere children. Even the elite Templars were slaughtered in droves as Valdor's warriors moved through the lower levels of the tower like a hurricane of death, leaving only broken and dismembered bodies in their wake. In contrast to the stern discipline of the Saturnyne soldiers, the Legio Custodes operated almost as individuals, with each warrior relying on his own skill to keep him safe rather than the watchfulness of the man at his shoulder, and against lesser foes, like the soldiery of the Spireguard, they were unstoppable.

However, as the warriors of the Legio Custodes reached the tower's spire, they encountered Cataphractii-armoured psyker-warriors of the Sekhmet, known to many as the Scarab Occult. These fell warriors, whose reputation was well known throughout the Great Crusade, were the dour Terminator elite of the Thousand Sons Legion, trained

all their lives to fight as a single unit and tempered by the long wars of conquest and Compliance. While even against such powerful foes as these the Legio Custodes were the superior warriors, the Scarab Occult did not fight as individuals, but almost as a single body of one mind. Forming a wall of hulking armoured bodies and flashing long-hafted force axes, they moved to counter the golden warriors, and where one of the Legio Custodes moved to strike a blow against one of the Sekhmet, his brothers to either side moved to defend him.

Here it was that the first of the Legio Custodes fell in open combat to a warrior of the Legiones Astartes, brought down by three of the Scarab Occult and the brutal efficiency of the style of warfare perfected by the Legions against the foes of Mankind. Yet even the martial skills of the Scarab Occult, psychically augmented as they were, could not triumph over the sheer brutal power of the Legio Custodes, the Emperor's Firstborn. For each of the golden warriors who fell injured or slain from the line of battle, four or more of the elite Scarab Occult were cut down, but the Scarab Occult were trained in more than simple bladework and marksmanship. The sorcery that had condemned them was the decisive advantage held by the Thousand Sons elite. As in the battles against the Space Wolves still raging to the north, they could ignite the very air and turn it against their enemies like a living tide, twisting their minds so that they struck at their own allies or conjured shields and blades of kinetic force, but as they reached for this power, they found nothing. Following on the heels of the imposing warriors of the Legio Custodes were the Null Maidens of the Silent Sisterhood, whose very presence chilled the air and sealed away the powers of sorcery that might have saved the Scarab Occult. Without their powers to rely on, the Terminators protecting the tower were soon overwhelmed by the Emperor's praetorians and slaughtered. It was a defeat such as the Sekhmet had never suffered since their inception. With their loss, the orbital transfer fields swiftly fell into the hands of the Censure Host.

Valdor, now walking the broken streets of Prospero at the head of his Custodian Guard, wasted no time in ordering a general deployment of those troops available to him: Imperial Army, Legio Custodes and Silent Sisterhood alike. Of those Space Wolves units that remained in reserve, the majority elected to await Russ' call, as did the small Sons of Horus contingent that

had joined them at Beta-Garmon. Only the Thirteenth Great Company, impetuous and ever-hungry for battle and blood, and the Eleventh, home to many of the Speakers of the Dead and those of the Black Cull who attended them—the death-kindred Cult of Morkai, largely a law unto themselves and perhaps less bound to the will of Russ for that—chose to join this new assault wave, leaving the Fourth, Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Great Companies still in reserve alongside the Ordo Sinister and Sons of Horus forces. Under the direction of Valdor, the second assault wave moved to secure two objectives: the first was to push north through the Palatinate Mansions and link up with Leman Russ and the first wave, while the second was to advance east and seize the Great Sesostrian Canal, which ran straight from the Valperine Sea to the foot of the pyramids of the Domus Tenebri and the Praefurnium Aeternus in the city's centre. These plans were initially opposed by only scattered resistance. The surviving FreeKorps units had fortified their position within the Palatinate Mansions and, after their encounters with the uncompromising Space Wolves, refused all calls to stand down, while the shattered remnants of the Spireguard regiments entrenched atop the Sanctuary Mount, amid the ruins of ancient temples and fallen shrines, had already been driven half mad by their losses and were likewise heedless of any calls by the newly arrived Imperium force to surrender. These pockets of resistance were instead encircled and thereby neutralised, allowing the main strength of the second wave, the Legio Custodes and Imperialis Auxilia elite troops, to gather at the orbital transfer fields in preparation to break the back of the Thousand Sons defences and bring a decisive end to the battle for Tizca.

THE STORM BREAKS

12:09:16 734004.M31

The warriors of the VIth Legion had fought many battles against the foes of Mankind, and had this been one such battle, it is likely it would have ended there. Now though they fought not some xenos menace, but one of the finest armies in the Imperium, a full Legion of the Emperor's own Space Marines. The Thousand Sons had no intention of allowing their foe to control the flow of battle, and upon detecting the landing of new reinforcements, those Thousand Sons Fellowships and Spireguard regiments previously held in reserve were quickly released to the fighting. Within the spires of the temple-arcology of the Corvidae, great rituals were undertaken at the cost of hundreds of thrall lives to pierce

the veil of the future, and in the holding cells beneath the Athanean Cult's brooding fortress, the magisters sought to break those prisoners brought to them from the front lines and divine the plans of the foe. Such a vast expenditure of lives, both sacrificed thralls and slaughtered prisoners alike, only quickened the dark stormfront which was forming over the city, but granted Ahriman and the other leaders of the Thousand Sons vital intelligence which, when combined with the warp portal network concealed within the city's ancient architecture, allowed them to quickly reposition their forces to stymie the invaders.

The 3rd Terranic Auxilia, freshly landed, found their advance on the hastily constructed fortifications of the Sanctuary Mount disrupted by the sudden appearance of a detachment from the Thousand Sons Ninth Fellowship. With a large proportion of Corvidae among their ranks, the Imperium force's commanders found all their assaults anticipated and shattered by the disciplined fire and psychic assaults of the crimson-armoured Space Marines. The largest single force of Legio Custodes warriors, some 500 strong under Constantin Valdor himself, moved to obliterate the rogue Imperial Army soldiers within the Palatinate Mansions, only to find themselves embroiled in vicious street fighting with a massed detachment of Thousand Sons Line Terminators and Dreadnoughts, the war machines of the dreaded Order of Ruin, along the ornate pillared streets of the Palatinate Approach. The Legio Custodes squadrons, divided by vast walls of roaring green flame as they advanced, were separated and then set upon by the Thousand Sons elite who

appeared as if from thin air, their long-bladed prosperine axes crackling with profane force as they cut into those isolated Legio Custodes caught in the trap, but against the Custodian Guard, whose meat and drink were the battle against the assassin and the unexpected foe, even such a deadly ambush proved no sure guarantee of victory, as many of the Thousand Sons discovered to their cost. Others of Valdor's command found themselves caught in a deluge of unnatural lightning that arced and twisted to follow the preternaturally agile Custodians, or were suddenly held motionless in cages of arcane energy as the Thousand Sons stalked towards them. The unfettered psychic potential of the Thousand Sons, the secret teachings of Magnus the Red and even those techniques he had once forbidden to his sons were all now unleashed in anger and desperation, and matched against the gene-craft of the Emperor in a confrontation that shook the very gates of heaven.

Elsewhere, attempting to push east around the Sanctuary Mount towards the gilded battlements of the Valperine Bastion, the Space Wolves of the Eleventh Great Company were similarly intercepted by the sudden appearance of Thousand Sons warriors along their flanks. The Death-kin of Morkai went laughing into the flames, their great black axes struck down their foes even as the power of the Warp was unleashed burning their armour from bone to ash. The Censure Host fared worse on the other side of the city, where the isolated detachments of the first wave were hard-pressed to fend off a renewed counter-attack from the central districts as Thousand Sons battalions and even citizen militia units rallied, or were

simply mind-slaved to Tizca's defence, the sheer numbers of their foe proving a drain on both the Space Wolves' numbers and munitions. In the face of the Thousand Sons' almost euphoric surrender to the profligate use of their sorcerous powers, the Space Wolves had little counter save their native ferocity and bloody-minded unwillingness to give way. Leman Russ could only turn the tide in a single battle at a time and the Rune Priests of the VIth Legion were limited in their ability to counter the vastly more powerful and reckless magisters of the Thousand Sons. Those very Thousand Sons let loose every forbidden discipline of sorcery and poured forth all their hate through the æther to scorch and burn the foe, forcing back the Space Wolves and their allies and holding a defensive line along the edge of the outermost temple-arcologies of the central quarter. Yet, even as they attacked, the skies of Prospero writhed above them and Tizca began to change. Many of those who fought there would later tell tales of dread apparitions that flitted by at the very edges of their vision, of streets that turned in upon themselves and led the warriors of the Emperor to places far removed from their intended destinations, and of comrades who crumbled to dust or simply vanished from right by their side. The Thousand Sons and their magisters must also have seen the changes their actions brought upon Tizca, but in their defiance they would not relent and sought only to drag their attackers with them to destruction.



Such a complete rejection of the Emperor's will, the dark lessons of the Age of Strife and the spirit of the Imperial Truth as evinced by the Thousand Sons could only be seen as contemptible by Leman Russ and the warriors of the VIth Legion. As they spat upon their blades, the Space Wolves swore the Thousand Sons were no longer the brother Legionaries they had conquered a galaxy beside, but something corrupt and broken. They were no longer owed any debt of honour or duty. In response Leman Russ, forcing a transmission through from one of his Legion Mastodons' command relays and burning it out in the process, summoned those of his sons that remained in orbit. This was no longer a limited war on Imperial soil. Prospero had been damned by the actions of its defenders and was owed no mercy, and the Space Wolves would scour it clean so that the evil that manifested there would never rise again to trouble humanity. On the direct orders of their Primarch, the warriors of the Seventh Great Company, where the majority of the Black Cull and the siege and artillery reserve of the 'Landayvan' —they who 'lay the land waste'— had been assigned, took up arms and prepared the weapons for which they were named: the poisonous flame of phosphex and the cold death of stasis weaponry, and with them and worse, new plague munitions and rad-phages taken from the armouries of Beta-Garmon and urged upon the VIth Legion by Horus' emissaries. Their orders were to erase Tizca, to leave no stone upon stone and spare none: man, woman or child.

The Purging of Tizca

Even as the Space Wolves reserves raced to reinforce Leman Russ and spill the blood of the Thousand Sons, the smaller Sons of Horus contingent landing in their wake set themselves to a far darker task whose implications have been largely ignored by later historians. Directed by Boros Kurn, whose intent originated with the Warmaster, the Sons of Horus and those auxiliaries bound to them spread out across the pacified districts of northern Tizca and began to round up all of the men and women of Prospero still to be found there. Clad in sea-green power armour and with vox-amplifiers blaring, the Sons of Horus drove great crowds of refugees into hastily assembled holding areas. Those few who dared to resist were either slain out of hand, their corpses hoisted high on the once pristine brickwork of Tizca's promenades, or brutally mutilated and left in the streets as living warnings against disobedience.

Within the holding areas, the Sons of Horus began to systematically sort and catalogue the now captive citizens of the Imperium while the desperate battle still raged. Some few were removed and taken aboard the Sons of Horus cruiser waiting in low orbit, perhaps as many as several thousand such individuals, while the rest met a far more grisly fate. Once the sorting had been completed and those chosen individuals were removed, the Sons of Horus pulled back from that holding area before directing artillery to flatten it and obliterate all trace of those who had once occupied it. Few records now mention these activities. And what the Sons of Horus were searching for is uncertain, but given the propensity for the denizens of Prospero to develop psychic talents and the later appearance of large numbers of rogue psykers in the auxiliary and cultic units fielded by both the Sons of Horus and Word Bearers during the Horus Heresy, there may be a link, though this is something that cannot now be proven. However, Horus was ever known for his foresight and unwillingness to abandon an asset that he might later use to good effect.



BITTER BLOOD

As Leman Russ took his own measures against the threat posed by the Thousand Sons' descent into madness, Valdor did likewise. The Ordo Sinister, Valdor's most potent reserve force, whose own anathemic properties could have perhaps turned the tide, were now also out of reach. Valdor's own forced communications into orbit had discovered that the handful of Psi-Titans that had shadowed the Censure fleet had already deployed without orders to investigate the fate of the Legio Mortis in the blasted land beyond the city. So close and so utterly out of reach, the power of the Ordo Sinister had been taken from Valdor's hand by the turning of fate. Matters would now be down to the flesh and blood of the Emperor's Talons to contest. However, unlike the Primarch, Valdor was unwilling to simply annihilate the very city itself and instead turned to the Untouchables of the Silent Sisterhood, whose aberrant nature acted as a potent counter to any psychic power. Unfortunately, in all of the Censure Host there were but 3,000 of the Sisterhood's initiates, hardly enough to shield but a fraction of the vast force sent against Tizca.

The redoubtable master of the Emperor's bodyguard faced a grim choice; he could spread the Sisterhood across all the disparate detachments of the Censure Host, granting a small measure of protection to all but leaving the Sisters themselves vulnerable to piecemeal destruction, or concentrate their deployment within certain formations, rendering them proof against much of the sorcery of their foe, but leaving the rest of the host vulnerable. With little time for lengthy deliberations and gene-crafted to lack the human tendency towards indecision, Valdor chose to gather the vast majority of the Silent Sisterhood under his own banner, within the formations of the Legio Custodes. He intended to punch through the defensive lines of the Thousand Sons, link up with Leman Russ and use those of the Silent Sisterhood available to mount a joint offensive on the city's centre. A small

cadre of the Silent Sisters were left at the orbital transfer yards to ensure that they did not fall to any psychic infiltration and would remain a valid fall-back position, but other commands were left to cope as best they could with the psychic might of the Thousand Sons.

Bereft of support from the Silent Sisterhood, the various independent commands of the Censure Host pressed the attack regardless, forced now to rely on superior numbers and brute ferocity to carry the day. In the southern districts, the Space Wolves of the Thirteenth and Eleventh Great Companies, almost 10,000 strong and under the command of Torm Gudaric, known among the Space Wolves as the 'Outlander Jarl' and believed to be the only surviving Terran member of the Legion's high command, marched on the Vulperine Bastion alongside the siege engineers of the Third Fane of the Charonid Sentinels. The bastion, with its fortified walls manned by a detachment of the Fifth Fellowship, was the key to control of the Great Sesostrian Canal, which itself served as an ideal assault route into the central districts. Control of the ornately columned aqueduct through which the canal flowed would likely decide the ultimate fate of the battle, and neither side was willing to allow the other to take control of it without demanding a high price in blood and death. Outnumbering the defenders almost three to one, the Imperium's troops pressed their advantage by mounting a ferocious assault on the walls of the bastion. A rain of shellfire and high explosives was hurled upon the parapets and redoubts where the Thousand Sons and surviving Southern Palatine Guard units sheltered, serving primarily to protecting those magisters still inside by deflecting projectiles with 'kine' shields, and extinguishing the infernos that were left in the wake of those shells that penetrated their defences.

With the sorcerers forced onto the defensive, the Space Wolves advanced while the black-cloaked forms of the Charonid Guard braved the firestorm around the walls to seed specially targeted sections with admixtures of phosphex tailored to reduce ferrocrete to little more than a chemical slurry. Despite

the unrelenting barrage, some among the sorcerers of the Thousand Sons could still turn their arcane skills to the destruction of their enemy, lancing actinic sprays of lightning into the Charonid engineers, lacing the Space Wolves' positions with psychokinetic mines or super-heating the water of the canal into a shield of vapour that obscured the parapets and battlements of the bastion. Desperation and spite lent power to the Thousand Sons' evocations greater than any they had enjoyed while they fought for the Emperor, and through that power even the greater numbers of the Space Wolves and their allies could be held at bay. Of the cost for their new-found strength, none among them spared a thought. For them victory against those who had destroyed their world seemed worth any price, and even as the sky churned above them and unnatural lightning blasted down about them unnamed by any hand, they called on whatever gods might listen for more.

While this new-found psychic strength lasted even the fury of the Space Wolves' barrage could not fully suppress them and the Thousand Sons held their executioners at bay, both at the Vulperine Bastion and at the Argent Bastion to the north, where warbands of the Second and Third Great Companies had encircled another embattled detachment of the Thousand Sons. Atop the Sanctuary Mount, but a few kilometres from the orbital transfer fields, a third force of the Thousand Sons mounted a similar defence, surrounded on all sides by the soldiers of the Imperial Army, who died in their droves and only held the attack because their ranks were bolstered by the golden-armoured Custodes. Even at the edges of the city's glittering central districts, where the flanks of the Corvidae and Raptoran pyramids bore great gaping wounds from the fighting, Leman Russ and the massed warriors of the Varagyr found themselves caught in a deadly stalemate. The Thousand Sons used the network of warp gates and a veritable storm of illusions and phantasms to lure the Primarch from one firefight to another, seeking to keep the Wolf King from engaging the main body of their forces. For while Magnus chose to eschew the battle for Tizca, there were none amongst them who could match the son of the Emperor, no warp-spawned lightning that could fell him and no 'kine' wall that could bar his path of destruction. While Leman

Russ was occupied chasing shadows and cutting a bloody path through diversionary skirmishes, the main force of the Thousand Sons struggled to keep the Wolves that followed on his heels from tearing the heart out of Tizca, and reaping a toll of their own in return. But they knew that this bloody holding action could not last.

The Hours of Fury

Of all the actions undertaken by the Censure Host during this stage of the fighting in Tizca, the only one to enjoy any measure of true success was the assault upon the Palatinate Mansions. Where the initial assault of the Legio Custodes had stalled in the face of the Thousand Sons' sorcerous might, when next they advanced it was in the wake of the Silent Sisterhood's stalkers. The chill and soulless warriors of the Order spearheaded the assault, infiltrating the columned avenues of the approach without alerting the psychic wards of the Thousand Sons and falling upon their sentries when the Legio Custodes resumed their assault in force. As the assault craft of the Custodes prowled into the ruins on the invisible cushion of their grav repulsors, the Thousand Sons leapt to meet them, yet now the growing hate they felt brought forth no eruption of psychic might, but only a brief guttering of thwarted power. With so many of the Silent Sisterhood present, including near a dozen of the Order's most powerful Oblivion Knights, the Thousand Sons' occult abilities were effectively neutered, leaving them to face the wrath of the Legio Custodes with only their martial training. The warriors of the Thousand Sons, though they had long relied on their psychic abilities, were still of the Legiones Astartes and amongst the finest warriors in the galaxy. In past wars a mere handful of such warriors had conquered worlds, and now over 6,000, including a detachment of the Scarab Occult and a full armoured column of the Order of Ruin, stood against a mere 500 Custodes and two Vigils of the Silent Sisterhood. With Tizca burning around them and the warp portals disabled by the insidious presence of the Untouchables, the Thousand Sons closed ranks and charged.

Within only moments it was obvious they stood no chance of victory; each of the Custodes slaughtered dozens before the Thousand Sons could drag them down. However, the Thousand Sons sought not victory for themselves, but survival for their Legion. The forward echelons threw themselves upon the Custodes, sacrificing themselves to allow their brothers to break

through the front lines and engage the Silent Sisters—seeking to kill as many as possible before they fell. The blademasters of the Thousand Sons Ammitara Occult, numbering almost a hundred strong, cut a path towards Valdor himself, in the hope they could injure or kill the leader of the golden host. Of the hundred, less than thirty managed to fight their way past the Custodians and Sentinel Guard that surrounded Valdor. Those thirty closed on the First of the Ten Thousand as a single body, each wielding long blades that, even without the psychic charge normally provided by its user, could still cut ceramite armour asunder with ease. Valdor slew them all, but at great cost to himself, for at least one of the crimson warriors had left his mark upon the lord of the Custodes, red blood staining his gold armour. Within a few short minutes the Thousand Sons holding the approach were destroyed, but they had paid a hefty price for their victory, with Valdor injured and scores of Custodians fallen as casualties—though given their formidable resilience, few would not rise again—but more critically near five hundred of the Silent Sisterhood had been slain.

Despite their losses, the Custodes pressed on, smashing the defences of the last FreeKorps around the Palatinate Mansions and linking up with the Eighth and Twelfth Great Companies in Old Tizca. The battered and exhausted warriors of the FreeKorps stood little chance against the combined assault of the Legio Custodes and Space Wolves, the unfortunate Imperial Army soldiers slaughtered. Having reached Old Tizca, Valdor quickly dispersed the Silent Sisters among the Space Wolves he encountered while retaining the majority of their number under his command as he sought to join up with Leman Russ at the forefront of the advance. As Old Tizca had been largely cleared of both active Thousand Sons units and civilians through the efforts of the Sons of Horus and the Black Cull, the Talons of the Emperor quickly joined the main force of the Space Wolves moving towards the centre of the city. With detachments of Silent Sisters now accompanying each of the main Space Wolves warbands, the Thousand Sons' hit and run tactics began to fall apart, for as the warp portals and their own powers of obfuscation grew more unreliable, they were less able to escape from the overwhelming numbers of the Space Wolves, some of which had even risked all to pursue the Thousand Sons into the portal network itself.

By this point in the battle, the Thousand Sons had, by the Imperium's estimate,

suffered perhaps 30,000 casualties or Legionaries rendered combat incapable, which accounted for almost half of the Legion's known manpower, and any Thousand Sons captured by the enemy or left behind wounded were summarily executed. While the Censure Host had suffered comparable casualty numbers, they also had a larger pool of reinforcements from which to replenish their ranks, as well as a number of medicae field hospitals returning their wounded to a combat-capable condition. As casualties mounted, the Imperium's advantage only grew, with the front the Thousand Sons could ably defend rapidly shrinking and allowing the Censure Host more opportunities to overwhelm their lines.

Worse still for the defenders of Prospero, Leman Russ was now accompanied by an honour guard of Oblivion Knights as well as Constantin Valdor and a number of the Legio Custodes. The Thousand Sons could no longer hide from the enraged Wolf King, nor divert his charge, and he struck their lines with the force of a thunderbolt. The Eighth and Second Fellowships of Magnus' Legion bore the brunt of his assault along the precincts that marked the edge of the vast bulk of the Raptoran temple-arcology, emplaced within hurriedly assembled fortifications and wielding their powers fitfully as the Silent Sisters wreaked havoc with the æther. Yet they were still a formidable force, some 10,000 of the Legiones Astartes girded for war, armed with some of the most fearsome weaponry known to the soldiers of Mankind and bolstered by a hatred born of arrogance and misplaced pride. Leman Russ, side by side with Valdor, tore the heart from their formation, leaving only broken corpses in their wake at the plaza before the temple-arcology, while the warriors of the Legio Custodes and Space Wolves Varagyr stalked the battlefield like the battle-gods of Ancient Terra, the gold and grey of their armour obscured by black ash and arterial red. There was no mercy for the Thousand Sons, no chance for a glorious death, only slaughter and bitter defeat. Their powers were shorn from them by the oppressive presence of the Soulless of the Silent Sisterhood, their glittering city ripped down around them by the forbidden weaponry of the Black Cull, and its citizens murdered. It must have seemed that this moment was the Legion's last, that it would be wiped from existence with little more than a death cry.

Then the Canis Vertex, though it had neither crew nor power, began to move...

THE BEGINNING OF THE END, 15:23:03 734004.M31

A relic of ancient oaths and wars long past, the *Canis Vertex* was the hulk of a Warlord class battle Titan, once of the Legio Astorum, that had stood as a mute monument within Tizca for many long years. Now, as the skies of Prospero buckled and heaved above, and actinic bale-fire played along its mighty limbs, the corpse-Titan stirred. Within the cadaverous confines of its head, a sickly light kindled and blazed forth from the view ports and the Titan let forth a shrill keening that echoed across the city and set the ears of lesser men bleeding for its ferocity. As it strode forth, tearing itself free from the supports that had held it in place, Prospero itself answered the call to war with a rolling fanfare of thunder that shattered even the reinforced transparent panes of the great temple-arcologies and threw the aircraft of the Censure Host from the skies like toys. The *Canis Vertex* took one tottering step after another, its limbs sheathed in the unearthly glow of witch-fire and its weapons spitting not cannon fire but bolts of condensed hate that tore through the ant-like invaders at its feet. It marched to war once again, and as it did so the moon of Prospero rose to cover the sun, blanketing Tizca in darkness. For it was no miracle of the Ommissiah, no technological secret that brought back the corpse-Titan to fight one last battle, but the desperate rituals of the Magister Templi Khalophis, lord of the Sixth Fellowship and Arch-magus of the Pyrae Cult.

Calling upon the macabre and most obscure arcana hidden within the libraries of Tizca, Khalophis had torn open a wound in the Immaterium and used the energies that poured forth to bind his very soul to the hulk of the ancient god-engine, rekindling its failed reactors with the dark fires of the Warp. He had also loosed great vortices of power across the city, enflaming the guttering powers of the magisters and acolytes of the Prosperine Cults. Even as the *Canis Vertex* began its final march, blasting torrents of warp fire from its once long-dead cannon, the Thousand Sons were re-invigorated with a flush of power whose source they cared not to question. They took what was offered without asking the price and turned it upon their foes, the sheer vehemence of their hate and new-found potency blasting through the protection of the Silent Sisters and searing the bones from the warriors of the Emperor. Towering above the fray, lit from within by the flickering fires of the unnatural energies that coursed through and over it in the dark that covered

Tizca like a shroud, the *Canis Vertex* led the charge, scattering Imperial companies like chaff and blasting their armour to cinders. At its feet came the Thousand Sons, a roaring wave of vengeance, sheathed in 'kine' shields and wielding all the weapons of their arcane arts with a new-found strength.

Where only moments before Leman Russ had stood on the brink of victory, he now struggled for simple survival. Not only had the protective shield of the Silent Sisterhood been swamped by the sudden eruption of the Empyrean around Prospero, but the surviving Thousand Sons had grown more powerful than ever before, their psychic bolts and telekine lashes tearing apart even the heavily armoured Terminators with ease. Worse yet, all communication with the orbiting fleet was now almost entirely blocked and left any commander on the ground out of touch with all but the closest detachments of the Censure Host—those within sound of his own roaring voice. Now Leman Russ, Valdor and the few hundred fighters that surrounded them were isolated amidst the Thousand Sons' counter-attack, vulnerable to the immense weapon batteries of the looming corpse-Titan as they were to no other. Yet still the Primarch and the Spear of the Emperor would not retreat in the face of the enemy, choosing instead to push further into the lower reaches of the Raptoran temple-arcology, out of reach of the guns of the *Canis Vertex* and cutting a path through the blasted lower chambers.

Here amidst the ruins of the pyramid, the Praetor-magisters of the Second and Eighth Fellowships, Phosis T'kar and Auramagma, brought the champions of the Emperor to bay. Both were fearsome warriors as well as masters of the arcane; T'kar, a devotee of the arts of the telekine, taught in the Cult of the Raptora, and Auramagma, a volatile follower of the Pyrae's less than subtle skills. Both had fought for over a century in the Emperor's name, conquered worlds and annihilated those xenos breeds deemed too dangerous to live. They had given rise to legends as warriors of skill and might, and yet both were as the least neophytes when compared to the warriors they faced. It was only by dint of the warp-spawned power that now coursed through them that they might challenge such paragons of war's bloody trade, and even that power might prove insufficient. The two magisters called upon every reserve they had, summoned every ounce of strength they could pull from the

tear in the Warp created by Khalophis, and brought down every hell Leman Russ had warned the Emperor of at Nikaea upon the masters of the Censure Host. Superheated flame scoured the vast galleries in which they stood, melting the armour of the Varagyr and Rune Priests around Leman Russ like wax, while T'kar stormed forwards—a 'kine' shield enveloping him—shedding bolter fire like hard rain, his own plasma-spitting pistol sounding in retort. Their bodyguard shattered, the Primarch and the Custodian raised their blades and met the charge.

At that same moment, wedged between the advance of the Black Cull, the Seventh Great Company and the Legio Custodes, another of the Magister-paetors, Phael Toron of the Seventh Fellowship, watched as the relentless advance of the Imperium's troops ground down the remaining warriors of his Fellowship. Of over 7,000 of his Legiones Astartes fewer than 3,000 remained alive, scattered across Tizca, and in his Company but a few hundred lingered, slowly dying one by one even with the power bestowed upon them by Khalophis' sorcery. As his brothers died around him and his city burned, Praetor Toron let go of all restraint and gave himself over to the power that lived within the æther, becoming a living conduit to that force. Blasts of coruscating light sprang forth to destroy the Space Wolves and Thousand Sons alike as they battled around Phael Toron's rapidly dispersing form, Toron's life ending as his own powers consumed him. This incident was at the time but one among many recorded psychic abnormalities in the renegade Legion, and of the various fragmented battle reports was disregarded by the harried battlefield commanders. Yet with the benefit of hindsight and a thorough reconstruction of events, it is this incident that sparked the demise of the Thousand Sons as a Legion and perhaps as men. From this epicentre, scholars have charted the fall of the Thousand Sons Legion with surprising accuracy. From Phael Toron's misspent sacrifice in a swiftly spreading circle, the Thousand Sons began to fail, falling prey to the insidious curse of the Flesh Change. Many did not even notice as they succumbed, ripping and tearing at the foe even as their own bodies convulsed and reformed into hideous new shapes.

On the far side of the great pyramid of the Raptoran Cult, the spreading ring of Flesh Change reached Auramagma and Phosis T'kar within but a few seconds, and the power they had so eagerly glutted themselves on

turned against them. Auramagma's roaring flames scorched back upon him even as he stood before the Wolf King, searing his warping flesh and corrupted soul alike, and sending him screaming from the battle as a terrible living pyre. Phosis T'kar, locked in a frenzied duel with Constantin Valdor, was hit by a wave of sudden mutation that saw his once noble form swell and shift into an abomination whose monstrous aspect left even the Lord of the Legio Custodes shocked. Yet this new form, though foul in appearance, towered over the golden Custodes and was suffused with such anger that it forced back one of the most potent warriors in the Imperium; it was only the last flickers of humanity that dwelled within the spawn of the æther that allowed Valdor to strike it down before he was overwhelmed. Further still from its epicentre, the wave of energy that had begun with Phael Toron swept across the massed ranks of the Second and Eighth Fellowships as they strove to hold back the Space Wolves, Legio Custodes and Silent Sisterhood, and left almost one in ten of that accursed brotherhood writhing in the throes of the Flesh Change. Yet, it was not only the Thousand Sons who succumbed to the effects of the warp power unleashed by the sorcerers of Prospero—some among the Space Wolves

also found themselves afflicted by a curse born in their own blood. Many of those who would later pen chronicles of the Battle of Tizca have omitted this detail, indeed the Space Wolves themselves have worked to see it erased from history, yet the truths kept in the vaults of the Imperium's archives cannot be denied. Within a few brief moments of Phael Toron's destructive passing, the battlefields around the Raptoran temple-arcology were rife with monsters, as shifting, formless ogres battled creatures more rabid wolf than man among the sea of grey and crimson Legiones Astartes.

At the very edges of the effects of the insidious wave of Flesh Change unleashed by Toron, the corpse-Titan *Canis Vertex* staggered onwards, guided by the spirit of Khalophis towards the port where the Space Wolves Stormbirds were grounded, seeking to crush the beachhead and cut the supply lines that fed munitions to Leman Russ' warriors. With every laboured step the vast Titan obliterated an entire city block, killing dozens of Space Wolves and doing as much damage to Tizca as the entire Black Cull. Green fire arced and spun around it as its battered limbs aligned with distant targets and spat lances of unearthly flame, tearing holes in the advancing Imperial detachments, and

swatting entire squadrons of aircraft from the sky. With the few Titans brought along almost as an afterthought by the Censure Host meeting their fate elsewhere, there was no fit enemy to challenge such a monstrosity; the tanks of the Space Wolves were merely targets and the Custodes Equinox interceptors making attack runs on its armoured carapace were but annoyances. Yet when the energy unleashed by Toron reached the *Canis Vertex* its effect was devastating, tearing asunder the delicate sorcery that held the corpse-Titan under the thrall of distant Khalophis. The unnatural fire that had replaced its reactor seethed out of control, erupting from beneath its skin and blossoming in explosions that rained debris across the central districts of the city until finally the vast store of ætheric energy within the ancient Titan's frame burst free with an explosion that quite literally shook the sky. It blasted out across Tizca, flattening buildings, stripping the vast frames of the closest temple-arcologies and birthed an immense churning tempest of fire and blood-red cloud in the sky above Tizca, centred on the Titan's burning corpse as it slumped bonelessly into the remains of the Corvidae Cult temple. Hell had finally come to Tizca, and all those present would live to regret what was yet to come.





THE IMPOSSIBLE BATTLE

'Many have spoken of the evils of the Psyker, the Sorcerer and the Witch; that the art is intrinsically wrong simply because it can be used to perform terrible deeds. I say that one must instead consider that this evil is a projection of the fears of the many who do not understand the possibilities that await Mankind if we can tame the dangers of this art. That it is this multitude of lesser sins that is the real issue for this Council.'

Magnus the Red, as recorded during the Council of Nikaea, 001.M31

'It is superfluous to suppose that what can be accounted for by a single demonstrable effect has in fact been produced by many.'

Thomas Aquinas, Theoretician of the ancient Catharian Empire, Old Terra, c.250.M02

SPACE WOLVES VARAGYR CATAPHRACT

VARAGYR THEGN ORTHELN OF THE BLOOD-WORM
THE WOLF KING'S RETINUE, FIRST GREAT COMPANY
THE PROSPERINE CENSURE HOST, 004.M31

One of the hundred-strong Varagyr retinue which accompanied the Wolf King during the fighting at Tizca, Ortheln saw combat throughout the anomalous event known as the 'Impossible Battle'. After-action reports filed with the Divisio Militaris and even a stanza in the Fenrisian Saga of Prospero list Ortheln among the dead, yet in the campaigns following the Prosperine Crusade, he appears very much alive and active in the ranks of the First Great Company. According to several eye witnesses and the oral saga, Ortheln was slain in the last few moments of the battle, one of the few Space Wolves to have breached the walls of the Pyramid of Photep, locked in combat with members of the Thousand Sons Scarab Occult. This confusing anomaly has been put down to the influence of the Thousand Sons sorcery that occluded the fleet's sensors and warped the weather, though as the Horus Heresy erupted, Ortheln is present at a surprising number of incidents involving aberrant Warp activity.

The armour worn by Ortheln bears a number of ornate decorations. Ritual knotwork covers his pauldrons and gorget, the patterns having great ritual significance to the Fenrisian warrior cult that had spread throughout the VIth Legion. The intricate patterns on his pauldrons act as a marker of the legend Ortheln had forged over years of battle, but also serve a more practical purpose by illustrating his tactical specialities for ease of identification during battle. In addition to the various decorative and pseudo-religious symbols, Ortheln also carries a Fenrisian wolf pelt and a number of fangs from the same beast, such trophies served as badges of rank within the Legion, often borne by squad leaders and veterans in lieu of any other mark of office.



Modified Pauldron – Featuring 'Wurm Mark' Decoration

The Wreckage of Hope

#>:11:03; ^-:11:03; *#:11:03

Auspex Timestamp Error

With the destruction of the *Canis Vertex* and the blossoming of what could only be described as a localised warp storm in the lower atmosphere of Prospero, all communication with the central districts of Tizca ended abruptly. Neither high-gain orbital auspex nor focussed las-vox units could pierce the veil thrown over the area; indeed, even the astropaths attached to the fleet could not perceive what lay within, nor even how reality flowed in such a wound in the fabric of space-time. To those outside, it seemed as though a dark swirling haze hung over the entire area, rendering all within indistinct and dreamlike, with reports from various quarters on what was observed quickly becoming wildly contradictory. Those who entered the area covered by the disturbance could not be raised, nor were they observed to exit again before the resolution of events within Tizca. The Strategoi of the Imperial Army in orbit were stunned by this sudden and, at the time, inexplicable development, for all of the senior officers of the Censure Host were within the wound and they were rendered impotent in the face of what they could only assume was some doomsday weapon unleashed by the Thousand Sons. Unwilling to do the unthinkable and proclaim both a Primarch and the Lord of the Custodes possibly slain, they chose instead to do nothing, to wait and hope that within the wound Leman Russ and Constantin Valdor were both alive and striving for victory.

Those few Imperial forces who had escaped the singularity now obscuring the central districts were ordered to continue their current missions and were issued glib assurances that Fleet Command was in full control of the situation. Detachments scattered across the city were left to follow their standing orders, bereft of the counsel of the Censure Host's commanders and with only scant information on events unfolding within Tizca's central districts.

At the outermost edges of the storm that now engulfed central Tizca, where Russ and Valdor had led the assault against the Thousand Sons' lines, the warriors of the Black Cull remained intent on the sack of the Raptoran temple-arcology, seeding its vast superstructure with phosphex charges. Other warbands, notably those of the Twelfth Great Company, instead chose to plunge into the unearthly maelstrom that separated them from their Primarch. Further from the

front lines, the Sons of Horus continued their purge of Tizca's civilian population, and newly arrived auxilia and Space Wolves reinforcements were directed by Fleet Command to join the ongoing siege of the Argent Bastion at the far eastern walls of Tizca. Resistance at the Valperine Bastion, at the edge of the sea on Tizca's opposite extent, finally collapsed with the æther tremor triggered by Phael Toron, the majority of the psykers within the bastion driven to the Flesh Change by the overuse of their powers, resulting in them rampaging through their erstwhile allies. Without the barrage of psychic flame to hold them back, the efforts of the Charonid engineers and Space Wolves' heavy weapons packs collapsed the bastion upon its remaining garrison in a blast that threw a choking cloud of dust across a dozen city blocks. Those Space Wolves elements equipped with mechanised transports, as well as Legiones Astartes and Custodes jetbike squadrons, swept up the canal's broad avenues towards the city's centre, launching a lightning attack on the dazed Thousand Sons units who found themselves trapped outside the æther storm, and laid siege to the outermost temple-arcologies.

For those warriors caught in the grip of the storm now raging over the centre of Tizca, a number of difficulties have been encountered in reconstructing the struggles they faced. All attempts at communication, whether by standard vox unit or close-range directional beam, resulted in a garbled stream of static, disjointed orders from earlier in the battle or even from engagements that had yet to occur, as well as incoherent screaming. Attempts to track the battle visually using pict records from the fleet's orbital augurs have proven equally futile—some property of the storm over Tizca rendered all images taken unusable and in many cases actively harmful to those who viewed them. Finally, all written and oral sources, post-battle debriefs, neural-cortical interrogations and the available Space Wolves 'saga' records, display a number of discrepancies when compared and are often wildly contradictory. Some accounts place specific warriors, leaders and, on occasions, entire formations in positions that are at odds with the other testimony and sometimes with previously established facts. At least three verified accounts exist that in all other aspects conform to the known facts of the battle, but include prominent warriors widely known to have been slain in the early stages of the invasion, or that speak in compelling detail of the deaths of noted warriors known to have survived the fighting. In other cases,

witnesses from both sides have made accounts of battles that none of the other participants recall, or of other engagements lasting much longer or shorter than other sources claim.

From the gross discrepancies presented, many of which defy all logic, it can only be assumed that the ætheric storm that had engulfed the central areas of Tizca had some form of warping effect on the fabric of reality, tearing across dimensions and fracturing time in unpredictable patterns that left those caught within vulnerable to severe hallucinations. Some of the more eccentric scholars of our later age have posited that the effect may instead have exposed them to alternative versions of the future in which events followed a vastly different course, but most credible historians have discounted such foolishness. Whatever the cause, this treatise has been forced to weave together what appears to the author to be the most credible and least contradictory of the accounts available of the final battle of Tizca. In places, this may leave the accounting at odds with some popular myths and suppositions, but represents to my knowledge the most comprehensive and accurate retelling of the invasion's final confrontation.

The Apex of Tragedy

#>:11:03; ^-:11:03; *#:11:03

Auspex Timestamp Error

That retelling begins as the storm explodes into existence in the wake of the collapse of the *Canis Vertex*, as Russ and Valdor advanced unperturbed by the vortex that blocked their communication with the orbiting fleet and the troops elsewhere in the city. By most accounts there were also some 12,000 Space Wolves of various Great Companies, near 400 of the Legio Custodes, perhaps 1,500 Sisters of Silence and two cohorts of the Tyrian Exoguard also within the bounds of the storm, opposed by approximately 7,000 Thousand Sons, and the majority of the elite Spireguard Templar and Dervish regiments, as well as scattered units from other regiments. Under the command of Magister-praetor Hathor Maat of the Third Fellowship and Ahriman of the First, the bulk of the remaining defenders had fallen back to a new line of defence between the temple-arcologies of the Athanean and Pavoni pyramids, placing the greatest concentration of their remaining troops at the centre of the line nearest the grounds of the Great Library and Pyramid of Photep. Here they were determined to hold for as long as possible as the thousands of surviving civilians and routed human

soldiers of the Spireguard sought to retreat to the as-yet intact interior of the Pyramid of Photep. It was here that the Sorcerer King of Prospero had remained for the entire course of the battle so far, and here that his sons set their final defences.

The Thousand Sons' retreat was made under the cover of the confusion that reigned among the attackers in the aftermath of the arrival of the warp tempest and the fall of the *Canis Vertex*, compounded by the tormented hordes of warp-touched abominations that roamed the ruins and threw themselves against any they encountered. However, the Space Wolves and their allies were hardened fighters, and even a disaster of these proportions could only slow their assault, not stop it. Leman Russ and Valdor quickly took command of those units they encountered and set scouts to gather those outlying formations caught within the storm, using them to relay orders in the absence of reliable vox communications, and choosing to push directly after the defenders with a smaller force rather than allow them to dig in completely while they searched for every available man. Isolated units from both sides were scattered across the central districts, left to wage their own personal battles as best they could and to die unrecorded, whatever heroics or base acts they committed in the last hours of the battle to go forever unknown. In many cases, such was the fury of these unknown battles that the only remnants of them were the debased survivors, whether they were once Space Wolves or Thousand Sons, changed

by the fury of the tempest and their own rage or psychic hubris into manic creatures of hatred. The first skirmishes of the battle for Tizca's heart were fought against these

creatures, both by Imperial and renegade forces alike, for many of them simply attacked any they came across without regard for their allegiance or intent.

Historia Terra Regum

The Wolf's Dark Legacy

It was not only the sorcerous brethren of the Thousand Sons who were changed by the effects of the ætheric tempest, but also the warriors of the Space Wolves. Almost all records of this phenomenon were suppressed in the aftermath of the Battle for Prospero, but some are still preserved in the vast stacks of the Imperial Archives on Terra for those few scholars who are granted access. The few surviving records describe a number of the Space Wolves undergoing a transformation when caught within the tendrils of the tempest; their armour splitting as limbs contorted and coarse hair sprouting across their bodies, becoming as the namesake of their Legion. Unlike the Thousand Sons, whose Flesh Change took on myriad forms, few with any cohesive or lasting theme, the Space Wolves who fell to the same affliction all suffered a seemingly identical curse. Whether this speaks of a different cause for the change that befell the Space Wolves, or some genetic flaw in the make-up of the Fenrisian warriors themselves, is unknown, and is a subject that the Space Wolves will not speak of.

Some accounts indicate that Leman Russ and others of the Space Wolves commanders exerted some measure of control over their changed brethren even as the change took them—another marked difference from the Thousand Sons abominations who heeded orders from none. Other records disagree and paint these so called 'Wulfen' as just as indiscriminate and uncontrolled as those born of the Thousand Sons' hubris, killing without reason in a blood-fuelled rampage. Whichever is true, the very existence of the Wulfen would seem to question the assumption that it was purely the fault of the Thousand Sons. If the Flesh Change was not the result of the Thousand Sons' misuse of their powers, the crime for which they were to be destroyed, then the true cause must lie elsewhere and in the wake of their destruction and the tragedy to befall them later, it is likely it will remain a mystery.



War Beyond Reason

Scattering the bands of abominations that attacked the phalanx of warriors they had gathered, Leman Russ and Valdor moved to assault the newly formed Thousand Sons defensive line. Expecting a fusillade of psychic assaults, as they had experienced during earlier engagements, the Imperial force's commanders organised their troops into tight formations, each with a number of Silent Sisters at their core. These columns were unwieldy and coordinating their advance was a slow and laborious process without vox links, granting the Thousand Sons plenty of warning of their approach and time to prepare their defences. Yet when the Imperium's columns advanced, they were greeted by the roar of boltguns and the screech of incoming warheads, not the maddening howl of sorcerous fire; for the Thousand Sons now feared to use their own powers, save in small ways, lest they bring the Flesh Change down upon them. The final battle between the Legions was to be fought in the old ways, the way of shot and shell, of the press of blades and clash of armour. The two lines met with a crash like thunder and vented their fury and rage upon those who had once been their brothers, hundreds falling on both sides as the Imperium's columns pressed forwards, bending the Thousand Sons lines like the back of a bow.

Led by the massed armoured squadrons of the Space Wolves, with Typhon siege tanks and Mastodon assault transports at the fore, the Thousand Sons were blasted from their redoubts and harried by the Imperial Army companies at the columns' flanks, pressed to the brink of defeat. Yet, when it seemed they must fall to the superior numbers and the golden blades of the Legio Custodes, there were those among the Thousand Sons desperate enough or filled with enough hate that they turned once again to the full power of their psychic might. These warriors gave themselves wholly over to the æther for a few brief moments before the Flesh Change took them and their brothers cut them down, inflicting grievous harm on the Space Wolves—whose rapid advance had out-paced the slower, more vulnerable Silent Sisterhood formations. By the sacrifice of these desperate warriors, the Thousand Sons managed to drive back the Imperium's assault, holding their last line but leaving yet more of their comrades bloodied in the dust of Tizca's ruins.

Three times the Space Wolves and the Talons of the Emperor pressed the attack, and three times they were repulsed. Each attack further thinned the line of crimson—7,000 became 6,000 and then only 5,000 until the Thousand Sons were but a tiny drop of colour amid a sea of angry grey and gold. All along the perilously thin line, the Thousand Sons and their allies braced for what must surely be the final charge, the injured given a weapon to make a worthy end or the hard mercy of death when they could no longer fight.

The dead formed their barricades, crimson and grey brothers once again in death, and the living chose for themselves a place to die. They were arrayed with the equality of the truly desperate, the blasted and scarred forms of lone Scarab Occult Terminators surrounded by haggard bands of Spireguard soldiers, made veterans by tragedy, the few remaining neophytes of the XVth Legion guarded by the axe-wielding warriors of the Templars, their finery now in bloody tatters. From Magister-praetor to the lowest militia conscript, they waited for death to come roaring through the ruins, each prepared for one last chance to strike a blow at those who had come to bring ruin to Prospero.

Facing them, Leman Russ and the warriors of the Imperium gathered, for they too knew this would be the last charge, the final deliberate blow of a murder they had prosecuted in a thousand bloody cuts. This was the reality of their duty, no glorious conquest to be sung of in legends and sagas, no battle against a horde of black-hearted traitors, but only the quiet and final slaughter of a handful of men whose pride had led them down the wrong path. Yet, Leman Russ and his Wolves were no strangers to duty, nor slaves to vainglory and sentiment. Likewise, Valdor and his own warriors would place the will of the Emperor ahead of their own wishes and the Sisterhood remained silent and determined. They were well chosen, for these warriors would not turn aside from the last stroke, even if it pained them to see it done, and the Imperium's forces mustered for the final charge, awaiting only Leman Russ' battlecry to set them about the slaughter. For a moment all was still in the ruins of Tizca, and even the tempest around them calmed as though all the galaxy had paused to see what would come in the next moment.

Then, as all those gathered watched, he came at last. The Crimson King, Magnus, Lord of Prospero, to challenge fate itself.



THE TRIUMPH OF CHAOS

Throughout the Battle for Tizca, and in the long months of the Censure Host's approach to Prospero, Magnus had remained silent, withholding his presence and counsel from his sons. He had taken no part in the fighting, not to save his Legion, not to save the people of Tizca, not even to save the precious knowledge contained in his city's many libraries. Yet now, at the XVth Legion's ending, when all had been decided except the manner of their passing, he stirred himself to action. Of the strange motive that moved him from his reverie, we know nothing; even the reasons behind his inaction are still a matter for conjecture among latter day scholars. If he sought redemption, then why abandon his vigil at the final moment? If he pursued some last sorcery to turn the tide of battle, why abandon it when it was needed most? Many point to the final moments of this impossible battle and claim this was the work of Magnus, the time for its completion bought with his blood. We will, perhaps, never know with any certainty—perhaps even Magnus himself was unsure why he took to the field, or what its final effect would be. Perhaps he simply allowed emotion to get the better of him.

Even the events of this unprecedented confrontation are veiled in myth and uncertainty, as the warping effects of the tempest that enveloped much of Tizca has left almost every account of the duel between brothers different in ways both large and small. Few accounts of the fight even agree on which of the combatants emerged victorious, and most have been disregarded as compromised by scholars. The most widely accepted is that of Leman Russ, which is incorporated in the *Space Wolves' Saga of Prospero*. However, it is the account of Jenetia Krole, Vigil Commander of the Silent Sisterhood, that bears the telltale mark of truth. It is this account that the author has chosen to favour in the retelling of the meeting of the Wolf and the Sorcerer, judging that the Untouchable's genetic resistance to the effects of the tempest left her best able to accurately recall such a momentous event. This was a battle of titans, unseen before in the annals of human history, save perhaps in the pre-Fall myths of Old Terra, and such was the sheer potency of the combatants that none was left in any doubt of this.

The very spire of the Pyramid of Photep burst asunder, a peal of thunder that shook the world, rippling out in the wake of its demise, and Magnus descended to the battlefield borne by a crackling pillar of black lightning, there to confront his brother. As the two Primarchs confronted one another, the tempest that surrounded the centre of Tizca intensified—many accounts speak of sibilant whispers heard by all present, urging them to deeds they would not later speak of—and the thunderous wind tore through many of the tottering buildings and monuments that surrounded the battlefield. Some accounts, including that of Vigil Commander Krole, speak of quiet words exchanged by the two Primarchs, but all agree that the battle began with the roar of the Wolf King. Of the first blow dealt, none can be sure whose it was, for such was the skill of the combatants that of those present perhaps only Valdor could follow the interplay of golden axe and silver blade. Russ' raw fury and patient cruelty met the psychic might and subtle skill of Magnus, and all in their path was torn apart, be it the sturdy architecture of Tizca or the ceramite-plated battle tanks of the Astartes. Those Legion warriors who sought to intervene in aid of their lord were annihilated before the Primarchs were even aware of their presence, and even the Custodes dared not interfere in such a battle. All about them was chaos, the frantic madness of battle and the unnatural reality-warping effect of the tempest—for as the Primarch Magnus unleashed his full power, it ripped apart the veil between dimensions and set loose those creatures that dwelt within the æther.

The two Primarchs tore at each other with blade and will, never giving an inch, both made for war in the gene-forges of Terra to be unconquerable. Yet the Emperor had not created all His sons equal—to each He had granted primacy of some aspect of war He had deemed worthy of inclusion in His Legions. Magnus was a supreme general, crafted to lead, to inspire and to divine the weakness of his foes—a master of that detached and emotionless state of war long practised by Strategoi and tacticians since ancient times. Though no less the general, Russ was a far different beast—forged upon a harsher anvil for a more brutal and personal degree of war. His was the blood-red fury of necessity and dark ages lost to savagery, the final resolve of a killer loosed when there was no other option but utter destruction.

Here in the midst of Tizca's ruins with the æther whirling about them as a world died, its armies scattered and blood in the air, there was no creature born better suited to triumph in such a hell than the Wolf King, though Magnus would not be brought low without grievous cost. This was a contest in which he was perhaps always destined to be the victor. Despite that his brother burned him and smashed him down time and again with his arcane power, Russ rose up once more, bloody but undaunted. Minutes or hours after they had begun, for time itself had begun to fray at the fury of their battle at the centre of the æther tempest, Magnus, Russ' savage wolf-kin snapping at his heels, the Silent Sisters, by some accounts, cutting into the arch-Sorcerer's control over his vaunted powers, faltered for but a moment and his brother cast him down, the final blow different to each who viewed it—for some the stroke of a blade ended it, to others the breaking of the Cyclops' back. It was a defeat played out across an infinity of existences with the same result. Leman Russ stood triumphant, wreathed in the wounds inflicted by his brother, his role as the Emperor's wrath once again fulfilled, and in its wake a storm of blinding light emanated from the sealed and embattled pyramid beyond Magnus' silent and torn corpse. When the blaze of light had faded, there was no sign to be found of any who had once occupied it, nor of the body of Magnus.

The fall of Magnus marked the end of the Battle for Tizca, but not in any way the Space Wolves Legion could have foreseen, nor did it end the fighting in that benighted city. Indeed, Leman Russ was given no clean victory of any kind, for of the fallen Thousand Sons Primarch no sign of his body would ever be found, no symbol or trophy with which to return to Terra that would justify the destruction of a world and the death of its people. Only the laughter of dark gods, and the congratulations and assurances of the Warmaster, a salve that would become bitter indeed in the years which would follow.

To Challenge Fate

#>:11:03; ^~:11:03; *#;11:03

Auspex Timestamp Error

As Magnus descended upon the battlefield, intent on the man sent by his father, the brother who sought his death, the Thousand Sons and Spireguard that yet survived withdrew to the fortified chambers of the Pyramid of Photep. Magnus and Leman Russ met at the head of the processional walkway that linked the pyramid to the outer gardens of Occullum Square, and their battle blocked all attempts to pursue the retreating renegades. Many among the Imperium's troops, Space Wolves and Custodes alike, attempted to aid Russ only for Magnus to incinerate them where they stood, or for the sheer violence unleashed to see them become collateral damage in a battle between demigods. Valdor, quickly seeing the futility of attempting to intervene or dissuade Russ from engaging his brother in what appeared an obvious attempt to distract the Wolf King, instead ordered the Space Wolves and Legio Custodes warriors to push on to the Pyramid itself and the Thousand Sons within. Under the cover of the artillery rapidly deployed to the rear of their lines, the power armour vanguard plunged into the decorative canal that surrounded the huge Pyramid of Photep, braving the fire of the Thousand Sons units ensconced within. Around them the maelstrom that enveloped Tizca grew increasingly wild as the two Primarchs fought, dark lightning arcing down from a sky of malign, churning clouds, the stone walls of the pyramid bubbling and running with blood and even the waters of the canal turning foul and toxic from the hate in the air. Still the loyalists pressed on, for such were their numbers that even if half of those amongst the attack were to fall to the foul sorcery around them or the guns of the renegades, they would still greatly outnumber the foe.

The Thousand Sons had barred the immense bronze gates of the pyramid and stood ready at the rents torn in its walls by the Imperium's artillery or the explosives carried by those Space Marines who had forded the canal. From this last stronghold there could be no retreat—its catacombs were packed with the evacuated civilians of the nearby districts and the Imperial host surrounded them; here they could only fight until they were no more. The first into the breach were those Space Wolves struck by the curse of the Wulfen, whose inhuman fervour drove them into the guns of the renegades. Few

survived the initial well-placed salvos of fire from overlapping defensive emplacements, and those who did fell to the shimmering blades of the Scarab Occult and Templars. In the wake of the Wulfen came the Space Wolves and Custodes, some bursting from beneath the canal and others leaping across the waters entirely on the flaming contrails of jump packs. Less reckless than their cursed brethren, these warriors sought to suppress the defenders with fusillades of bolter fire and fragmentation grenades, creating beachheads on the shoreline as their comrades began fording the canal with heavy assault tanks and other siege equipment to force the breach. Even as their Primarchs cut and tore at each other, the Thousand Sons fought with a bitter fury, not for survival, for they knew that would never come, and not for victory, but for spite's sake—that the Imperium that had forsaken them would know its mistake by the wounds left in their passing. They fought with a passion born of hate that was the equal of the righteous fervour of the Space Wolves, firing until the last of their munitions were exhausted and then fighting on with blade and fists. Those of their number injured beyond care gave themselves over to their psychic powers, walking out into the crossfire guarded by 'kine' shields so that when the Flesh Change took them, they would turn on the enemy and not their brethren.

Still they could not stop what was coming, and could only impose a heavy toll on their executioners. As Spartan and Mastodon assault tanks rose slowly from the canal's toxic depths, burned but inviolate, they knew death had come, for what few munitions remained to them could not halt those machines of war. Some among them chose a quick death, throwing themselves into the teeth of the enemy guns with a final curse on their lips and weapons, while most favoured the slower path, finding a space within the pyramid to stand and die. On the far side of the pyramid's armoured walls, Constantin Valdor and the elite Aquilon Terminators of the Legio Custodes gathered for the final assault alongside the Varangii of the Space Wolves, the warriors of the Black Cull expertly placing thermic charges along the pyramid walls to blast a new opening. Valdor's order were simple: all within the

pyramid were to die, maximum sanction—no prisoners. Such was the threat posed by the rogue psychic talents manifested during the battle that not even the least of Prospero's populace could be spared, or Valdor would have failed in his duty to protect the stability of the greater Imperium to which he was pledged. Even as Valdor raised his hand to give the order to end the war on Prospero, Leman Russ, having finally battered his brother to the brink of death, brought down his blade for the final stroke. As it fell, a great light suffused the Pyramid of Photep, bleeding out from its interior in brilliant rays that blinded even the most sophisticated auspex or integrated visor, and for a moment the storm converged on the pyramid, its winds shrieking and tearing loose rubble, Space Marines and even armoured battle tanks into the skies. Ghostly laughter and the death-screams of dying worlds echoed through the ruins, time bled and ætheric entities clawed their way through the weft of reality to throw themselves upon the outlying forces of the Imperium and devour the wounded where they lay. In places, marble walls ran like water and the broken angles of reality cut like blades. It seemed for those few brief moments that Magnus had undone reality in one last act of revenge.

Valdor roared the order to retreat across the garbled vox net as the Imperium's host descended into disorder and chaos. Few warriors were able to see more than a few feet ahead amid the debris-laced hurricane and blinding light, desperately bracing themselves against the rage of the wind and claws of unseen abominations. Then, in the blink of an eye, all was silent and the storm blew out like a suddenly extinguished flame. Frantic vox chatter from the orbiting ships and other detachments across Tizca washed over them and rubble, bodies and the shells of tanks rained down from above. Of the Pyramid of Photep there remained only the barest skeleton, its armoured flanks stripped bare, and of the thousands of men and Astartes who had sheltered within moments before there was no sign, for not even their bodies remained.

THE LEGACY OF PROSPERO

Of the final moments of the battle around the Pyramid of Photep, there remain dozens of unanswered questions. Even now, as the ashes of the Horus Heresy cool and we talk of rebuilding the Imperium, there is so much we do not understand about what was wrought there. By sifting through the various records of the battle, we can safely assume that there were approximately 3,000 surviving Thousand Sons within the Pyramid of Photep, as well as a similar number of soldiers of the Prosperine Guard, mainly from the elite Prosperine Templar and Dervish regiments, and perhaps as many as 10,000 civilians packed into the lower catacombs. All of these people vanished in but a few moments, leaving no trace of themselves behind, not even the scorch marks or drifting ashes that conventional thermite weapons or biogenic phages would leave. Under Valdor's orders, an extensive search of the ruined city around and below the pyramid was conducted to ensure that none had escaped by conventional means, and the annihilation-adepts of the Black Cull took stock of the pyramid's corpse itself to determine what manner of weapon might have wrought such destruction. Neither of these endeavours was to find any answers to the riddle posed by the end of the Battle for Prospero: how had almost 20,000 renegades and refugees been spirited away from Imperial judgement and what had happened to the sons of Magnus and their father's corpse?

Of course, in these latter years we have learned some few dark truths regarding this matter. Firstly, that Magnus survived the Battle of Prospero and lives still, and secondly that many more than the handful of Thousand Sons that disappeared from Prospero would later appear to assault Terra—both facts that the new masters of Terra have taken pains to obfuscate. Though these facts tell us little of how their escape was accomplished, it does show that somehow they did. The commonly posited explanation is that the final sorcery of Magnus the Red in his mortal and uncorrupted form was to transport the survivors of his Legion to a distant world—a feat that is not only beyond any known psyker, but also beyond even the technological marvels of the Martian Mechanicum. While short-range teleportation between discrete points is possible with some forms of psychic manifestation, such feats rarely allow for travel of more than a handful of kilometres, and while travel by physically breaching warp space is possible by technological means, it requires a vast energy output, powerful shielding techniques and often a significant amount of time. If Magnus did indeed use his own sorcery to rescue his sons then it is a feat of psychic mastery of truly terrifying power, surpassing even the prowess of his father. Recent investigations, undertaken at the behest and under the authority of this record, by the newly reconstituted Adeptus Astra Telepathica and their agents, have uncovered a number of interesting anomalies in the ruins of Tizca, a site still barred to all but those granted specially authorised travel.

Most notable of these is that the remains of the Pyramid of Photep still bear a powerful psychic charge, one reminiscent of the expenditure of a vast reservoir of energy—most likely that of the sacrifice of a large number of souls, a phenomenon the bound psykers of the Adeptus Telepathica are intimately familiar with. Such a sacrifice is the most likely metaphysical catalyst for a psycho-portation event of the magnitude posited in this situation, and due to the high proportion of psychic potential amongst the natives of Prospero and the initiates of the Thousand Sons, they would provide an ideal medium for such an act. Yet, the sheer number of sacrifices required would seem to make this unfeasible, for projections based on available data indicate that even if the vast majority of those within the pyramid were sacrificed to the æther, it would generate only enough power to transport a mere handful of individuals, perhaps only one. This however does not correlate with the later appearance of a demi-Legion sized force of Thousand Sons at Terra a mere ten years later, far too short a time for them to have implanted and trained a new generation of neophytes from a small band of survivors. Of course, even if all 3,000 known survivors had transitioned to some hidden fastness across the galaxy, they would still be insufficient to explain the 10,000+ Thousand Sons Legionaries present at the Battle for Terra. Indeed none of the credible theories come even close to explaining all of the unknown factors in the escape and subsequent reappearance of the Thousand Sons. We are then left with the most unlikely of notions, such as the interference of previously discounted warp entities, the so-called 'Chaos gods', a line of enquiry that is not sanctioned by the current rulers of the Imperium.

Amongst those who dabble in such matters, of which the author of this record is not one, some have expressed the thought that Magnus was not solely responsible for the salvation of his Legion. While he may have wished for it, even he did not possess that kind of power. Instead another entity, some great force for change that rests uneasily within the vast seas of the Empyrean, answered his plea for aid. This entity selected but one man among the Legion, whom it considered worthy of serving it and transported him to safety, consuming the others to fuel this act. Those Thousand Sons later to be seen, the theory claims, are mere facsimiles, created and empowered by this primordial force of change as part of some Machiavellian scheme of monstrous proportions, real enough perhaps to even fool the only true survivor into believing them his comrades and to cajole him to some sorcerous act required by this entity. Of all the Thousand Sons there seems only one man worthy of such attention, Ahzek Ahriman, once chief among the sorcerers of his Legion, but then such a tale is so fanciful and unlikely that to give it any form of credence is sheer folly. It is most likely that the true fate of the Thousand Sons will remain ever unknown to the Imperium.

The Remains of Glory

19:17:56 734004.M31

As the flailing maelstrom that had enveloped the centre of Tizca blew itself out in the wake of Magnus' fall and the disappearance of those renegades within the Pyramid of Photep, organised resistance to the Censure Host collapsed. The Imperium's forces, now reunited through the high-gain orbital vox connections of the fleet, stood triumphant in the ruins of Tizca, the main body of the Thousand Sons vanquished and their Primarch believed slain. Inevitably, despite the conflagration which marked the defeat of Magnus, fighting continued across the devastated cityscape of Tizca, with isolated bands of Thousand Sons, scattered elements of their Legion armour, being hunted down, as well as rampaging mobs of abominations, originating from within both the Thousand Sons and Space Wolves Legions, still prowling the ruins. This final slaughter was further accelerated when the ætheric tempest finally cleared, allowing additional reinforcements in the form of Knights and Taghmata support forces from House Malinax and the last Space Wolves reserves to enter the fray, and begin systematic search and destroy operations.

The main remaining centre of resistance was the Argent Bastion, the sprawling fortress that guarded the eastern gate in Tizca's alabaster walls. Here a detachment of the Eighth Fellowship, numbering almost 2,000 and reinforced by a large number of psycarna-automata, held the battlements for a further hour and then retreated to prosecute a hit and run campaign in the labyrinthine passageways and catacombs of the ancient fortress. These bitter holdouts remained

a viable threat for almost another full day of fighting, as Legio Custodes hunters and Varagyr Terminators stalked the tunnels in search of them, only ending when the still-bloodied Leman Russ himself joined the hunt. Even the psychically empowered automata attached to the Fifth proved no match for the bleakly enraged Primarch, despite the wounds inflicted on him by Magnus, the Thousand Sons were obliterated, leaving only a few survivors to scurry into the darkness. As this secondary battle raged, the ruins of the Valperine Bastion, abandoned by the Space Wolves in their eagerness to advance on the city centre, disgorged another battalion of Thousand Sons warriors—preserved during the collapse of their fortress by a network of 'kine' shields of surpassing skill and subtlety. Rather than attempt to engage any of the scattered Space Wolves units in the area, the Thousand Sons commander, believed to have been a line officer named Sul Kontep, directed his troops to salvage what they could of the bastion's once plentiful supply of aircraft and anti-grav vehicles, and to gather what refugees were to be found in the ruins about them. Within a few hours, even as Space Wolves and Custodes units were being directed to assault this new threat, the Thousand Sons and their charges embarked on the makeshift convoy

and headed out to sea, using low-level flight and the ash and steam clouds that lingered after the morning's bombardment to conceal their path. While many were struck down in flight, others it is believed escaped.

Elsewhere in the city, Valdor assembled a number of scouring formations, each formed of Legio Custodes and Space Wolves veterans around a core of Silent Sisters, setting them to discover and eradicate those isolated groups of the enemy still loose in the city. Small holdouts, often consisting of little more than a dozen or so individuals and rarely more than a hundred, were to be found across the city. Most were warriors of the XVth Legion separated from their companies during battle or the last survivors of a beaten battlegroup, and these renegades fought to the last man with all the cunning and ferocity of their loyalist brethren. Others were haggard soldiers of the Prosperine Guard, whose ranks had been all but annihilated during the day's brutal fighting; some of whom attempted to surrender rather than continue a hopeless fight.



However, those who threw themselves on the mercy of the Imperium's troops found only a quick death, gunned down in the streets without ceremony and left to rot where they fell; an unfortunate few were taken by for later interrogation. The Sons of Horus contingent, who had limited their actions to the northern quarters of the city, now spread out across Tizca and began a systematic purge of each district they encountered, leaving no living thing in their wake. At the furthest northern extent of the city, at the fortified complex that served as the headquarters of Prospero's Airguard, whose fighters and bombers had long since been hunted to extinction by the Legio Custodes interceptors that still howled through the sky above, the Sons of Horus and the war engines of House Malinax made contact with the last survivors of the Northern Palatine Guard. The regiment had fallen back from their early defeat under the command of Lucretia Elunnirai, Seneschal-prime of the Prosperine Guard, and had weathered the battle within that fortified position, mostly ignored by the Censure Host. They had gathered to them some thousands of civilians and many other stragglers of the Prosperine Guard, and at the approach of Boros Kurn of the Sons of Horus and Anrac Hadratha of the Black Cull, Seneschal Elunnirai came forth with her honour guard to sue for their safety.

Expecting that her rank and the force of arms at her back would assure her safety and honourable treatment, the Seneschal-prime demanded the oath of the Astartes commanders that the civilians, non-combatants all, would be well treated in return for the immediate surrender of herself, all men-at-arms under her command and the forfeiture of all arms and munitions in their possession. Boros Kurn executed her

on the spot and scattered her honour guard, while the Thegn Hadratha and the Black Cull, supported by the massed firepower of House Malinax, immolated the Airguard's headquarters, condemning all who were inside to their deaths.

In all, sporadic conflict continued amid the ruins of Tizca for another three days, as well as smaller actions to investigate and clear lesser outposts elsewhere on Prospero that may have survived the bombardment. During those three days Lemn Russ refused to leave the planet, scouring its ruins for any sign of Magnus or his sons, and killing all he found. By the time the blackened and ash-filled skies of Prospero were lit by the third dawn since the bombardment, the city was a blasted ruin, with few buildings left intact and the great temple-arcologies little more than gaunt and scarred skeletons, while in places the unclean brilliance of phosphex fire still crawled and burned. Valdor began the evacuation of the Imperium's troops, a process that took another full day as wounded and scattered Imperial Army units, Silent Sisterhood vigils and Custodes phalanxes assembled at the orbital transfer yards to ascend to the ships above.

Lemn Russ and his Space Wolves waited until almost the last moment, as the ships above dispersed across the globe, falling once again into bombardment formation, before beginning their own evacuation in the vessels grounded around the port. The final action of the Battle for Prospero took place there, with the remnants of the Fifth Fellowship that had fled out to sea making a sudden reappearance and staging such an audacious and well-timed assault on the orbital transfer yards that some manner of

powerful divination must have been used in its planning. Striking at the last of the Imperial Army transport arks, the Thousand Sons overwhelmed the meagre forces placed in sentry over the evacuation, most of the Custodes long since removed to their golden ships, and seized control of three of the bloated transports. Capitalising on the dispersed nature of the fleet above, the three ships slipped past the Imperium's cruisers and accelerated for the outer system, perhaps seeking to hide until help could arrive. Loyalist destroyers would intercept and destroy one of those craft, but the other two were never found, no doubt drifting silently amid the stellar debris of the outer system, but as they did not possess warp drives, no concerted effort to find them was ever made.

With the last known force of Thousand Sons now gone from Prospero, Lemn Russ abandoned the broken world, the last warrior of the Imperium to leave the surface as he had sworn at the battle's start. Once he reached orbit a second bombardment began, ravaging the already burned world and ensuring that even if any had escaped the blades of the Space Wolves, they would not live to celebrate that hollow victory. Then, after seeding the orbit of Prospero with proximity mines and vox-beacons broadcasting the Imperial decree announcing the world below 'Perditus Maximus', forbidden ground by Imperial law, the Censure Host departed, leaving only the silent, burned corpse of a world in their wake.

The Battle for Prospero was over, but its legacy would continue to haunt the Imperium for millennia.

The Bloody Tally of Justice

All told well over 30,000,000 lives were lost in the prosecution of the Emperor's justice, the vast majority of these deaths being those citizens of the Imperium on Prospero at the time of the fleet's arrival. Official records place the number of survivors from Prospero's civilian population at zero, and while in actuality there were certainly some thousands at large in the galaxy or potentially escaped with one of the few bands of Thousand Sons to leave the planet alive, as a people the Prosperine branch of Mankind was now extinct. Of the Thousand Sons, official records from before 014.M31 no longer list the Legion, assuming it was completely destroyed until the Siege of Terra. Again, the actual truth is somewhat different, but still places the losses incurred for those Thousand Sons on Prospero at the time of the fleet's arrival at near total, with the survivors scattered across the galaxy.

Some of those detachments fighting in the Great Crusade elsewhere in the Imperium were to be destroyed by their allies before news of Prospero's destruction reached them: 2,000 under Sentor Rahme of the Ninth Fellowship were slaughtered in their encampments by the Ultramarines attached to the same force, and 300 veterans of the Seventh Fellowship were abandoned to their deaths during the assault on Maktor VIII by the Imperial Fists to name but two of the more prominent cases. Of all the main contingents of the Thousand Sons abroad in the galaxy, only two were known to have escaped Imperial justice, the majority of the Fourth Fellowship, some 5,000 Legiones Astartes who fled their Great Crusade assignment after hearing of the attack on Prospero, and a force, perhaps of several thousand, of the Sixth Fellowship present on Zhao-Arkhad as part of the agreement between the Legion and that distant and enigmatic forge. Worse still for the Legion, the destruction of Prospero and their status as renegades left them bereft of all support and succour within the borders of the Imperium, with no means to resupply or recruit, barring open piracy.

The Censure Host fared only somewhat better, taking combined casualties of perhaps 49,000 in total and a far greater toll of munitions and machinery either destroyed or abandoned on Prospero. Driven by the cold rage of their Primarch to engage in some of the bloodiest fighting of the campaign, the Space Wolves suffered the heaviest casualties, with some 25,000 listed as killed in combat, and several thousand more besides, mostly of the Thirteenth Great Company, simply listed as missing. This figure constituted a substantial amount of the Space Wolves' total strength and by the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, a mere handful of standard months later, they'd had little chance to replenish their numbers. Just as serious for the Space Wolves was the expenditure of munitions and equipment—such was the zeal with which they prosecuted the war on Prospero that their reserves of such things were badly depleted and left them unable to engage in more than limited warfare during the early stages of the Heresy. The Imperial Army units attached to the Censure Host, although an auxiliary, also suffered badly in the fighting, with an estimated 23,000 dead. Indeed, several units were simply disbanded or merged with other formations on their return to Terra. The Legio Custodes and Silent Sisterhood suffered relatively light casualties by contrast, although considering the smaller relative size of those forces, they could still be considered severe. Perhaps more telling was the damage done to the Legio Custodes' mythical invincibility in the minds of some—for during the fighting on Prospero, some of their number had been engaged and beaten by mere Space Marines, a lesson that would be remembered by certain of the Legiones Astartes in later years. However, the wiser minds among the Legiones Astartes noted with just what ease the Custodians had despatched their kind in turn, and wondered perhaps if this had been the very task they had been made for.





THE SEEDS OF HERESY

'Many name war the only true calling of the Legiones Astartes, but such short-sighted fools fail to note the great failing of war as a tool; for ever it creates greater evils than it destroys.'

Excerpt from the Book of Magnus, Ninth Appendix: Musings on the Future

Fighting had ended on Prospero and the Censure fleet returned to Terra under the command of Constantin Valdor, Leman Russ declining the honour and instead leading his bloody Legion in search of further conflicts. The little-known volumes of history penned by Valdor himself in later years record that

Leman Russ was deeply affected by the duel with his brother, for though he accepted the responsibility of his duty, to do that which the other Legions and the other Primarchs could not stoop to do, he was no less pained by it. Valdor records the last words he exchanged with the Wolf King before they parted ways:

"A king does not invite his bloodstained headsman to the victory feast, for such a man has no place in the halls of peace and plenty. While there are terrors for the axe to slay, I will be lauded from afar, and when there are no more, I will be simply forgotten."



Publicly, the returning warriors were greeted by festivities and parades, though the records of the Imperial Court speak of a less jubilant reception from the Emperor, for whom the loss of Magnus represented a serious setback and the precursor to a more painful sacrifice. Official proclamations were issued quietly declaring the expurgation of the Thousand Sons from the Imperium's records and declaring all their possessions and chattels forfeit and treaties void, and many in the Court considered the matter closed. However, this was far from the end of Prospero's legacy.

Most immediately and overtly, the destruction of an entire Legion on charges that seemed to some of the Imperium's vassal states to be dangerously unwarranted, led to certain diplomatic incidents. A number of worlds brought into Compliance by the XVth Legion or known to act as recruitment centres for it brought official grievances to the Court over the matter, and the potential secession of several saw elements of the Imperial Army stationed upon them as surety for their loyalty.

The Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad, long an outsider within Imperial politics, ceased all communications with both Imperial and Mechanicum authorities, an action but a hair's-breadth from actual secession and rebellion. Many in the Imperial Court made accusations of harbouring enemies of the Imperium against Zhao-Arkhad, and called upon the Fabricator-General of Mars to chastise them appropriately, and it was only the outbreak of the Horus Heresy and the hidden politicking which preceded it that stopped armed conflict between Zhao-Arkhad and the Imperium. Murmurs and fears spread throughout the domains of the Emperor, that if one amongst them, a Space Marine stronghold no less, had been singled out by Him and annihilated, any other might follow. Moreover, the entire attack on Prospero had been organised at the direct behest of the Emperor, with no recourse to His military regent, the newly named

Warmaster. It spoke little of Horus' authority that the Emperor would continue to practise His own wars behind his back, and some of his opponents whispered that Horus and his new title were little more than a polite front with no real political power, while his allies opined it a betrayal of their master's trust and a bitter insult from his father. Horus remained silent, but it is noted that in the wake of Prospero he spent little time upon Terra, busying himself on the fringes of Imperial space far removed from his father. The unity of the fledgling Imperium had a dangerous rift torn through it, which many have linked to the later outbreak of the Horus Heresy.

More subtly, the Battle for Prospero had brought the impossible into the realm of reality—for on the soil of Prospero, Space Marine had fought Space Marine for the first time. The unthinkable had been given precedent, made real by the simple fact that what had happened once would occur again and any one of the remaining seventeen Legions might be the victim. No little ire was directed towards the Space Wolves, for it was they who had shattered this unwritten taboo, no matter that it had been on the orders of the Emperor Himself. Moreover, of all the Legions, it was the Space Wolves alone who possessed any experience of real war against the Legiones Astartes, knowledge from which they quickly codified a body of tactics and strategies intended to aid in defeating other Legions should the Emperor ever decree their destruction. This *Omega Codex* was a direct threat to the other Legions, and its contents were shared only with the Sons of Horus and the Warmaster himself, an

error the Wolf King would not realise until much later. Almost every Legion petitioned the Emperor for the destruction of the *Omega Codex* and the censure of the Space Wolves for its creation, save the Night Lords, Alpha Legion and Iron Hands who instead demanded it be shared with all of the Legions equally. In the short months that preceded the Horus Heresy, a number of the Legions shifted garrison forces and amended inter-Legion treaties to shore up their personal defences and exploit potential weaknesses should the same fate as the Thousand Sons befall them too. As with the larger Imperium, Prospero's fall saw the once famous unity of the Legiones Astartes torn asunder and where once eighteen great Legions stood united as a single undefeatable host, now seventeen individual and vulnerable armies waited for the next to fall.

Whether this activity was also the result of the machinations of Horus Lupercal will never truly be known, but the timing of these events and their repercussion play so directly to his advantage in the early years of the Horus Heresy, it seems unlikely to be simple happenstance. Indeed, the fallout from the Prosperine Crusade is so ideally suited to set the stage for the rebellion begun by Horus but a few months later that the chances of his not purposefully directing events is seemingly minuscule. The destruction of Prospero, intended to stand as a triumph of Imperial justice and to safeguard its future, should rightfully be known instead as the crowning glory of Horus' rebellion, for truly it was here that the seeds of the Heresy were sown, and only now that the terrible fruit of his labours is fully appreciated.



FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM



THE SPACE WOLVES

Numeration: The VIth Legion

Primogenitor: Leman Russ

Cognomen: None officially recorded, but various informal and idiomatic cognomen inconstantly used.

Observed Strategic Tendencies:
Shock Assault, Search and Destroy,
Pursuit Operations, Punitive and
Excoriation Campaigns.

Noteworthy Domains: The death world
of Fenris (Enforced Dominion)

Allegiance: Fidelitas Sine Recursu

*'It matters not how high your walls soar,
It matters not how many will answer your call,
It matters not how keen your blade glimmers,
Nor how bright burns your hearth fire.
The wolf waits,
The wolf waits in darkness for us all.'*

*From the Lay of Grimnr Cold-Tongue
The Fenrisian Sagas*

Since the days of the VIth's inception on Terra it has remained a Legion apart from its fellows, its origins shrouded as it garnered a fearsome reputation, both for its prowess as a shock-assault deployment and as a tireless pursuit and hunter-killer force. Unexpected violence was the Legion's calling card from its earliest involvement in the Great Crusade, its campaigns unsubtle but brutally swift. Like its latter-day namesake, the wolves of Old Terra, the VIth Legion's assaults have always resembled calculated exercises in ferocity aimed to tear and rend until the foe lies in ruins or is driven to its death. But it was with the restoration to the Legion of its Primarch, Leman Russ, and its settling on the icy death world of Fenris, one of the most perilous and strange of Mankind's ancient homes, that the VIth Legion's nature would find its apotheosis and the Space Wolves would truly be born.

Under its master and 'father' Leman Russ, the Space Wolves Legion would reave a bloody path across the stars of the Great Crusade, but never stray far in truth from the shadow of the Emperor. For, unlike their brother Legions, the Space Wolves were kept under the tight control of the Imperial Court and unleashed at the Emperor's command, as often to savagely chastise those who would renege their oaths of service as they were sent to destroy those who resisted the offer of Compliance upon the dark frontier. This oft-served role as bloody-handed tool of punishment, coupled with the secret purposes to which the Legion had been used and the Space Wolves' rapidly increasing cultural idiosyncrasy, steadily drove a wedge between the VIth and the other Space Marine Legions as the decades of war ground on. So it was by the closing years of the Great Crusade and the ascension of Warmaster Horus that the Space Wolves in many ways stood a Legion isolated and apart. With some of their brethren they maintained ties of comradeship and respect, however distantly, but with others there simmered mutual acrimony and distrust, and others still considered them no more than leashed monsters, set loose only to kill when needed—something less than human and in truth perhaps even less than Legiones Astartes. Of such opinions or considerations the Space Wolves cared little; they knew well enough that they were not the builders of empire, nor were they the watchers on its walls, nor lock-step soldiers who cared for bright pageantry and meaningless contests for rank and perfection—they were predators, thus they had been made, and woe betide any who fell into their jaws.

THE SHADOW BEFORE THE WOLF

As with several of the proto-Legion groupings in the closing stages of the Unification Wars, much of the early details of the founding and intake of the VIth Legion remain shrouded under a quite deliberate veil of secrecy woven at the time of their creation. Beyond the usual concealment and security that the Emperor chose to surround the Space Marine project with in order to protect the nascent Legiones Astartes, the VIth division, along with that of the XVIIIth Legion (that would later become known as the Salamanders) and the XXth Legion (who would become the Alpha Legion), was formed and established largely in separation from the rest, and it is generally thought created to very specific ends. There were none save perhaps a handful of the Emperor's closest and earliest confidants surviving from those lost and bloody days who knew the facts regarding this mysterious 'trefoil' of Legions, as it is sometimes known, and the truth likely died with them, though in the case of the strains of Legiones Astartes that would be known as the Salamanders and the Space Wolves, they varied considerably in gene-forged ability to their peers.

This element of mystery surrounding the trefoil proto-Legions can be seen to establish a distance between the three and their brethren, particularly in regards to their earliest intake of initiates, around which dark rumours circled. In the case of the intake of the VIth, vast divergence in origin and genotype was clear even to the briefest of observations. Closer study of the evidence that remains indicates that representatives of some of the most barbarically regressive and hyper-violent cultures and outcast groups of pre-Unification Terra were chosen to found the Legion, though with such diversity that selection appeared to have been taken on an individual-by-individual basis rather than to invoke or capitalise on any single strain of warrior society. So it was that while certain proto-Legions, such as the Xth (later the Iron Hands) and the XVth (later the Thousand Sons) held strong cultural imprints from Terra's subjected warlord-empires, the nascent VIth was almost a blank slate. Instead, what bonded it together was first its training in isolation as a coherent military force under the direction of the Strategos of the Emperor's inner circle. What also made the VIth singular was the unique nature of its gene-seed, although what separated it from the other proto-Legions was not yet apparent to outsiders.

Evidence further indicates that the VIth Legion's passage between stages of expansion was slower than many of its peers, slower perhaps in its first years than any save the XXth's, whose strange and obscured origins are the subject of another record. In retrospect this is likely to have been because of the high levels of fatal implant reaction rates among the Legion's candidates, which was to be demonstrated subsequently as a factor of the VIth's gene-seed before its later stabilisation with its Primarch's genetic pattern. Regardless, like the other proto-Legions of the trefoil, the VIth was largely held back from full engagement in armed conflict during the closing stages of the Unification Wars and the re-conquest of the Sol System. This not only served to further isolate them from their peers but also denied them the boons of vastly increased recruitment intake gained by those Legions that had participated in the subjugation of Luna and the reward of primacy in the use of its gene-labs. Perhaps ironically however, this segregation also spared them the travails of the gene-seed crisis which almost destroyed the IIIrd (later the Emperor's Children) and caused damage to the Vth (later the White Scars) and the IXth (later the Blood Angels) as well.

It was almost a decade after the Great Crusade had broken free of the confines of the Sol System and spread out to distant stars that the VIth Legion was to be unleashed openly en masse against an enemy. What occurred in the previous decade remains entirely lost, even to the Space Wolves Legion's own history, but record of that first great battle, the Compliance of '1-122', known to its indigenous human population as 'Delsvaan', are clear. Dispatched from the shadow of the Principia Imperialis, the great Expeditionary fleet commanded by the Emperor Himself, the then full strength of the VIth Legion, some 3,500 Legionaries, descended upon a world that had already met the overtures of the Imperium with violence. Delsvaan had weathered the Age of Strife relatively well, maintaining a technologically advanced, highly industrialised society, governed by a militarised plutocracy dedicated to the tangible profits and political control of its many production-combines. Hubris and arrogance rather than any deviancy or deep-seated malignity was its sin, but its people had defied the Imperium and they would be shown the error of their ways.

Left to their own devices as to the planning and execution of the operation—as was no doubt part of the testing of the Legion, for

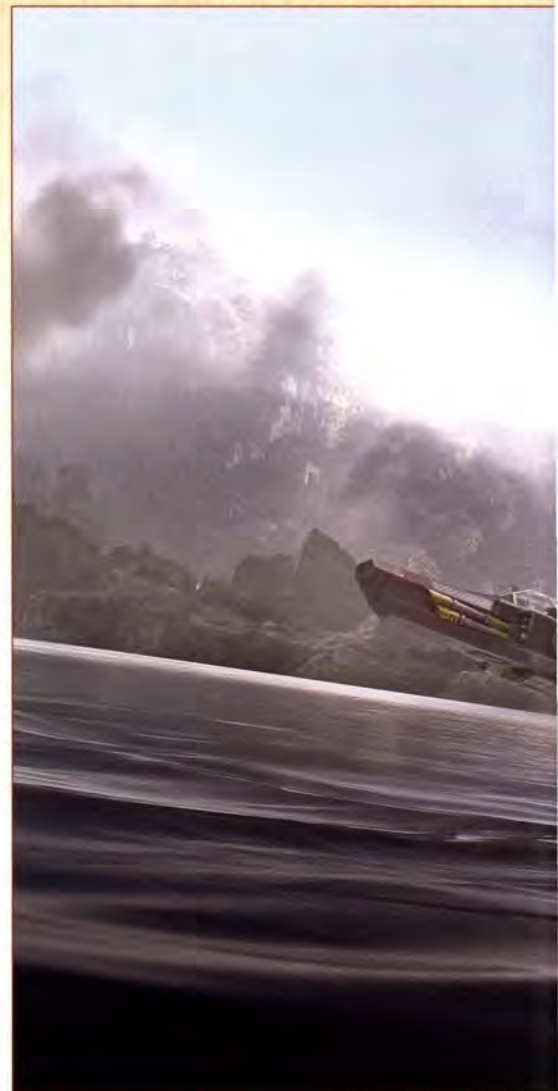
surely a test this was— Commander Enoch Rathvin, the VIth's first master, executed a multi-vector planetstrike operation aimed directly at Masaanore-Core, the fortified dormitory-city of the most powerful of Delsvaan's combines. Under cover of near-indiscriminate bombardment of the city's outer areas and infrastructure nexus, dozens of separate landing areas were breached in the ensuing confusion by gunship and drop pod strike, with Rathvin landing nearly his entire strength within a single hour and holding back no reserve. Tactical commentaries made by Imperial observers clearly state that what appeared at first sight to resemble the 'point of the spear' shock assault tactics already widely practised by the Legions as pioneered by the XVIth under Horus—then the only extant Primarch—were quickly shown to have developed, or as some detractors had it 'devolved', into something else.

Rather than conducting a direct advance to areas of the enemy's command and control as was the standard pattern, the VIth Legion spread through the city more like a raging fire than an assaulting army. Their infantry and reconnaissance elements rapidly outpacing their armoured support, they seemed to flow like a destroying tide through the city, stopping to claim no strategic assets, holding no ground, but leaving anything in their path shattered in their wake. The armed resistance they met, caught suddenly fighting a war on a hundred fronts, was hopelessly outmatched, and what could not be easily overrun, such as fortified bunkers and watchtowers, was simply bypassed and isolated, and left for the second wave of armour to deal with. The native army—conscripts lightly armed with las weaponry, reinforced by detachments of better trained and carapace-armoured combine soldiers—stood little chance against this onslaught, utterly unprepared for the speed or strength of the armoured invaders, or the sheer violence with which they dove on. Most of the defenders were killed where they stood, trying to mount firing lines to hold the advance, or cut down in their hundreds as attempted counter-attacks turned into routs, the panicked militia themselves soon tangling with thousands of fleeing civilians.

Faced with this stampede of terrified humanity, the VIth Legion seemed to redouble its attack as if goaded on by the scent of blood and terror. They fell on the people of Masaanore-Core and there was great slaughter. There remains debate in the historical record whether at this time

Legion command actually lost control of its units to the ongoing violence, however briefly, but in any case Enoch Rathvin did not quickly rein in his forces, and when he finally accepted the surrender of Masaanore-Core, its streets had been painted crimson with the blood of its inhabitants. The fate of the city was example enough however for the leaders of the other combines, and quickly they saw the folly of further resistance and so Delsvaan was brought into Compliance. The cost to one city had been great, but comparably to other Compliance actions, the cost to the world had been minor. The VIth Legion's performance, while disquieting to some in the Imperium's hierarchy, more for its apparent ill-discipline than its results, was clearly sufficient for the Emperor's satisfaction to grant it its own sub-fleet to command; Expeditionary 115—still affiliated to the core of the great Armada of the Principia Imperialis but otherwise internally independent with its own tenders, escort craft and warships.

For the next dozen years, the VIth Legion continued as an active fleet command of the Great Crusade, its numbers steadily growing to recorded levels of nearly 5,000 at the Battle of Hyn'tal and then 7,000 active Legiones Astartes at the start of the Relovs Landing campaign. Given this relatively small size—Legions such as the Luna Wolves and the Dark Angels of the 1st numbered thrice and four times that number respectively—they often served alongside other Legions and large Imperialis Auxilia forces in major campaigns or were entrusted with smaller, often bloody missions to destroy particular knots of enemy resistance in shock assaults. Over time the Legion developed particular expertise also in conducting rapidly moving hunter-killer operations, particularly in city-fighting conditions, or in undertaking more generally punitive actions, such as suppressing rebellions by inflicting short, brutal reprisal actions—tasks for which the VIth under Rathvin seemed particularly suited, and indeed missions of which type Rathvin often requested for his Legion. During this period, when many other Legions were adopting liveries and slowly forging their own martial traditions, the VIth notably maintained a curiously unadorned appearance, seldom varying its armorials other than to feature an indication of role and tactical division. One notable exception was when it was placed in command of Imperialis Auxilia regiments, the addition of the twin flame-blade insignia of the 'Sanghauta' being prominently displayed. This icon, more commonly used by the



Discipline Master and Provost Corp of the Imperialis Militant, carried with it a very definite meaning; it displayed clearly the power of life and death every Legionary of the VIth had over the lesser troops under their command. It was a power they were infamously quick to exercise in its extreme, a summary punishment for any merely human forces who they felt lacked militancy or discipline alongside them.

Of Jackals and Hounds

The VIth's reputation amongst the wider forces of the Great Crusade by its second decade was by this point something of a mixed one. They had an unarguable track record of success and had won numerous battle honours, but accusations and stories of unneeded collateral damage and casualties among human civilian populations where they fought were widespread. It was said, long before the influence of Fenris and its culture, that there was something of the bestial to the Legion's warriors, something readily apparent in the first foreshadowings of a mark of what was to become later known as the Canis Helix upon them, though insufficient time had yet passed for this to



become so very pronounced. More than this, some had concerns that the VIth were said to be an internally fractious Legion, ruled more by the strength of its officers than obedience to legitimate authority, and violence and factionalism within the ranks was said to be far too common. This was in an age where the Primarchs themselves, save Horus, had not yet been found to stamp their mark upon their Legion, but the likes of the VIIIth Legion was already gaining a reputation as the Emperor's agents of terror and fear, and the 'unwonted savagery' of the VIth was often spoken of alongside the future Night Lords in the symposia of the great and the good of the Great Crusade's hierarchy, with some even warning that the Legion should be closely monitored lest it become uncontrollable. But of all the accusations, perhaps the most cutting was that the VIth Legion was never keener to the fight as when an enemy had already broke and fled before it—than where its victims were helpless.

With this came an informal and insulting cognomen for the VIth Legion of the 'Rout'; a collective noun often used for carrion jackals and the mutated pariah dogs of Terra's dry

seas that hounded and preyed upon refugee columns and wastelanders—creatures brave only when their victims were half-dead or exhausted. Ironically enough, this insult may even have been meant to unfavourably compare the VIth to the equally ferocious XIIth, already become known as the War Hounds, a Legion also renowned for the unbelievable violence of its mettle in battle, but which was at this time held up as an example of honourably controlled fury, its rage directed only at the direst foes and used to overcome the most overmatching odds. This comparison seems now as some macabre joke given the very different paths these Legions were to take and what future history had in store for them—paths dictated in no small measure by the effect that the finding of their Primarch was to have upon them both. That change, and truly transformative it would prove to be, was not long in coming for the VIth.

THE WOLF KING

Unlike the rediscovery of Horus—the first Primarch returned to the Imperium—in the case of Leman Russ, and indeed many of those Primarchs whose rediscovery came

after, very few definite facts can be obtained, and with Russ, the matter is further shrouded by a fog of carefully and deliberately crafted allegory and myth. What can be said for certain is that Leman Russ was the second Primarch to make an appearance openly at the Emperor's side, doing so a handful of years before the rediscovery of Ferrus Manus on Medusa. Leman Russ had been found upon the death world of Fenris, a planet itself shrouded in considerable mystery and legend, and like Medusa, known by name to some of the most ancient star charts of the Dark Age of Technology still extant. The comparative swiftness of this finding has prompted some prone to conspiracy to hazard that the Emperor may have already known that this location, as deadly and as far-flung as it was, was the resting place of one of his lost sons, and it cannot now be said with any certainty how long Fenris and the Primarch may have been under observation before contact. Of the few Fenrisian allegorical saga-histories made available dealing with the early life of Russ and his rise to power as the pre-eminent warlord-king of that battle-torn world, the only details that can be gleaned that seem

OF THE DEATH WORLD: FENRIS

TRANSCRIPT EXERTED FROM CHAPTER CLXXVIII OF THE 'PRINCIPIA CARTOGRAPHICA DOMINUS IMPERIA' OF LORD EPHRATA HOOD; CHARTERED ROGUE TRADER MAJORIS; CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE OMICRON-11TH VOIDCLAD; SCOLAM-GENATOR IMPERIALIS; ITERATOR-EMERITUS OF THE ALBIAN HIGH COLLEGES AND LORD ADMIRAL OF THE 2,113TH EXPEDITIONARY FLEET BY THE ORDER OF THE MASTER OF MANKIND

In Preface

Fenris should not be. As a world its dangerously elliptical orbit should have seen it long ago stripped of viable atmosphere and of anything resembling higher order life, but this is not the case. As a world of such harsh climatic and extreme biospheric conditions, multiple competing genuses of megafauna should not exist on Fenris, but they assuredly do. Human life should not be possible on Fenris, but human life is there. Fenris should not be—all generally observable phenomena of life and planetary formation tell us this emphatically—but Fenris most assuredly is as real as it is deadly.

In my nigh two centuries voyaging the darkness between the stars in the service of humanity and the Great Crusade, I have seen countless wonders and terrors beyond measure. I know full well that there abound strange domains whose very existence defies logic and the dictates of reason, worlds whose ancient mysteries care little for the common predictions of scientific lore or our preconceptions of what is possible. Fenris is such a world. Even if it were not home to human life where human life should not exist, it would still be classed as such a dark wonder, and that it is also the home to one of the most fearsome and dreaded of all of the Legiones Astartes only makes it all the more remarkable.

It has been my honour to have personally visited Fenris twice and walked upon its icy shores, and I am one of the very few lords of the Imperium to have had that chance. For unlike Legion worlds such as Olympia and Baal, which while distant have become beacons in the darkness of the far frontiers, Fenris, though relatively close to Terra on the galactic scale, has remained as cold and forbidding as it ever was. No provender fleets stop at Fenris but by the infrequent request of its masters, and no fleets find ready shelter from the rigours of the void there unless hard pressed by desperation. How then came I to its bleak and forbidding shore? The first time I was but one of any number of lesser chartist captains, and my galleass by happenstance had been assigned to deliver certain arms and munitions to the newly homed VIth Legion in the days when the great fortress of the Fang was still under construction and all on Fenris was strife and fever. Then, many void ships and off-world cabals of bonded tech-magos and Terran arch-wrights swarmed the system forging defences, vaults, armouries and fortifications suited to its purposes under the Emperor's own plan and writ, for it took a colossal effort on such a scale to make an isolated ice world

a bastion that could stand off an armada if needs be. The second time was nearly eight decades later, and by my will, my diligence and my good fortune I was Rogue Trader Militant then, and I returned to see the fruits of that frenzy of labour and vast expenditure of resources so many years prior. Here now sat the domain of the Space Wolves, a Legion rightly feared and spoken of in whispers across the Imperium, and I and my fleet were to lead them to a fresh quarry to destroy. I was to meet with and give council to their Lord of Winter and Ruin, and never have I been greater struck with awe and terror in equal measure, save in the presence of the Master of Mankind. But of my dealings with the wolves that stalk the stars in human guise this is not my place of recording, but it is of their dark and wondrous world of which I shall now speak.

THE WORLD OF BLOOD AND ICE

Fenris is a category Omega death world, an orb of ice-shrouded oceans subject to deep volcanic turbulence that destroys as quickly as it creates a shifting scatter-pattern of islands and archipelagos across its storm-wracked surface. Beyond this only a single stable northern continental landmass exists, and that is all but inaccessible from the seas. It is a world biologically active but fundamentally inimical to human life, where our presence should not be possible without substantial technological aid. Its Omega classification indicates severe threat from multiple sources, and in the case of Fenris this comes from the extremes of its climate, deadly geological instability and some of the most dangerous fauna encountered by Mankind.

Fenris follows a long elliptical orbit around its pale sun, called the 'Wolf's Eye' in translation from its native dialect. During much of this, Fenris is remote from its star and it plunges into a long geo-climatic winter. Over this period the oceans all but entirely freeze over, and at its furthest point even the equatorial seas are covered with ice and the bleak volcanic islands that punctuate the waters of this largely ocean-covered world become mountains in a vast ice plain as treacherous as it is temporary. As the planet slowly swings back out of its 'helwinter', a violent thawing leads to quakes and storm surges, a vast increase in tidal force-wrought volcanism and the febrile blossoming of deep sea life, much of it predatory, in quest of kilometre-thick swarms of pelagic life drawn to the brief warmth of the surface. The world is transformed during this period into a carnivorous feeding frenzy and each life form struggles to feed as much as it may to store energy for the long cold to come, and also to destroy any

competition for that same food resource. The apex of the orbital passage close to the sun cracks the sub-oceanic mantle of Fenris and causes ever more violent tectonic disturbances which force an end to this season of slaughter, their effects drowning some land masses entirely and sundering others. While a few might endure unscathed and others yet be born anew from the welling lava, the sub-sea quakes bathe the world in scalding fogs and poisonous fume-clouds as the pale sun looms large in its skies.

Kraken, Wurm and Wolf

If a single word is appropriate to sum up the native fauna of Fenris, that word is 'deadly'. From kilometres-long deep oceanic predators ranging from the famed Fenrisian 'Kraken' to a host of batrachian and ichthyic nightmares without ready classification, the seas of Fenris are perilous beyond measure, while even the shifting islands as well as the great northern granite mass of the world's only true continent, known in the local dialect as 'Asaheim', are home to a host of apex-alpha class predators, ranging from cold-adapted mega-saurids to carnivorous pseudo-primates and ursids, to the legendary Fenrisian Wolves themselves. Of all these, the latter creatures are the most remarkable, not only in posing vast physical danger to any they encounter by virtue of their phenomenal strength, aggression and resilience, but also because they are undoubtedly semi-sentient creatures, and capable of co-operation and abstract thinking beyond any mere beast. What is striking perhaps to the genitor-scholar and student both of history and myth such as I, where perhaps to others it might go utterly unremarked, is the simple fact that these creatures both are, and are not, wolves. Which is to say, they give every appearance of the ancient and long-extinct 'lupus' genus of Terra, except in the degree of their size and power, which exceeds any natural creature of humanity's cradle and reaches into the range of myth and fable. And herein lies I think a clue to not only the Wolves of Fenris, but also to the nature of Fenris itself.

So many super-predatory species exist on a world so unsuited to having evolved even one of them—so many variations in form and type and development, and with few common gene-markers between them; why? My inescapable conclusion is that Fenris itself was made to be as it is by some conscious will, by some hand or master lost to time. Fenris then to me cannot be anything else but a vast and monstrous menagerie left to go wild down the millennia, a manufactured death

world. The host of super-predators we see there now are the survivors of some bloody and forced competition between the apex species of perhaps a thousand scattered worlds drawn together to fight for survival, and also perhaps with them was introduced the product of arcane science seeking to bring to life creatures that had only ever before existed in myth. And if this is so, then what of the human population?

The Tribes of Ice and Steel

That human life could have endured on Fenris during the long night of the Age of Strife given all I have said of this death world should be patently impossible, but it did not only endure, it thrived. When restored to the Imperium, Fenris was found to be the home of numerous fractured yet culturally cohesive human tribes, reduced to a barbaric, preindustrial condition and near-feral levels of technology by which the forging of steel was the highest art known. Conditions on Fenris mean that daily life was nothing but a ceaseless

battle to survive against a host of dangers—from the treacherous climate to the beasts that hunted the seas, and of course each other. Semi-nomadic and driven on by the merciless cycle of the formation and destruction of ice and land, competition for resources and survival between the tribal groups was relentless and bloody, with every battle a matter of life and death not just for those who fought, but for all their kin who depended on them. The men and women of the sea raider peoples of Fenris lived hard, attenuated lives, often cut short by ill-fortune and the stroke of blade or claw, but burned bright if briefly with passion and the will to survive, and they could endure much.

Culturally, just as with the beasts of Fenris, there was an undoubted stain of deliberate adaption from certain cultural patterns of Ancient Terra, which along with their dialects, clear derivations of Terran Gothic, points to the original population of Fenris being direct colonists from Old Terra itself, placed there by some cohesive effort at some

time within the Dark Age of Technology. But again more questions are begged. Why would a population of men and women clearly large enough and well-selected to remain genetically viable over the long term be set down with such a vast coterie of monsters on a world of such murderously intemperate nature? The only answer now perhaps lies in the fact that in certain obscure and ill-provenance star charts of Dark Age of Technology origin, there lies Fenris marked under the name 'Fenryr Perdita'; a term in the ancient form some have translated simply as 'Fenris/forbidden' and others as the 'Prison of Wolves'. There have also been some who have wondered that Fenris was so swiftly rediscovered by the Great Crusade and seen meaning in this, and they may be right. But what the Emperor knows of Fenris' lost history and indeed perhaps its purpose, He has shared with nought, save perhaps its king.

[Transcript ends]

Name: Fenris

Classification: Legiones Astartes home world

[Death World]

System Data: GR/3/2546//ZΩ

Stellar Grid: 99-RBAL/CT-31

Segmentum: Obscurus/Coreward

Notation: [Unstable orbital path: topography reformation twice per solar cycle. Flora and fauna extremely hostile]

++[Operational base of VIth Legion]++





HRIMTHURSAR ARN THEROD

ICE LORD OF THE SONS OF YMIR, ANCIENT OF THE FOURTH GREAT COMPANY

THE PROSPERINE CRUSADE, THE BREAKING OF THE ACROPOLIS MAGNA, 004.M31

Renowned among even the bitter ranks of the Hrimthursar for his grim demeanour and unrelenting wrath, Therod was among those present for the sundering of the Acropolis Magna's gates and the slaughter of all within. The systematic slaughter of the Prosperine Guard, whose weapons proved little more than annoyances to Therod's Dreadnought shell, continued for some hours before the Ancient deemed his work complete.

As with all Space Wolves Dreadnoughts, Therod's shell is replete with decorative inscriptions and designs, mostly commemorating past deeds and victories. Of note is the Hagalaz rune on the Dreadnought's left greave, the mark of the Hrimthursar, the most hateful of all the Sons of Ymir, as the Space Wolves named their Dreadnought cadres.

certain is that alone in the wilds the infant-Primarch, post-human as he was, survived despite the death world's many terrors and, after finding and joining with Fenris' human population, integrated into its warrior society and embraced its culture as his own. In doing so, and without advanced technology of any kind, he mastered a domain as deadly as any world found in the wide cosmos in its degree of hostility to human life. Taken to the Emperor's side, there appears to have been little or no difficulty in his comprehension of what he truly was, or indeed in absorbing the ways and means of the Imperium's advanced technology, scale and society.

Russ' education appears to have been short but thorough, and his testing brief. Very swiftly he was sent to command his Legion, and he did not go alone. With Leman Russ went as many as several hundred Fenrisian warriors who had, despite their age, undergone and survived the implantation and gene-processing required to become Legiones Astartes, at least to the greater part. Many had died in the attempt, but far less than might have been expected, and this was for two reasons. The first was the stabilising effect of Leman Russ' own gene-helix pattern over the existing VIth Legion gene-seed, which seems to have all but reversed the prior difficulties of candidate survival. The second was that the Fenrisians themselves proved of extraordinarily resilient stock, a factor attributed to long-term human survival on Fenris in general, and that world's own many mysteries. These men were to be Leman Russ' first 'Varagyr,' rendered sometimes as 'Varangii' in Imperial records, or more literally 'Wolf Guard.' They were Russ' oath-bound warriors, sworn to him even if it meant denying the jaws of death to be at his side, and whose loyalty had seen them leave their world of ice and blood and ascend uncomprehendingly but undaunted to the stars in their lord's footsteps. These Varagyr were valued by their king for this loyalty over the might of the superhuman Legiones Astartes of the VIth he was given to command, despite their vaunted strength and savage reputation, for they had not yet proven themselves as warriors or earned his respect. This lesson was the first Leman Russ was to teach the VIth and an early sign that under the Wolf King's rule, his Legion would be very different to any other.

The Wolves that Stalk the Stars

Records which remain about the transition of command in the VIth Legion indicate that things went generally smoothly, at least at first. That their Primarch had been

the second recovered was a matter both of rejoicing and some pride within the ranks of the Legion, and that their new lord was of barbaric mien was perhaps of less consternation to them given many of the individual Legionaries' origins than it otherwise might have. Russ also was charismatic and readily inspired awe among those he had been given to command, and in a Legion which already respected strength over perhaps anything else, here was a warrior whose strength exceeded any of them by a degree as to seem almost absurd in comparison. Rathvin relinquished command to his Primarch perhaps grudgingly but without open challenge, and if the presence of the Varagyr, who Leman Russ had ordered dispersed partly through the ranks, was cause for some resentment, it was quickly made known that both Russ' rule was not to be questioned, and that the Varagyr were more than willing to offer themselves in single combat to decide any argument over the matter. Before any acrimony could fester, Leman Russ in his wisdom determined to take his Legion into battle so that he, his kinsman and his gene-sons would spill blood and face death together and so be forged anew as one, or in his words;

"...as the strands of iron are twisted and hammered together in the forging of a killing blade, so shall we be. I and my oath-sworn have been until now the Wolves of Fenris, and you, cousins of my blood, the Wolves of Terra. Together we shall become the Wolves that Stalk the Stars, and the beasts that crawl and feed in the darkness of the void shall come to fear us, and know themselves hunted."

The target for this first campaign undertaken with his Legion had been carefully selected in council with the Emperor and Horus, and would prove for the VIth a true test of its mettle. Their target was a sector of the expanding frontier known as the 'Wheel of Fire', to the galactic east of the Segmentum Solar. It was a sprawling wilderness of erratically transiting star systems and burning nebula, wracked by frequent ion and Empyrean tempests and home to at least a score of xenos-occupied worlds, many under the dominion of the Orks, and thereby a source of periodic drifting space hulks and marauder attacks into the nascent Imperium. Human occupation in the region was scant, viable resources few and the cost of pacification projected to be high. For this reason the Wheel of Fire had so far been left alone save for a few probing raids, but now the Great Crusade sought again to expand towards the far larger and more dangerous prize of the worlds beyond Seraphina, an

area itself controlled by a vast Ork empire. The threat of the Orks of the Wheel of Fire attacking at the Great Crusade's back in support of their kind was a real one, and to negate that threat, the VIth would take the Wheel of Fire and purge it, regardless of any cost they would pay.

The Wheel of Fire

Under the guidance of the renowned Navigator Durlan Ocellati, the VIth Legion fleet, reinforced with new strike cruisers dispatched from Mars but shorn of its human auxiliary regiments at Leman Russ' direct order, drew its plans of attack against the Wheel of Fire. Russ' decree was that they would mount a rapid series of assaults on key worlds, focussing on pulling apart the Orks' domains and isolating them from each other. He saw no merit in a set piece invasion or grinding campaign of conquest and attrition in which the divided and fractious Orks were given a chance to come together against an outside threat and mass their strength as they had proved they could many times before. Instead they would be set reeling, attacked on many fronts at once and left scrambling to claw back at shadows. The iron-bitter lessons of Fenris' eternal wolf-wars of sea raid and sudden slaughter would serve the VIth Legion well in such a campaign, and off-set the advantage of a foe whose warriors outnumbered that of the Legiones Astartes force tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, to one.

Entering the Wheel of Fire as one, the VIth Legion fleet split into a dozen smaller squadrons of various sizes, each dispatched to strike at targets of their own. The largest force with the heaviest ships was under Leman Russ' personal command, and it set out directly for the heart of the Ork powerbase in the Wheel of Fire, a star system propitiously enough entered upon ancient maps of the region as 'Lucan,' where a vast tangled conglomeration of hulked ships and debris had been turned into a ramshackle star-fortress and shipyard of sorts by the Orks. A secondary force of lighter vessels, formed under Rathvin, was sent to target the teeming Ork worlds of Gundastol and Karkash, while the final third of the VIth Legion fleet was fractured down into much smaller units, each comprising a handful of warships, or even assigned as the raider-crew of single frigates with orders to roam freely and attack targets of opportunity.

At Leman Russ' command, war came to the Wheel of Fire like a raging hurricane, war the likes of which even the brutal and

bellicose Orks that claimed its mastery had never known. Riding the backs of the squalling ætheric storms under the masterful warp-navigation of Ocellati, the VIth Legion fell upon the Orks without warning. These were no clear-cut clinical raids, but slaughters and shock assaults, reavings and acts of mass destruction that left the Orks' crude city-sprawls shattered and whole landscapes burning in their wake. Provender worlds of enslaved lesser xenos who provided the greenskins with food and ore were thermo-bombed into ash wastes, while the 'War-Eds' and 'Mekkaz' which led the Orks were singled out and broken. Battles were conducted in the teeth of the foe's strongholds, and fortifications were overwhelmed before their garrisons could even rally to their defences. Jagged-hulled Ork killships were boarded and stormed while still at their docking ports, and dozens of 'rok' asteroid bases were penetrated to their depths before being blown apart from within.

For five standard years the war went on, never letting up in tempo, never abating in fury. Casualties for the Legion both in terms of warriors and in ships were frighteningly high, with almost a full third of the Legion destroyed before it was done and the Wheel of Fire left a graveyard of its war dead. Of the many slain were included the increasingly unstable Enoch Rathvin, crushed in the hydraulic claws of an Ork hell crawler while leading a suicidal charge on Xyat. But for every Legiones Astartes who fell, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Orks perished. This was war without quarter, war without relenting; it was not an act of conquest, but of extermination, and was carried out with a ruthlessness and indefatigability that no unaugmented human could have maintained. It was what the VIth had been made for, and on the Wheel of Fire, just as Russ had promised, it was re-forged anew.

The old enormities and excesses of which the VIth had been accused were themselves made good under Leman Russ. Its blood lust controlled with discipline and iron will, and its rage shackled by duty and oath-sworn loyalty, Russ gave his Legion pride in what it was, pride in the power it wielded, pride even in the monstrous violence which lurked within its heart, but with all this he did not allow them to crave glory for its own sake, nor wallow in the bitter poison of mindless bloodshed. He gave them purpose and he gave them honour, bleak as it was. They served the Emperor and that duty was a sacred one; they were made to be the fangs fastened around the throat of humanity's

foes. Just as on Fenris, war was ever slaved to the survival of kith and kin, the galaxy would be made a safe and secure home for human life, even if the Wolves that Stalked the Stars had to wash it clean in blood first.

The Fang

After the Wheel of Fire, the VIth Legion —its surviving warriors as battered and rent as the warships they voyaged in— returned home for the first time to Fenris, the legendary death world upon which their Primarch had been found. For the survivors of the old VIth and what remained of the first Varagyr, Fenris was now indeed home for both, for during the trials of the great campaign they had undertaken, all had indeed come to adopt elements of the Fenrisian culture their Primarch embodied, and its martial traditions. The dark wisdom which the Varagyr brought with them found favour with those in the Legion who wished to be closer to their gene-sire, just as the Fenris-born embraced new weapons and ways of war more fitted to the vast and unimaginable battlefields they now prowled across.

What they found waiting for them was one of the mightiest citadels ever built during the Great Crusade: the fortress of the Fang, set upon the rocky peaks of Fenris' single polar continent. Still under construction by the hands of Mechanicum magos and artisans belonging to the Emperor's own Chamber Castellanis, its vaults plunged deep into the granite, kilometres below the surface, just as its bastions and docking ports pierced the icy skies above. It is clear in retrospect that both Leman Russ, who had a hand in the fortress' design, and the Emperor, who had assigned vast resources and expertise to the project, had intended for the Fang to make the VIth essentially self-sufficient as a Legion, both in terms of wargear and munitions, as well as in gene-works and extensive psychomemetic conditioning facilities, allowing for the Legion's independent continuance in isolation from the Sol System. This latter factor in the Great Crusade's early decades was a rare thing, and only over a century later was it common for each Legion to hold this function, when the sheer scale of distance to which the Imperium had reached made the previous system impractical. This self-sufficiency had a deliberate purpose, both for the Legion and the Great Crusade, but this would not be clear until later.

Leman Russ' first order of the day was to expand his Legion. Many were the foes to be fought, and those scant 15,000 who had survived the Wheel of Fire would not be

enough by a long measure to fight them. This expansion was made possible first of all because of his own genetic pattern, which could be used in conjunction with the facilities being built within the Fang to stabilise, amplify and greatly expand the Legion's gene-seed stock—this particular and unique pattern entering into the Imperium's lore as the 'Canis Helix'. To this end was the world of Fenris turned with subtle but deliberate steps into a machine dedicated to the sole purpose of the creation of new warriors for the VIth Legion. There would be no rising of Fenris' children from the darkness and savagery of their primitive lives; such harshness bred formidable warrior stock and warriors were what was needed. For the same reason, there would neither be attempts to annul the fury of Fenris' climate or its treacherous geology, nor any attempt to pacify or corral the many beasts, both proud and horrific, which trod its ice fields or hunted its oceans' depths. None at all. There are even unconfirmed reports that matters were in fact deliberately inflamed, the better to test future candidates for the Legion, and rumours have persisted that a program existed early on to expand the planet's native population base, and that men and woman of suitable feral and primitive worlds were brought to Fenris against their knowledge and will, their minds and memories tampered with, re-programmed and set loose to fend for themselves so that the strongest would survive and swell the population pool for potential Legion recruits. There is no extant proof of this, but there are few who would claim such a thing as impossible and so the stories persist.

The plan to adapt Fenrisian culture to serve the Legiones Astartes went far deeper than any base demographic tampering however, it also sank deep into the bodies and souls of the natives. The Wolf King, master of Fenris before the coming of the Emperor, had gathered to him all the most potent and respected skalds and priests of his adopted people, for he knew that they were both the guardians of its oral history and myth, and also the keepers and promulgators of its laws. To these he also granted the technological boons of long life and increased endurance, mere fractions of what a Space Marine was, but more than enough to mark them out as 'blessed' and apart from their people. Through these men and women he adapted the ancient superstitions and sagas of Fenris to accept him and his Legion as something of preternatural power and holy purpose. To the people of Fenris, the Fang itself became equated to the hall of the gods and immortals,

the Legionaries of the VIth the warriors of the skies, and there was no greater honour than to be chosen to join their ranks and sail the void of night as a champion in the service of the 'Allfather'—the Emperor cast as the godlike father of humanity, and Leman Russ, His favoured son and strong right hand. To some onlookers, before and since, this deliberate use and manipulation of superstition and religious belief runs in direct contravention of one of the most key tenets of the Great Crusade: the liberation of humanity from the lies of ignorance and the worship of false gods. In this it seems the Emperor agreed that the ends justified the means, and in this as with much else, the VIth Legion proved an exception to the rule.

Warlord of the Imperium

Regardless of what ultimate plans and purposes the unique arrangements of the creation and expansion of the VIth Legion under their Primarch served, other matters pressed. The Great Crusade was still young and the Imperium's wars were yet unwon. Its war machine needed as many warlords of Leman Russ' calibre as it could get, despite that several other Primarchs such as Ferrus Manus, Fulgrim and most lately Rogal Dorn had also now re-joined their Legions. With the trials of the Wheel of Fire behind them and fresh waves of Legioneres Astartes neophytes first refilling then expanding their ranks, the VIth Legion was again ready for battle. War beckoned on many fronts and the VIth was ready to answer. The decades that were to follow saw Leman Russ and his Legion participate in scores of successful Compliance actions and military campaigns, both alone and in command of numerous secondary war fleets, regiments of the Imperialis Auxilia and even on several occasions, other bodies of Space Marines whose Primarchs had not yet been found.

This period of the Legion's history often goes unremarked but in it can be seen a series of victories that reveal Russ and his Legion to be far more than the savage semi-beasts some later portrayals make them out as, and confirm Russ as a field general of surpassing skill and noteworthy record. Before the VIth, xenos domains of the Orks and Eldar, Taralais and Saharduin all fell, and famously on the ancient hive world of Nova Borilia, the alien tyranny of the Noman, an enslavement that went back millennia, was destroyed. This last conflict in particular was a celebrated victory, for which the ancient battle tank STC restored to the Imperium in that same campaign was named in Leman Russ' honour by the Mechanicum.

THE CANIS HELIX

The term 'Canis Helix' is applied to the altered gene-seed strain which gives the Space Wolves their distinct nature. Its mutations from the standard pattern offer the scions of the Legion vastly enhanced sensory acuity and reaction time, as well as inducing certain physical characteristics such as extended and hardened canine teeth and an otherwise animalistic appearance. The presence of the Canis Helix, it has been argued, is also linked to the Legion's almost uncontrollable aggression, bordering on frenzy in combat possibly due to violent overstimulation of their enhanced senses. The effects of the Canis Helix only became apparent over time as the early generations of the Legion's intake aged, with the psychological effects appearing earliest in those who had survived the troubled implantation process. Longer term, the instability of these mutations would lead in some cases to mental and physical breakdown of the most extreme kind, the man truly devolving into the monster. Thankfully, this instability was greatly ameliorated after the Legion's re-unification with its Primarch, though some cases of the gene-breakdown crisis, known now in the Legion as the 'Curse of the Wulfen', persisted but were relatively rare. This was the case at least only until the psychic cataclysm which marked the final deadly act of the Battle of Prospero. Then was the curse visited upon the Legion in numbers and to a degree never before seen, particularly in the case of the warriors of the all but lost Thirteenth Great Company, where it is believed hundreds fell to the curse's terrible effects.

The VIth was now a Legion on who Leman Russ' famous words and the snarling crimson wolf's head badge—adopted now as the Legion's own—had long since confirmed the common epithet of 'Space Wolves'. Much, it was said, to the private consternation of Horus, whose own 'Luna Wolves' wore such a similar name first, but seemed the worse fit for it. But for all the Legion's conquests on the expanding frontier, it was for the traitor and the turncoat that Russ and his warriors savoured a particular ire. On Rama Sula, Russ' Legion subjugated a rebellion of more than a million militia soldiers in a single blood-soaked day, while across the stars of the Nyrcon Cluster, they hunted down the fleet of the renegade Rogue Trader Belisarius Hayte and hurled the body of the self-proclaimed god into the fires of his flagship's reactor core. It was for the aftermath of such actions as these and scores of others, of punishment meted out to 'oath breakers' whose savagery was named 'excessive' even by generals upon whose orders armies went to their graves and worlds were set flame, that the dark tales that had long surrounded the Legion were once more kindled. The stories were fuelled by the increasingly savage disposition and appearance which was starting to take over the Space Wolves, a name which now seemed as much a statement as an enunciation of heraldry.

THE DARKEST WAR

The turning point for the Legion perhaps came during and after the Rangdan Xenocides of the 860s. At last the Expeditionary fleets had breached the Eastern Fringe of the galaxy and in doing so

had attracted the attention of the Rangdan Cerabvores, a species of such macabre power and technological might it seemed, for a time at least, that the Imperium had met its doom. Facing waves of attack from the galactic east and north, and suffering losses that would not be exceeded until the dark days of the Heresy, the wars of the Rangdan Xenocides were the most terrible of any yet fought. Whole Expeditionary fleets went to their deaths without a single survivor, worlds were laid waste, dozens of Titan Legions were obliterated and by the end, entire Space Marine Legions [REDACTED SECTION] lost to the Imperium. Much of what happened during this abyssal conflict is still locked under seal, but what can be said is that with the breaking of the Labyrinth of Night by the Emperor, the threat was at last stymied. What remained was for the Rangdan taint to be purged in a subsequent decade-long series of bio-pogroms that left entire human inhabited sectors lifeless to ensure what was hoped to be a final victory. It was then given to the Space Wolves of the VIth and the Dark Angels of the Ist—the latter who had suffered themselves so very dreadfully against the horror—to conduct these purges, these two Legions entrusted above all others to do what had to be done.

Horus and his Legion, who had been otherwise occupied in the ongoing wars in the galactic west, were now firmly in the ascendance in the eyes of the Great Crusade, and with him and those other Legions who retained their strength having not suffered at the Rangdan's hands did the future of the next few decades of conquest



and expansion now rest. In comparison to these new 'paragons', for the Space Wolves now came the whisper of 'executioner' rather than warrior, and the image of destroyer that had always been theirs in part now came to replace that of savage but noble conquerors in the minds of many in the Imperium. As for Leman Russ, to some he was no longer a wise warrior-king as if sprung from the pages of legend, but a blood-spattered tyrant kept on the Emperor's leash, as feared as any who had held sway in Old Night—a keeper of monsters and devourer of worlds, a fiend in Primarch's form. Whether there was justice either in these accusations, or the distrust that seemed also to dog the Dark Angels as well from these times, it is not for this record to judge except to note that the Imperium endures, but this might have not been so if not for they who bled to ensure its survival.

THE WOLVES IN SHADOW

By the second century of the Great Crusade, the Space Wolves were truly a Legion apart from their brethren. Their Expeditionary fleets and taskforces went where they willed, fought where they willed, and undertook

such requests for aid as their master and his warlords saw fit, and most often they fought alone. The high commanders and Lords Solar of the Imperium knew better than to try to bring them to obey their orders, for it was widely known that the Legion heeded only one commander, Leman Russ, and Leman Russ only acknowledged one overlord: the Emperor Himself.

In this loyalty the Legion was adamant and unshakable, and they cared little or nothing for the good opinion of any other, be they Primarch or provincial governor. Of their brother Legions, they maintained something of a particular comradery and rivalry in equal measure with the Dark Angels, with whom they had shared dark passages of history, but for the others they seemed to have held a distant respect at most, barely disguised indifference for others and at least in the case of the Thousand Sons, outright scorn. The Legion maintained no domains but Fenris, and needed none. It had long since been all but self-sufficient save in the production of the greater patterns of warships and the introduction of newly-minted war engines

and weapons intended for the Legiones Astartes, which it acquired directly from Terra or from the forge-shipyards of Ryza or Lucius in infrequent batches. Approach to Fenris was forbidden without invitation, save for the emissaries of the Throne World, even to brother Legiones Astartes, and the Legion had become profoundly strange and inscrutable to outside observers.

To those who knew not the truth, the Legion and its warriors now seemed terrifying savages aping the manner of the Legiones Astartes. Some heard only the guttural tongue of Fenris and words wrapped in the primitive enigmas of myth and saga, and did not understand their meanings, laced as they were within and without with memetic complexities and rich allegory as eloquent as any High Gothic cant. They saw only armour adorned with pelts and the trinkets of superstition, the leather ritual masks of the Legion's 'priests' and the twisting animal imagery entwined upon their wargear, and rankled at the worship of false religion. They did not see the outward trappings of an intricate martial culture which brought



discipline and control to the fury which seethed within the beating heart of the Legion, and which allowed its adherents to fight the most terrible foes, armoured in belief in themselves and in their brothers, and bound by a will of iron. In short, many outsiders looked upon the Space Wolves and were afraid, but did not know that this very fear was deliberately crafted for them to feel. They saw barbarity, but did not understand that such barbarity was deliberately honed and tempered to a killing edge by keen minds. So it was that allies and enemies alike saw what the Space Wolves wished them to see, and many underestimated the VIth Legion and the weapon it had become in the Emperor's hand.

Silent History

The post-Rangdan pogroms had been far from the only 'secret' war the Space Wolves had undertaken at the Emperor's command. In the decades in which they had made war in the Imperium's shadows as well as in the glare of the fires of the frontline of the Great Crusade, it is recorded of them on the black basalt memento-mori on Baal and nowhere

else that side-by-side with the Blood Angels they had exterminated a fourth stage Enslaver outbreak on Poseidonis Secundus, marking one of only three occasions in the entire Great Crusade that an Enslaver outbreak of that intensity had been defeated without resort to Exterminatus. Known to few but the Wolf King and his Emperor, the Legion faced and bested many threats both nightmarish and arcane, from the godlike power of the psyker-kings of Vhallach to the insidious menace of the Lacremara infestation of Morox. These victories and unknown others, conflicts so terrible they are recorded only as battle honours on the Great Bell of Terra, remain occluded—all data regarding them sealed or purged from human memory.

It is the case that many of the Space Wolves' victories of the latter years of the Great Crusade—even those that were not sealed under order of high authority—were neither widely lauded nor eulogised by the remembrancers and iterators of the Imperium with which the Legion held little truck. Indeed, in scorn of such men they freely lied and mocked, and played the barbarian as expected. For where the Wolves stalked, they often stalked alone. For their true histories were theirs alone, preserved in webs of saga and myth where the facts and direct memories had been purged from the mind by psycho-memetic obliteration to preserve the sanity of the warrior from the things they had seen and done, and to remove from them knowledge they were not meant to have. The secrets the Space Wolves had been charged to keep by their Allfather and their Wolf King they would keep to their grave, and beyond if needs be.

Before the End

It is the truth that at the time of the Horus Heresy's inception, the Space Wolves Legion was not objectively stronger than any other, nor were its warriors objectively greater than any other, but it carried with it a bloody reputation and an aura of fear which few other Legions could match. It was also, even to its brothers, an unpredictably dangerous and unknown quantity, but that it was absolutely loyal to Terra and its master none doubted, just as none doubted that if called upon there was nothing the Space Wolves would not do, no act of destruction so great that the Legion would not perform it without question should the Emperor demand it. Set apart and opaque to outsiders as the Legion was, much of the political turmoil that surrounded both the Librarius Project and the Chaplaincy Edict had no real impact

on the Legion, the Space Wolves' own rule and martial culture swallowing any such attempt at outside interference without trace, while any notion of Horus' 'Warrior Lodges' gaining ground within the Legion was laughable. Indeed, there is no evidence such a thing was even attempted.

When Horus was made Warmaster, all evidence holds that the Space Wolves and their Primarch respected this decision as the will of the Emperor and obeyed, but did so in duty as by oath bound rather than eagerly, and did little to develop any direct relationship with the new overlord of the Great Crusade—while even before his fall from grace, Horus seems to have dealt with the Legion at arm's length, preferring the company and direct service of other Legions of longer association and more receptive to his command in the Emperor's stead. Because of this, it is perhaps the case that Horus saw the assignment of the Space Wolves to the censure of the Thousand Sons as a gift of fate, allowing him to neutralise two potential thorns in his side for the treachery to come, and it is perhaps the case that the reduction in the Space Wolves' strength by attrition was just as much the arch-Traitor's goal as the silencing of Magnus. What was in some ways the Legion's strength could also be their weakness, for by playing upon their antipathy for the 'sorcerers' of their brother Legion, the Thousand Sons, Warmaster Horus, not yet revealed in treachery, manipulated the Space Wolves into turning what was to be a mission of censure and arrest at Prospero into a massacre. So was the Horus Heresy set in motion, the Thousand Sons all but eradicated and the Space Wolves Legion weakened, all before the first shot of open civil war had been fired.

The Space Wolves Legion's wounds were still not yet healed when Space Marine blood was spilt upon Iststvan's black sands, and they found themselves isolated, distrusted by those who ought to be allies, and bitterly hated by those of their brothers with whom grievance had long sat and now festered into poison. In the years of civil war that were to come, at the Alaxxes Nebula, on Vanaheim, and at Daverant Reach, and in a host of lesser engagements, the Space Wolves were to clash with their fellow Space Marine Legions turned Traitor in an Imperium thrown into anarchy and turmoil. But it was at Yarranton that they would face their darkest hour. Here they would pay the price for their history and their unswerving loyalty to the Emperor that created them, but they would do so unbowed.

UNIT AND FORMATION STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEGION

When Leman Russ took over the VIth Legion, it adhered rigidly to the guidelines and dispositions laid down by the *Principia Belicosa* of the Imperium's High Command. This rule was clung to by the warriors of the Legion as an anchor against the disorder their own increasingly fractious character was sowing in their ranks. Enforced discipline was common and even executions in the field were not unknown in the VIth. With the rediscovery of Leman Russ and the cultural influence of Fenris which he imprinted on the Legion, these factors however rapidly fell by the wayside. The fury which lay within the Legion's heart was given form and discipline mastered by will, and this wellspring of savagery was channelled and directed in battle rather than left unfocused, providing a catharsis which purged the Legion of its self-destructive tendencies and unified it under the Wolf King's banner. Both the Fenrisian way of warfare as adapted by Leman Russ and the natural tendencies of the Legion to want to close and get to grips with its foes at close quarters led to a rapid and shifting focus away from the generalist and combined arms approach advocated by the *Principia Belicosa* and towards tactics dependent on highly mobile shock infantry units, with heavier support elements maintained, but largely focussed in specialised detachments rather than as part of the general line of battle. The Space Wolves were conditioned to hold a near-suicidal disregard for danger and trained to exploit this to the fullest on the battlefield, pitting their courage and might where it would be most effective; in the very teeth of the foe, overwhelming opponents by sheer speed and ferocity of attack, both in hand-to-hand combat and in brutal short ranged fire fights. As time went on, their tactical dispositions shifted to better accommodate this preference, leading to the creation of unique shock units such as the 'Grey Slayers' and 'Bloodied Claws', which gradually came to comprise the bulk of the core infantry of the Legion by the time of the Burning of Prospero.

By the late Great Crusade era, the Space Wolves Legion had strongly deviated from the *Principia Belicosa*'s definition of the *Legiones Astartes* structure and organisation, although they could, if pressed, readily enunciate how each warrior would fit in such a structure should it be needed. At the macro level, the Legion consisted of thirteen 'Great Companies' designated by their number in the order of battle, with each nominally composed of a theoretical

10,000 *Legiones Astartes*, though in practice attrition and casualty rates meant this was never more than a notional figure. Below this strategic level, the Legion's host was now broken down into a shifting array of ad hoc formations either put together for a particular mission or beholden strongly to the personal authority of a particular company commander, and below them to a series of tributary sub-commanders, known variously as 'Wolf Lord' (Jarl) or 'Claw Leader' (Thegn), regardless of their notional or accorded rank within the Imperium's order of battle. These warband-like forces — while each was part of one of the overarching Great Companies which comprised the Legion — were largely autonomous and heavily infantry-focussed. They often lacked certain specialised units and formations found in other Legions, and could range in size from between battalion to chapter strength in conventional terms, while below this, the more general terms of 'Pack' or 'Claw' became an accepted descriptor of any small tactical unit, be it a single squad of warriors or a small combined taskforce. These arrangements could be confusing to outsiders with, for example, a particular Great Company having within it several 'Jarls', whose relative seniority or areas of command were far from clear to any but the Space Wolves.

The formation of the Great Companies themselves varied considerably, both as a result of their history and the preferences and dispositions of their commanders, who had much leeway in determining their composition. Of particular note was the First Great Company (or 'Onn' in the Fenrisian) which served as Leman Russ' core of veterans, including his chosen elite, the Varagyr. The Seventh Great Company in contrast held the distinction of being the 'Landayvan' — the destroyers and layers waste — and in this company were concentrated many of the Legion's siege warfare and artillery assets, as well as those skilled in the use of such sanctioned weaponry as phosphex. It was also the home of the largest concentration of a particular sub-cult of the Fenrisian mythos centred around the wolf-spirit Morkai, a pseudo-deity of death and the dead. The Space Wolves who were attracted to this cult were said to be those who most 'felt the breath of the wolf in their bones' and within them the fiery passions of their brethren had chilled to a bleak killing frost and only the prospect of immediate bloodshed could bestir them with feeling once more. Many such warriors

were drawn together to form the packs of the Black Cull, an extermination corps which also specialised in near-suicidal and all but unstoppable line breaker attacks, embracing the touch of death as one might a lost friend.

Also of particular note within the Legion was the role played by the so-called 'Priests of Fenris'. This sealed chamber within the Legion embodied much of the special command functions provided by the separate Apothecarion, Librarian and Armourium in other Legions. They were suffused both with an aura of ritual and secrecy, for as well as the continuation of the Legion's martial culture, the maintenance of its wargear and the preservation of its gene-seed, these 'priests' also occupied the role of keepers of the Legion's occluded history and superstitions, and served as the wardens of its secrets. The senior representatives of this varied priesthood, be they Priest of Iron, Caster of Runes or Speaker of the Dead, had a place of honour on the Einherjar, the Legion's council of war, which advised their Primarch, and on which every Jarl and Thegn had a place, and where every warrior of the Space Wolves had the right to speak.

War Disposition

At the time the order reached the Space Wolves Legion for the censure of the Thousand Sons, it was able to muster what is believed to have been roughly two-thirds of its active strength. This comprised some 75,000 *Legiones Astartes* assigned to the Prospero assault, with the estimated remaining 20,000-25,000 either scattered across various sub-fleets and taskforces beyond their master's immediate call, with a small contingent left to garrison Fenris in the Legion's absence. This itself reflected the heavy degree of campaigning the Space Wolves had conducted in the preceding decades, having fallen in overall strength from about 130,000 after a series of actions, some of whose nature remains sealed. Its fleet is believed to have comprised some sixty capital vessels at this time, with perhaps four times this number of smaller strike craft and escort vessels. In particular, the Legion was disposed towards heavily armed and augmented frigate designs, which allowed for the long-range independent operations of small task forces. In contrast, its flagship by the time of the Heresy, the *Hrafinkel*, was one of the largest patterns from the Gloriana class frame, and configured both as a heavy battleship and capable of conducting independent planetkill operations.

SPACE WOLVES LEGIONARY

LEGIONARY HRUGA

KARIC OF THE NORN'S WARBAND,

EIGHTH GREAT COMPANY

THE PROSPERINE CENSURE HOST, 004.M31

Legionary Hruga and the bulk of the Eighth Great Company spent the earliest stages of the fighting on Prospero engaged in combat with Imperial Army elements at the Palatinate Mansions. Unlike the fighting against the lightly equipped Spireguard infantry, the troops entrenched within the Mansions' walls had access to the full panoply of the Great Crusade's vast armoury and proved more serious opposition for the reavers of the Eighth Great Company. Hruga and the other members of his warband were tasked with the reduction of enemy self-propelled guns and armour, a mission complicated by the relative lack of heavy support weaponry among the Eighth. Utilising the ornamental hedgerows, culverts and canals of the Mansions' gardens to assault enemy positions, Hruga and his companions used melta bombs and other improvised explosives to disable and cripple the Medusas and the ironically named Leman Russ battle tanks arrayed against them.

The Eighth was equipped primarily with MkIV power armour, the advanced augur array incorporated into that design proving beneficial to their role as advanced scouts and skirmishers, but even this newer armour had soon found itself remade in the image of the Legion. The suit worn by Legionary Hruga was brought into service less than ten years before the fighting on Prospero, assigned to the VIth Legion from a macro-cache manufactured on Anvillus and shipped to the distribution yards at Beta-Garmon. Despite its relatively short operational lifespan, it has already undergone significant modification, most notably the entire right pauldron has been replaced with a reinforced MkIII pauldron, a common field augmentation of the lighter MkIV suits. Additionally, Hruga has engraved several knotwork patterns across the chest and greaves. Though the exact meaning of the patterns is difficult to ascertain, they are likely warding talismans against harm.



Shown is an alternative Legion icon in use among reconnaissance units of the VIth Legion, the so-called 'Fimbul-wulf', the silent and deadly spirit of ice storms.

SPACE WOLVES LEGION HERALDRY



Legion Icon
Common Heraldic Form



Legion Icon, 'Varagyr'
Command Variant



Ninth Great Company
Command Armorial
(Inc. 'Devouring Sun' honour)



'Cult of Morkai' Armorial
(associated with
'Deathsworn' units)



'Void Wolf' Armorial (associated
with Breacher troops and
ship-to-ship specialists)



'Horns of Winter' (associated
with Destroyer units)



Legion Tactical Icon (Later
Great Crusade Armorial use)



Second Great Company
Grey Slayer Heraldry



'Worm Mark' – Decorative
engraved forms with encoded
memetic significance



'Gyre Triskel', etc. Indicative of
survival against dire odds



Legion Apothecarion
Heraldic depiction



Pre-Fenrisian Legion
Overseer markings



THE PANOPLY OF WOLVES

The wargear and armour of the Space Wolves Legion were renowned for their use of unique Fenrisian cultural artefacts, runic script and artisan modification in their appearance. More than simply an aesthetic influence, these carried various coded references to the history and deeds of the bearer and his unit and Great Company, and their markings could often carry multiple meanings depending on their relation and positioning.



ELDTHURSAR HAR SKRINN

FLAME LORD OF THE SONS OF YMIR, ANCIENT OF THE THIRTEENTH GREAT COMPANY
THE PROSPERINE CENSURE HOST, THE IMPOSSIBLE BATTLE, 004.M31

Also known as the Sons of Muspel and the Destroyers of Worlds, the Eldthursar are the most violent of the Sons of Ymir, as the Space Wolves style their Dreadnought cadres. Most often these warriors have suffered terribly before being placed within the Dreadnought's sarcophagus and the pain of their death drives them to bouts of killing mania when left conscious. Rarely are they awoken unless the Legion requires the utter annihilation of the enemy, for these war engines are not subtle weapons.

Eldthursar Skrin was destroyed during the fighting on Prospero when his berserk fury drove him to stand against the immense power of the Canis Vertex, yet even after his metal body was laid low by the Titan, the Eldthursar continued to twitch and claw impotently at the churning heavens, his fury unquenched even in his final death.



EXEMPLARY BATTLES

THE DEAD OF ASHKHELON

Much of the martial record of the Space Wolves' involvement in the latter stages of the wars of the Great Crusade remains known only to themselves, and only from time to time do their wars stray from the shadow into the light. When it occurs, this is often by simple virtue of the fact that they have fought alongside some other body of the Imperium's military and in doing so are related not in their own words, but in the evidence of comrades whose experience and indeed bias does much to colour their account. The record presented here however draws much of its story from a far colder and more dispassionate account than most—that of the Mechanicum.

The war this account relates was a relatively brief but extremely brutal affair which took place on the world of Ashkhelton-III in a star system of the same name which resides in the Ultima Segmentum, close by what is known as the Golgothan Expanse. Now the Cartographica Imperialis lists Ashkhelton as a dead system, but it was once not so. Joined to the Imperium by the 76th Expeditionary Fleet, under Admiral Atemara Luxxor, without armed conflict, it was a faded jewel of humanity's ancient domains, a world with a turbulent atmosphere, poisonous but rich in complex and rare chemical compounds. In order to harvest this bounty, the technological might of the Dark Age of Technology had sunk great sealed dome-cities into the channels of kilometre-deep ravines in the arid world's surface. Scorning the dangers of this hostile world, these cities had once been the home of hundreds of millions, and Ashkhelton no doubt a rich and prosperous world blessed by the fruits of the Dark Age of Technology's high science. But then had come the Age of Strife and the fall of that ancient empire of humanity, and isolated and alone Ashkhelton had suffered. By the time of the arrival of Luxxor's fleet in orbit through tentative vox-communications with the survivors below, it had been established that their population had fallen to a handful of millions, descendants of the original colony reduced to scavenging and cannibalising the failing dome-cities which comprised the artificial world around them in order to live.

The Imperium's boon was an end to their tenuous way of life, an end to want, and the illumination of the Imperial Truth, and in return the long-disused cloud refineries were brought back slowly online by a coterie of magos despatched from the Forge World of Ryza, who took to the task with a holy fervour. For twenty-seven standard years Ashkhelton fulfilled its promise and became a working cog in the vast machine of the ever-expanding Imperium, its population increasing with new colonists, and the Ryzan presence expanding to the extent that the building of a small temple-fane was needed to house the contingent permanently. But it was not just the precious resources of mineral gases which drew in the Mechanicum, but the promise of archaeotech. As isolated and hostile as Ashkhelton had been, its very remoteness and hazards had spared it the worst privations of the Age of Strife, or so it seemed, with little or no evidence of xenos attack or marauder raid to mar its surface, or indeed plunder its treasures. Slow decay under a shroud of

alkali dust seemed to have been the fate of its ancient vapour-works and the deep-sunk vaults that dove far beneath the still half-deserted dome-cities, but beneath that fall of dust and in sealed chambers untrod for centuries, many wonders of the past were preserved still. Those wonders served only to draw in technoarchaeologists like flies to carrion, with the Ryzan magos jealously coveting the spoils, tithing and data that was uncovered. For the Ashkhel natives such plunderings were an ill-omened thing, for their culture held many dark myths about the deep places of their world and the perils of disturbing them, but grateful for all the Imperium and the magos had done for them, the Ashkhel did not object too loudly or too forcibly, until it was too late.

The Scream of the Grave

Records later recovered from the newly built planetary control bastion—a ferrocrete sky-tower rising up from the most substantial of the surviving dome-cities, a place dubbed 'Safehold' by its inhabitants—show that the first sign of the calamity to come was the sound of screaming. No mere natural cry of distress or human agony, this was a cacophony of shrieking that echoed up from the depths of Ashkhel in a relentless, rising tide, sounding from a hundred passageways and broken, cracked walls at once. Almost immediately, the Ashkhel fell to widespread hysteria and panic, for such screaming figured well in those dark myths with which they had lived through Old Night. There was a stampede of terrified humanity, all rushing for the upper levels, all trying to climb as high as they could, some even hijacking air-sealed maintenance vehicles and heading out on to the surface to flee as far as they could. At Safehold's only star-dock, there were riots and bloodshed as the Ashkhel desperately tried to make passage off-world and the Imperium's enforcers and naval armsmen had to open fire with live rounds to maintain control.

Some three hours after the screaming began, Enforcer command registered the full initiation of martial law and curfew lockdown as only just managing to control the terrified population; it also noted the persistence of the screaming and the worrying inability of the planetary control bastion to raise the Ryzan sub-forged complex for report—these facts all contained in hasty vox messages to Ashkhel-III's orbital beacon station high above for retransmission elsewhere. Minutes later, the bastion fell silent. The servitors and crew on the orbital beacon relay looked on helplessly as one

by one every single city-dome, gas cloud refinery and outpost on the surface below fell silent, even the echoes of the macabre shrieks, filtered through open vox channels, died away. In under a standard hour, Ashkhel-III was as silent as the grave.

The astropathic distress transmissions were met with a comparably swift response in the shape of a patrolling Imperial Armada Lunar class cruiser, the *Tantalus-V*, and her escorts, which arrived within a matter of days. Their auspexes swept the world and found the energy signatures of machines idling, power creeping through conduits and the vent waste of life support systems still running below, but of a single life sign there was nothing. Of a population estimated at more than eleven million, there was nothing. The captain of the *Tantalus-V* knew well his duty. He declared the planet under sanction and withdrew his ships from orbit to form a blockade and sent for assistance to sector command. He and his vessels would see to it that whatever misfortune had befallen this blighted world, it would not leave it while the warships of the Imperial Armada were there to hold the line. First days and then weeks, then a whole quarter year according to the standard measurement in time went silently by as the blockade watched and nothing stirred below. Then knifing from the howling Empyrean help finally arrived; dozens of warships, some deep crimson and others storm-cloud grey. They bore within them both the Wolves of Russ and the warriors of Mars.

Heretek Omega

Though the response of the *Tantalus-V*'s captain to these new arrivals has gone unrecorded, shock is its most likely nature, for even the so-abrupt silencing of a single Imperial colony was not likely to elicit such a sudden and dread-inspiring reaction as this; an entire Great Company of one of the most feared of the Space Marine Legions and a like number of the Martian Skitarii, the personal army of the Fabricator-General of Mars. The two flagships alone, the battle barge *Void Wyrms* of the Eleventh Great Company of the Space Wolves and its counterpart, the Mechanicum war-barque *Axiom of Trinity*, had each sufficient firepower to lay waste to Ashkhel from on-high, but they had come to do more than that, nor was their arrival together an accident. Unbeknownst to the isolated survivors of the Ashkhel Beacon, a second emergency signal has been despatched by the dead of Ashkhel, a Mechanicum astropathic missive which contained only the memetic

symbol-forms for two words, translated to the common Gothic as 'Heretek Omega'. In the parlance of the Cult of the Omnissiah, it meant more than simply the descriptor of a fatally-dangerous tech-blasphemy of the highest order, it meant a sin of the Dark Age of Technology; a human-made horror which could not be allowed to continue to exist. Received and relayed many times across the æther before it was laid before the warlords of Mars, their response had been a swift one, a reactive force calculated and configured to suit the environment in which it was to fight was assembled and dispatched. And to chill Fenris the request for further aid was not lightly sent, but in expectation that the battle ahead would be a dire one. The Lord of Winter and Ruin had made his will known just as swiftly in response, and the Eleventh were loosed.

The Dead Cities

Descending through the poisoned atmosphere of Ashkhel in squadrons of slab-sided gunships and baroque assault shuttles, the landing force targeted two distinct landing zones separate from each other by a dozen kilometres; the Safehold bastion and the Ryzan sub-fane. They met no resistance as they landed on the empty, wind-swept surface, but everywhere there were the signs of sudden violence and destruction. As they closed from the air, it became evident that the Ryzan sub-forged had been particularly afflicted, though its hexagonal environmental dome was still intact. Beneath its armoured facings, the entire facility had been gutted by fire and riven by explosions. To the experienced eyes of Space Wolves and Skitarii alike, it was clear that the sub-forged had been destroyed from within. The landings went unopposed and the Space Wolves Pale Hunter war packs quickly spread out to search the empty bastion and descend through the city, while the Skitarii Clades secured the landing zones and began to pick through the ruins of the Ryzan sub-forged looking for answers.

One thing was immediately apparent; despite the obvious signs of violence, of weapon impacts and blast scoring, shattered barricades and the plentiful rust-dark stains of spilled blood, there were no bodies whatsoever. The dead of Ashkhel had been taken, for dead they surely were given the aftermath of the desperate battles that had been uncovered. The war packs stalked through the cities of the dead, and everywhere the story was the same, the same wreckage was found and the same tell-tale signs of bloodshed discovered, with the

only difference being that the lower the Space Wolves descended, the fewer signs of a struggle were evident; here was obviously where the attack had come swiftest and first. It was Inar Halvasn's claw-pack that first sighted the foe, little more at first than a shape in the darkness, standing still and silent at the cavern mouth of a lower lift gantry far below Safehold's surface.

It was as Halvasn's warriors spread out to encircle the figure that the screaming began, bathing the cavern in an onslaught of shrieking cries. Sent reeling at least at first from the sheer volume and pain the screams inflicted before their armour's auto-senses compensated, the Space Wolves answered with a hail of bolter fire. Illuminated in the muzzle flash of the volley was a huge, hulking thing, headless and near the size of a Legion Dreadnought. Its flesh was a ridged and corded mass of shining blue-black matter bound within an exoskeleton frame of gilded metal and pulsing black pipework. The thing staggered forwards, its dark flesh shuddering and rupturing from the contents of a dozen bolter magazines emptied into it at point blank range. It staggered but did not fall. With a sudden lurch, it reached the circling Space Wolves and when its immense taloned hands fastened upon one of their number, the warrior was torn in half effortlessly. Howling out a challenge in response Halvasn charged, looping under its talons and pulverising its knee joint with his power fist, toppling the hulking monster to the ground. The pack fell upon the beast, their chainblades roaring and power axes swinging in glittering arcs of caged lightning. Butchered and dismembered, the thing was revealed to be no beast of flesh and blood, but a mechanism, a thing of false life, neither servitor nor automata as the Imperium reckoned them, but something akin to them, grown and spliced into a frame of hydraulics and gears, and pulsing with unnatural life. As the thing was finally stilled, the screams it had ceaselessly issued throughout the fight came to an abrupt halt. Moments later that same scream was taken up again in the darkness, echoing and reverberating, answered by many others of their kind down in the depths. A sentry the thing had been and its alarm had been raised.

The Corpse Takers

From the depths they came, hulking dark fiends by the hundreds, headless and screaming. Looping along with them were other, less certain creations; bounding, spindle-limbed simians, also headless, with their torsos split vertically by whirling saw

blades, and alongside them were strange, asymmetrical orbs which hovered in the air, spitting forth barbed spikes that could split ceramite. Against this tide of screaming horror the Space Wolves howled their own war cries and counter-charged, slamming into the masses of hulking bodies with shattering violence, while the Skitarii drew up in their ordered ranks, their radium carbines and volkite chargers raised to meet the monstrous host with a blizzard of burning shot and scalding rays.

The battle was joined in blood and fury. In the corridors and chambers of the dead city, the Space Wolves met their inhuman foes at close quarters, their rage and skill matched against the unnatural flesh and colossal strength of the machine-creatures. Meanwhile, across the industrial sprawl which surrounded the burned-out Ryzan sub-forged, the Skitarii formed geometrically aligned pentagon formations, their interlocking fields of fire as lethal as they were precise. But they were soon hard pressed, as the hulking attackers, some set wholly ablaze by the weapons fire that struck them, still clung to their unnatural lives long enough to smash into the Skitarii's ranks like wreaking balls, crushing the life from dozens of the Martian troopers before they were finally stopped. While in the passageways and tunnels below Safehold, where the Space Wolves prevailed, there was but brief respite before fresh assault was redoubled, and where the screaming hulks succeeded in tearing and crushing the Legiones Astartes, they turned and dragged the remains of the slain down into the dark, fresh monsters ready to take their place in the attack.

Jarl Varald Helsdawn, grim commander of the Eleventh Great Company, led the defence of the control bastion's spire, surrounded by his Terminator-armoured huscarls, joining battle wherever the press of the enemy was thickest. Despite this direct engagement, the seasoned commander also successfully maintained strategic control of the wider operation, coordinating the efforts of his Legion, mounting a shifting defensive line to prevent any of his packs from being cut off and overwhelmed, and sending aid to the beleaguered Skitarii by calling in reserves from orbit. He doubted not the skill of his warriors nor their fighting spirit even when faced with such odds, but was equally mindful that their losses had already been heavy. The strange hulking machine-creatures were easily a match for one of the Mechanicum's own Castellax battle-automata in strength, and just as resilient it seemed,

and already his warriors had resorted to trying to attack the joints of their limbs to disable them first rather than fruitlessly hurling shots into their dense body mass. Nor were the machine-creatures' tactics mindless; their attacks were well timed and focused, with the smaller chainblade-implanted creatures—his own warriors had quickly taken to calling them 'gutters' in vox reports—making swift flanking strikes when his packs were already engaged, as all the while the strange orbs hunted out his heavy weapons and targeted them relentlessly with their projectile attacks. In all this Helsdawn detected not simply a guiding tactical protocol, but rather a single overmastering intelligence. Their attackers were too coherent, too seamlessly integrated for anything else. He had already set both his own Iron Priests and the attendant Mechanicum adepts to finding him answers and swiftly as to the nature of this horde of monsters from the darkness beneath the world, for as his tally of the dead mounted, victory by brute force alone was by no means certain. The Mechanicum were swift and shrill in their conclusions; confirming the remains of the creatures that they had examined to indeed be Heretek Omega—perverse developments based on ancient human technology, the synthetic bio-plastic of their flesh a hideous mockery somewhere between organic life and the artificial purity of the machine, able to cancerously replicate and repair themselves in endlessly distorting patterns. Such travesties or things like them had been encountered before and long ago placed under a sanction of extermination by the Machine Cult. The Iron Priests for their part had already determined the continuous screaming to be some form of echo location by which the machine-creatures used both to sense their surroundings as well as co-ordinate their attacks, a fact even now being used to better track their movements.

Into the Darkness

While the battle still raged above him, Corym Skaarsol, one of Helsdawn's Speakers of the Dead, went one step further than his peers to meet his lord's demand for answers, and followed a cluster of the headless creatures down into the dark, using the signal data garnered from the Iron Priests to aid him in the confusion and outrange their screaming-sense. Stalking them as he would any other deadly prey, Skaarsol followed them to their lair. Down and down he followed the headless things until rough hewn stone corridors gave way first to a mighty cavern, broad enough to muster a Legion Great Company in, then beyond to soaring vaults of

dull gold ridged with the same pulsing bio-plastic that formed the flesh of the corpse-takers. Retreating quickly to the upper levels, Skaarsol made his discoveries known to his lord. Now Helsdawn had a target for his Legion's wrath. The bombardment cannon and beam lances of the Void Wyrms, high in orbit, were unleashed, shattering the canyon walls and blasting down to open up the caverns beneath Safehold, the city-dome and bastion spire shaking as if seized by an earthquake. As the hurricane of dust cleared, it revealed a portal into darkness. Into this abyss, Jarl Varald Helsdawn committed his last reserves from the ships waiting above. Assault rams led the way, with gunships and targeted drop pod strikes following on with such accuracy that it would have beggared the belief of any who thought the Legion composed of mindless berserkers. In the Space Wolves' wake, the *Axiom of Trinity* sent her own final offerings; sleek, shark-like landers whose spinal sarcophagi were filled with a cargo of piston-limbed Sicarian Ruststalkers—assassination engine cyborgs doctrine-encoded to kill without respite.

The Horrors Beneath

Into the darkness the wrathful warriors in Fenrisian grey and Martian red plunged, meeting murderous resistance from the outset, shedding blood for every metre they penetrated into the hidden depths of Ashkelon. At the forefront of the assault were the Sons of Ymir, the Great Company's score of Dreadnoughts. Unleashed into battle as one, they hammered and blasted a path for those who followed after, but soon even their armoured hulls were battered and scarred almost beyond recognition by the relentless attacks of the machine-things. Down the attack pressed into a lightless hell filled with hulking monstrosities and endless screams. Many fell, Space Wolves and Sicarian alike, but it was not until the great cavern before the strange vaults that they were stalled. Before them vast, near-formless horrors of ink-black bio-plastic and screeching hydraulics waited for them, each the size of Legion gunships. The screams of these machines of the pit were so violent that even the autosenses of the Legiones Astartes power armour were overwhelmed and hundreds of Space Wolves had their ear drums pulverised to bloody pulp as the monsters let forth their cries. Within moments the attack became a desperate holding action as the great shifting monsters crashed into the Space Wolves line, the metres-thick pulsing bio-plastic of their flesh seeming to simply swallow any shot or shell that struck them, and even the searing blasts

of lascannon did little more than burn open wounds that would reknit moment later. Huge hydraulically powered tendril-limbs smashed down, bursting ceramite power armour like eggshell and shattering even the Dreadnoughts of the Sons of Ymir as if they were toys. Still undaunted the Space Wolves fought on, roaring their spite and their fury at the twin horrors before them. The nimble Sicarians, human fear long since surgically removed from their brains, tried to swarm the nightmare mass of the colossal machine-creatures like ants, their transonic blades stabbing and slashing repeatedly, trying to find some vital linkage to sever or some vulnerability to strike but to no avail. It was then that Varald Helsdawn appeared with the bloodied remains of his Terminator Huscarls, and behind them came the packs of the Black Cull, their wolf-skull helmets sheened as with blood in the ruddy light cast as the Huscarls' heavy flamers bathed the closest giant in crimson fire. Helsdawn raised his frostblade aloft and howled the attack, slamming into the monstrous wall of shifting pseudo-flesh before him and hewing at it as a man might swing an axe into the tides of the sea. With him came the Black Cull, their great blades falling, rad grenades and stasis charges blazing with sickly flares of light as they were hurled point-blank into the hacked-open wounds within the monstrous mass. The first great machine-monster reeled back, its endless screaming twisted and discordant as it was torn apart from within by eldritch forces not even its strange flesh could endure. As the thing fell back, its tissues and machinery boiling apart into spitting ichor, a great cheer rose from the mass of the surviving Space Wolves and the attack was redoubled. Within minutes the second great horror met a fate just as the first, its death throes this time crushing dozens of its lesser kin massing behind it. Onwards the Space Wolves thundered into the high almost cathedral-like vaults of dull gold and pulsing inky false-flesh.

Here at last was discovered the fate of the dead of Ashkelon. Here they lay stacked neatly in red-weeping alcoves by the tens of thousands, in vault after vault with no rhyme or reason other than that they had been placed there carefully. The resistance the attackers met now was negligible and they rushed on, Space Wolves and the few still living Ruststalkers together, knowing due to vox reports that even now the strange monstrous regiments of the machine-things fighting elsewhere were falling back as one to defend this very chamber complex. It was as the Space Wolves breached a final central

chamber that the screaming that still echoed through the vaults contorted into a voice fashioned from those very cries. Speaking in the ancient languages of Mankind it demanded, it threatened, then it tried to reason with these killers in its lair, and finally it tried to beg. But the Space Wolves heeded it not.

There in the centre of the chamber surrounded by hundreds of linking tendrils of bio-plastic, hovered a midnight blue pulsating orb in which the shifting patterns of golden circuitry flicked like strange constellations. Though Helsdawn was no magos of the Omnissiah's faith he knew it at once for what it was, and what the delving technoarchaeologists had disturbed from its long slumber, a Silica Animus, the blasphemy of a true machine-mind.

Even as the Ruststalkers launched themselves forward, screeching their binarc death-cants, they burst into white flame as they struck the Silica Animus' defence field, Helsdawn hurled his frostblade, the axe spinning end over end as it burned through the arc-shield and buried itself in the pulsating mass of the Silica Animus' corporeal form. The arc-shield burned out in a blinding storm of actinic light and the thing's screams reached a hypersonic climax, and then there was silence. Elsewhere, in Safehold and on the landing grounds, the Imperium's forces watched on in shock as the machine-creatures, mere extensions of a single false life and inhuman will perished, just as the body of a serpent dies when the head is struck off.

The dead of Ashkelon had been avenged, and a nightmare of ages past had been destroyed. What motivations it may have had for its macabre assault remain unknown and unknowable, save that all such blasphemies of technology are ultimately madness-haunted things best never created. Ashkelon's fate was sealed, the nature of the threat had been identified and destroyed, but who knew what else lurked unknown beneath the dust-shrouded planet's surface? From orbit, the dread firepower of the Void Wyrms and the *Axiom of Trinity* levelled every standing structure and hammered the sub-surface vaults into collapse, crumbling even the walls of the kilometre-high canyons to rubble in their fury. Ashkelon was a forbidden and dead world to which humanity would never return.

VITH LEGION CONSUL

CONSUL-OPSEQUIARI BERCIM OVKUL
DISCIPLINARY CORPS, EIGHTH COMPANY
MOLORIAN REVOLT, 800.M30

Presented here is a rare example of a pict recording of a VIth Legion warrior almost twenty years prior to the return of Leman Russ. During the earliest years of the Great Crusade, the VIth embodied feral ferocity and aggression, but exhibited little of the control they later possessed. As a consequence, the Legion employed a far larger number of Disciplinary troops than almost any other Legion, barring perhaps only the XIIth. These Disciplinary Corps served to maintain order in the ranks, both during and away from battle, as well as curb any attempts to disregard or circumvent orders. The Consul-Opsequiari were selected from among the most stable of the veterans of the VIth and granted the power of life and death over their brothers, and were marked by the distinctive emblem of that oft-maligned Order, seen here on the right pauldron and abdominal buckle of Consul Bercim's armour.

The Molorian Revolt stands as a prime example of the need for such detachments. The world, only recently brought to Compliance, had declared an open rebellion against the Imperium's rule, and the Eighth Company of the Legion had been dispatched in response. What began as a surgical strike against the renegade government's palaces rapidly degenerated into a killing spree as the rebel forces counter-attacked. Spreading out across Molor's capital, the Space Marines began to slaughter all they encountered, to the extent that the preservation of the industrial capacity of the world was put at risk. It was only by the brutal efforts of the Discipline Corps that any of the Molorians within the city survived, though that survival was bought at the cost of a number of summary executions.



Early VIth Legion Markings: Terran Raptor indicating initial
Legion induction/Field Overseer Militant Authority

SPACE WOLVES LEGION TERMINATOR

TERMINATOR THEGN THORWAL KING'S-BANE
THORWAL KING'S-BANE'S WARBAND,
TWELFTH GREAT COMPANY
XANTRISS INSURRECTION, 999.M30

Tartaros pattern Terminator armour was the last iteration of the Tactical Dreadnought Armour project to reach mass production before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy proper. By the time of the Battle for Tizca, only a few hundred suits had been shipped to any of the Legions, with a large proportion of these being marked for the use of the Twelfth Great Company of the Space Wolves. The Twelfth was known for its bloody predilection for engaging in firefights at cut-throat range, having earned the epithet the 'Shield Gnawers' for its belligerence and impetuous assaults. This body of warriors was deemed ideal for the combat trials of the new armour, with the first such action occurring in the final year of the 30th Millennium. The fighting on Xantriss proved both the capabilities of the armour as well as the bloodthirsty nature of the Twelfth Great Company. Initially a disciplinary action targeting a battalion of rogue Imperial Army troops, it escalated into a full-scale purge conducted across the remote feral moon the battalion had claimed for its own, culminating with the execution of the Imperial Army colonel turned king. The battle, fought predominantly through the subterranean passageways of the inhospitable moon, established the Tartaros pattern's reputation for a high degree of manoeuvrability compared to previous patterns.

The high level of ornamentation on Thorwal's armour is typical of the Space Wolves command echelons, where the number and complexity of these patterns serves to identify both the skill and seniority of its members in place of more standard rank markings. Of note are the runic emblems along Thorwal's chestplate, which are intended to ward off ill-fortune and malefic powers, and the small heraldic rounds which display icons attesting to his specialisation in the various skills of warfare.



Tartaros Pattern Pauldrons with Legion Iconography

WOLVES OF IRON AND SKY

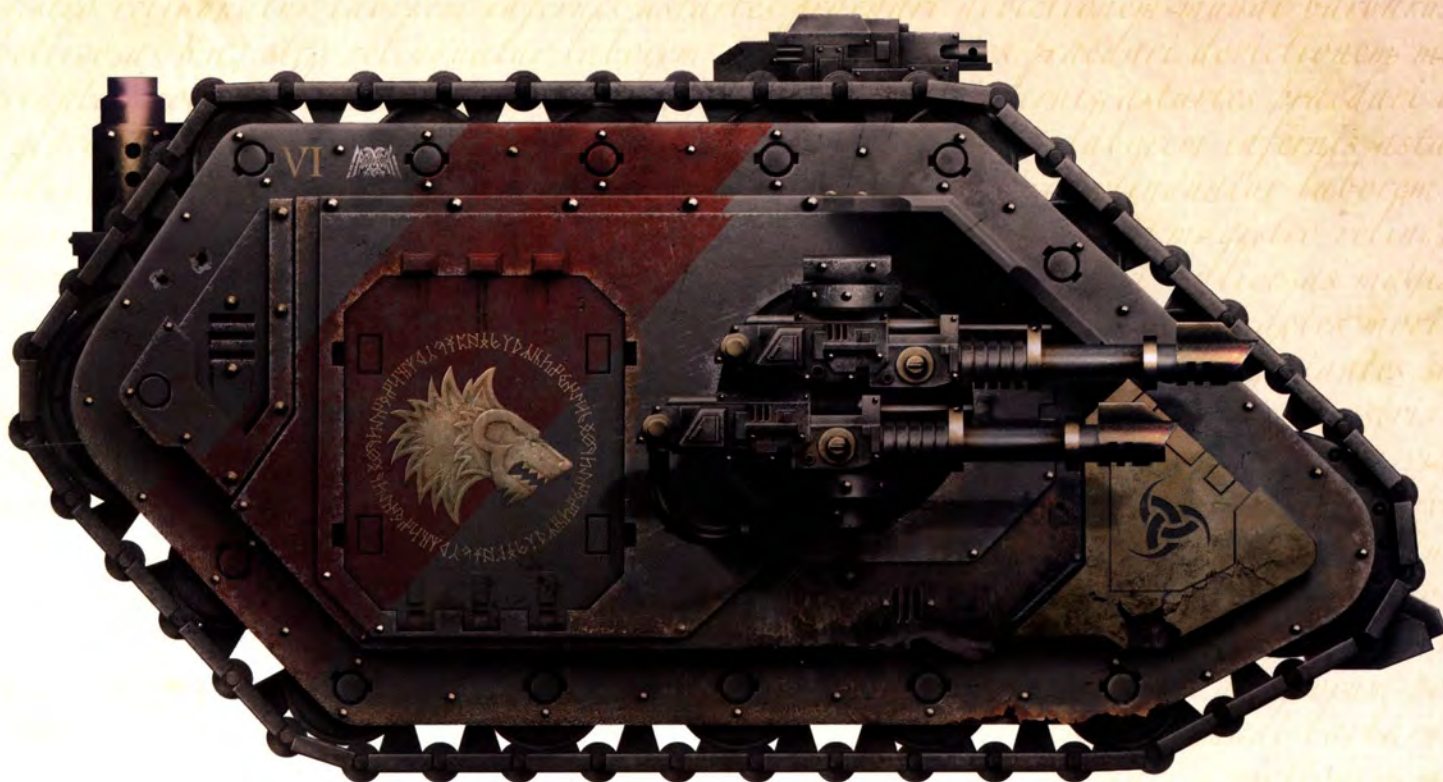
Such was the nature of the war on Prospero that many of the largest war engines of the Legion proved unsuitable for deployment during its initial stages. The tangled streets and difficulty of deploying them without access to a safe landing zone for the vast bulk landers such vehicles required forced the Space Wolves to rely on lesser war machines to support their assaults. This included the various main battle tanks small enough to be air lifted by Thunderhawk Transporters and Khonsu pattern Stormbird transports, including Vindicator tanks and Land Raiders of various patterns. These armoured, but still highly mobile vehicles cleared major roadways and crossroads of enemy fortifications, punching a hole through the Prosperine defences so the Legion could prosecute the close range assaults they favoured without facing the full weight of the enemy's firepower.

In addition to ground based armoured spearheads, the complete aerial superiority achieved by the Imperium's forces in the initial stages of the battle allowed them to utilise aircraft in continuous ground support of the advancing Space Wolves claws and war packs. Such missions fell mainly to Storm Eagle and Fire Raptor gunships, as these craft were both nimble enough to keep pace with the frantic advance of the Space Wolves lines and sturdy enough to brave the anti-aircraft fire of ground batteries and man-portable heavy weaponry. Any strongpoint that stymied the initial assaults or was bypassed by the advance felt the wrath of the airborne predators, whose relentless attacks swiftly reduced them to nothing but tattered ruins and ashes. The only limiting factor to the use of airborne assets during the assault on Tizca was the need to retreat to low orbit to rearm, forcing the Space Wolves to utilise rotating wings of ground attack craft in order to maintain pressure on the enemy.

This, combined with the sheer area which the craft had to cover, forced these wings to act as support for ground assaults rather than engaging in a policy of indiscriminate bombardment.

Within the Space Wolves, as with the majority of other Space Marine Legions, armoured and airborne assets were distributed at the chapter level, with each chapter—or Great Company in the VIth Legion—maintaining a pool of such vehicles to be assigned to combat detachments as required. For the assault on Tizca, the vast majority of these assets were deployed for combat in support of the VIth's main force. This relentless use of their firepower was essential in the rapid advance of the Space Wolves Legion's units and formed the core of Leman Russ' initial tactics for combating fellow Legionese Astartes warriors.





Land Raider Proteus 'Pawn of Ymgr': This is one of a number of Proteus Land Raiders used in the Tizca assault whose ancient augur arrays have long since been removed to allow these venerable vehicles to carry a full squad of Space Wolves. The Pawn of Ymgr was part of the main advance on the temple-arcologies, along with a mixed formation of some fifty Land Raiders drawn from various Great Companies, one of several whose hulls were scoured to burned and twisted metal by the Thousand Sons.



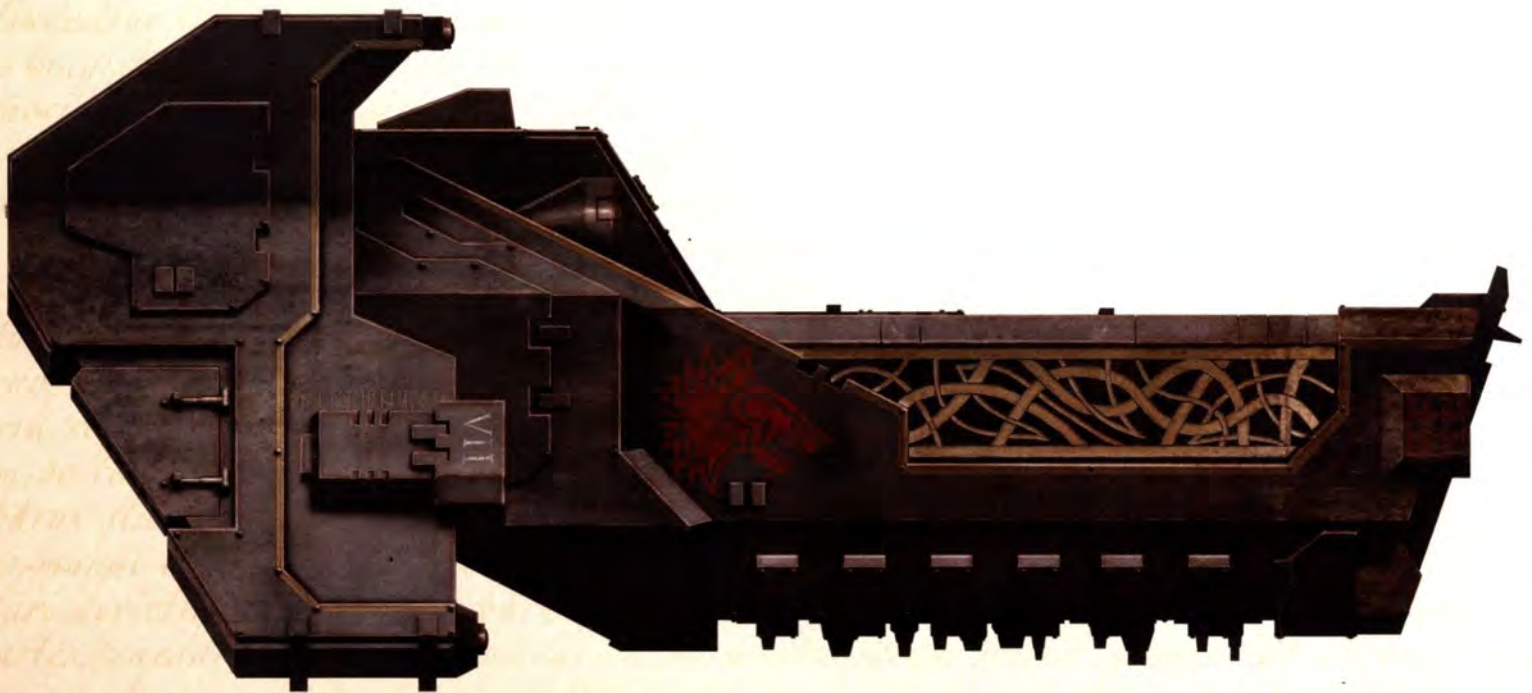
Storm Eagle 'The Red Storm of Fenris': Attached to the Second Great Company, this Storm Eagle saw action through almost the entire Battle of Tizca, making thirteen separate orbital transfers to rearm and repair. By the end of the fighting, the crew recorded an expenditure of some fifty-two Tempest rockets, seventeen lascannon macro-charge cells and eight combustion flasks. The vast majority of these munitions were expended in the reduction of various redoubts concealed within the baroque architecture of Tizca, often remaining undetected by ground forces until the defenders opened fire. The Red Storm of Fenris met its end making low altitude dive attacks with its melta cannon, having exhausted all other munitions.

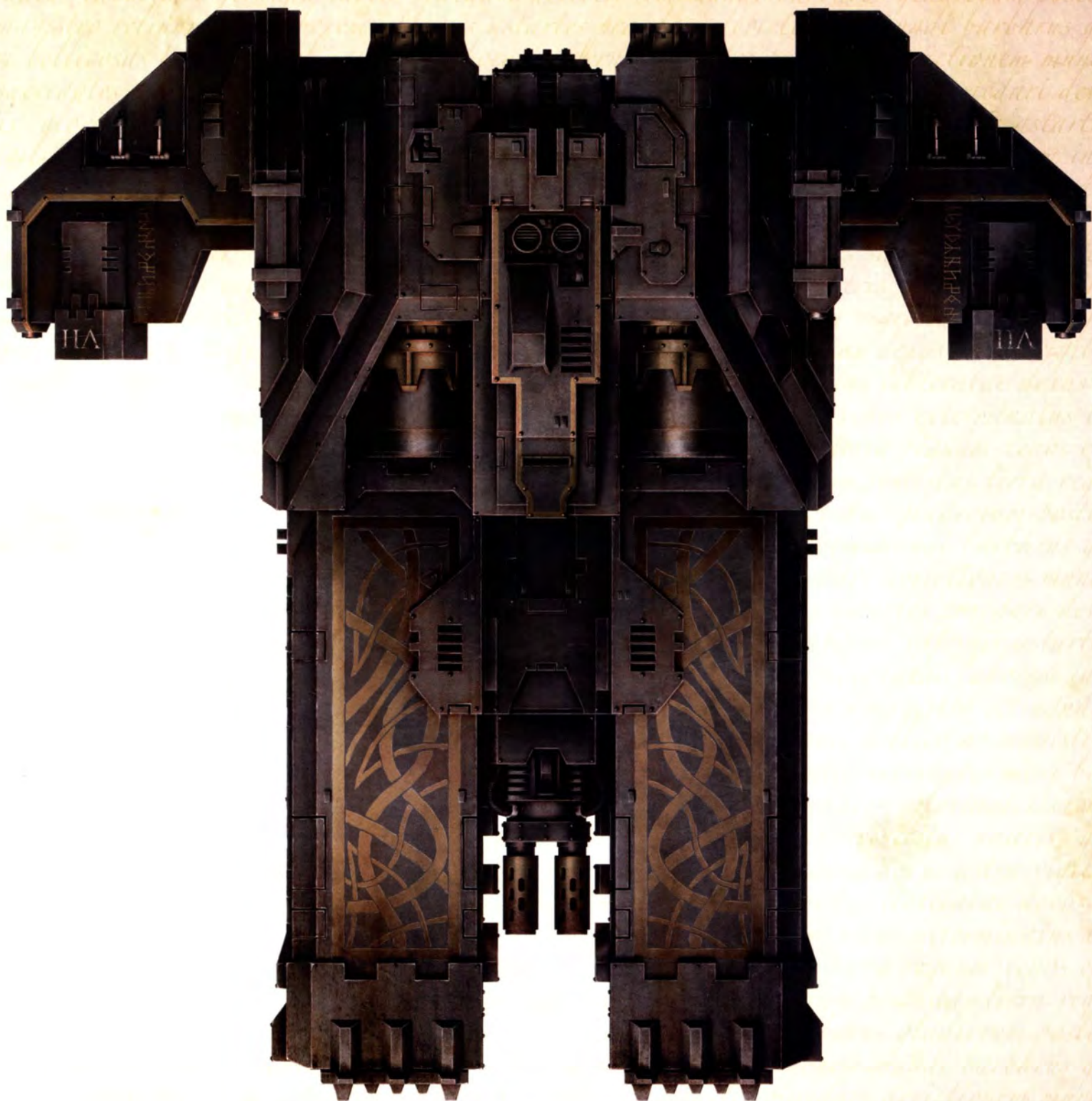
THE DEATH OF THE RAPTORA CULT

The temple-arcologies of Prospero's principal psyker Cults were among the primary objectives of any invasion of Tizca, for they served both as the headquarters for the various branches of the Thousand Sons hierarchy as well as the most fortified strongholds in that great city. Each of these structures encompassed training halls, barracks and armouries for a full Fellowship as well as housing and other facilities for several thousand thralls and dependents, all within a relatively small footprint due to the complex internal construction and layered sub-levels. With deeply sunk internal generators and extensive hydroponic facilities, they were also close to self-sufficient and in the event of a siege could likely last for years without outside aid, a fact the Censure Host's planners were well aware of. As such, each of these fortresses would need to be taken by storm as early as possible in order to avoid a protracted and costly siege.

However, on arrival at Prospero a more brutally direct strategy was made available, one dictated by an unexpected twist in the defence of the planet—the absence of the Thousand Sons fleet. Considered a significant threat to the Censure Host, the massed void craft of the Thousand Sons fleet had been another focus of contingency planning, with the fleet possessing a number of assets intended purely to combat it. Yet on arrival at Prospero, the fleet was not to be found and those assets sat unused, including several squadrons of fully equipped Caestus Assault Rams. These craft, designed to pierce the armoured hulls of void craft and disgorge Legiones Astartes warriors into their vulnerable interiors, were ill-suited to atmospheric operations or ground attack roles, and had originally been disregarded by the distant strategists of Terra in such actions. Yet, in the immediacy of the battle for Prospero, the Space Wolves showed little hesitancy in co-opting the unused craft for a new mission: the assault on the temple-arcologies.

In total, over fifty Caestus Assault Rams were deployed in three squadrons, targeting those temple-arcologies in the direct path of the Censure Host, those of the Athanaen, Raptora and Corvidae Cults. Of these assaults the most dramatic was that made upon the Raptora Cult, for the razor edge of the 'kine' shields that protected its armoured flanks tore apart almost all of the aircraft assigned to the attack, releasing a shower of grey-armoured corpses upon the battlefield below. Only two of the craft survived to impact the upper levels of the temple-arcology, releasing over a dozen of the Black Cull into the structure. Their numbers insufficient to affect a full assault, the warriors of that dour cult separated into smaller teams and attempted to fight their way to the more vulnerable systems of the arcology, intending to set off the phosphex charges they carried. Of their exact fate little is known for none survived the assault, but during the ferocious fighting at the foot of the arcology, three separate internal explosions that served to debilitate the structure's defences were recorded by those fighting outside.





Caestus Assault Ram, 'Corpse-swan' (Trans/Fenrisian/approx.): The only Caestus of the assault squadron sent against the Raptora to survive the battle, this was one of two to finally penetrate the screen of 'kine' shields that protected the temple-arcology, breaking the armoured hide of the vast structure in a dive at maximum velocity. This initial assault left the craft pinned in the jagged wound it had created, trapped by the broken spars of the arcology's superstructure, and the crew abandoned the assault ram to join the attack on the temple. After the battle it was recovered and returned to service with honour.

THE SKYFALLEN FORTRESS

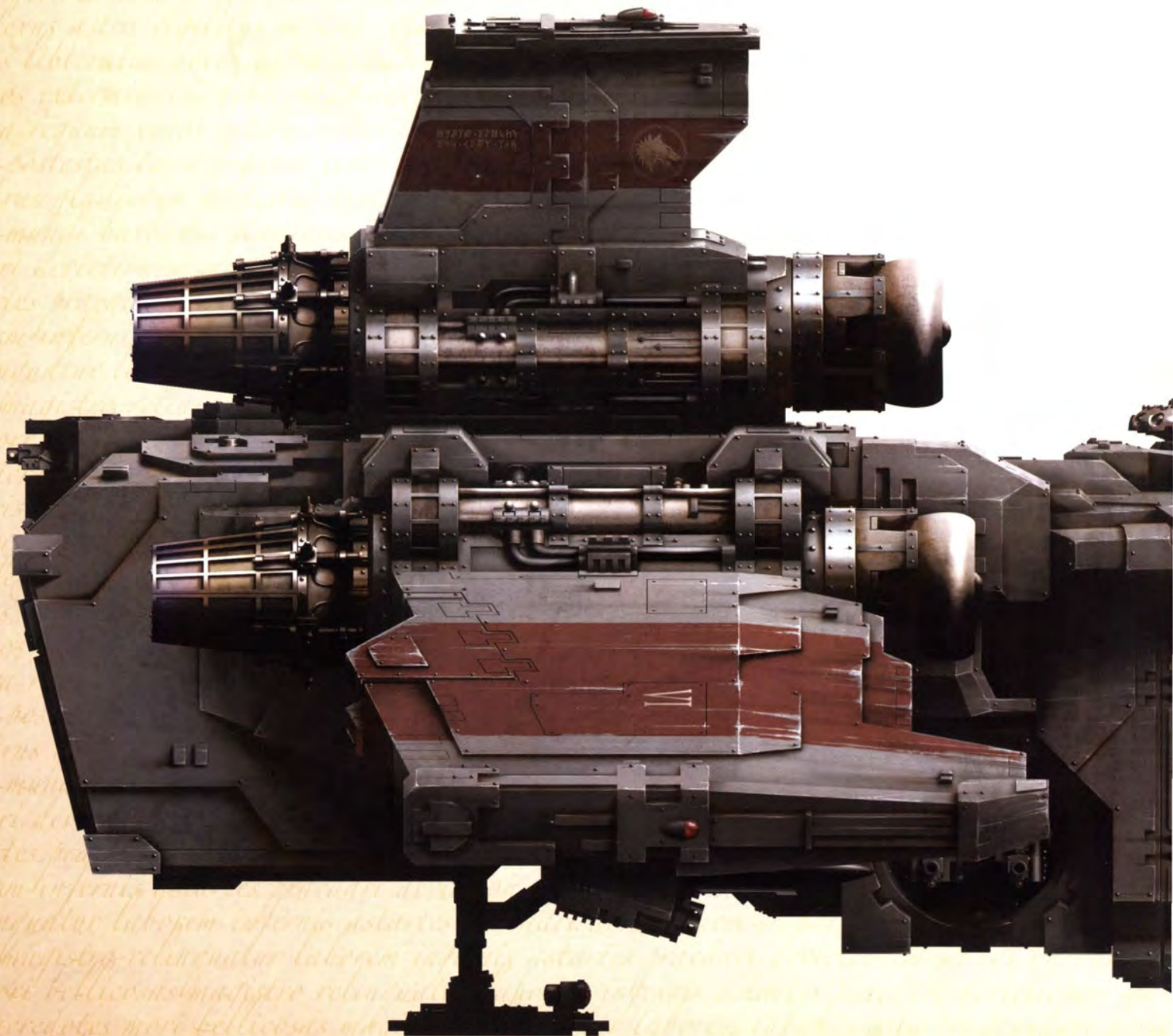
The first and most vital step in the invasion of Tizca was the creation and defence of a secure beachhead. The Space Wolves lacked the IVth Legion's expertise with the orbital dropping of pre-fabricated fortifications and they were forced to turn to other means of securing such a beachhead. The Wolf King chose the most direct approach and embarked the majority of the first wave upon the various orbital transports available in the fleet. This wave of Stormbirds and transports included over 300 smaller Sokar class Stormbirds, nearly 100 of the vehicles

bearing Khonsu class Stormbirds and nearly 30 of the monstrous Apophis class Stormbirds, whose ominous appearance and vast wingspan had earned them the popular title of 'Sunkillers'.

The fleet of Stormbirds performed a complex landing operation, forming up in a helix pattern along the outskirts of Tizca's ancient surface port, with the largest craft at the centre. Such an assemblage covered a vast area, visible from orbit as a jagged field of grey that stretched from the port's outskirts

along the foothills of the White Mountains to the warehouses that lined the border of the Palatinate Mansions gardens. Once on the ground, the void arrays of the assembled ships formed a shimmering, overlapping barrier centred on the gathered Apophis class Stormbirds and reaching almost half a mile in height.

This combined energy screen was of such potency that along its huge perimeter numerous buildings were damaged by arcing power flares or short lived electrical storms



and dust cyclones, while any light artillery directed at it by the Prosperine Guard was repelled as if it were no more than errant rain. Under this protective envelope of energy, the Space Wolves disembarked from their transports at little threat from enemy fire. The majority of their number was to immediately embark on offensive operations while a small number stayed within the cordon to act as a security force in case of an enemy counter-attack. As the battle for Tizca progressed, the area around the port, dubbed by the orbiting tacticians as the 'Skyfallen Fortress', acted as a secure rally point for the Imperium's troops, as well as an ammunition and supply depot and grand field hospital. Without its presence, it is likely that the conquest of Tizca would have reaped a far higher toll in lives from the attackers.



Sokar Class Stormbird, 'Ever-hungry Hawk of Aelle': Identified by the runic inscription upon its tail, this is one of the Stormbirds deployed by the VIth Legion during landing operations in Tizca. Unlike many of the combat vehicles employed by the Space Wolves, this Stormbird shows remarkably little in the way of decoration, bearing only a few simple crimson stripes. Indeed, it was not uncommon for the Space Wolves to display a distinct dislike of airborne transports, far preferring to keep their feet upon the ground, save in the most dire of circumstances. Their dislike even extended to the names they bestowed upon them, the title of this particular vehicle being a reference to the ill-favoured vulture analogues of Fenris.





THE SERVANTS OF THE WARMASTER

Though their involvement now largely fails to figure in most official records pertaining to the destruction of Prospero, the Censure Host included in its ranks a discreet body of forces which can be described accurately as the Warmaster's servants. Awaiting the Censure Host's muster at Beta-Garmon under Horus' directive was a contingent containing elements of the Sons of Horus Legion, a detached force of the Legio Mortis Titan Legion, a number of Knights drawn from the Household of Malinax, along with their support units, and several regiments of the Imperialis Auxilia. This contingent was arranged under the guise of assistance, but also in retrospect was clearly there less to ensure that Horus' word was followed as some have taken it—a nonsense given that little could have prevailed upon Russ or Valdor to act against their own will—but to act to certain and hidden purposes of the Warmaster's own, to be conducted in the shadow of the conflict that was to follow. In part these roles no doubt included observation; though hindsight may predispose us to interpret past events to fit more perfectly the future that was to follow them, it is true that the Burning of Prospero would be the first time that the Space Marines of the Legiones Astartes would fight each other Legion-to-Legion in open combat. This in itself was an event of momentous importance, and as the future would prove, with Horus already planning his rebellion, any data and wisdom which could be gleaned from such a clash of arms might have proven vital for the civil war which was to come, far beyond any theoretical simulations of inter-Astartes conflict.

The Sons of Horus

The XVIth Legion contingent comprised a single reinforced battalion of approximately 5,000 Legiones Astartes under the command of a line captain (designated force overseer) named Boros Kurn. This element seems from surviving evidence to have been equipped as a standard line-of-battle unit, but its ulterior motive appears to have also been the

abduction of prisoners in the shadow of the main attack. Both they and the several sub-units of the Imperialis Auxilia that had been assigned to them as direct sub-commands were kept from the main battleline as much by their own reluctance to get between the Space Wolves and their quarry as by the will of Leman Russ to do what needed to be done by dint of his own forces.

The Legio Mortis

Those of the Legio Mortis assigned to the Censure Host comprised two full maniples and one demi-maniple of the Legio, with some twelve Titans of various classes, along with their Secutarii support elements. This force alone was more than enough to destroy an enemy city and had proven itself capable of doing so in many campaigns previously, while their commander, Princeps Senioris Maldis Drane, was an experienced and highly decorated officer. It is notable that of all of the Titan Legions the Legio Mortis, as well as being one of the largest and regarded as something of an extension of the Fabricator-General of Mars' will, had also long been in close service of Horus and his Legion since the earliest stages of the Great Crusade. It is notable that though Leman Russ allowed them to be part of the host, the Wolf King was adamant that they take no part in the landing or any battle that followed—to him the Emperor's orders were for the Legiones Astartes to carry out upon their brothers, and the impersonal goliaths of the Legio Titanicus had no right of involvement in that judgement. As the fates would have it, the Legio Mortis contingent would be almost wiped out against a foe they may have been there to confront all along in the shadow of the Censure: the forces of the Zhao-Arkhad Mechanicum sub-fane far beyond the precincts of the city of Tizca.

House Malinax

The inclusion of House Malinax in the Sons of Horus contingent is in retrospect a strange one, and may have come about more of simple expediency than deliberate assignment. The powerful Mechanicum-bound House owed its fealty to the distant and notoriously independent Forge World of Xana, and had no great standing loyalty to Horus or any other party in the battle that was to follow. Malinax however did have an entirely deserved reputation as a particularly callous and ruthless Knight House, even in the company of others bound closely to the retinues of the Forge Worlds, and Horus likely had little doubt they would follow whatever orders they were given.

The division of House Malinax assigned to the Censure Host was in fact by happenstance at the end of a re-supply and re-armament cycle on Beta-Garmon when the Host was commanded to muster, and it was a simple enough matter to alter its orders and have it requisitioned to service. The force itself comprised some eighteen Knight armours, as well as a small attached support force of battle-automata and Vultarax Stratos-automata, along with their auxiliaries. Like the Legio Mortis, they were deliberately kept from the frontlines of the incursion by Leman Russ, and equally kept from the Legio Mortis' initial landings against the Zhao-Arkhad fane, likely through pride on Maldis Drane's part, and perhaps to avoid prying eyes. The Malinax force then was not unleashed until the very end of the Razing of Prospero; a last reserve descending in support of the scouring operations and the destruction of the last knots of Thousand Sons and Zhao-Arkhadine resistance on the surface, where they lived up to their methodical and merciless reputation.



SONS OF HORUS LEGIONARY

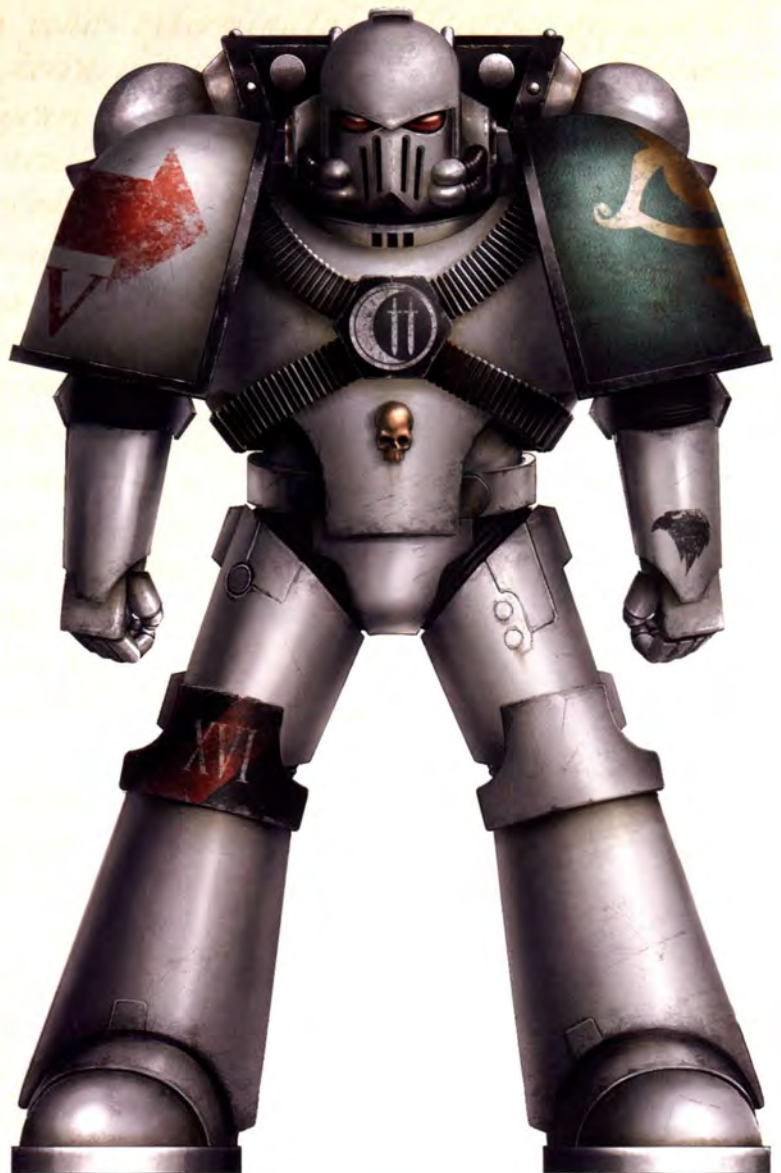
LEGIONARY REM DANIM

4TH COMPANY, 16TH INDEPENDENT BATTALION

THE SCOURING OF OLD TIZCA

This pict-capture, created during the muster of Leman Russ' forces prior to their arrival at Prospero, shows one of the several thousand Sons of Horus Legionaries assigned to the host. As with much of that Legion, the 16th Independent Battalion was still in the process of reconfiguring its component units to the newly established sea-green heraldry, with many Legionaries displaying a piecemeal appearance. Indeed, much of the Legion was in a state of flux, with many new doctrinal reforms introduced to the officer cadres and line warriors of the Sons of Horus, including a push in recruitment for the various Warrior Lodges. Based on reassignments in the aftermath of the invasion, and later events in the Isttvan System, it would appear that the Sons of Horus deliberately used the campaign to identify those among them unprepared for the coming changes.

Legionary Rem was among a number of the 16th recorded as a combat casualty; though the actual number of combat encounters that involved the 16th Independent Battalion was relatively low, they incurred an anomalously high casualty rate. Legionary Rem and his unit are recorded as killed in action in the vicinity of Old Tizca during the final hours of the fighting—an area previously cleared of hostiles. It has been suggested by some scholars that such records indicate incidents of friendly fire during the confused stages of the so-called Impossible Battle, or even a deliberate purge undertaken by the Sons of Horus Legion.



Older style Tactical Markings for the 4th Company, dating to the Luna Wolves period.



Recently introduced Sons of Horus Legion markings, often the only altered element on units yet to comply with new doctrine.

SONS OF HORUS LEGIONARY

CHIEFTAIN OCRAM ADRAAN,
'THE BUTCHER OF THE ICOSIAN DISTRICTS'
4TH COMPANY, 16TH INDEPENDENT BATTALION
THE SCOURING OF OLD TIZCA

Adraan was commander of the 4th Company of the Sons of Horus Legion's 16th Independent Battalion, a unit assigned to clear the Icosian Districts of Old Tizca of civilians. Ostensibly, the Sons of Horus classified their operations in Old Tizca under the category of 'Enemy Populace Reduction', a term used during the Great Crusade to identify the massacre of non-Compliant or genetically deviant civilian populations. 'Chieftain' Adraan, in fact a veteran sergeant by formal rank, himself adopted the informal title 'Butcher of the Icosian Districts' in honour of the award, and rumours persisted of his crucifying captured Prosperine natives along principal thoroughfares in the manner of a Cthonian famine-purge of his world of origin.

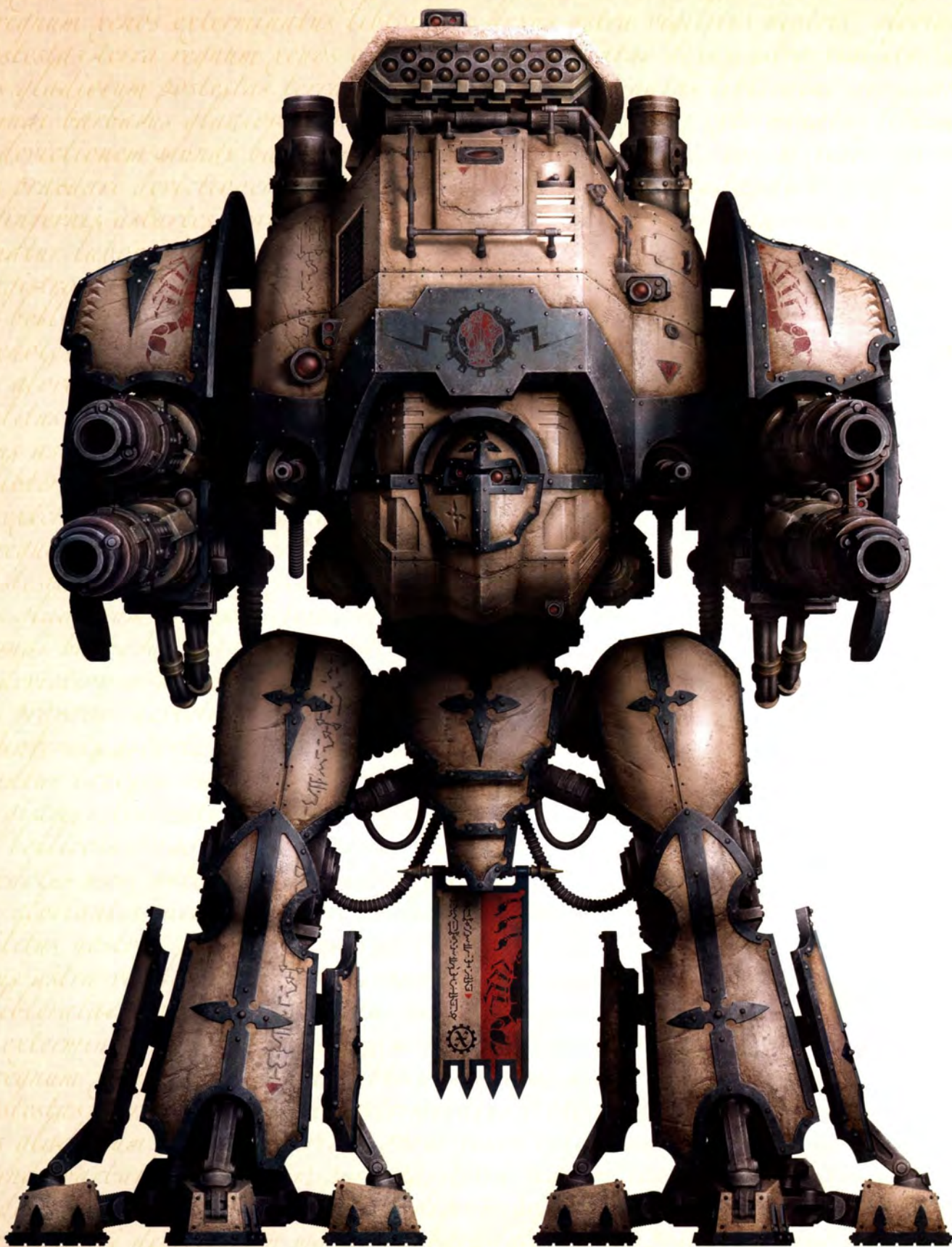
However, tallies of the known population of the Icosian Districts and the kill-counts of the 4th Company do not match a discrepancy that on its own is unremarkable considering the chaos of that engagement. It is not the sole evidence of some subterfuge on the part of the Sons of Horus as there exist a number of other anomalies in their records, most notably in the manifests of their dropships. These show a marked increase in the tonnage and consumption of supplies in the Sons of Horus dropcraft on the return journey from Prospero. The most logical assumption is that the Sons of Horus took a number of civilians from the surface of Prospero, a theory now almost impossible to prove. However, later evidence of the Sons of Horus' deployment of large numbers of rogue psykers during the Heresy would seem to provide some credence to the theory.



Displayed here is the Command Emblem for the 16th Independent Battalion.



Black on gold insignia were in widespread use among the officer corps of the 16th.

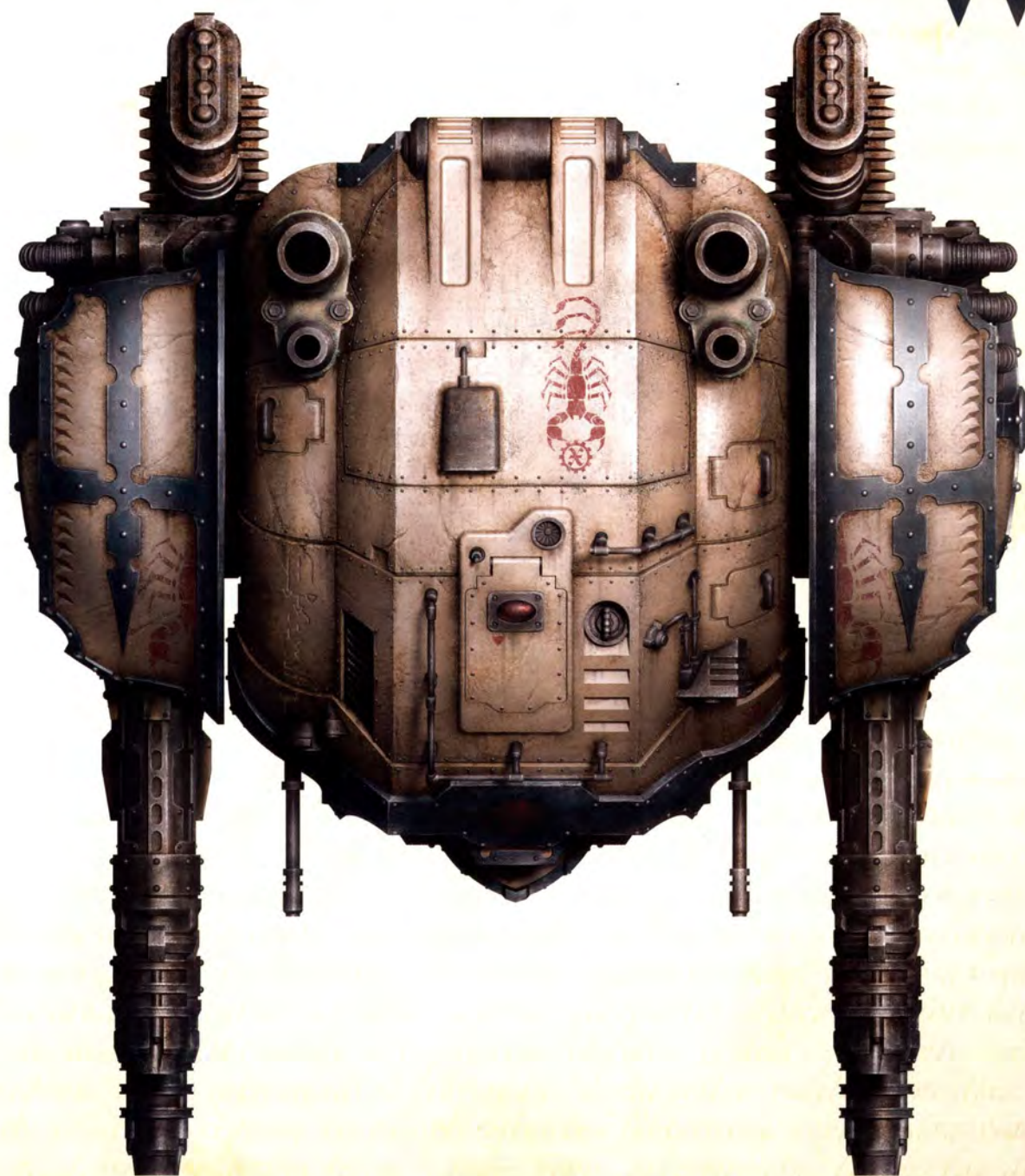


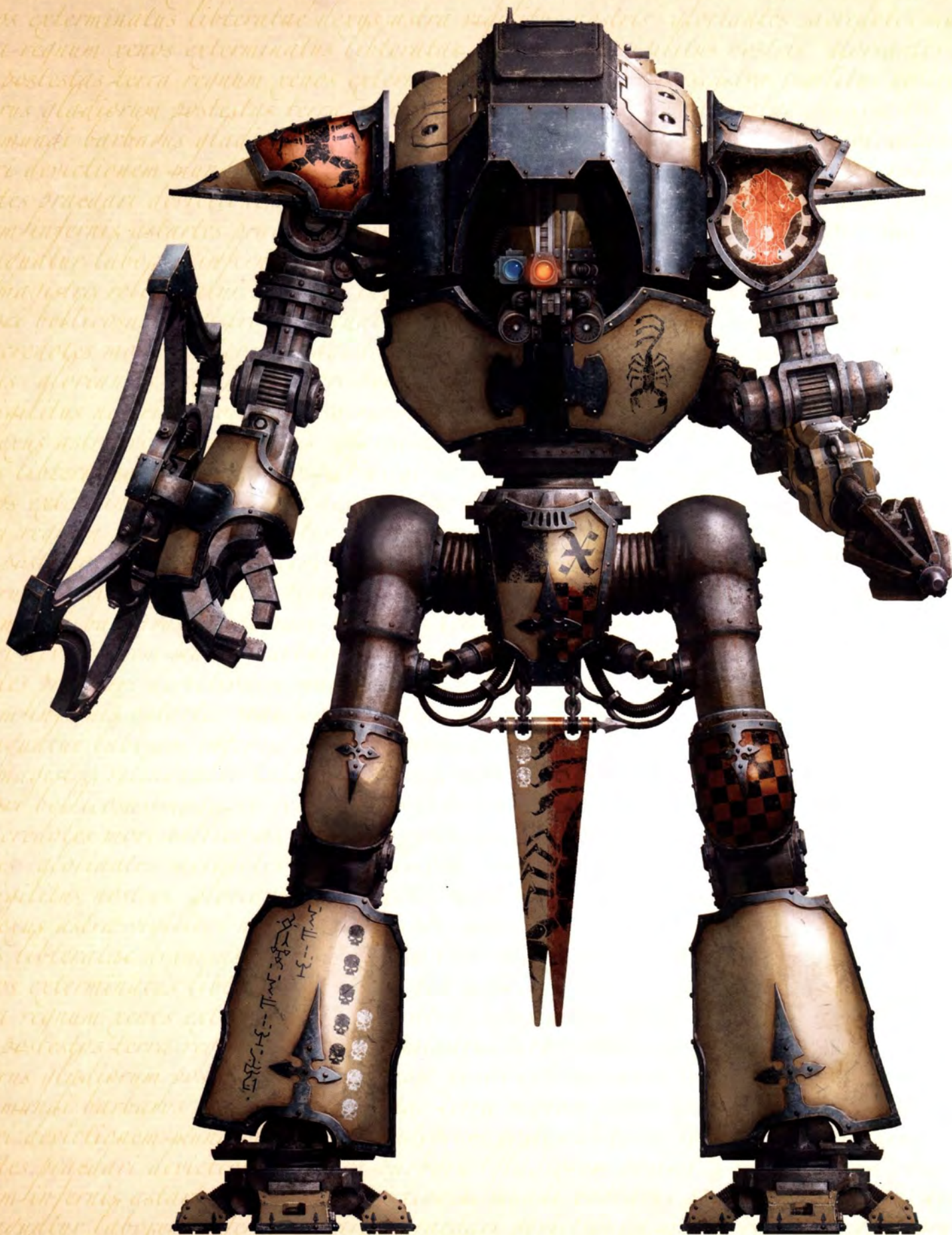
Acastus Knight Porphyron – 'Xotlatlic': One of two of this rare class present among the ranks of the House Malinax contingent set down in the wastes outside of Tizca. Though mighty war machines, they were quickly overmatched by the tainted Titans of the Xestobiox.

HOUSE MALINAX ACASTUS KNIGHT PORPHYRION

The Knight armour *Xotlatlic* is one of the newest armours to be fielded by House Malinax, having been presented to the lords of the House as part of the arrangement that brought them under the aegis of the Forge World of Xana. The icon of the Malinax clan, the three-tailed scorpion clutching the symbol of Xana, is a traditional symbol of the relationship between the bonded house and patron forge, and its prominent placement on such a grand engine of destruction, one of the largest in use by modern Knight Houses, is a clear message to the other Scions of the House. Similarly, the banner displayed by *Xotlatlic* includes a short passage from the formal Sidonian Protocols, the ancient code by which Knight Houses are bound to Forge Worlds. Written in a Cthonic script from the isolated world of Xana, it can be transliterated roughly as 'In Service to the Forge We Prosper'.

The Knight armour *Xotlatlic* is noted as being under the control of the Scion Machtectlan, a member of one of that exotic House's pre-eminent bloodlines and one of the leaders of the operations undertaken by House Malinax against the Legio Xestobiox on Prospero. Machtectlan is credited with one of the few telling wounds inflicted on a Xestobiox Titan, capitalising on the heavy firepower of *Xotlatlic* to breach the Titan's exposed armour.



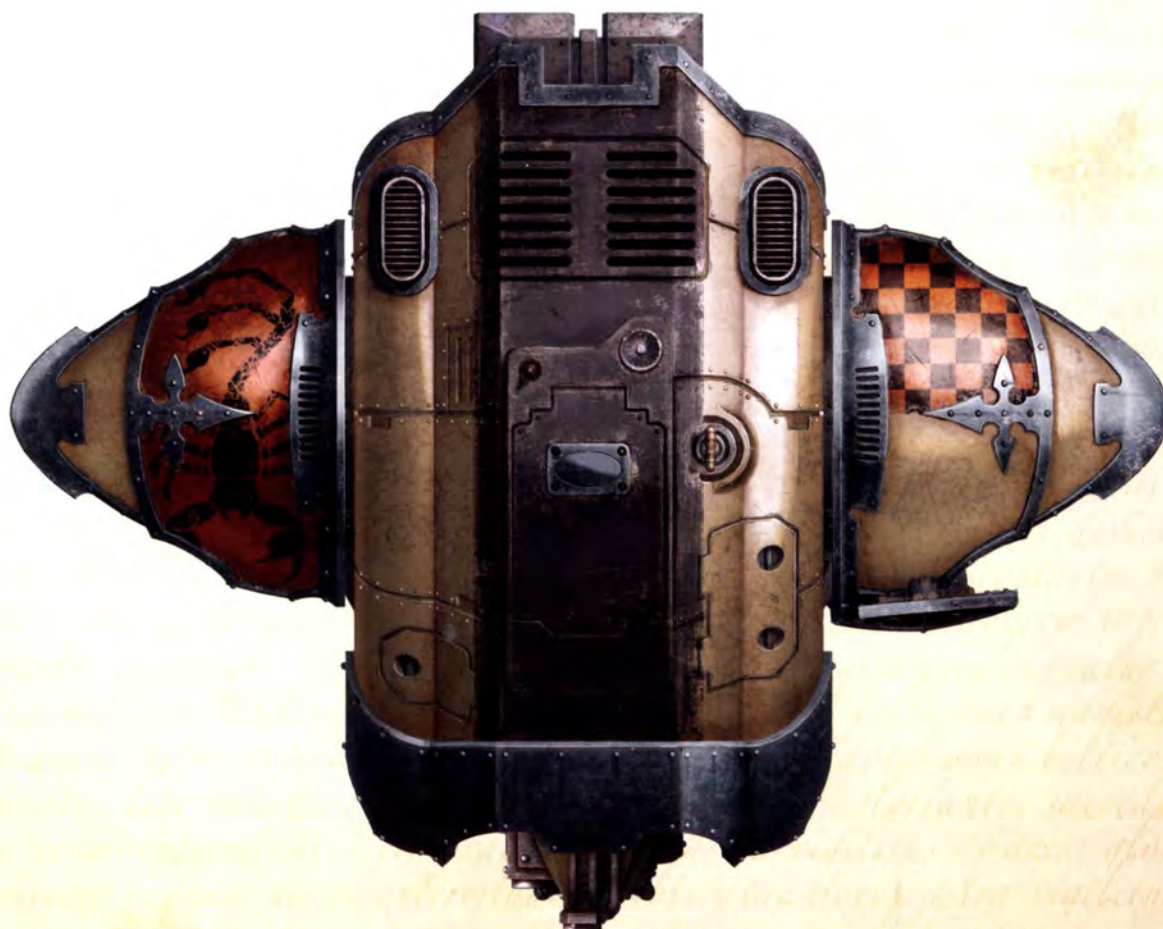


Cerastus Knight-Lancer – 'Itzilnan': Recorded as part of the contingent added to the Censure Host on Horus' orders at Beta-Garmon, later committed to battle against the Titans of the Legio Xestobiox.

HOUSE MALINAX CERASTUS KNIGHT-LANCER

The House Malinax detachment deployed to the surface of Prospero during the later stages of the battle consisted of some of the oldest Knight armours available to the warriors of the Imperium, mostly Cerastus, Achaeus and even the towering Acastus patterns. Pictured here is a particularly ancient example of a Cerastus Knight-lancer armour, which predates the House's incorporation with the Forge World of Xana. Of particular note is the relative lack of Mechanicum insignia and the prominent placement of the triple-tailed scorpion, the traditional insignia of House Malinax. Indeed, the only emblem of the Forge to which the House is pledged is the Taghma icon on the heraldic shield attached to the armour's right pauldron. Such idiosyncrasies are likely due to the fact that the Scions of House Malinax had spent the majority of the previous century as part of the ever-moving Great Crusade forces and many had never even seen the distant world of Xana, a far from uncommon predicament of that age. Many of the troops attached to Great Crusade forces were first and foremost loyal to their individual fleets, then to the distant authorities of the Imperium and then to whichever dull star they once called home.

The armour Itzilnan and its Scion showed little aversion to engaging other soldiers of the Imperium in combat, and is one of a number of Malinax Knights known to have participated in the massacre of the Spireguard remnants at the Airguard Headquarters. Itzilnan is credited with nearly 100 infantry kills in this single engagement, though the accounts of that action paint it as more akin to an execution than a battle. Indeed, it is tales of this and other actions undertaken by the Malinax Scions during the fighting on Prospero that established the bloodthirsty and sinister reputation of these warriors within the ranks of the Imperial Army.





LEGIO MORTIS CONTINGENT

The evidence of Legio Mortis being present as part of the Censure Host sent to Prospero has largely been lost to history. This is not only as their involvement was tangential to the Battle of Tizca, but also because the vaunted Legio Mortis suffered a bitter defeat at the hands of a brother Titan Legion considered by Mars to be a degraded imitation of the Omnissiah's ideal. That the defeat of the Legio Mortis force was only prevented from becoming out-right obliteration by the intervention of the shadowed Ordo Sinister was enough to pull a final shroud of secrecy over the debacle.

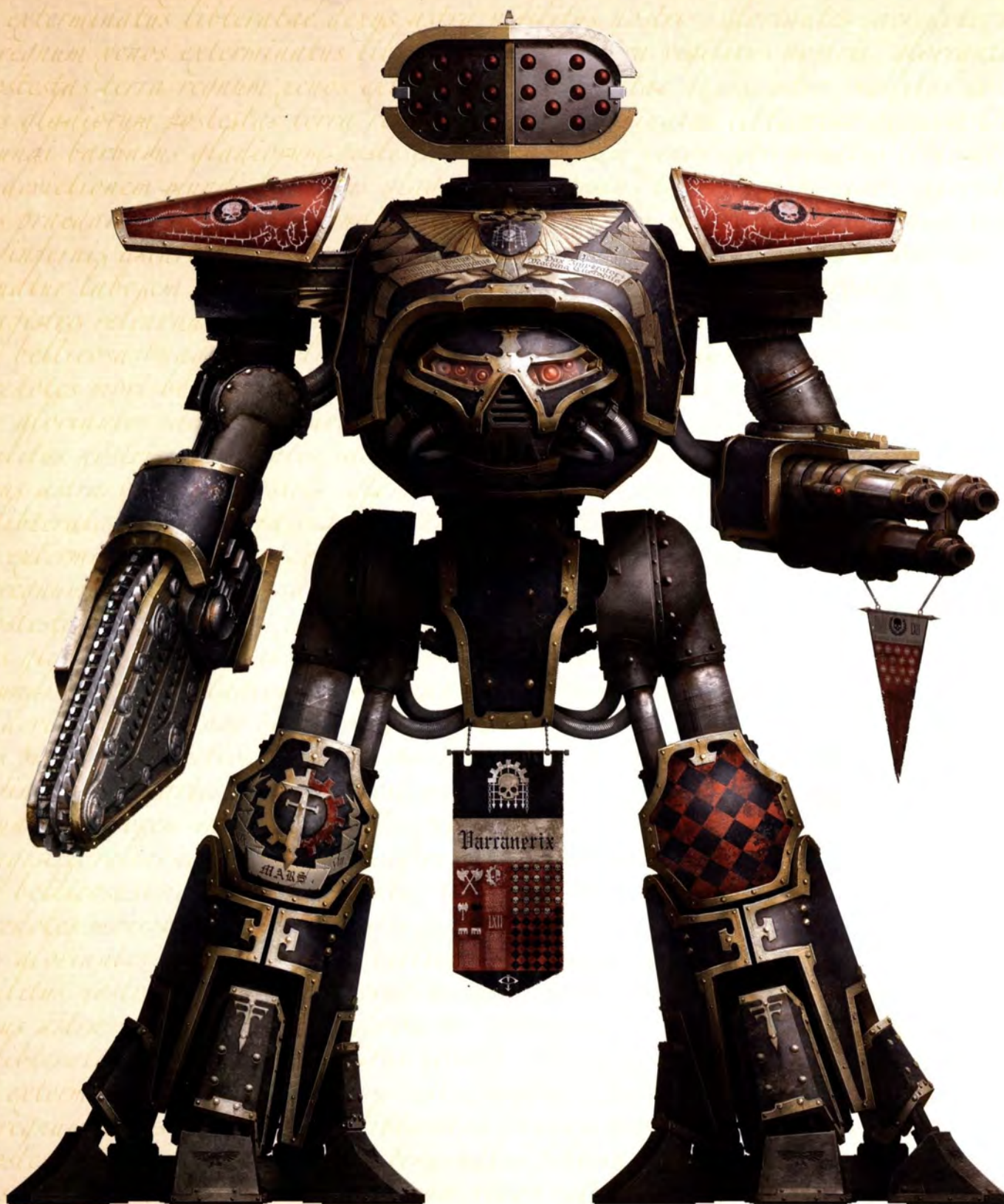
LEGIO MORTIS WARLORD BATTLE TITAN –

CADAVARIS PERDITA

Command Titan of the Legio Mortis detachment sent by the Warmaster alongside the Censure Host and god-machine of Princes Senioris Maldi Drane, the Warlord *Cadavaris Perdita* was a storied veteran of the Great Crusade, having fought for years alongside the Sons of Horus Legion and the 63rd Expeditionary Fleet. The Titan's proud martial history is evidenced across its intricate heraldry, as is its rank as the lead element of its Titan Maniple and the incorporation of the symbol of the Eye of Horus beneath the Skull and Portcullis motif of its Legio.

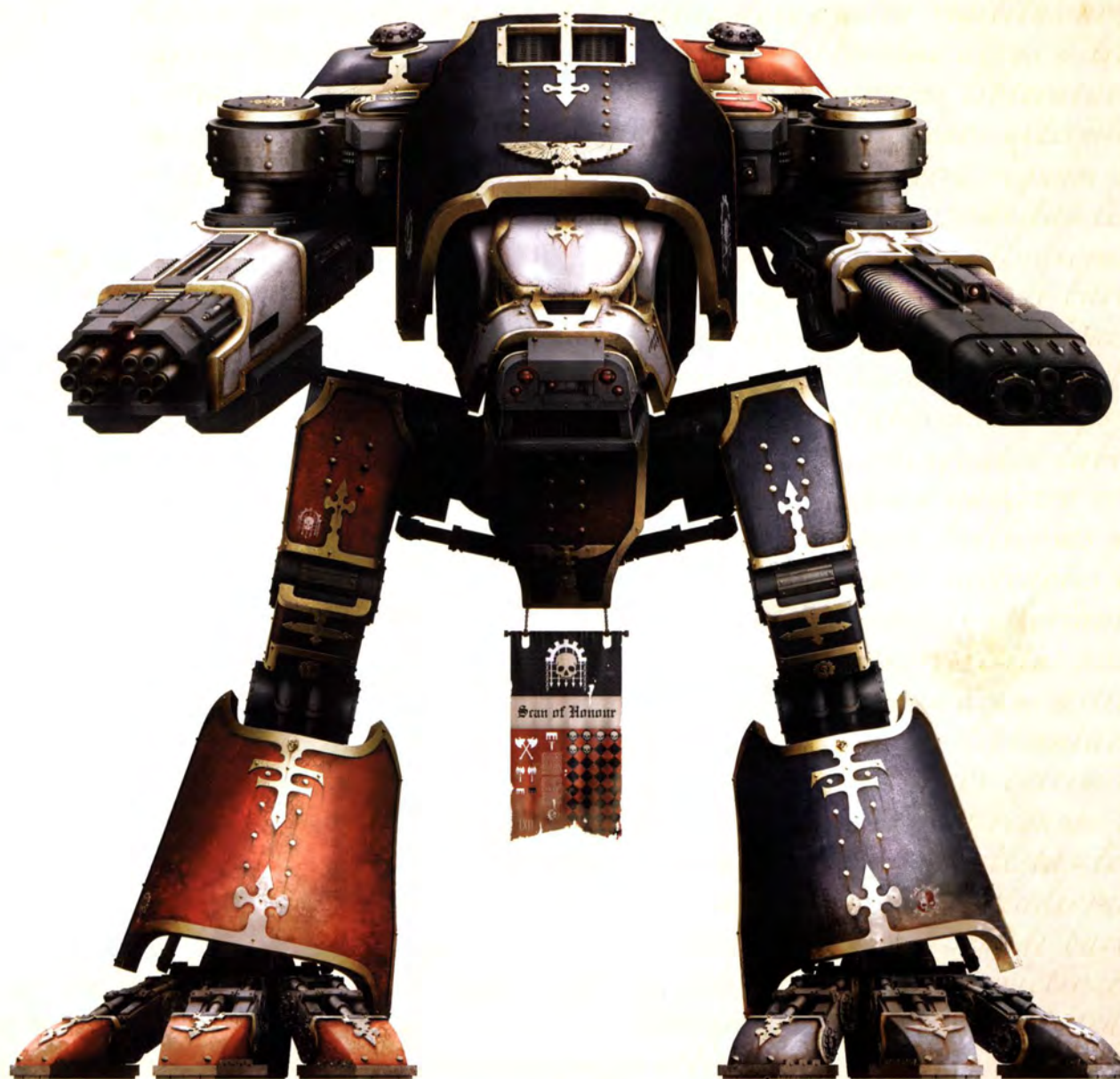
It is clear that Drane was one of Horus' favoured, quite beyond his loyalty to Mars, and this no doubt was one of the reasons the Warmaster had contrived to have the forces at the Princes' command attached to the Censure Host under the Warmaster's own authority. The attack on the Zhao-Arkhad sub-forged was to be Maldi Drane's last battle however, as he was slain when his Titan was decapitated by the Legio Xestobian Reaver *Sleepless Watcher*. The carcass of the venerable Warlord was however recovered and re-commissioned by the Legio Mortis, but ever afterwards retained the shame of its defeat and was considered something of a pariah among the Death's Heads.





LEGIO MORTIS REAVER PATTERN BATTLE TITAN – VARCARNEX

The Varcarnex was a truly ancient war engine, whose armoured core, although rebuilt and repaired many times, dated back to the ancient wars of Mars during the Age of Strife. Though badly damaged and forced into retreat early in the battle against the unleashed Taghmata of the Arkhadine sub-forged, having borne the brunt of the enemy battle-automatas' and Krios tanks' barrage, it was this very withdrawal that enabled its survival. As a result, it did not face the fury of the Legio Xestobian, nor suffer from the arrogance of the Legio Mortis' attack pattern against them.



LEGIO MORTIS WARHOUND PATTERN SCOUT TITAN – SCAR OF HONOUR

One of the few Scout class Titans attached to the Legio Mortis detachment, the *Scar of Honour* was a relatively recent creation of the Martian forges, its livery as yet unadorned by heraldic victory markings. Rather than deploy his Warhounds as a skirmish line to probe the defences of his foe when approaching the surface ruins of the Zhao-Arkhad sub-fane, Princeps Senioris Drane, in command of the Legio Mortis planetfall, instead deployed them as outriders out on the extreme flanks of their approach, expecting them to hunt down the fleeing remnants of a broken foe. As a result, the Warhounds were the last to engage the Xestobix and the last to be destroyed.



THE LEGIO CUSTODES

Title (Formal/Base): The Legio Custodes
Magna Imperator

Banner Imperialis: Chamber Militant of
the Imperial Household

Magisterium: Lex Ultima (authority
within accorded duty incontestable except
by the direct and expressed word of the
Master of Mankind).

Cognomen (Informal): The Custodian
Guard, The Ten Thousand, Auric Mortalis
(‘The Golden Death’)

Domains (Legal Remit): Wherever the
shadow of the Emperor falls.

Domains (Vassalage): The Tower of
Hegemon (sovereign sub-fortification;
Imperial Palace). Various fortresses, vassals,
chattel, void craft, ministries and claims
unknown to any but themselves upon the
Throne World of Mankind, throughout
the Sol System and beyond.

‘Only in Death does Duty End.’

First Maxim of the Legio Custodes

‘No Vigil is Absolute save that of the gods.’

Attrib to the Satarix Uvenl

The Legio Custodes are the bodyguards and sworn protectors of the Emperor and His chosen emissaries, and should the need arise, His most deadly executioners. Genetically engineered warriors of unswerving loyalty and unshakable purpose, their might and skill-at-arms is greater even than the Space Marines of the Legiones Astartes, while their weapons and wargear are uniquely potent, representing the apex of the Imperium's technology. Their history is a long one, and for centuries they have walked in the Emperor's shadow as His praetorians and the protectors of His secrets.

THE FIRSTBORN

The Legio Custodes are by many accounts the Emperor's true firstborn, prefiguring even the Thunder Warriors. They are His first genetically engineered, psycho-indoctrinated warriors, perfected weapons crafted by the Emperor's genius from the dread lore of the Dark Age of Technology. They are in almost every measurable way superhuman: stronger, faster, more acute of senses and more resilient even than the doomed Thunder Warriors or the Space Marines who would follow them, and so far beyond the limits of an unaugmented human as to be almost godlike in comparison. Indeed, only the Primarchs and above them the Emperor Himself exceeds them in corporeal might, and to meet them in open conflict is to court death for human or alien alike.

They are rare creatures, these firstborn of the Emperor's gene-craft. Such was their psycho-physical design, and the intricacy and sophistication of the gene-craft involved, that the modifications which went into their creation required such strict biological and psychological criteria that only a mere one in many thousands of potential candidates might prove suitable for the simplest of the steps involved in the Legio Custodes creation process. Even of this small pool of candidates, survival through the decades of alchemical augmentation and psycho-memetic training was far from guaranteed. In this fact can be seen a pattern also replicated in the Space Marine Legions, only to a far more highly pronounced degree, so that while the numbers of the Legiones Astartes were prevented from growing beyond perhaps a million at their greatest strength by the limitations inherent in the means of their creation—a paltry sum compared to the billions of others who took part in the Great Crusade—the Legio Custodes could never, upon the available evidence, have operated on the scale of the Space Marine Legions, even if the attempt had been made for

them to do so. The number of active Legio Custodes warriors has never, it is believed, exceeded 10,000. This figure was first attained towards the middle stages of the Great Crusade and maintained diligently enough that the 'Ten Thousand' itself has become a cognomen for the Custodian Guard in the works of the remembrancers and the notaries of the Imperial Court since, whatever its literal accuracy.

Wrought by the Emperor's Hand

It is not an uncommon belief, even among the learned across the wide sweep of the Imperium, to suppose the Custodian Guard are themselves some variant of the Legiones Astartes—if so crude a term might be applied, an 'advanced' form, perhaps even a second, improved iteration. While this explanation might seem to fit the facts, particularly to those without intimate knowledge of the Imperium's birth pains during the final acts of the Unification Wars on Ancient Terra, it could not in fact be further from the truth.

The bloody chronicles of the Unification Wars, particularly in their earliest stages when the Emperor first rose from the nightmarish bloodshed of Ancient Terra's long night to cast down the reign of the warlords and monsters that had long carved the birth world of Mankind into a thousand slaughter-haunted pieces, are difficult now to comprehend and many are rightly sealed from the Imperium's scholars and even the Terran Court, the dangerous truths within suppressed. But in those dark chronicles the Custodian Guard, in some form or shape, have their part as far back as any can record or those few souls who survive yet from those times can remember. Upon the pillars of the Black Manse of Nas'sau, capital of one of the earliest of the techno-barbarian holds to submit before He who was to be known as the Emperor, inscriptions record the 'Lord of Lightning' coming before their warlord-king flanked by His 'four giants of crimson and gold', demanding surrender. Decades later, according to detailed extant records preserved in the Trans-Nordyc Akashic archives, a companion guard of thirty 'Custodians', bearing power spears, clad in augment-armour and personally commanded by the Emperor, fought at the head of the new-born Thunder Legion in the assault against the formidable Maulland Sen Confederacy. One of their number is even recorded as being responsible for striking the head of the confederation's tyrant-prophet from its shoulders in the aftermath of the campaign's climactic 'Battle of the Red Frost'.

Decades later still from this infamous battle, it would be now the Custodian Guard in their hundreds, in a form akin to their most modern aspect, who would be charged with leading the cull of those same Thunder Warriors who had once served the Emperor and who had then rebelled in the wake of their forcible disbandment and internment. Only this time the Custodian Guard would be accompanied by the new gene-crafted warriors meant to replace the Thunder Warriors; the first few thousand prototype Space Marines, most of whom would go on to form the nascent 1st Legiones Astartes, latterly known as the Dark Angels. The evidence then is clear; since before the first worlds were conquered as the Great Crusade left the Sol System, since before the taking of Luna and the Treaty of Olympus, since before the Cataclysm of Ursh and the fall of the Yndonisic bloc, before the Space Marines and before the Thunder Warriors, the Custodian Guard have walked at the Emperor's side.

Of the Legio Custodes and the Legiones Astartes

As has been mentioned, the Custodian Guard and the Space Marines are related in form, as perhaps might be expected of works of a same creator's hand, but they are very different in function and capacity. There are of course similarities between the two. Both are physically transformed well beyond 'natural' human limits in terms of strength, endurance and fortitude, and fitted for inhuman environmental adaption and resilience, though in this the Legio Custodes are the markedly superior of the two in might, if not in adaptability. Both are subject to extensive psychological and cognitive conditioning, and are physically and mentally reworked to render most of their baser drives inert and their beings rechannelled towards aggression, goal acquisition and the fulfilment of duty, and as a further safeguard against distraction and as a biological control, both are of course incapable of procreation. In both cases all that is left are beings of singular purpose; in the case of each Legiones Astartes, what is created is a living engine of conquest that cares for little else, and in the Custodian Guard, each is created protector of unrelenting diligence and savage capability—a watchman whose vigilance will never tire.

What also differs truly between the two, Custodian Guard and Space Marine, is not just their functional purpose, but the extent of their augmentation and the means by which it is accomplished. While the process through which the Legiones Astartes are

fabricated from a human being is well enough documented in its outline, though its details are, of course, rightly held secret by those parties involved in the process on a Legion by Legion basis, genuine facts about the manner in which the Custodian Guard are created are very few, even within the hands of the Imperium's hierarchy. This is because—as with all else about the Custodian Guard—it is a matter for the Imperial Household alone, and that authority is one none may gainsay or question. What is known, however, marks them as different. Firstly, there is the matter of the age of the candidacy. For a child to become one of the Legio Custodes, it is known that they must begin the process in their late infancy and certainly before adolescence has taken hold on their physical structure. This stands in stark contrast to the Space Marines whose implantation is only possible after adolescence and best served before full maturity. This may link to a second of the few known facts about the creation of the Legio Custodes: that the gene-craft and alchemy that transforms them is as absolute as it is subtle, and worked upon the smallest conceivable microscopic level of their genome and cellular structure. It is a process that effects such change on the mortal human form that, when complete, unless they suffer such massive bodily harm as to forcibly end their lives, they are effectively immortal, without perceptible ageing taking place after full maturity.

Not then for the Legio Custodes the pattern of surgical grafting and organ implantation that creates a Space Marine, no such crudities

of augmentation at all mar the Custodian; what creates them is as invisible as it is potent, worked upon the core genetics and at a deep cellular level, and perhaps tailored to each specific inductee. There are those who insist that so invisible and yet so powerful this process is that it crosses over into a metaphysical realm of biomancy and psychic manipulation on a level unguessed at. Given that it is said that the Emperor Himself has overseen the creation of every single Custodian Guard who has ever lived, this may well be true.

The peerless warriors who then result from this arcane process are a rare breed indeed, and not to be squandered recklessly on the battlefield. They were created with a single purpose in mind; to be the Emperor's own elite guard. They were a force created both to defend the Emperor from physical harm wherever the Great Crusade might take Him, to stand watch over His private domains and most guarded secrets, and to serve as the direct agents of His will—as His personal emissaries—be that will to protect, to venture, to claim, to keep secret, or to execute without remorse.

INCARNATE PURPOSE

To accomplish the ends to which the Legio Custodes were designed, not only is a Custodian's superhuman physical power honed to a razor's edge, but so also is the individual Custodian's intellect, mental fortitude and martial skill developed with ruthless application and zeal. The result is the creation not simply of a preternaturally deadly fighter or master assassin—though

they can readily serve as both—but to create a being whose perception and apprehension of threat and how to counter it is literally beyond the natural limits of man or the powers of a machine. By means unknown and unknowable beyond the Emperor's own forbidden laboratories are the minds of the Legio Custodes programmed and fortified, filled with an encyclopaedic knowledge of all the arts of death, deceit and destruction they might encounter in their duty, and how both to counter and employ them. Beyond even this their education is prodigious, for not simply the Emperor's protectors in intention, they are also made to be His companions and with Him they are armed to converse on such matters of warfare, politics and philosophy as He wished. Most importantly, their psyches are also crafted and shaped as a master gemsmith might cut and polish a perfect stone, fashioned to precise order and pattern, a pattern to which loyalty and discipline, duty and unflinching obedience to the Emperor goes deeper than blood and bone, deeper than conscious thought or unconscious desire. If at any stage in the process the merest flaw is encountered, as with the gemsmith's search of the perfect stone, the flawed subject is discarded.

The product of these amassed arts, arcane, academic and militant, is a body of warriors these living weapons make up—the Legio Custodes itself, the Ten Thousand. As an organisation, it is in many ways both alike and unlike to the Space Marine Legions in formation and structure, a paramilitary force unique in history, inviolate in action and answerable only to the Emperor. While



each Legion is, at least at conception, a highly stratified and self-contained military organisation designed to be the shock troops and principal agency of the Great Crusade, the Legio Custodes is similarly self-sufficient and self-contained, but is never armed or expected to prosecute war, but instead to utterly dominate whichever particular close battle in which they fight. Their base of operations is Terra itself and their own domains interwoven with that of the Emperor. They hold few void ships of their own, but could command by edict any such vessel of the Imperialis Armada to their task, and in fact requisition anyone or anything within the Imperium in extremis to serve their most sacred and undaunted task; the protection of the Emperor and His works from all the foes of humanity.

Whether serving as part of a detachment acting as the destroyers of some ill-fated foe, or tasked as a bodyguard for the Emperor or some element of His household, or even where a handful of Custodians might be deployed to act as the personal protectors to an Imperial emissary or Lord Militant, they are tireless, vigilant and remorseless. They are armed, created and trained to be the match and the death of anything they might encounter face-to-face, be that human, xenos or machine, in any circumstance of single combat, counter-attack to ambush or close range assault. Again and again has history seen the Custodian Guard stand off and defeat odds that seem beyond reason or belief. It has seen them slay monsters foul enough to have been dredged up from pure nightmare, and defeat and slay assassins born of arts both dark and subtle beyond human ken. Tested again and again, be it on alien worlds before now untrodden by humanity, or within the tangled under-hives of the domains of Mankind lost to the Age of Strife, or the twisted palaces of alien warlords, the Legio Custodes proved themselves warriors of terrifying ability. Their service and their mystery has seen the Legio Custodes quickly become a legend equal in wonder and terror even to those alongside whom they served and in the echoes of whispered stories in every corner of the burgeoning Imperium. To the common soldier and planetary governor alike, the golden-armoured image of the Custodian Guard is a visible sign not only of the Emperor's direct protection and the embodiment of His will and agency, but also the omen of His unstoppable wrath, as personal and as terrifying in their way as the Angels of Death, his Space Marines, are impersonal and all conquering avatars in the minds of many of the Great Crusade itself.

The Gene-terrors of Old Night

Many human mythologies, both ancient and the product of the collapse of civilisation on thousands of worlds during the Age of Strife, carry legends of the apocalyptic wars of the gods in whose aftermath terrible weapons are left upon the desolate battlefield for the gods' inheritors to find. Many scholars liken these legends to the fall of past civilisations and the discovery—or rediscovery—of some pivotal technology such as gunpowder, steel or atomantic force, but never has the mythic construct been more appropriate to the understanding of such a perilous rediscovery than in the case of the gene-craft of Terra. At the height of humanity's ancient dominion during the Dark Age of Technology, unbridled and recklessly potent human science had unlocked the myriad potentials within the human genome and even thought nothing of the terrible crimes of transgenic hybridisation, the fusing of human and alien biology, if it suited the whims of the scientist-kings of that lost age.

The descendants of some of the Dark Age of Technology's more stable flesh-works remain with us to the present in extremes such as the high-gravity adapted Ogryns and the Navigators without whom long-distance space travel would be impossible, while others are mercifully long perished. But when the Dark Age of Technology ended in an apocalypse of war and terror, as the masters fought their creations in the shapes known to us now in legend as the 'men of stone and the men of steel', and the anarchy and destruction of widespread psyker emergence brought the dominion of Mankind crashing down, the weapons of the gods were truly left strewn upon the battlefield. Nowhere was this more so than on Terra itself, the seat and capital of that ancient empire, and storehouse of its secrets. For centuries such dread secrets slumbered; in forgotten bunkers and armoured vaults lay the masterless gene-looms and autosurgical chambers of the Dark Age of Technology, waiting for the ignorant and the power hungry to set them to work once more to bloody and ill-reckoned purposes. The end result of their inevitable rediscoveries was a world already plunged into violent anarchy and environmental collapse made infinitely worse by the abused powers of those lost gods and devils of ancient science unleashed, genetically tailored viral warfare, desperate schemes at blood-bought immortality and power, and a hulking grotesquery of once-human shock troops driven into battle by the ambition of crazed warlords. Mutation, monstrosity, pogrom, disease and death unimaginable were let loose by the warlord's lust for conquest; such was Terra's long night.

By the time of the coming of the Emperor to finally quell the endless war, splice-wrought and muscle-grafted warriors were the common currency of war amid the techno-barbarian tribes and mercenary clans which dominated much of desolate Ancient Terra, while degenerate gene-damaged mutants and abhumans haunted the ruins and wastes beyond the holdfasts of petty empires. The more extreme children of the Dark Age of Technology were also a fearful legend which haunted, all too real, the dreams of men, be they the Excubari Vivamorphs of Cah'marg, who culled the young for 'beautiful' flesh to graft to their own failing bodies, or the nightmare horrors of the Ghourmant clans of the deep sinks of Detra-Merica, whose terrible strength and longevity were bought only at the price of a far more indiscriminate and insatiable hunger. It was both to break the rule of these foul abominations and the unscrupulous masters of the gene-bred dogs of war, to see them purged from Terra, that the Thunder Legion was created. It was an act of fighting fire with fire. Just as it was that in the creation of the Space Marine Legions was a tool of unparalleled conquest fashioned so that humanity could reclaim the stars. Just as it was that with the Legio Custodes that a body of undying, indefatigable protectors was created, who like watchful demigods of myth would stand guard over the Master of Mankind until the stars burned cold. It was only the Emperor, in His wisdom, who could claim the inheritance of the gene-craft of the Dark Age of Technology, and turn it to these ends, to forge angels of flesh and blood where lesser men had created mutilated monsters and imperfect messiahs. It was only the Emperor who was able to see that relic lore safely contained and truly controlled, so that it might reach its apotheosis in His own works.

THE ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES

The full details of the organisational structure, disposition and regulation of the Legio Custodes are shrouded in secrecy as befits an institution dedicated to ultimate security. Those outside its ranks, even though they operate close to the Terran Court and the highest levels of the Divisio Militaris, cannot hope to know more than a degree of detail which is purely observational, and likely barely scratches the surface of the no doubt byzantine Legio. What can be outwardly observed is contained here within this account, as are the various details and titles with which the Custodian Guard openly interacts with the other organs of the Imperium's power.

The first mystery that outsiders must cope with is that of identity. The Custodian Guard are themselves it would seem effectively ageless and as unchanging as granite, and just as impenetrable to outsiders. They each profess to a given name, often a compound drawn from the lore of Ancient Terra's roll of kings and tyrants, gods and legends. Whether or not this represents some humour or deliberate irony on the Emperor's part given the Legio's role is something that it is perhaps unwise to speculate on. Such true names they knew as part of their birth and origin are likely obliterated by the process of their creation, but the myths that have grown up around the Legio Custodes have long held that each Custodian Guard garners over his centuries a long list of additional names and titles grated purely by the Emperor for their deeds, history and character. Such names are held as a secret of their Order and never betrayed to others, though some myths would have it this roll of honour is graven hidden upon their golden armour or even etched microscopically into their very bones.

In terms of structural organisation, it is apparent that the Legio Custodes is unique unto itself in terms of form, offering little in common with the rest of the Imperium's agency of warfare such as the Imperialis Auxilia or the Legiones Astartes. This is only fitting as the Legio Custodes, like other elements of the so called 'Talons of the Emperor', can be more accurately described as a paramilitary rather than a strategic force, neither geared nor equipped towards the fighting or winning of wars, but to its duties of protection and where needs be, execution.

COMMAND STRUCTURE & TACTICAL DISPOSITION

The overall command of the Legio Custodes of course lies within the purview of the

Emperor directly, but serving as the head of the Order is a single officer; the Captain-General. Since any can remember or record, this role and dire responsibility has been held by a single man, Constantin Valdor, or as he is sometimes known 'The First of the Ten Thousand'. He is a puissant warrior and a being of supernatural stature and gravitas, such that many have likened him to one of the Primarchs of the Space Marine Legions, and though while this is doubtless hyperbole, records of his existence predate any of the Primarchs' creation.

Below the absolute authority of the Captain-General lies the Custodian Tribunal; a senior cadre of perhaps ten in number, forming the Legio Custodes' council of war and policy. This body has the incomparable privilege of providing their services as counsel to the Emperor Himself should He so desire it, and in the matters of the security of the Imperial Palace's inner sanctums and the person of the Emperor, no higher authority exists.

In rank below the Tribunes of the Legio Custodes can be found the Custodian Prefecture and the Shield Captains. The distinction between the two, not apparent entirely to outsiders, is one perhaps of seniority and function, with the title of Prefect accorded as a reward of veterancy and favour in service by the Emperor, while the rank of Shield Captain indicates an active field command over a particular detachment or deployment. Below these ranks, the Custodians seem to be peers as in the manner of a warrior caste or aristocracy, rather than links in the more familiar chain of command found elsewhere in the Imperium's armed forces. Their functional titles adapt to their chosen role and panoply of war in whichever command they have been included, with the following broad distinctions applied in communication with external forces on a tactical level, their titles drawn from various ancient sources.

The Hykanatoi

The main strength of the Custodian Guard comprises this role at any given time. They are the bearers of the spear, the bodyguard of the Emperor and the executioners of any who would offer threat or opposition to His will. They are the image of the golden-armoured warrior that is summoned in fear and awe when the Legio Custodes is brought to mind. Their numbers include variations of force, wargear and panoply such as the

Sentinel Guard and Custodian Guard proper, as well as the elite Hetaeron Guard—the most skilled fighters among a force of warriors whose martial skills are already beyond human.

The Tharanatoi

Though there are few opponents that the Hykanatoi cannot deal with, they are not a rounded military force in the sense that they are not configured to deal with exigencies such as siegecraft or attrition warfare that fall outside their purview. However, the Legio Custodes still maintains the ability to deploy its forces as heavy shock troops should the need arise, or indeed to counter a foe that directs overwhelming force against it in high-intensity warfare. These counter-assault forces are known as the Tharanatoi, and encompass custom-modified suits of Terminator armour optimised for use by the Custodian's superhuman frame, as well as vastly potent portable firepower such as carried by the Sagittarum Guard, whose weapons include those few dark relics known as Adrathic weapons—disintegration beams of phenomenal destructive potential, long gathered to the Emperor's household and entrusted to no other.

The Kataphraktoi

Long before the Emperor's retreat and seclusion on Terra after the appointment of the Warmaster Horus to command His forces, the principal role of protection and defence the Custodian Guard engaged in was a mobile one. They went wherever their master did, no matter what blasted alien world or lost cityscape of ancient glory He trod. In this the elements of speed and mobility were paramount to their success, as was reconnaissance and counter-strike in lightning response to threat. Those of the Legio who specialised in such tactics and the means of employing them were called the Kataphraktoi; they flew interceptors and gunships of sublime sophistication and power, and piloted a range of repulsor-lift grav-vehicles; tanks, transports and strike skimmers, jet bikes and interface flyers advanced beyond anything else in the Imperium's arsenal.

The Ephoroi

The division of the Custodian Guard about which the least can be said for certain, the Ephoroi were those of the Order that were tasked with covert operations, counter-surveillance and the vitally important task of simulated attack and infiltration. It was

CUSTODIAN KALANEMI Velt

THE EHOPHORUS-SIGMA SODALITY OF THE
KYKANATOI OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES
PROSPERINE CENSURE FORCE

Kalanemi Velt can in many ways be viewed as a highly representative example of the Legio Custodes force despatched under Constantin Valdor as part of the Terran contingent of the Censure Force. A veteran of more than a century of warfare according to available records, the Custodian had previously served at the Emperor's side during the Urak Incursion and the Sencari Crisis, as well as seeing detached duty with the 38th Expeditionary Fleet as Imperial Emissary Militant, and serving in a Custodian strike force during the Ullanor Crusade. The famed and deadly war at Ullanor had in fact been the last time Kalanemi Velt appears to have travelled beyond Terra before the Censure Host's mission to Prospero, and in this he was also the representative of his Order, who when the Emperor withdrew to His palace-laboratories, became an increasingly rare sight abroad in the Imperium.

Depicted here as he fought at Prospero, he wears the archetypal crimson and gold panoply of the Legio Custodes. He also bears the common armorial livery of the Kykanatoi, and carries the Guardian power spear with its inbuilt bolter.



Custodian Armour Pauldrons



LEGIO CUSTODES CONTEMPTOR-ACHILLUS DREADNOUGHT

MORITOI EXCELCIS ABRAM HASRUBAL
ORESTIAN CHAMBER OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES
PROSPERO CENSURE HOST

The forces dubbed the 'Talons of the Emperor' which formed part of the Censure Host sent to Prospero contained within their ranks a score of Legio Custodes Dreadnoughts, envisioned as part of a reserve in case of emergency. As matters transpired, the Dreadnoughts of the Moritoi were utilised as part of the Custodes' first wave, dispersed through mixed units of Custodian Guard and the Silent Sisterhood to strengthen them and contend with Thousand Sons heavy units when encountered. Hasrubal was one such, attached to the splinter command of Prefect Tem Lanais in the assault on the pyramid of Lhis'Ta on the northern edge of the great plaza of Tizca.

they who tested the Legio Custodes' defences and preparations just as foes would, as well as conducted their own hidden missions to dispose of potential threats within the Imperium, and enact final and sometimes utterly secret justice as the Emperor's will demanded it. There are those who have posited that where the Ephoroi ended and the powers that controlled the Officio Assassinorum began at certain junctures was difficult even for the wisest of the Lords of Terra to discern, and it is certain when they wished that the Assassins of the Temples of Terra were the Legio Custodes' to command.

The Moritoi

The smallest and most singular division within the Legio Custodes was the Moritoi; the 'honoured dead who walked'. Just as with the Legiones Astartes, it was possible for a Custodian Guard, having suffered injuries so terrible that even they could not recover from them but within whom the vital spark of life remained, to be interred within the cybernetic life support sarcophagus of a Dreadnought. The first of these was made while the Unification Wars were being fought, in a modified Ur-Gholem pattern Dreadnought, the first iteration of its kind intended for use within the Thunder Legions, and as the number of Dreadnought patterns and subtypes within the Imperium's arsenal increased across the Great Crusade's decades of warfare and innovation, so too did the Legio Custodes keep pace with these developments. Though they remained relatively rare, with less than perhaps a hundred Dreadnoughts of the Legio Custodes in service at the time of Magnus' folly and the subsequent attack on Prospero, they represented a phenomenally powerful concentration of force, most having had their chassis upgraded to the Achillus pattern, a variant of the Contemptor manufactured with materials and technologies far beyond even the vaunted war machines of the Legiones Astartes.

PANOPLY OF ARMS

The Legio Custodes' panoply of arms and armour, its wargear and even the vehicles and support systems it employed were often unique to the Legio Custodes and them alone. Whether ancient relic or newly made, these items were not only customised exactly to task, but were also produced without any regard to the consumption of resources or rarity of component or lore required; to arm and outfit the Legio Custodes to the optimum, nothing was spared.

This supremacy was evident from the auramite-alloy reinforced armour the Custodian Guard wore, each a planet's ransom in worth, to the plethora of repulsion-lift grav-vehicles under their control, most of which were derived from designs brought back by the great technoarchaeologist Arkhan Land and forbidden for use by any other. Likewise, their singular weapons, be they blade or bolter, were masterworks, produced by entire sequestered sub-cults of the Mechanicum and clades of hereditary artisans beholden to no other and tasked alone in the Legio Custodes' provision. Even greater than these resources at their disposal was the Legio's ability to draw upon any facet of the Imperium's war machine and uncounted hosts it needed to meet its ends, extending its potential power to unguessed at levels.

The reason for this supremacy above all in arms was a simple one, for not only were the Legio Custodes fitted to match any potential threat from without, but also from within, and a clear demarcation was enforced between the potency of the Legio's arms, and those of any other Imperial forces, not least of all the Space Marines, who they already overmatched in physical might. It is perhaps one of the great questions of lost history: what might have been in the wars of the Horus Heresy had the Legio Custodes not been so heavily waylaid by the disastrous consequences of Magnus' great sin on Terra and more able to take an active hand, had not so many of them been trapped for years in a terrible parallel war all but entirely hidden from the eyes of the cosmos? But that is a darker tale yet, and the weighty duty of a different record than this to tell.

Magisterium & Misericordia

One of the singular features of the Legio Custodes as an organisation, and the power of its individual Custodians, is their place in the scheme of the Imperium's law. While an accredited Imperial governor is effectively tyrant of their own world within the edicts and parameters of wider Imperial law, and few would gainsay the Legiones Astartes in any demands they were to make, the Legio Custodes are alone officially afforded the power of the 'Magisterium Lex Ultima' in the high form, which is to say they are beyond all law and all command save for the direct authority of the Emperor Himself. In addition to this, each one is a lord of the Imperium in their own right. This fact is symbolically represented not only by the right to still carry the single-headed raptor and lightning bolt heraldry of the Unification campaign, but also by the carrying of the 'Misericordia.'

For long centuries of unbridled internecine carnage on Ancient Terra during the Age of Strife, the 'Blade of Mercy' or 'Misericordia' came to represent the complete power of life and death the warlords held over the mass of humanity which toiled beneath their yolk and suffered at their whim. From the dust wastes of Ursh to the Manakonite Temples of the No'rad ice hive, the bearing of such a blade, usually in the form of a long dagger or short sword made to perpetrate a single, killing thrust, came to symbolise the dread authority of the executioner-judge. Beyond the power it represented, the Misericordia might also be used in practice to carry out a 'clean' sentence of death on a transgressor, or to offer terminal surcease to a warrior grievously wounded in battle at their master's discretion, in either case living up to its name as an agent of mercy as well as death. When the Emperor came to mastery of Terra and ended the bloody cycle of the warlords' reign, His agents and judges, and only they, came to carry the Misericordia as His mastery eclipsed all others, and it is a tradition the Legio Custodes still uphold.

LEGIO CUSTODES CORONUS

PATTERN GRAV-CARRIER

'THE IRE OF MITHRADATES'

ASSIGNED TO THE RASIA-INCAL SENTINEL GUARD
SODALITY OF THE HYKANATOI
PROSPERINE CENSURE FORCE

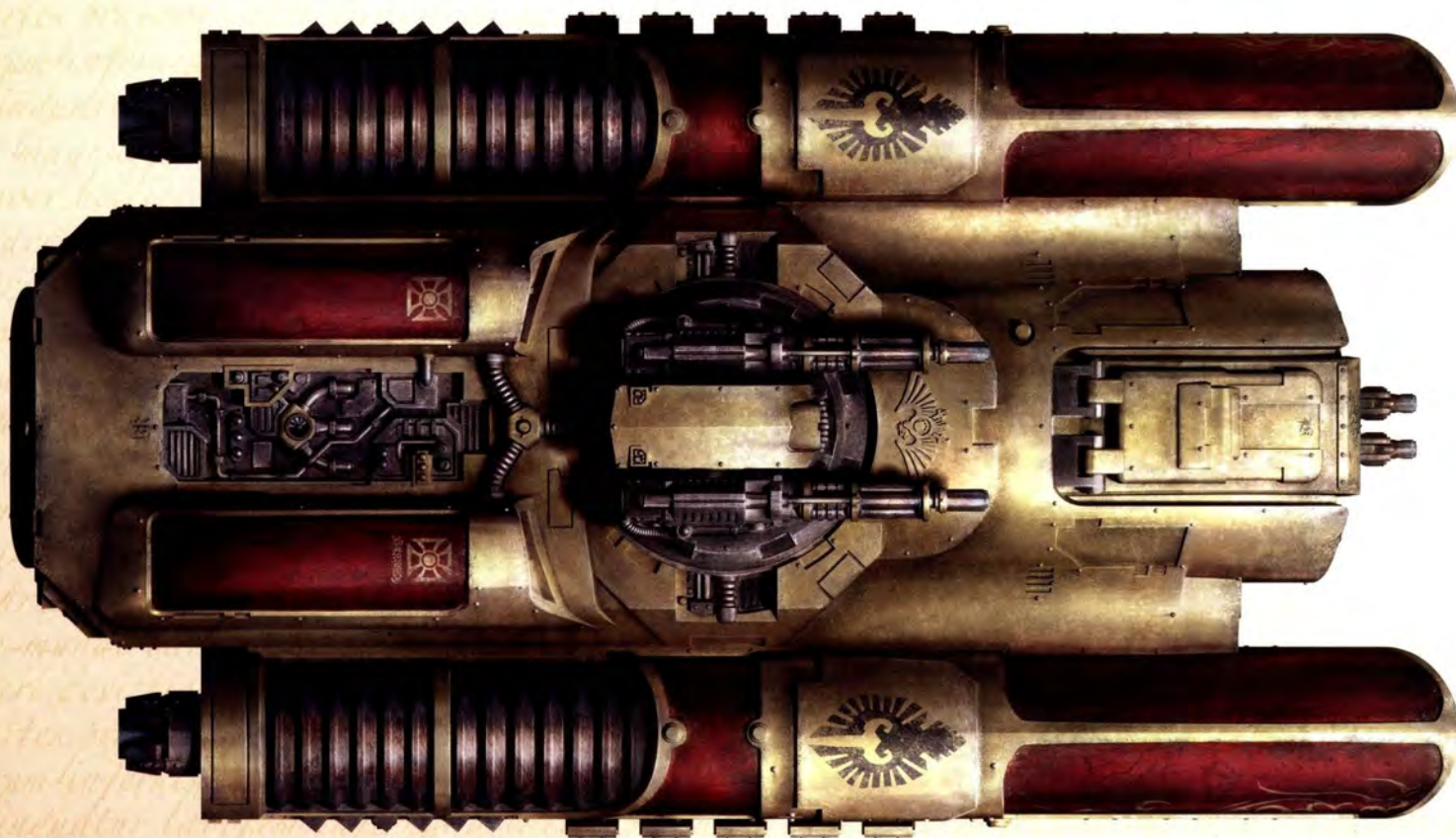
Coronus pattern grav-carriers served as the primary tactical transport of the Legio Custodes by the closing years of the Great Crusade. These repulsor/suspensor lift skimmers offer both great speed and manoeuvrability to the Legio Custodes in battle, allowing them to redeploy swiftly to meet threats and, if needed, to even evade such threats completely as required. The Coronus is also, despite being a skimmer craft, extremely durable, with battlefield survivability almost comparable to that of the Land Raider class of battle tank thanks to its advanced material construction and integrated field defences. The Coronus'

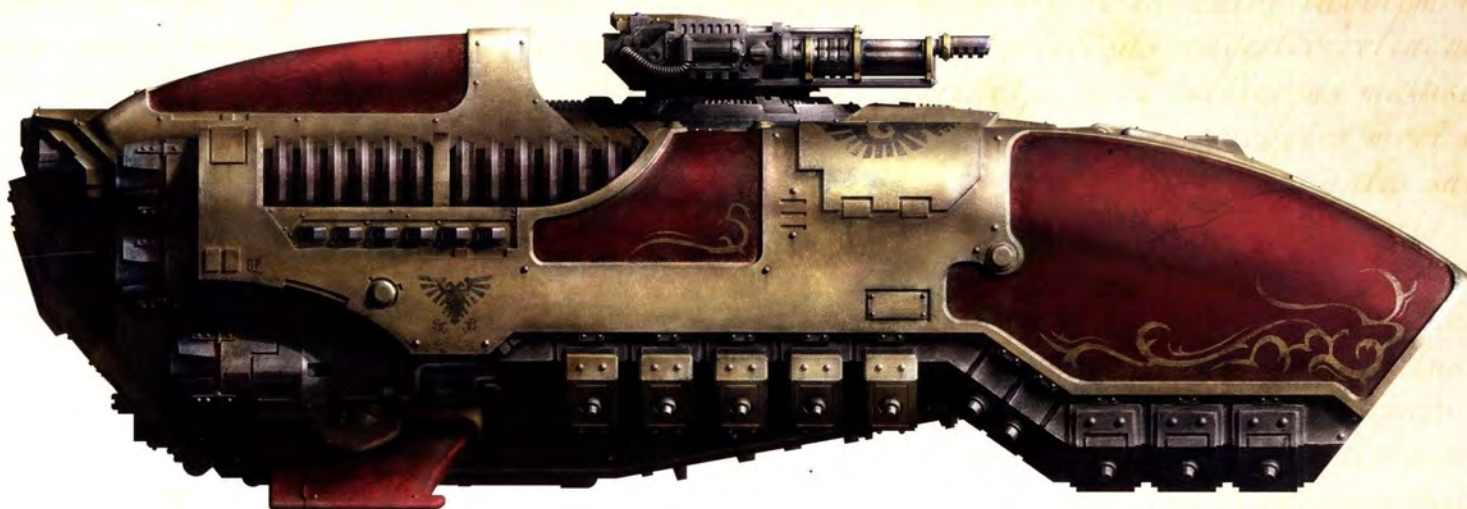
principal firepower is provided by a turret emplacement of potent and flexible blaze cannon; an advanced las weapon which uses different cyclic fire modes to engage infantry targets with volleys of comparably low-powered pulses, or using concentrated energy single discharges, deal with more heavily armoured targets.

This particular grav-transport, the *Ire of Mithradates*, was assigned to the Rasia-Incal Sodality of the Legio Custodes, a Sentinel Guard formation which specialised in fighting as an unbreakable bulwark against enemy attack. As the fighting intensified during the Battle of Tizca's closing stages, the Rasia-Incal Sodality fought and redeployed many times across the increasingly ravaged cityscape, using the repulsor-drive capabilities of

their craft to bypass the difficulties of the burning wreckage and collapsing buildings between them and their next objective. This strategy of mobile counter-attack and rapid reinforcement to shore up the lines of the increasingly anarchic conflict was instrumental in the prevention of heavy losses within the Legio Custodes' ranks, despite the nightmarishly powerful forces arrayed against them.

Though it received severe damage to its port nacelle repulsor system from enemy plasma fire during the battle, the *Ire of Mithradates* survived the Prosperine engagement intact enough to return to its orbital conveyor under its own power and eventually back to Terra, where it served as part of the Legio Custodes garrison for the rest of the wars of the Horus Heresy.





The *Ire of Mithradates* features relatively little in the way of vehicle insignia or numeric markings, a factor common to many vehicles in service with the Legio Custodes, who saw little need to mark their war engines out for the easy identification of others, or indeed to facilitate their ready integration into wider amalgamated Imperial forces. Featured on its hull are however more general emblems indicating its ownership by the Legio Custodes, as well as the cruciform insignia which has been used to designate elite close-quarters units of the Imperium's military since the time of the Unification Wars on Ancient Terra.





THE SISTERS OF SILENCE

Title (Formal/Base): The Silent Sisterhood of the Great Tithe

Banner Imperialis: The Divisio Investigates of the Divisio and Adeptus Astra Telepathica

Magisterium: Lex Majoris Psykana (authority within accorded duty subject to the review only of the Lords Imperial of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and the Offices of the Imperial Household).

Cognomen (Informal): The Sisters of Silence, the Witch-Seekers, the Pale Scourge, the Soulless Ones, the Null Maidens, the Eyrine, the Daughters of the Abyss

Domains (Legal Remit): Wherever the shadow of the Emperor falls.

Domains (Vassalage): The Somnus Citadel (Luna, headquarters), the Magadan Orbital Construct (Fortress Anchorage of the Black Ships, Sol System), Cold Alpha (Prison Fortress, Titan orbit, Sol System), Star One/Silent Harbour/Taceant Astra (code designations believed to be Segmentum Solar planetary systems given over to the secure processing of the Great Tithe, location unknown/prohibited).

'As a child on Gehenna, I remember the stories of the white maidens; terrifying ghosts that would come in the night to steal away the witch-born and children who had done terrible wrongs. It was said that they could find the wicked no matter how deep in the hive they sank or to what forgotten spire they climbed. As I grew, I came to believe such things were no more than superstition, but now that I am an officer of the Great Crusade, bloodied upon the battlefields of a score of worlds, I have come to find that my childhood fears were true, and quite valid.'

*The Memoires of Lt. Colonel Gudrun Ceax (Rt.)
227th Gehennan Rifles*

Across the great Imperium of Mankind, the Sisters of Silence are figures of mystery and fear. They have entered the folklore and superstitions of thousands of Compliant human worlds, despite the efforts of the Imperium's iterators to stamp out such folly, and it is easy to understand why. Riding the dark void between the stars upon the dreaded Black Ships, the Silent Sisterhood are the enforcers of the Great Tithe, known by some as the 'Psyker Cull' and the 'Hunt That Never Ends'. Each one of them is an anathema, a soulless thing that inspires dread wherever they walk. They harvest those humans with the psyker's 'gift', child or adult; whether given up by their kin and government freely, or stalked and trapped to the very ends of their world, there is no hiding place from the Sisters of Silence, no argument that can sway them, and no turning them aside. By the writ of the Emperor they come and go like ghosts between the stars, and strike like the reaper of myth against any who would seek to thwart them.

THE HUNT THAT NEVER ENDS

It is rightly said that the Sisters of Silence—to give them their most common official designation—are one of most secretive and mysterious of all the Orders of the Emperor's servants. They are a covert organisation that has served as the militant arm of the Divisio and Adeptus of the Astra Telepathica since its foundation, and within whose ranks and titles they are known, at least in formal documentation, as the 'Divisio Investigates'—a rather obscure phrase which covers up a shrouded world into which very few have ever had the power or the authority to look within. Though markedly different in nature and origin, they share much in common in this regard with the Legio Custodes, particularly in the reach of their legal authority, which where their duties are concerned is effectively inviolate over all the myriad powers and principalities of the wider Imperium and its hundreds of thousands of human inhabited worlds. Markedly also, the Silent Sisterhood has the right and duty to walk freely within the inner sancta of the Imperial Vaults, the sovereign and sole domain of the Emperor and His Household at the behest and licence of the Master of Mankind. It is a right they share only with the Legio Custodes.

The duties of the Silent Sisterhood are complex and manifold, but at their core they are warrior-investigators, hunters and gaolers. Their charge is to seek out, apprehend and

process psykers from the human population of the ever-expanding Imperium, and return them to the Divisio Astra Telepathica for assessment and disposition. As part of this never-ending task, their duty is also to hunt down renegade psykers and destroy those who are deemed too dangerous to live. This is a perilous task well beyond the abilities of any merely human law enforcement or military force, but it is made possible, indeed in some cases seamless, in its execution not simply by the martial prowess of the Sisterhood itself, but crucially by their fundamental nature as Psychic Nulls.

The Daughters of Anathema

The most singular thing about the Order is that each and every one within its ranks is an 'Untouchable', a rare sub-set of humanity who cast no shadow in the Warp, and whose minds are immune to psychic assault and an anathema to those with psychic powers. Their mere proximity is enough to cause psykers discomfort and pain, and in truth they will even sow fear in the hearts of those whose minds are without the psyker's gift, no matter how strong willed they may be. It is a simple and irresistible reaction to the fundamental 'wrongness' of the Untouchable or as it is often put more melodramatically, a body without a soul. This curious and macabre phenomena goes beyond simple absence, as one might feel disturbed by a mannequin or automata which apes humanity but remains unalive—instead it is an observably preternatural effect which seems to strike deep against the fundamental unconscious perceptions of all living beings as something malignant and contrary to the natural order of existence. There appears to be perceptible degrees of this effect which vary from individual to individual, with some Untouchables 'stronger' in the phenomena than others, and it is from the strongest of these that the Sisters of Silence are drawn.

It is also noteworthy in fact to the extent that the disturbance caused by an Untouchable is evident not only to humanity, but also all other lifeforms and xenos species encountered to some greater or lesser extent. There are in proof of this many recorded incidences of the unsettling effects of human

Psychic Nulls being enough even to unnerve the blind brutal savagery of rampaging Orks, while to the Eldar xeniform, psychically attuned as their race is, the presence of a human Untouchable is a thing of acute existential horror.

The most potent and perhaps shocking power of the Psychic Null however is that which makes them the perfect hunters and slayers of psykers; Untouchables such as the Sisters of Silence are almost impossible to affect with Empyrean powers. Their minds cannot be taken over, their perceptions cannot be altered and their bodies cannot be possessed. Even the cruder but more direct manipulations of the environment or ambient energy by the psyker such as conjured fire or the hurling of debris by telekinetic force is lessened and sometimes negated outright by the Untouchable's proximity. With Psychic Nulls such as the Sisters of Silence, specifically chosen for the 'strength' of their gift, it is the case that their minds are not simply absent or inert to a psyker's mental perception, but howling abysses of darkness that not only negate psychic force directed at them, but actively interfere with the flow of the Warp around them. The profoundly phobic reaction they engender extends to both human and xenos psykers as well as entities and creatures of the Empyrean, their mere presence a debilitating toxin.

Further, there are those among the Sisterhood who through arcane training and practice, and whose nature has never been revealed to outsiders, are able to develop their 'null' abilities further until they are actively disruptive enough to make any use of psychic power in their presence extremely hazardous. These Sisters are honed into the 'Oblivion Knights', and within their Order they are the foundation stone of an elite force specially tasked not with the day-to-day enforcement of the Great Tithe, but the destruction of alpha-level rogue psykers and the ceaseless training for battles of this deadly kind.

THE ASTRA TELEPATHICA, THE ASTRONOMICAN AND THE GREAT TITHE

Before expanding the Great Crusade to the stars beyond Sol, the Emperor first ordered the construction of the Astronomican on Terra. Huge numbers of Tech-Priests were brought from Mars to oversee the project and the majority of the Terran population was drafted to construct the towering machine-building or support this labour. At the time, the Astronomican was the single largest artifice on Terra, and the sole purpose of this colossal endeavour was that the entire device was merely a focus through which the Emperor could direct His fathomless psychic energies to generate a partly self-sustaining signal (although few involved were aware of this fact). The psychic navigational beam which the Astronomican generated was able to cut through the Warp and those attuned to its unique frequencies and modulations, the Navigators, were able to use it as a beacon and pole star when plotting journeys through the Immaterium. By this the Warp could be travelled at speeds and with a margin of safety that had been unprecedented—although risk of course could never be fully mitigated—and this was an incalculable boon to both the Great Crusade and the fledgling interstellar domain it was creating. Such was its effect that even then some referred to it as the 'Divine Light', or the 'Emperor's Light', often without fully realising the literal truth of those words.

In addition to this invaluable beacon among the stars, the Imperium would not have been made possible without the creation and continuation of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. This special corps of inter-stellar communicators was created by the Emperor during the final months of the conquest of Ancient Terra, as the Emperor had foreseen their absolute future need. For the most part the Emperor did not favour the use of psychic talents in others; as a psyker Himself, albeit one of unprecedented power and control, He was well aware of the dangers inherent in contact with the Warp. Furthermore, the Age of Strife on Old Earth had its own 'witch-kings' and possessed psykers to attest to those dangers, some of whom the Emperor had personally slain. However, He was

able to identify those who were strong enough and so with some prudence, certain psykers were employed in a variety of specialised roles within the Imperium, and the astropaths were to be such an exception, being needed not in their hundreds, but tens of thousands. It was to feed this need that the Great Tithe was first envisioned.

The Astropaths

An astropath is an 'astro-telepath', an individual capable of communicating with others of their kind over vast interstellar distances through phantasmal visions, empathic transmission and vision allegory rather than through words. This is an essential talent as the inhabited worlds of Mankind are many light years apart in physical terms and the only practical way for the Imperium to maintain any semblance of unity is by such communication, however temperamental it may be. All astropaths undergo a special process that moulds their powers and at the same time strengthens them against psychic danger. This is called the 'Soul Binding' ritual, which shapes the mind and cerebral structure of the subject with the Emperor's own psychokinetic force as a potter shapes wet clay. Unfortunately not all candidates survive this ritual—some are driven insane, and all have their personalities altered to some degree. The raw energy of the Emperor's will also has another effect. So powerful are the forces involved that many of the more delicate sensory nerves can be damaged, especially the optic nerves. Consequently, almost all astropaths are blind, whilst many also lack a sense of smell, touch or hearing, a stigmata which sets them as a breed apart even as their sacrifice binds the Imperium together.

The Great Tithe

In order to fuel and provide manpower for the creation of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, a vast and intricate organisation was created, the Divisio Astra Telepathica, and many of the resources gained by the initial conquests of the Great Crusade were diverted to its establishment. It was vast in scope and its key function was to execute one of the fundamental goals the Emperor

Himself had set for the Great Crusade; the marshalling and regulation of all human psykers across the ever expanding worlds of the Imperium. This seemingly incomprehensible task required hundreds of thousands of functionaries and technicians, billions of tonnes of raw materials to construct specialised facilities, and most significantly, an absolute concentration of a body of psyker lore on a scale perhaps unknown before in humanity's long history.

While the astropaths remained the major focus of the Divisio, within the Great Tithe's shadow grew scores of sub-organisations: administrative blocs, logistical corpus, dedicated techno-cults and arcane academic faculties, all shrouded in deep secrecy to maintain their absolute security. These included most notably the chambers of the Scholastica Psykana, an institution of bound and bonded psykers who were deemed strong and stable enough to induct and train others of their own kind into the Imperium's service. Suborned to them were new organisations such as the fledgling Primaris battle psyker programmes, the training of the mentally conditioned truthsayers of the Administratum, and much that went unseen.

Above all of these sub-groups and of vast practical importance was the League of Black Ships, a dedicated fleet of specialised, purpose-built interstellar craft, their masters and crew fashioned to carry out the harvest of humanity. From the start however, it was clear that the Divisio would also need its own militant wing specialised not only in conducting the Great Tithe of psykers the Emperor had decreed, but in combating the very evils the tithe sought to prevent directly. The onus of this dread task fell upon the newly-formed Divisio Investigates.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE DIVISIO INVESTIGATES

As surprising as it may be, evidence suggests, at least upon the surface, that the Silent Sisterhood as it now stands was not part of the initial pattern of the Imperium's forces laid down by the Master of Mankind. There are those however who contest this, and claim that what became the Silent Sisterhood long dwelt in the shadows awaiting their time. It is doubtless true regardless of this that a number of so-called Untouchables did serve under the banners of Unification, but evidence suggests that understandably perhaps they did so at a remove both from the Emperor Himself, and His aide and minister, Malcador, then vizier to the Lord of Lightning, the both of them being psykers of prodigious strength, with He who was to be Emperor the greatest psyker humanity has ever known. These 'soulless' servants were, according to such rumours that persist from those times, in the nature of covert agents and assassins, and few in number, rather than a distinct militant Order. In fact, the only analogue in Ancient Terran history for the Sisters of Silence, as they are now known, can be found in the Akashic records of an entirely different age and hue; the darkly famed 'Hollow Ones' who served the Unspeakable King —himself by some legends a Psychic Null— in the terrible lost centuries of Terra's Age of Strife before the coming of the Emperor.

The First Harvests

During the Unification Wars, there had been many terrible threats born of psyker-witchery and warp entity possession encountered during the pacification, but these had been fought head on and overmastered by the power of the Emperor and the raw might of His warriors, but in the latter case at a terrible and disproportionate cost in lives. As the Great Crusade began to leave the confines of the Sol System and the first waves of the newly created League of Black Ships followed in their wake, where the Great Tithe was concerned initially, newly founded paramilitary investigation and enforcer cadres were employed to minister it on the ground, commanded by a cabal of loyal Primaris level psykers drawn from the Scholastica Psykana —this was the first incarnation of the Divisio Investigates— and to Terra directly they returned their harvest.

Though by all accounts well led and ably armed and armoured, this new militant Order's track record was not one of unalloyed success as the size of the Imperium rose to

encompass first dozens, then scores, then hundreds of inhabited star systems, and the strain quickly began to show. It was swiftly apparent in fact as the years passed that mortal losses among the Divisio's armed forces, incidences of psychological breakdown and bloody tragedy involving them were far too frequent to be borne. Such records that exist available to the auspices of the Terran Council indicate that it was known at the time that a better solution to the problem of the apprehension and control of psykers was clearly needed, but with the Great Crusade still in its infancy, its future configurations were not yet set and much was in flux, and many of the Emperor's purposes had not yet been made plain or found their final form. It is also said that at this time, a number of radical solutions were put before the consideration of the Emperor and His counsellors, but before a ruling was made, matters came to a head with the Cataclysm of Pentacanaes.

A Plague of Madness

A largely impoverished but relatively societally stable Sol pattern hive world, mere weeks in distance from Terra by the tides of the Empyrean, Pentacanaes had been both an early and an easily acquired bauble for the Great Crusade. Struggling to barely maintain an industrial technological base, its only advantage was as a fleet anchorage, and the only resource it offered the Imperium was its vast human population which ran into the tens of billions of lives.

Under an Imperial governorship which displaced a squalid mess of rival competing petty kings and confederations that had held the planet beforehand, Pentacanaes had grown first into a frontier outpost, then into a port-of-call, with hundreds of Imperialis Auxilia regiments temporarily stationed there before mustering and redeployment to the front lines. During this period, many of the native population's ablest and fittest youths also took up the call of the Great Crusade, thus stripping the world of its best and brightest to form departing regiments of its own. The end result was a planet in a steady, slow rot from within. Vice and petty corruption bred in the shadows of the vast landing yards and barracks complexes, while in the hive sinks and deep-core slum falls, bypassed by the wealth that had come to the world's upper castes and bled of hope and prospect, dark beliefs and strange cults began to fester despite the best efforts of locally posted iterators of the Imperial Truth and enforcement purges to stamp them out. Eventually, intelligence reached the

Imperial governor of a particularly dangerous doomsday cult, calling itself the 'Final Banquet', having taken root in a desolate slum sector known as the Distempora. The cult violently resisted any attempts to destroy it and it was reliably rumoured to be led by a 'holy family' with the power to 'work miracles'. The League of Black Ships was duly informed, and when next one of the tithe vessels arrived in Pentacanaes' orbit, a quintet of heavily armed gun-cutters was dispatched to descend into the Distempora sector carrying a strong Divisio Investigates force to end the cult and seize its leadership, who were judged in absentia doubtlessly to be rogue psykers. It is not known precisely what happened next, but the gun-cutters and their crews were never heard from again, and within hours all of Distempora was riven with a cataclysm of hideous and unreasoning bloodshed. This spread like wildfire and a few hours later, all of Pentacanaes' southern hemisphere was ablaze and stricken with an unending tide of riot, savagery and slaughter. It was clear that some form of psychic force had been unleashed on Pentacanaes, taking the shape of a plague of madness which had seized perhaps fully one in four of the living as it slowly expanded out from the Distempora sector like a spreading stain. Those it claimed became monsters, inhuman things bent upon the perpetration of atrocity and wild destruction.

A state of emergency was declared and units of the Imperialis Auxilia barracked on Pentacanaes were activated and moved to form a cordon around the affected sectors, but even they could not hold, and worse, soon many of their own ranks began to succumb to the madness. The Imperial governor of Pentacanaes was also a victim, shot down by his bodyguards as he attempted to end the lives of his own children as the madness took him. Authority now fell to the highest ranking Imperial officer in orbit, the master of the same Black Ship that had triggered the massacre: Captain Gigan D'antès. Elements of the VIth Legion —not yet known as the Space Wolves— had been alerted and were inbound from Terra, but their arrival would not be for days and Gigan D'antès judged that Pentacanaes did not have that long. Even the desperate measure of targeted lance strikes and orbital barrages could not halt the spread of the anarchy across the world, and wherever Captain D'antès looked, all was in disarray. No force already in combat could hold long against whatever psyker-born madness afflicted that damned world. No force, he noted with surprise, except for one.

The Daughters of the Crow was what the manifest of the stationed Imperialis Auxilia named them, or more formally the 5th '9-13' Indentured Irregular Infantry Regiment. They were a primarily female-culturally phenotype (techno-barbarian) force from an obscure feral world in the southern reaches of the Segmentum Solar, so obscure in fact it lacked a proper name in the records, only the designation of '9-13.' Recently raised and folded into the Great Crusade, landing only weeks previously for muster, the regiment had not yet seen active service, but the sparse records available showed a number of ill-defined complaints raised against the regiment by those who had been barracked alongside it; numerous fractious incidents were logged and discipline masters had been frequently sent out in force to break up trouble between the 9-13'ers and others. Sent in with the rest of the Auxilia as the tide of madness had spread, the small regiment had not only held against the onslaught, it had driven back the afflicted horde, and not one of its fighters had suffered psychic contamination. Not one.

To Gigan D'antès, versed in the lore of the Scholastica Psykana, there could only be a single answer; the Daughters of the Crow—or at least a very significant proportion of them—were Untouchables. It was unprecedented and doubtless something that needed later investigation, but for now they offered a lifeline to a world besieged by madness. Swiftly organising such air support as he could, and using Black Ship pilots where possible to add resilience against the growing psychic storm, Gigan paved the way for the Daughters of the Crow, gambling all and airlifting the entire regiment, reinforced and up-armed in any way possible, and blasted them a landing zone into the very heart of the nightmare, the depths of the Distempora sector. Here they gave battle to the transfigured horrors that had been unleashed from the gestalt minds of the 'holy family' of the cult—gave battle and slew them. The effect was akin to extinguishing a fire by hurling an explosive into its midst. A psychic shockwave roared across the planet. Many of the afflicted mercifully simply died, their hearts stopped and their brains sundered as some great parasitic link was severed. Others who were less fortunate became catatonic, but still more raved on, now simply truly mad rather than the puppets of some malign force. The spreading stain of madness however had been cut off at its source, and now mere anarchy and disaster reigned, where dark purpose had previously ruled all.

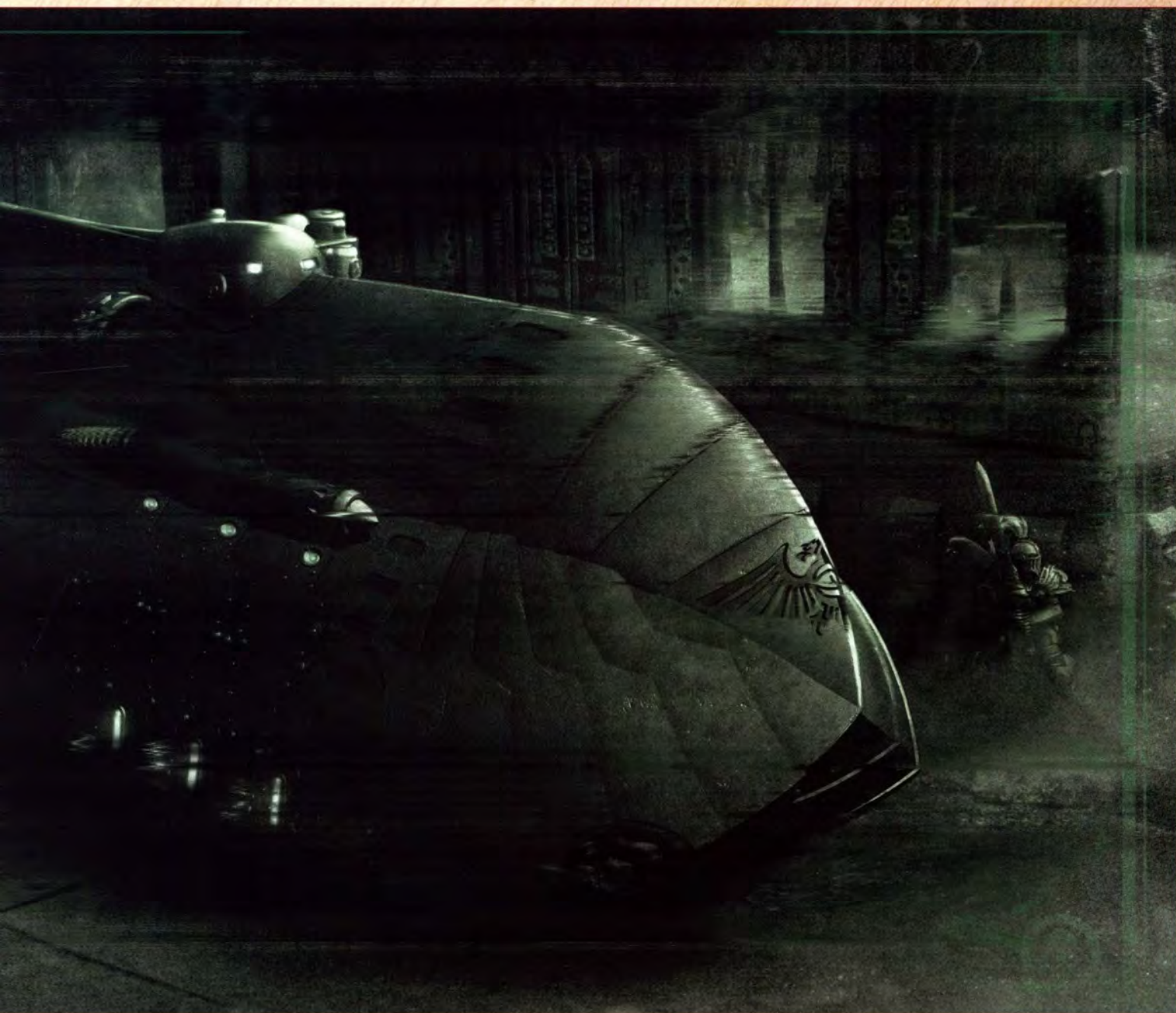


It would take the arrival of the VIth Legion to bring Pentacanaes back to heel, and in the aftermath a billion dead were accounted for and half a world left a burned out shell. By then the survivors of the Daughters of the Crow were long gone within the hold of D'antès' Black Ship, while far off across the Segmentum Solar, it is said that scores of other Black Ships appeared in the skies of the obscure planet designated '9-13' and in their passing left a world half emptied.

The Birth of Silence

The events of the Cataclysm of Pentacanaes stand in blessed isolation in the Imperium's record as regards the origins of the Sisters of Silence, and it seems certain to many observers that '9-13' and its bounty of Untouchables are to all evidence the core upon which the remade Divisio Investigates

was formed. Or so it seems. There are some at this point in time who doubt the veracity of this account, or at least its significance. That the account exists at all in the chronicles of the Great Crusade is suspect to the minds of other observers, when so much else around the Silent Sisterhood is shrouded in secrecy. Others merely contest that the historical account has been doctored. Certainly, Lord Militant Luca Kulga a century later in his treatises, *Notable Battles of the Segmentum Solar*, was recorded as speculating that the whole Pentacanaes affair was arranged; a kind of bloody experiment—a field test whose results were bought at the deliberate sacrifice of a billion lives. If this is the case, then by whom—the lords of the Divisio Telepathica, or the Emperor directly? If so, then the answer becomes immediately unknowable.



Some insist that the origins of the Silent Sisterhood go even further back, either in the mind of the Emperor, or some lost agency of the Dark Age of Technology, that they awaited perhaps only a critical mass of Untouchables to act, or at least to operate in the open. Regardless, within an unknown exact number of years, but no greater than four decades into the Great Crusade, the Divisio Investigates became synonymous with a new militant Order, that of the Sisters of Silence. Unique in the Imperium's service, this Order comprised human Psychic Nulls, all female, thousands strong and beholden to none but the Emperor. The Great Tithe now included direct action to reinforce their numbers in the harvest of worlds, garnering Untouchable female children just as it did the psyker-marked. Structured in isolation and with the ironclad rule of

discipline, this militant arm of the Divisio Astra Telepathica operated with remorseless efficiency and under an unassailable vow of silence and secrecy, a distinction which gave them a ready common name to those of the Imperium's authorities with whom they dealt, and to the Imperium through which they began to pass ghostlike upon their dark harvest, they became objects of fear and awe.

Exactly where and how the Sisters of Silence came into being remains but one mystery among many where they are concerned, and that the shadow of some techno-barbarian culture is part of their bloodline seems clear, but from whence exactly it came not even the wisest of Imperial military historiographers can state with clarity. But as a postscript to the official account of the Cataclysm of Pentacanaes, it can be said for a fact that the

hive world endures; although it is a ravaged, half-empty domain of gloom and ashes now, steeped in old tragedy and long since left behind as the Imperium has expanded across the galaxy. As for the world designated '9-13', no such sphere is listed in the Cartographica Imperialis—the numeric is simply missing from its lists.

THE WITCH-SEEKERS AND THEIR WORKS

The Silent Sisterhood as an organisation is one of singular reach and secrecy. Its exact numbers are unknown save to the Emperor, for though it remains nominally part of the Divisio Astra Telepathica, it has long become interwoven with the will and direct agency of the Emperor Himself. For while the Legio Custodes guard the Master of Mankind directly, the Sisters of Silence have become pivotal to the carrying out of the Emperor's

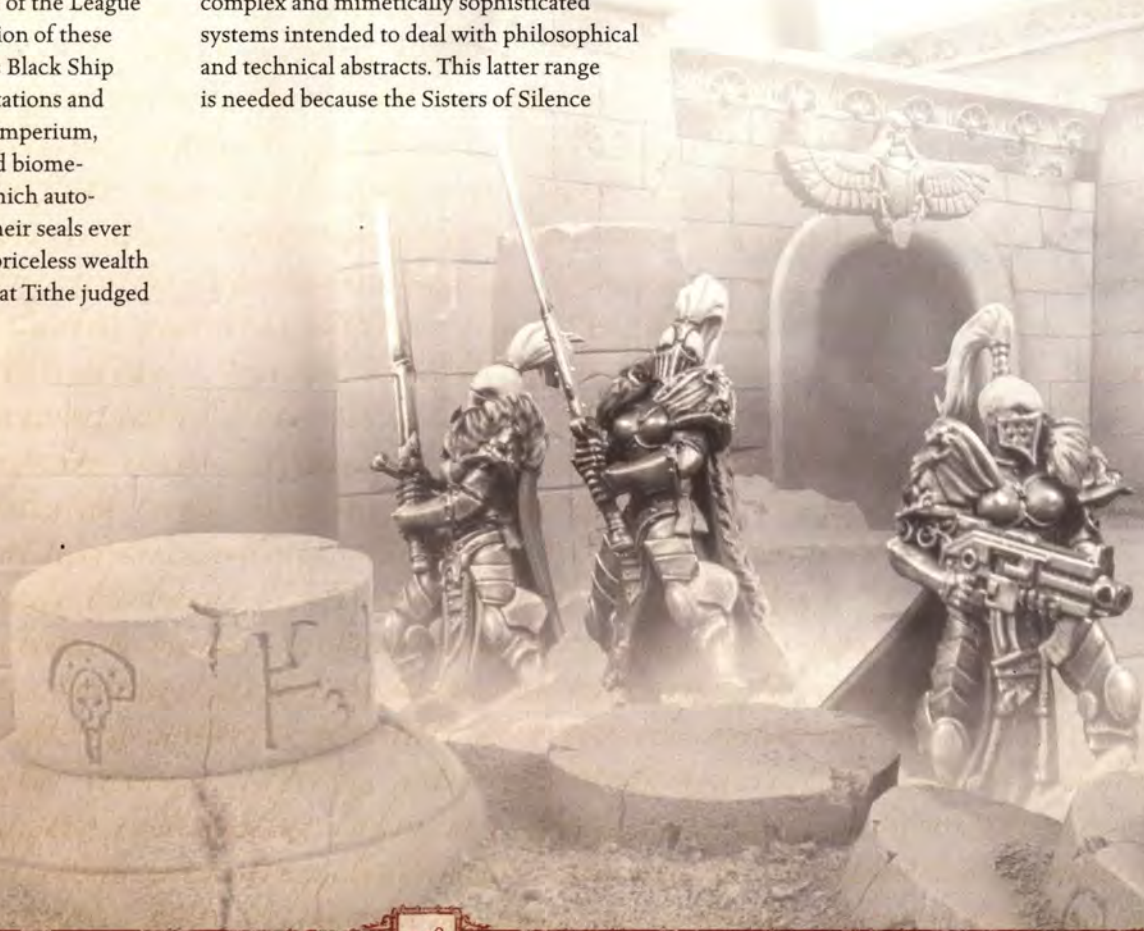
great and secret works. By the later Great Crusade, the Sisters of Silence certainly numbered in their tens of thousands, though this force was widely dispersed, and the Sisterhood's Untouchables now crewed and commanded the vessels of the League of Black Ships. In addition, they maintained a strong presence both on Terra itself as well as notably at their Luna headquarters, the Somnus Citadel—a facility handed over by the ancient Selenite cults—and the Magadan Orbital Construct—the fortified orbital anchorage station utilised by the League of Black Ships in the Sol System to deliver their cargo, and forbidden to all others. It is also taken as fact that much of the initial sifting and processing of the Great Tithe takes place not in the Sol System but elsewhere on several isolated and otherwise prohibited star systems nearby—an understandable change from the tithe's early days given the sheer scale of the operation as the Imperium has expanded and the potential security risks involved in so many untrained psykers being concentrated in a single area. These Divisio Astra Telepathica administered star systems are only known to other arms of the Imperium as vague and shifting code designations, but here the Silent Sisters alone hold sway and what numbers, facilities and resources they possess in these sovereign domains, none save they and the Emperor knows. In fact, such is the shroud of secrecy surrounding the Great Tithe that only the Navigators of the League of Black Ships know the location of these processing worlds and various Black Ship anchorages, collection-node stations and outposts scattered across the Imperium, and their lives are led in sealed biome-crucibles, prisoning homes which auto-incinerate all within should their seals ever be compromised; such is the priceless wealth in human potential of the Great Tithe judged and guarded.

The Vow of Tranquillity

Secrecy is more than just the watchword and the method of the Silent Sisterhood; it is core to their very being. After their training is complete and their induction to the Sisterhood is confirmed, a process which begins when they are taken up in childhood, the final step on the path of the Order is the Vow of Tranquillity; a solemn dedication to their duty unto death which manifests outwardly as the vow of silence which gives the Divisio Investigates its more common title. From this point onwards no Sister of Silence utters a single spoken word for the rest of their lives, not even under duress of pain, be it the stroke of a blade or impact of a bullet, such is their stoic resolve. No secret can or ever shall pass from the keeping of the Sisters of Silence, and no word of remission or clemency from them is ever given. Further symbolic of this absolute vow is the portcullis-style armoured gorget they wear as part of their panoply of war, which, often in combination with a death's-head skull, has become identified with the Order in the iconography of the Imperium.

Communication within the Sisters of Silence takes the medium of a complex series of physical sign language forms, ranging from highly efficient and abrupt tactical cants designed for the battlefield, detailed forms geared to the ready and precise expression of strategic concepts and actions, to hugely complex and mimetically sophisticated systems intended to deal with philosophical and technical abstracts. This latter range is needed because the Sisters of Silence

remain an organisation dedicated not only to the ministrations of the Great Tithe but also to investigation, pursuit, inquiry and judgement. They also possess and must express when needed an unmatched and encyclopaedic knowledge of the psyker and the Empyrean, which they alone, owing to their Psyker Null status, are uniquely safe in keeping. Communication outside their ranks is usually facilitated by one of two sources. Firstly, through the involvement of selected apprentice-acolytes of the Sisterhood, themselves Untouchables and warriors in training of various ages, who act as intermediaries, known as the 'Proloquors', and secondly through a number of technolinguistic systems which allow the symbolic-structure of the Sisters' sign-forms to be rendered machine-readable at great speed, and if needed in extremis, outputted as vox-signal via servo-automata. The Silent Sisterhood maintains fluency in numerous other forms of gestural and non-verbal linguistic communication such as Legiones Astartes battle-sign of various types, voidsys and graph-binarc for conversing with other military forces of the Imperium directly when the need arises.



The Art of War of the Silent Sisterhood

Beyond their unique abilities as Psychic Nulls, the Sisters of Silence are also a highly trained and relentless paramilitary force, ably equipped to their task and skilled in overcoming any opposition they may encounter in their sworn duty, be it deluded bystanders, mind-ridden soldiers, hordes of psychically-puppeted corpses or even armed cults sat at the heart of a world's ruling caste. The Sisters of Silence are as remorseless, dedicated and as formidably skilled as any human fighting force of the Imperium, while the cold darkness of their minds makes them a more terrible foe than any to the witch, the rogue psyker and the Warp-touched.

Given their particular duties, their training and tactical bias focuses on close-quarters combat, short-ranged, high-intensity warfare which often sees them fighting from a position of numeric inferiority and on unfamiliar ground, and their skill in such conditions is supreme. Fear is alien to them, their conditioning and experiences exposing them to horrors against which even a veteran of the dark frontiers of the Great Crusade could not easily endure. Glory and honour—as these things are generally understood—are of little value to the Sisters of Silence, theirs is a higher calling and only

the attainment of their goals has meaning to them. Given this, stealth, covert surveillance and torture are all tried and tested weapons in their repertoire to be used when needed, and they know well the value of mystery, shock, awe and terror in their work. They will readily invoke their Emperor-given authority to use and discard any intermediaries and agencies of the Imperium as they require, and 'collateral' destruction in pursuit of their targets is judged as a thing to be avoided as a matter of course, but irrelevant in cases of necessity.

Beyond their extreme training and coldly rational tactical discipline, there is also something that has been quite deliberately invoked of the barbaric and the arcane about the Sisters of Silence as a militant Order. This is not simply to provoke fear in others, although clearly this effect is ably achieved, but also it lends them a distinct and singular entity, as well as a murderous intensity in combat seldom encountered beyond the Imperium's superhuman fighting forces such as the Legiones Astartes. This deliberate element of feral barbarism finds its expression in many forms, ranging from the totem-like names chosen to designate their tactical sub-units during deployment, to the aesthetic design of their ornate battle gear, which is styled to invoke imagery of the warriors of ages past but match the function of the finest power armour, to their manes of long hair, said to remain unshorn unless the Sister has a sworn quarry escape them.

THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SILENT SISTERHOOD

The Divisio Investigates is an organisation more akin in structure to the fusion of an agency of legal enforcement and a secret society or secular military Order of old. As with so much that surrounds those who orbit close to the centre of the Emperor's work, its ways and dispositions are all but impenetrable to outsiders beyond certain open ranks and divisions observable by those who are called to fight alongside them.

A complete accounting of the Sisters of Silence's ranks is then impossible, but the simple extrapolation of logic from the notional size of the League of Black Ships required at the minimum for the Great Tithe to function, as it assuredly does, places the Sisters of Silence at tens of thousands of active Witch-seekers. The high command of the Order outwardly comprises three high offices and individuals that were known to the hierarchy of the Imperium at the time of the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, though doubtless there were others that went unknown outside of the Sisterhood itself.

Most famed of these is the rank of Knight-Commander; the most senior field officer of the Silent Sisterhood. This title was held by one of the most sinisterly renowned warriors in the Imperium—Jenetia Krole, known also by popular myth as the 'Soulless Queen'. Of equal importance to the execution of the Great Tithe is the rank of the Mistress of the Black Ships, and in effect, the grand admiral of the Divisio Investigates' fleet; this was held by Varonika Sulath. Lastly is the Nemesis Praxia, Ebon Naroda; she who was high guardian of the compiled lore and estates temporal of the Divisio Investigates, and ultimately responsible for the training of its acolytes.



Other ranks within the organisation progress through that of Acolyte —of the First, Second and Third rank— more informally known as 'Sisters-in-waiting', who have not yet formally been initiated into the Order. Further ranks of the Sisterhood proper were referred to with melodramatic flourish as the 'Null Maidens' by the remembrancers of the Great Crusade. These are structured both in terms of seniority and tactical disposition, ranking in order: Seeker, Prosecutor, and with Vigilator as the most senior of the three. Other specialist units such as the Pursuers, the Aquilae Astra and Questora, accounting for cyber-beast handlers, pilots and void crew, and Investigators/Enforcers respectively branch off these.

Above this level, the Order's hierarchy bifurcated to outside eyes into two distinct groups: the Chamber of Oblivion and the Chamber of Judgement. The first is an elite militant sub-faction comprising the most powerful Psychic Nulls and most martially skilled of Vigilators, and from its ranks of Oblivion Knights and Knights-Centura—the battlefield commanders of the Order are taken. The latter chamber is if anything more feared. It comprises the dreaded Silent Judges of the Excrutiatius, whose task is to weigh the actions of the guilty and innocent when it comes to those concealing psykers from the tithe, and where matters are not clear regards those believed to be psykers, to determine the presence of the psyker's gift, and where it is found, to pass judgement on whether the accused should be taken by the tithe, or executed as a danger to humanity.

Panoply of War

In terms of armament and equipment, the Divisio Investigates is particularly well served, and second only perhaps to the Legio Custodes in the scope and customisation of its arsenal. It has long maintained myriad different weapons and tactical systems suited to its needs, from patterns of the Terran bolter—a weapon more commonly associated with the Space Marine Legions—manufactured for use by unaugmented humans, to the exquisitely fashioned and utterly lethal executioner's power blades carried by its Vigilators. The Divisio Investigates also has access to large stockpiles of advanced and specialised weapons such as las-borer alchem needlers that can render a target comatose for capture as readily as slay them, and with them a poisons cabinet whose contents have been drawn from across a thousand worlds. Though the Sisters of Silence have access to the multitude of the Imperium's STC designs, which they have

often relied on in their duty, during the late Great Crusade these were largely replaced in the field with unique patterns of grav-repulsor craft outfitted with sophisticated covert operations and stealth systems better suited to their needs. Besides this, the Order has access to certain far more arcane technologies all but unguessed at outside the Divisio Astra Telepathica; most prominently psi-negation and disruption weaponry whispered to have been created for them by the hand of the Emperor Himself.

The Black Ships

The League of Black Ships itself cannot also go unremarked in any overview of the power of the Silent Sisterhood. It is a fleet of uniquely designed void craft of considerable size and power, most being variants of more commonly known long-range cruiser and battlecruiser designs. They are heavily armed, well-defended, rigged for extended operations and above all equipped with systems that allow them to go unnoticed by signal and auspex scan if needed. Just how many there are is a matter of conjecture, but this figure by the end of the Great Crusade certainly ranged into the hundreds, if not thousands. They are a shadow upon the

stars of the Imperium, coming and going all but unseen, even as the wars of the Heresy unfolded, bound to no purpose or authority but their own. Just as secret are the location and capacity of many of the orbital ship forges and docks which serviced them. The vessels are also highly automated, reducing the need for human crew who might be imperilled by their cargo, and allowing for voyages of long duration without resupply when needed. They are by their nature a hell for any psyker taken on board as their structure is interlaced with systems to block out and resist the psyker's connection to the Empyrean, as well as numerous cells for internment, punishment and interrogation, and cryo-crypts and stasis chambers for the storage of the most dangerous subjects. The largest and most powerful Black Ships also carry limited supplies of Exterminatus class weaponry—usually planet-mantle breaking cyclonic torpedoes and rare vortex warheads rather than bio-weapons for reasons of intended outcome. This enables them to enact world-kill protocols or the more confined if no less absolute annihilation of an area if a rogue psyker crisis threatens a catastrophic warp breach on a world's surface, though such incidents are thankfully rare.

THE PARIAH GENE

The exact biological source—as it is believed to be—which creates in a human being the state of Psychic Null, the so-called 'Pariah gene', has proven an elusive and ephemeral subject of study, and in testing no single 'gene' at all. Such attempts to exploit or isolate it when pursued by both the Imperial Archotechnologist Corps and the Mechanicum during the Great Crusade's early years courted disaster, and as a result the Emperor decreed a general moratorium upon the study of the biological basis of the Psyker Null phenomena, affecting all but His own direct experimentation should He wish it. What remains of those extant studies indicates that most attempts to synthesise, propagate or even weaponise the Psychic Null were tragic failures or worse. Despite all this evidence, shadowed accounts of certain Clades of the Officio Assassinorum and the dread and obscure Ordo Sinister also contain evidence of the Emperor's own 'engineered' use of the Psychic Null in warfare. To others however, the mystery of the Pariah gene, if it truly exists, remains out of reach.

So many unanswered questions revolve around this most arcane and dangerous of topics. Foremost are those which centre around theories of how the Pariah gene came about: was it perhaps the result of xenos tampering of the human genome or some strange and terrible experiment of the Dark Age of Technology? Or, as the wildest theories state, is it some perverse evolutionary development against the Warp-riven cosmos itself? There is also the observation that no Space Marine, or Custodian Guard for that matter, has ever been recorded as being a Psychic Null. This factor weighs the evidence of some scholars that within the Space Marine gene-seed itself is perhaps a shadow of the Emperor's own genetic material and a sliver of His own psychic power crucial to its process and success. If this is the case, it would be wholly an anathema to the Pariah gene and likely simply kill its implanted subject. It can only be speculated that if even a single Legion of Psychic Null Legiones Astartes had been possible, how very different history may have been—just as without the involvement of the Sisters of Silence in the war and the Emperor's great work, Horus' treachery may well have ended in his triumph upon the broken throne of Terra.

VIGILATOR ALMATRA CRAVARE

FROST SPIDER VIGILATOR CADRE
17TH DOMINION OF THE SILENT SISTERHOOD
OF THE GREAT TITHE
PROSPERINE CENSURE FORCE

Archetypal of the Sisters of Silence present in the Censure Force despatched to Prospero from Terra, Almatra Cravare was a veteran of the Great Tithe, and such extant records that survive from the Somnus Citadel on Luna indicate that she had more than two decades of service in the League of Black Ships. As a Vigilator —one of the Execution blade-equipped close combat elite of the Silent Sisterhood— it was her task and the task of cadres like hers to close rapidly in combat with enemy psykers and dispose of them with the bloody certainty of a power blade strike, preferably one inflicting a decapitating blow. While they relied not only upon their power as Psychic Nulls, but also their skill and speed as well as the protection of their advanced armour to defend them from harm in such close assaults, to serve as a Vigilator was still to invite peril and death, but this was an honour that the Silent Sisterhood's ranks aspired to above all. The risk of such service was never more evident than upon the deadly, reality-warped battlefields of Prospero. Amid the fury of the darkest hours of the Battle of Tizca, the selfless sacrifice of the Vigilator cadres was perhaps the deciding factor in many sectors of the battle, allowing their comrades both of the Custodian Guard and the Space Wolves to close with the foe without being swept aside on a tide of warp-conjured horror. Almatra Cravare stands as a testament to this, fighting on despite bolter and shrapnel wounds which should have felled an unaugmented human being several times over, she gave up her life only after plunging her blade through the torso of Magister Gul Hadrastep of the Thousand Sons Order of Ruin, disrupting the skein of psychic energy with which he drove on the psi-automata at his command, allowing them to be overcome.



Vratine Armour Pauldron Iconography



THE ORDO SINISTER

Title (Formal/Base): The Titanicus
Terranic Ordo Sinister

Banner Imperialis: Ordo Militant of the
Imperial Household, seconded ex tempera
to the Divisio Militaris of the Great Crusade

Magisterium: Pater Imperium (operating
under the Writ of the Imperial Household)

Cognomen (Informal): The Left Hand of
the Emperor; the Nightmare Titans

Domains: Four Chamber 'fortress-crypts'
of the Ordo are stated to exist on Terra:
Occidentalis, Orientalis, Polaris and
Borealis.

"...I am Become Death, Destroyer of Worlds."

The Apocrypha Terra

'Fools have asked "Why did the Dark Age of
Technology end in the fall of humanity?",
and other fools answer back "Folly" or "Pride"
or "The Worship of Progress", as if these
things alone had any meaning. The answer,
as the wise know, is simple. It is because
finally humanity had the arts at their
disposal to make their dreams reality, and
the dreams of humanity have ever been the
darkest things in all creation.'

Introduction to the 'Emerald Testament',
Suppressed work of the
technoarchaeologist Synecius Thorn

M29

The forces of the Great Crusade were myriad in nature, and as the remembrancers were wont to style them "...as numberless as the stars themselves". This is only befitting, as the task for which the vast host of the Imperialis Militarium was conceived and embodied was for no less than the staggeringly incomprehensible goal of the domination of the entire galaxy. This required weapons and warriors as diverse as uncounted Pioneer corps of indentured labourers, hundreds of thousands strong, to the superhuman might of the Legiones Astartes, a purpose-created gene-crafted fighting force greater than any in history. The will and reason of the Emperor divined and designed for the Great Crusade in effect a weapon and a warrior for every conceivable form of war, and even those inconceivable until they had to be fought—unhallowed wars against powers and horrors beyond human imagining and beyond merely human endurance. One such dark creation, an experiment perhaps in weaponry long forbidden, and carried out not by any Mechanicum Archimandrite nor by Strategos Magister, but by the hand of the Emperor Himself, led to the creation of the Ordo Sinister.

FORBIDDEN TO ALL SAVE ONE

The exact genesis of the experiments which led to the creation of the Ordo Sinister is difficult to pin down by scholarly observers in this latter age. As with almost all that began in the prohibited vaults of the Emperor's own laboratory complex beneath the Imperial Palace on Terra, its nature remains sealed by time and by the destruction that was to follow. Such records that do remain within the Martian Mechanicum however, who, given the nature of the Ordo Sinister's origins, were seriously perturbed by the project—or more accurately their exclusion from it—do evidence certain speculations that it was arrived at either as a tangent of what was to become the Emperor's Greater Work in the control and manipulation of the psyker factor in human evolution, or as a direct attempt to develop esoteric weaponry on the macro scale to combat certain encountered menaces which had proven terrible in the cost of their destruction. These menaces, such as the Enslaver Alpha-incursions, the Rangdan Osseivores and the Hellespont Void-forms, all of which had taken the lives of millions of soldiers and thousands of star vessels to combat, and had broken whole Expeditionary fleets and Titan Legions in the past, were menaces to which no sure counter existed save that of Exterminatus.

The purpose of what became the Ordo Sinister was the battlefield employment of macro-level weaponry of terrible potency and of a nature which was expressly forbidden to any within the Imperium, be they Primarch or planetary governor, on pain of death. These were weapons born of the Dark Age of Technology and perhaps ancient relics of civilisations which had risen and fallen before life had even begun on primeval Terra, weapons forbidden to all but those under the Emperor's direct shadow and control, and even then only under the greatest possible conditions of secrecy and failsafe. The 'Ordo Sinister' was the cadre set up to build, maintain and use these weapons, classed as their name suggests as 'Sinistrum'. This word has long stood as the Terran tech-arcana classification for prohibited technologies designed to artificially amplify or weaponise the psyker's gift, usually at the cost of the psyker themselves, body or mind, and examples, such as the 'Culexine-shackles' used by the narco-enslaved psyker covens of the Caucasus Wastes subjugated by the Emperor during the Unification Wars, had long since been bywords for the evils of the Dark Age of Technology.

The Oblation

It is not known just how long the Ordo had existed in the Emperor's shadow, but their first prominence came during 967.M30 when a Writ of Compulsion was issued by the Emperor requiring the deliverance of a grand total of twenty-five fully operational Battle Titans of the Warlord class to the Vault Imperial, in perpetuity. This extraordinary request caused a strong reaction in the Mechanicum hierarchy, splitting it between those who fervently considered the Emperor to be the living incarnation of the Ommissiah, and therefore immediately entitled to any of His servant's works, and those who saw with a more political eye, deeming the demand to be a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the treaty which bound the Mechanicum to the Imperium and guaranteed its rights. To this latter group, the spectre of potential Titan Legions being formed without the sacred imprint of the Mechanicum at their inception or control was the start of the end for Mars' independence. Schism threatened but after an audience between the Fabricator-General and the Emperor, the colossal demand was met and any further open malcontent within the Machine Cult's ranks over the issue was suppressed, though what ill-feeling remained in secret can only be speculated upon in light of later events. Mars herself bore the brunt of the burden, delivering eight Warlords from her reserve,

while new production and requisitions from the Forge Worlds of Metallica, Phaeton, Arachnus, Caradryn Magna and Voss made up the rest. The transfer was viewed as a crime by some and a blessing by others, but of this event, or the 'Oblation' as the followers of the Machine Cult named it, nothing would come to pass for several years, the god-engines swallowed up as if without trace on Terra despite their scale and power. Twenty-five of the most powerful war machines ever fashioned by humanity simply vanished.

The King of Terrors

Skagan-VI was a largely unremarkable human-occupied world upon the southern border of the Segmentum Solar. Rendered Compliant in 860.M30 by the IVth Legion in a relatively bloodless action, it had grown rapidly in population, seeing waves of migration brought in from overcrowded worlds closer to the Segmentum Solar core, as well as the rapid increase in hive-style urbanisation and industrialisation which followed. The result for Skagan-VI was political instability, simmering insurrection and the threat of full-scale civil war by the year 946.M30, when the local Lord-Arbitrator requested aid from the Sector overlords, saying that the world had become a factionalised powder keg ready to ignite.

The response to the Lord-Arbitrator when it came was an unexpected one; a flotilla of vessels sent from Terra itself, comprising a single unmarked Titan conveyor, flanked by an escort of Saturnyne fleet Solar Auxilia cruisers and, most shocking of all, an augur-frigate in the scarlet and gold panoply of the Imperial Household Squadron. A single lander-crucible deployed from the unnamed Titan conveyor and descended to the starport of Decorah Breaks near the capital city-plate of Skagan-VI. Its cargo upon dismounting was to be a single Warlord Titan liveried in deep green-black verdigris and bearing a snarling lion in cold argent head as its sigil. Upon its armorial was featured no symbol or sign recognisable as belonging to any Titan Legion of the Imperium, instead it bore the words 'Ordo Sinister – Pavore Dominetur' and what was judged to be the Titan's blazoned name, *Polaris-Albedelach*, though within days such a strange-sounding title was replaced with one far more appropriate in the whispers of the natives of Skagan-VI—they called it 'The King of Terrors' after the psyker-tarot card of the same name. For where the god-engine walked, fear walked with it. Of course, such towering colossi of destruction rightly engender fear in those who look upon them, such is their inherent quality of awe

and warlike splendour that even the most jaded soldier cannot help but quake when in the presence of such a terrifying machine of destruction or while contemplating what it is capable of, but the fear this monstrous newcomer inspired was something else. Fear bled from it like a miasma, flowing out to chill the bone and still the heart. Crowds fled from it in unreasoning panic, while others could do nothing but fall prostrate in abject terror as the Titan passed through the city's great arterial travelways, never firing its hulking weapons nor sounding its war siren in anger.

Where it walked the world was stilled, and where its shadow passed upon the horizon, the sleep of the just and the guilty alike was wracked equally with cold dreams of death and oblivion. Would-be revolutionaries were silenced, insurrectionists abandoned their arms and dispersed to outlying districts,

their causes and grievances ashes upon their tongues. The King of Terrors brought Skagan-VI to heel without firing a shot.

The Witch-Idol of Magc'Sithraal

The second time the Ordo Sinister would take to the field would be a far bloodier and more terrible affair, as part of a protracted series of battles that has since come to be known as the Defence of Helioret. The Helioret sector had, since the opening years of the 960s.M30, been under escalating attack from Eldar corsairs and marauder forces based upon a half-shattered Craftworld known as Magc'Sithraal. These Eldar were by any example of their species who had been encountered, insane, tortured creatures, still reeling from the fall of their ancient power, driven by grief and suicidal with bitter hate for all other races. They had fallen upon the worlds of Helioret with merciless violence, burning planet after planet, unleashing

strange synthetic plagues that fused flesh into bloodied crystal, and fractured moons and orbital stations to tumble down upon the worlds below.

The Imperium's response to the onslaught soon escalated until scores of regiments of the Imperialis Auxilia had been mobilised against it, with them Taghmata forces from Anvilus and Incaladion, supported by a demi-Legio of the Tiger Eyes Titans who contested bitterly to hold the line against the splinter-bone Wraith Titans of the Magc'Sithraal Eldar at Luxor and Ratep. Utter loss of those key worlds was only averted when a full third of the strength of the Blood Angels Legion took to the fray with their Primarch Sanguinius at the fore. Not even this apocalyptic force could win outright victory though, but instead it saw the Eldar forced back to a defensive ring around their sundered and debris-trailing Craftworld.



It was as the angelic Primarch girded his forces for an all-out attack against the Magc'Sithraal Craftworld that he was unexpectedly joined by a squadron bearing the Seal and Writ of Terra and the Imperial Household. With it were a dozen Black Ships carrying within them cohorts of the Silent Sisterhood and with them a trio of unmarked Titan conveyors with the Warlords of the Ordo Sinister within their holds. The battle which followed was shocking in its intensity, with the barbed, swift hulls of Eldar warships set burning across the void as they fought both the steel-grey war-barques of Anvilus as well as the proud, white-hulled battleships of the Armada Ultima. As the void battle raged, the sleek Black Ships and the crimson predators of the Blood Angels fleet dove straight on to their quarry. Crashing through the decaying spires and force-domed atmosphere of the desolate Craftworld, the invaders were met by Magc'Sithraal's

army of the dead; thousands of wraith war constructs ranging from swift-footed assassins to towering warriors and Titan-walkers, all powered and animated by the vengeful souls of that haunted realm. Reality rippled and shuddered as the Eldar distortion weaponry rent the air, tearing crimson gunships from the skies, while below, ancient colonnades and towers that had stood for centuries toppled, hammered by remorseless shellfire—and as missiles rained down in detonating waves, the landing was forced. A score of Eldar Titans rose up from the depths of their ancient vaults, and at the head of them was a Warlock Titan, filled with the souls of Magc'Sithraal's fallen seers and prophets. The Imperium had encountered it before and named it the 'Witch-Idol' and where it had walked, no Imperial victory had yet been won. Against this massing of force, the Imperial assault first faltered and was checked, as even the Titans of the Legio Fureans landing with the second wave were swiftly torn apart by the Witch-Idol and its kinsmen, though it is said that the Angel Sanguinius destroyed one of their number himself, tearing open its head with his bare hands and sending it crashing to destruction before being struck a grievous blow by the Warlock's psi-lance from which none other would have survived. It was then that the three Titans of the Ordo Sinister made their landing, and at their footfalls the very fabric of the Craftworld was said to have shuddered as if in revulsion.

From their carapace weapons poured volleys of rocket fire and searing turbo laser blasts as might have been expected from any battle Titan, while their right hands were vast power claws which twitched in expectation of the close-quarters kill, but from the baroque and strange weapons that served as their left arms, there spat a silent darkness. These bolts of black nothingness slammed through the ranks of the wraith-constructs, devouring everything they touched. While in the aftershock of their detonation, scores more wraith-kind simply fell like severed marionettes, never again to stir. Howling a great chorus of grief and outrage, the Eldar Titans rounded on the newly arrived giants and let fly, pulse lasers cutting the sky apart between the two while the Witch-Idol conjured forth a tempest of eldritch warp-lightning, its coruscating wave of destruction suddenly met by an ice-white blaze of force emanating from the god-engines of the Ordo Sinister and shattered. The backlash of the forces negating each other shook the Craftworld like an earthquake, tumbling Space Marine and Wraithguard alike to the

ground like toys. Empyrean force had been met with Empyrean force and it was clear to every spectator to this clash of colossi how; the god-engines of the Ordo Sinister were Psi-Titans. The conflict that followed was a true battle of the gods, and the recovering Primarch Sanguinius had wisdom enough to withdraw the warriors of his Legion to give the Titans a wide berth for what was to ultimately follow.

For three standard hours the Titans fought, unleashing destructive forces on a scale enough to break a dozen cities; pulse laser slashed metre-thick ceramite Warlord armour, only to have it melt and reform whole in the wake of the destruction, though not even such occult protections could hold back the lethal strike of a gigantic Eldar power blade plunged deep into the reactor-fuelled heart of one of the Ordo Sinister's number. Ghostlike holo-fields flickered and shuddered as the Eldar Titans danced the dance of death with impossible grace, and fusillades of screaming rockets found only empty air, but not even such mastery of speed and confusion could stop the ravaging darkness of the Warlord-Sinister's baleful primary weapons. Slowly but surely for the Eldar Titans, four became three, became two, became only the wounded Witch-Idol beset still by two of the Ordo Sinister's Warlords, although both were damaged. Its lance shattered by a blast of ravaging emptiness, it sang its defiance across the Empyrean but was answered by imprisoning hurricanes of psychic force against which its superior manoeuvrability became nothing more than the struggle of a battered scarecrow caught in a storm. One of the Warlords-Sinister then seized the Witch-Idol's broken shoulder, holding it captive while its dark companion tore off the Warlock Titan's head.

With the Witch-Idol's destruction, it was if the soul of Magc'Sithraal had died as well. Lights flickered and died across the ruined Craftworld, systems failed and the end began. The last remnants of the Eldar who had not already fled their dying home came on in a suicidal frenzy, but found only the fury of the Blood Angels Legion and the cool savagery of the Sisters of Silence waiting for them. The Psi-Titans of the Ordo Sinister did not wait, instead they bore up the remains of their fallen comrade, and without further communication departed the battlefield. The last of the slaughter was not long in coming, and the final act of the Defence of Helioet was for the wreckage of the broken Craftworld to be hurled into a nearby sun to die its final death.



The Deeds of the Ordo Sinister

The account of the Ordo Sinister's involvement in the Defence of Heliores contained within the battle chronicles of the Blood Angels remains the most detailed and certain account of the secretive Ordo in battle. There are perhaps a dozen other such incidents of less certain veracity or of little detail elsewhere, but each also features the account of some vastly potent enemy to be contested, usually possessing great psychic power, or conversely as with Skagan-VI, a fractious world brought back to peace through almost preternatural terror. The most important perhaps of these is the passage of three Titans of the Ordo Sinister within the Imperial host despatched to censure Prospero, a fact which appears was kept even from Leman Russ until well after the fighting had already begun. What does seem certain however from all these accounts was that very few Titans were ever fielded at once by the Ordo Sinister, and when they appeared, it was often without the foreknowledge of any of the forces on whose side they intervened. The Ordo was never despatched to the frontiers of the Great Crusade, and never left Terra for any length of time that can be discerned. Nor, unless by some far more secret means, does it appear that any more Titans were added to their number. To many this has led to the belief that the Ordo Sinister all through the latter Great Crusade was an experimental field trial, an unfinished project still in its testing stage when the wars of the Heresy upset many destinies and intended courses of action. Tellingly, even before his treacherous fall from grace, never once was the Ordo Sinister placed at the disposal of Warmaster Horus or any other independent commander, but it always remained in the shadow of the Emperor's authority.

When the Horus Heresy came, a representative of the Ordo Sinister did present himself to the Council of Terra when requested and answered various questions of the force's structure and command during the period of the Emperor's self-sequestering; a meeting from which some of the latter details of this account are drawn, but citing express orders from the Master of Mankind the Order was then not included in the general preparations for the wars of the Heresy that came afterwards. Instead they waited, as part of Terra's last line of defence, until almost the end, or at least such is the official record.

Historia Terra Regum

The Hereteknika of the Psi-Titan

While the Warlord-Sinister appears to be a singular creation in form and function, the concept of the 'Psi-Titan' however is not an entirely unknown one, at least in the annals of the Great Crusade's foes, and even the more obscure reaches of the Mechanicum's own Titan lore. In the depths of pre-Unification history, there are numerous occluded references of what might be described as 'Psi-Titans'; in this case, Titan engines designed to be piloted by and amplify the powers of a single psyker as experiments and unique relic engines of war. Though now long suppressed by Martian orthodoxy, what became of the machines themselves or the sub-cults of the Omnissiah who created and piloted them remains unknown. Among the psychically potent xenos species with which Mankind has warred, psi-construct war engines were known to be possessed by both the Eldar and the Fra'al, and more tenuously by the now exterminated Vaxal'rek, some of which easily matched the Titans of the Imperium in scale if not always in form.

THE WARLORD-SINISTER

In information given to the Council of Terra by the Ordo Sinister's representative, an officer of the Order styled Prefect Kelner Anahat, it was confirmed with authenticated patents that the organisation of the Ordo Sinister was arranged and provisioned entirely to an exacting order laid out by the writ and dictate of the Emperor, from which it could not deviate nor innovate upon pain of destruction. It comprised four allied but self-contained fortress crypts—each with their own defences, support staff, menials and techno-arcansists, all in support of a 'Chamber', each comprising five specially modified Warlord Titans. These

god-engines, properly classified as Terranic pattern Warlord-Sinister Psi-Titans, were each rebuilt around an Emperor-designed psychic amplification matrix device called the Ciricrux Anima. In place of the standard Titan configuration of mind-impulse units, it was this which controlled and empowered the Warlord-Sinister and in place of the moderatii that would normally crew a battle Titan, the Psi-Titans were instead crewed by what might be considered the damned—bound psykers surgically locked in place and slaved to the will of the Preceptor-Intendant

who mastered the god-engine in place of a Princeps. By direct cortical control, the power and spirit of the bound psykers were siphoned off and focused by the arcane technologies of the Ciricrux Anima, the baleful device that truly makes the Psi-Titan what it is. This energy was controlled by a techno-arcane interface quite unlike that of a standard configuration mind impulse unit, while much of the Psi-Titan's other functions were slaved to sub-automata systems and machine spirit homunculi. Set at the heart of the storm of these energies, the Preceptor-Intendant sat in a shielded command crucible in the Titan's head. But even this was insufficient to entirely protect them from the psychic forces at play, and so each Titan commander of the Ordo Sinister was a psychic blank, an 'Untouchable', but

selected it would seem on entirely different criteria from those who served within the Sisters of Silence or the Culexus Clade, and cybernetically augmented to allow for human-machine interface. Although in his testimony Prefect Kelner Anahat would not be drawn on his or his comrades' recruitment or training, he did state that of the psykers bound within the Warlords-Sinister that "for some, it was a punishment for their crimes, and others, a blessed relief from their torments, and that... a balance was maintained in order that optimum conditions were met". He would also not be drawn on the rate the bound psykers were exhausted by the process.

Through the use of the Ciricrux Anima, a Warlord-Sinister is able to project psychic phenomena on a truly gargantuan scale, although without any of the nuance or fine manipulation available to an individual trained psyker. These phenomena include waves of preternatural fear, psychokinetic effects, biomantic leaching of life in the immediate area and even the temporal distortion-based reversion of damage to the

Titan itself. But the most devastating use of the psychic potential of the Ciricrux Anima is the focusing of its power through a unique weapon system, the Sinistramanus Tenebrae. This is a hybrid of strange technologies, more akin to a mutilated warp engine in design than a conventional weapon, but it serves to focus the psychic antipathy of the bound psykers into a fracture in reality—a fracture, much like the forced warp-breach inherent in vortex weaponry which is then channelled and released as a projectile of nightmarishly destructive force. Where the projectile—which manifests as a sphere or bolt of 'darkness' as it eats the light of whatever medium it passes through before striking dense matter—detonates, it causes complete annihilation in the immediate impact area, as what was there is disassembled and hurled bodily into the Empyrean molecule by molecule until the mercifully brief rupture self-seals. Those in the wider area of the impact are simply struck dead, their bodies left unmarked as if their souls had been sheared from their bodies. While vortex warhead ordnance is both more powerful in its blast and limited in range only by its function, the Sinistramanus Tenebrae psi-cannon has the advantage that it may be fired repeatedly, at least while the strength of those on board lasts to power it.





THE FORCES OF PROSPERO



THE THOUSAND SONS

Numeration: The XVth Legion

Primogenitor: Magnus the Red

Cognomen: (Prior) None.

Observed Strategic Tendencies:
Psychic Warfare, Precision Assaults,
Misdirection, Lore Culling,
Macro-coordination Multi-theatre
Campaigns

Noteworthy Domains: Prospero

Allegiance: Traitoris Perdita

'A seeker will make three great errors on their ascent, no matter how bold their spirit, or keen their sight. The first error is to believe they have reached the end of the path when in truth they have only taken the first step.

The second error is to believe that the end of one path is the beginning of another.

The third error is to believe that any price is worth paying to take another step.

These are the errors, their number is three, and their reward is the loss of all they have ever gained and ever loved.'

Aeolus the Lesser, Tractatus Angelus

Betrayal is a child of many sires: power, hate, vengeance, shame, guilt, bitterness, viciousness, callousness, all have played their part in the fall of those who turned on the Emperor, but to this list two more must be added: hubris and blindness. While other Legions walked into infamy at their own choosing, the Thousand Sons were plunged into that state; first by their own pride, second by the treachery of those who they trusted, and third by the Imperium itself. Tainted by mutation and touched by the Warp, the fall of the Thousand Sons seemed certain in retrospect, but that certainty is false. Another path might have waited for the XVth Legion if fate had not been so cruel. As it is, their story is not one of darkness, but of a light that drew a Legion and Primarch higher and higher until they could no longer see the boundaries of obedience left far below them.

ORIGINS: THE TEMPEST BORN

The nature of many Legions was clear from almost the first moment they took to the battlefield. But the purpose of the Thousand Sons—for purpose there undoubtedly was—would unfold only slowly as a dark bloom, one petal at a time. The XVth were born late in the creation of the Legiones Astartes. The conquest of Terra was already complete, Luna had fallen, and the first-born Legions had started to bring the rest of the Sol System to heel. The Great Crusade was about to begin, starting the cycle of conquest that would see it flood across the stars and the strength of many Legions had begun to wax as their ranks swelled with recruits taken from conquered foes. No longer was Unification the prize for victory, and no longer could the fires of the Imperial Truth be confined to Terra. It was a time of transition, a time of endings as well as beginnings, and into this time the XVth Legion were born.

Storms marked the creation of the Legion. The great warp tempests, which had isolated Ancient Terra during Old Night, had boiled up again, and it was said that witch-fire lit the skies, and dreams of terror and brilliance danced through the minds of humanity's birth world. For a brief time, fear and revelation once again stalked the turning of the sun and stained the light of the moon. Instances of psychic mutation and emergence spiralled to new heights, void shipping was trapped at anchor, and a wave of panic swept the nascent Imperium strong enough to provoke a harsh response from the servants of the Emperor as they sought to crush again the woken serpent of superstition on a newly unified Terra. It

is a time now marked in the annals of days and the chronicles of the years as the 'Song of the Blood Skies' amid the much-stricken Nordafrik Conclaves, and as the 'Spiral Misrule' by the noble houses of the equatorial plate cities, but most official records know it as 'The First Tempest'. In this time the Emperor seems to have been utterly unmoved and unalarmed by the resurgence of the phenomenon which had blighted humanity for so long, and left such response needed to the judgement of His more parochial servants of civil and military order. The momentum of His conquests contained by this sudden squall of the Empyrean, the Emperor, according to available records, simply channelled His energies elsewhere with a promptness that might imply both preparation and foresight, and it is thought that several branches of the Imperium owe their formal origin to these times, not least amongst them the nascent Silent Sisterhood and the Black Sentinels of the Astra Telepathica, but perhaps chief amongst His acts was the creation of the XVth.

At first it seemed unremarkable from the other proto-formations of the Legiones Astartes, save that it was clear that very deliberate and exacting criteria were being set upon their intake, strictures imposed that were beyond that of their fellow Legions. The aspirants who would be raised to the Legion were in fact drawn from perhaps the most stable, loyal and culturally sophisticated of the Emperor's domains on Terra, and further sifted finely in selection of candidates. Chief amongst these sources were the Achaemenid Empire, the Enclaves of the Fire Lords of Oaus, and the Kashai Domain. All had been amongst the first powers to give fealty to the Emperor and had supplied warriors for His armies since the earliest battles of the Unification Wars. All of them also had populations which were largely free of the unpredictable mutation which blighted so many of Terra's children. Other aspirants of the XVth are also known to have been drawn from across Terra, but never in so great a number as to be distinct. The entirety of the Ionus Plateau is recorded as having only given up a single youth to the XVth, for example, though hundreds were taken and raised to the VIIth Legion from the region in contrast. The Emperor Himself is known to have selected many of the first recruits personally, an honour done to almost no other Legion, and never to such a degree.

It is unclear how many recruits were submitted to the process to raise them from humanity to the XVth Legion, but many

seemed to have survived it. The sealed accounts of those involved in the later stages of the project note that successful implantation and integration of the XVth Legion's gene-seed was remarkably high. What is known, however, is the number who walked from the Terran and Luna gene-forges, a number recorded with exactness across many sources as though it held a significance beyond a measure of strength. One thousand warriors—a fully operable initial pattern Legion induction—clad in the grey that all Legions wore at their birth, knelt before the Emperor and made their Oaths of Eternity. Some who saw it say that as the Emperor bade His 'Thousand Sons' to rise, at that exact moment the storms surrounding Terra broke, their force and fury dissipating and leaving only stillness and calm in the Warp beyond corporeal reality.

The Thousand

At first there was little to distinguish the XVth Legion despite their auspicious birth, and the honour done to them by the Emperor. Though as competent in the arts of war as their brother Legions, they were still relatively few in number and possessed no special talent or predilection that was immediately apparent as they acted to quell some limited and localised rebellion on Terra itself before being given their first warships and assignments beyond Sol. Their initial deployments and campaigns were not remarkable. In the cloud warrens of Proxima-III, they assaulted the transgenic blasphemies of the rotten alien cities. On Gladris, they held the lines beside the far larger battalions of the VIth Legion, and on Seculoris, they castigated the non-Compliant mica-clans beside the Imperial Heralds of the XVIIth; all were early campaigns successfully executed by the Legion. Yet despite the competency of their actions there was little to draw regard or, in fact, any attention at all. The most that could be said of the XVth was that they displayed a degree of synchronisation and integration in their actions beyond even that common in such exalted warriors as the Legiones Astartes. Perhaps early on the only notable fact about them was that they had quickly adopted some distinct heraldry of their own, namely the ancient 'Millennial' glyph to signify their Legion, commemorating the Emperor's pronouncement, and elements of the ochre panoply of the storied 'Immortal Regiments' of the Achaemenid Empire from which they drew their most pronounced genetic ancestry. From the beginning it is certain that the Legion considered itself a breed apart, despite—and unlike certain

other Legion raisings—being integrated quickly into the Imperium's order of battle as a general Space Marine force with little, at least to begin with, to distinguish it.

These first years of the true Great Crusade were heady times, and the reputations and strength of the Legions grew at an accelerating pace. The Luna Wolves was a name new on the lips of many, but one quickly distinguished in victory—their ranks having already grown to over 30,000 warriors—and the reputation of Terra's pale 'night's children' which made up the the VIIIth could already cow enemies and potential turncoats alike by fear alone, while conversely, the potent fortresses raised by the VIIth already marked the skin of Terra and a dozen worlds beyond Sol's light.

While the XVth made no such meteoric rise, they remained indistinguished from their peers as the Imperium moved out into the unconquered stars, and so it was until the first whispers and rumours began to follow them. Then, no sooner had the Great Crusade entered its second decade, an altogether stranger reputation soon clung about them like a cloak.

Whispers and Fire

Perhaps it was the honour done to the XVth Legion by the Emperor at their creation that first drew the speculation and curiosity of others. The Legion had become marked by the Emperor's words at its oath-taking, and had become known as the Thousand Sons even before its first battle honour had been

won. Perhaps it was because even as other Legions grew in numbers, the XVth grew slowly, its recruits selected seemingly with great caution from the stock of many worlds according to criteria that remained unclear. But perhaps it was simply suspicion bred by the lack of manifest reason for the unusual manner of their creation and the apparent lack of corresponding exceptional nature.

No matter—the Thousand Sons, as the XVth were now widely known despite having outgrown the literal truth of that title, were a Legion that moved uneasily amongst their brothers from their first days, and when the unique qualities of their warriors finally manifested, they did not dampen the embers of distrust, but turned them into a blaze.



A decade after the Great Crusade spilled beyond Sol, the first Thousand Sons began to openly manifest potent psychic abilities. First just a handful were affected, and then as the years went on, more and more. These were not the petty powers of cult prophets or even the sanctioned lesser arts of the half-charlatan fate-twisters that attended the noble House of Terra, but manifestations of the true potential of the Empyrean at its most destructive and majestic. At the hands of the Thousand Sons was displayed living fire made manifest, there came deluges of bio-lightning, armour-cracking telekinetic fury, thoughts which razored open minds, flesh which healed from deathly wounds before the blood could hit the ground, even visions which guided the seer to find hope in a sea of failure. It seemed to onlookers as though the designs of the Emperor had at long last begun to bear fruit.

The careful selection of recruits, the hidden methods of selection, the meticulous preparation of the Legion's warriors, even the low numbers taken as potential recruits, all now seemed to be part of a clear purpose. The Emperor in His wisdom had created a Legion which fused the psychic potential of Mankind with the gene-alchemy of the Legiones Astartes. On the battlefield, though still few in number, the Thousand Sons proved as unpredictable a foe to the enemies of the Great Crusade as they proved utterly deadly, but from this very success grew the suspicion of their brothers.

To those who had come through the Unification Wars, the psyker was at best a shunned instrument of occasional necessity, and most often an abomination to be destroyed. So it was that even as more and more of the Thousand Sons manifested their abilities, so too was it that the aura of curiosity which had followed them since their birth became a cloud of distrust and even outright hostility. Some amongst their brother Legions refused to take to the field alongside them, particularly during the initial flowering of their powers. On Ostrastis, the first Millennial of the IIIrd Legion withdrew their ships when a company of the XVth joined the mustering to take the colonies of the Cyn Stars. During the Colgren Campaign, the Dusk Raiders contingent mustered as part of the force refused to look at, listen to or speak to any of the Thousand Sons, dealing only through intermediaries and servitors. It is stated by a few fragmentary sources from the era that even Horus—at that time the only Primarch who was a part of the Great Crusade—voiced direct concerns to the

An Empyrean Purpose

At the time of the manifestation of their psychic powers, the truth of the scheme of the Thousand Sons' creation seemed obvious, and still seems so now. How could the Emperor, in His wisdom and power, have not known what seeds lay in the flesh of the humans taken to make the Thousand Sons? How could He have not known the qualities of the gene-seed used to raise them above humanity, when it was the product of His own hand and knowledge? If we admit that He did not know what He did, then we admit to a universe filled with doubts and bottomless uncertainty.

Yet if we acknowledge what seems manifestly true—that He knew full well what He had wrought in the creation of the Thousand Sons—then we must perhaps see that the hubris that would lay Magnus low was not his alone, but lived in his father also. Perhaps there is another truth, lurking beyond our understanding or ability to comprehend; the ways of the Emperor are rarely simple, and the purposes of His actions seldom what they seem. Yet what comfort is there in such possibilities besides the laughter of the universe at the pride of Man? No matter the cause, the unfolding psychic nature of the Thousand Sons created a single unified response amongst those who learned of it: terror.

Emperor about the Thousand Sons' growing power and advocated a plan to swiftly cull the Legion should they waver. What the Emperor's response to such a question might have been is neither remembered or recorded, but one fact is undoubted; amongst all of the calls of disgust and fear, and even while the Thousand Sons took to battlefields in a blaze of occult fire, the Emperor withheld His censure and remained silent.

Those first years were not marked by discord or isolation alone. Victories piled up in the wake of the Thousand Sons' passage through the stars, victories won in spectacular fashion, victories that became tales that filled listeners with dread and wonder: armies of hundreds of thousands turned to ash, fortress walls cracked as if by the crushing hand of an invisible colossus, and small companies of warriors marching through storms of plasma fire and emerging untouched. And, beside the tales of destruction, there are accounts listed in records that cannot be doubted—the fact that it took Captain Ohrmuzd only six hours to subdue the planet of Necordo with two hundred warriors, or that the now lost Legio Lacrimae gave oaths of perpetual kinship to the Thousand Sons for driving back a force of countless Orks from their crippled Titans during the reversals of the Rout of Megorania. The remembrances of Solomon Voss even imply that the Emperor Himself went to battle with a cadre of Thousand Sons in His vanguard on at least one occasion against the horrors of the foul xeno-form of the Khrave. These deeds are now the forgotten past of the Thousand Sons, their brief time of glory before the next dark mark on the page of their history.

THE CURSED LEGION

The Thousand Sons remained a small Legion even while the star of their martial success rose. While the strength of other Legions grew by the thousands or even tens of thousands, the XVth grew in more modest numbers, sometimes even shrinking when war took its inevitable toll. Half a decade after their exodus from Terra, the Thousand Sons are listed in most records as no more than 10,000 warriors. By comparison the Luna Wolves, the largest Legion of that era, numbered close to five times that strength. Part of this was because the Legion accepted so few recruits, and beyond this, further factors came into play to limit its expansion. While they harvested conquered worlds for recruits like all Legions, the numbers that the Thousand Sons took were small compared with the mass inductions of the Luna Wolves from Cthonia, or the Imperial Heralds from their cowed enemies. Even of these, records indicate that relatively few of those chosen survived the process of transformation to become a Legionary compared to the success rate of the Ist Legion's induction process (generally taken as the median for such things). But it cannot be disputed that during this period what they lacked in numbers, they compensated for in effectiveness. The dominant majority of the Legion were now fully emerged psykers of some form, though of wildly differing levels of ability, and many of the rest seemed to harbour some lesser tendency. But though powerful, they remained few. So it was that when disaster came, it almost destroyed them.

It began on Bezant. Elements of the Thousand Sons 2nd and 5th Chapters had been given the task of bringing the sun-worshipping humans of the verdant world to Compliance. The Bezantine though were loath to give up their golden temples and the whispered commands of their sun-blinded priests. That might have mattered little if it had not been that the population was witch-tainted to its core. The priesthood were all chosen from those who could 'hear the light of the stars', and the traditions of the cult had shaped the population so that of every child born, one in ten were similarly blessed. When the Legion descended on Bezant, they were met not with swords or armies but with fire, nightmare and the roar of dissolving matter. It was an enemy whose arts they understood but had seldom encountered on such a scale. The Legion fought back using their own powers, as keen to prove their psychic mastery as the War Hounds Legion of the era might have been to test their bloody skills against a cadre of superlative enemy warriors in a brutal pitched battle.

There are no accounts outside those of the Thousand Sons of the battle, but if they can be believed, it was as though the fundamental elements of existence itself warred that day. Clouds spun of lightning cleaved through hurricanes of debris, and the shrieks of invisible battles soared through the burning air. The Legion had never been so tested; its warriors poured every scrap of skill and strength into the battle, but still could not break the Bezantine priests. Then, as the psychic deadlock forced black rain from the sky, the pressure broke and a single scream echoed through every mind on the planet.

The name of the warrior who fell at that moment is not recorded. In what remains of the Thousand Sons Book of Days and Passing, recovered from the burned libraries of Prospero, he is simply called 'Daleth', and represented by a single ancient sigil in a dead tongue. That the warrior had another name in life is certain, but the meaning of the name his death is recorded under is not. Some savants and linguist-arcans have said that this thought-form 'Daleth' has a purely esoteric meaning, and might symbolise the door from the past to the future, or the beginning and the end of all things. Perhaps they are right, because what is known is that at the height of the battle, the substance of the warrior's body slowly blew apart. Slick flows of malleable flesh spilled from his broken armour, bone fused with the substance of his wargear, and his blood misted and congealed into new forms in

the air as all the while the nameless warrior screamed for mercy in a thousand silent voices heard in every mind of his Legion.

His brothers killed him then, ripping his rebelling flesh apart with bolter fire and bathing the remains in cleansing flame until he was nothing but the dust of ashes. At the time, those who were present swore to keep the fate of their brother from all outside of the Legion. The accounts we have now of this singular event only exist because of what came after, when there was no longer any hope of the secrets being kept, and no redemption offered by keeping them.

The Horror Begins

For a time after Bezant, the Legion seemed

unchanged to outward eyes. Even within its ranks the feeling was that Bezant was an aberration, a unique and terrible fluke caused by the psychic energies unleashed in the battle with the Bezantine. The Great Crusade continued on and the Legion continued to conquer, all the while manifesting ever greater levels of psychic strength. We do not know how long it was until the second warrior fell; only the Thousand Sons know the truth. Perhaps it was months, perhaps years, perhaps longer. But a second did succumb, and then a third Legionary, their bodies dissolving into warp energy, mutating without control. The Legion gave a literal name to the curse that had come upon them; they called it the Flesh Change. The Thousand Sons fought to control what was



happening to them, and to keep it a secret, but both endeavours were doomed.

The Flesh Change manifested again and again, and in ever growing carnage, sometimes afflicting hundreds in a single instant. Such an epidemic could not be kept entirely secret but the Legion strove mightily to do so, twisting the facts where they could not be entirely hidden, so as to hide their shame. Those few within the Imperium's hierarchy who knew that some deep-rooted defect had manifested within the Legion believed it a form of deep-seated flaw of cellular degeneration, such as had once afflicted the Thunder Warriors, or perhaps gene-seed damage such as that which external tragedy had inflicted on the

IIIrd Legion, and did not fully suspect the unfolding horror for what it was.

That the Flesh Change was linked to their psychic abilities and their gene-seed cannot be doubted, but how or why, none save perhaps the Emperor can know. That it afflicted Legionaries who had no, or slight, psychic inclination did not matter to the shadows of hatred and fear which flocked around the Legion even as they floundered. With few facts to draw upon, the forces of the Imperium saw the Legion become withdrawn, and ever more secretive and ever more erratic in its commitment to the Great Crusade. Also, units which fought alongside them increasingly suffered inexplicable losses and even 'accidents', which in

retrospect can be seen as perhaps a desperate silencing of witnesses.

There was little sympathy from their brother Legions, and for those within the Imperium's hierarchy who learned of or at least suspected some measure of the truth of the Flesh Change (or merely the Thousand Sons' 'affliction' as some in ignorance called it), a common belief was that it was just the manifestation of the Thousand Sons Legion's genetic and perhaps even philosophical corruption. The whispers of suspicion soon became shouted condemnations. 'Sorcery', they called the arts of the Thousand Sons, dredging up the word from the black days of the Age of Strife and setting it on the XVth Legion's head like a crown of cold iron.



The Thousand Sons struggled on, their numbers dwindling. Battles and the curse of the Flesh Change cut deeper with every passing year. Shunned by their brother Legions and much of the rest of the Imperium, they continued to slowly conquer even as they seemed to wither. But even as they were undone from within, their psychic might grew. The most powerful ascended higher still in mastery, well beyond any known psyker of the few found in the ranks of other Legions; the number of the surviving warriors within the XVth manifesting powers with increasing potency. From a certain point of view, it might be said that they had little choice. With their numbers falling, and with few others to aid them, they fought using the weapons they had. There is another view, one that resonates with the paths that the Thousand Sons would walk over the following centuries; they persisted in using their powers not only because it was necessary, but because they believed that they were right to do so.

Decay

The Thousand Sons, as has already been noted, were never as numerous as their brothers, and with this gathering calamity, they began to spiral into nothing. Formations which had been thousands strong became hundreds, which became handfuls of warriors outnumbered by the dead and the lost. Ships which had carried great armies of conquest now carried no more than a haunted remnant of past glories walking echoing empty corridors. The condemnations of others also grew in intensity and strength as the Thousand Sons shrivelled. Primarchs, Legion Masters and figures of authority throughout the body of the Imperium called for the XVth Legion to be disbanded. Some perhaps called for this thinking it a kindness, a mercy given to a once great Legion dying in shame. Others called not just for the Thousand Sons to be dissolved, but for them to be obliterated, and some even said purged—cut from the body of the Legiones Astartes like a cancer, their warriors executed, and their names

THE DREAMLESS BROTHERHOOD

The Thousand Sons made many attempts to cure the Flesh Change before the rediscovery of Magnus and their time on Prospero. Many tried to control it through sheer will, suppressing it or using meditative techniques to try to stop it taking hold. Others used alchemical or retro-viral methods to shut off the uncontrolled biological mutation. Most of these attempts would fail, and all would prove ineffective over time. Faced with this failure, the Thousand Sons took to placing those who succumbed to the early stages of the curse secretly into stasis. As the epidemic bit deeper, the holds of certain ships in the Thousand Sons fleet filled with more and more of their brothers, held in a timeless, dreamless sleep. By the time that the Great Crusade reached Prospero, there were more trapped in this unchanging existence between life and death than there were amongst the living. Some had elected to enter the stasis vaults when they felt the first signs of the Flesh Change take them. Others had been subdued as the curse took hold, their distorting flesh frozen in the instant of dissolution. Of the thousands committed to stasis, it is generally believed that only a few survived Magnus' cure. It is assumed that most had been removed from their timeless sleep and had persisted as the Flesh Change took hold, or were too far gone to save and put from their misery. That assumption, like so much else must be weighed, and we must wonder at the true fate of the Dreamless Brotherhood.

and honours struck from every record, monument and memory. The Emperor did not heed the calls for Him to end His Thousand Sons. Whether He would have, or if the Legion would have simply slid into nothingness, will never be known, because at the moment when it seemed certain that only oblivion waited for the Thousand Sons, they were saved.

PROSPERO: A CRYSTAL AND LIGHT

Prospero was a polished jewel glittering alone in the long dark of night. At least so it appeared at the time of its discovery. While other worlds which had cradled the lost Primarchs it seemed were often unremittingly soaked in darkness, cruelty and blood, Prospero had achieved an ascendancy over such barbarity. This ascendancy was not one of technology, but it was because of the minds of its people, minds shaped by ancient disasters and the necessities of survival.

Prospero was a world which moved between high mountains and deep oceans, between lush forests and dry deserts, a new Terra of legend, and many thousands of years before the coming of either Magnus or the Emperor, humanity had covered its surface. The ancient Prosperine humans had built cities and nations in every reach of those lands. But at some point during the darkness which humanity now calls Old Night, calamity had come to Prospero and almost erased its people from existence. The precise course of this event was never known, even to Magnus or his most gifted sons, but it seems likely that at some point the humans of Prospero had experienced a sudden explosion in psychic potential. Such storms of psychic emergence left scars on many worlds during the Age of Strife and seldom ended in anything but utter disaster. To this day on Terra and hundreds of other worlds, these memories persist in stories of unremitting horror passed down from those dark times, and with good reason. On Prospero the terrifying nature of such a surge can only be guessed at, but in its wake a second calamity came upon its people.

The Mind Parasites

The Psychneuein are nightmarish predatory creatures who live both within the Warp and in reality. Drawn to individuals of psychic potential, their reproductive cycle requires their eggs to be gestated in the mind of a living psyker in our reality. In the psychic blossoming of Prospero's people, the Psychneuein had found the perfect nest and swarmed onto their world in an infestation the likes of which has thankfully rarely been seen the length and breadth of the galaxy. The old civilisation of Prospero died, some believe in a single night of witch-fire and feasting horrors devouring the living from within. But some few indeed survived the calamity, fleeing with what knowledge and technology they could. Those few founded Tizca—the City of Light, Citadel of Reason, the last and only true city of Prospero.

Tizca gleamed under the light of sun and moon. Pyramids flanked in artificial crystal rose up to the azure sky between the glimmering sea and a circle of snow-capped mountains to house the city's masters. Statues carved from coloured stone and polished metal looked down on the paved avenues which radiated out from its centre like the rays of a noon sun. Its people were tall and handsome, with eyes that held the fire of sapphires or emeralds. In the millennia since the psychic cataclysm and the Psychneuein plague, the psychic potential of the survivors' descendants had not faded. Most born in Tizca, be they patrician or pauper, possessed at least a spark of psychic potential. That potential might have doomed the enclave though if they had not learned to control their powers. Traditions grew alongside the buildings of Tizca, schools of mental control, meditation and transcendent focus. Kept safe by these practices, humanity endured on Prospero, but it would never again flourish beyond the bounds of its sanctuary. Beyond Tizca and its cultivated environs, the landscape remained all but empty of human life, haunted by the unquiet ghosts of a lost past. Ruins still dotted the land under coverings of dust or vegetation, the wind singing through their bones like the echoes of old nightmares. The Desolation, the people called that empty expanse, and shunned it in all but the direst of necessities.

A KING FALLEN FROM THE STARS

Magnus came to Prospero as a comet falling from a night sky. The scholars and masters of Tizca looked up and saw his descent like a slash of fire cut through the firmament—a line drawn from the heavens to the heart of Tizca. The ground is said to have shattered where his body struck, the marble flowing like molten silver, and the dreams of every man, woman and child of this world were suddenly overwhelmed in a burst of light and sensation. Cries of mingled terror and wonder rolled through the city. Each of these portents and many more were recorded by the masters of Tizca in exact detail, even as their meaning was argued. None could doubt that the child fallen from the sky—a child found unmarked in the glowing crater caused by his impact—could only portend great change, though whether for good or for ill none could be certain. The answer to that question would not be answered for centuries more, when Tizca and all its people were ashes, and its stars lost beyond storms of poisoned clouds.

Magnus grew amongst the people of Tizca, absorbing the lessons of their masters and exceeding their skill in every area of psychic discipline, scholarship and endeavour. Chief amongst his tutors was a man called Amon, who in a different age would have been the foremost scholar of his people, but Amon's qualities extended beyond the intellectual. While others might have chafed at watching their pupil outstrip their own accomplishments, Amon seems to have realised that Magnus was far more than he could ever be, and so set himself the task not of teaching his charge knowledge but wisdom. As much as Magnus' mind and abilities leapt forwards, Amon tried to instil caution, to temper genius with humility. There came a time though when no further limitation could be placed on Magnus, and the pupil became the master in every sense.

Magnus ascended to the heights of Prospero's governmental circles, remaking the civilisation which had fostered him as he did so, perfecting and building on the traditions of the past and raising them and the people of Tizca to undreamed of heights of intellectual and psychic attainment. From the foundations of the methods of mental control he created the Five Prosperine Cults. From the roots of Tizca, the pyramids and towers rose higher and higher. Leaps of intellectual intuition, the deciphering of ancient lore and the unravelling of many mysteries became like the passing of sea breezes. Tizca flowered as never before, and at its head was Magnus, the 'Crimson King' of an empire of dreams.

The Gift of Salvation

It has been suggested that a connection existed between the Emperor and Magnus for long years before the Great Crusade came to Prospero. The truth and extent of this can never be known. Magnus claimed such a prior link, and that the understanding between the two was considerable, greater even than that between the Emperor and any of the other Primarchs. He is even recorded as having remarked that his ultimate teacher in the psychic realm, even in the time before he was fully conscious, and during his early life on Prospero, was the Emperor, and that the two had quested in the ætheric realm beyond reality many times.

How much of what was claimed is true, or true to the extent claimed by Magnus, is uncertain. The supremely psychic nature of Magnus and the transcendent psychic might of the Emperor makes a form of connection possible, perhaps even likely, but whether it was to the extent claimed by Magnus is open to doubt. Perhaps he was speaking in metaphor, a habit that he often demonstrated.



THOUSAND SONS LEGION CONTEMPTOR DREADNOUGHT

USHAPT-OSIRON HEDARA PTOMALAC
GUARDIAN OF THE HOUSE OF THE JACKAL

One of a cadre of nine Dreadnoughts which 'slept' within the walls of the House of the Jackal, a large mortuary and memorial complex which sat upon the western edge of Tizca's central district, serving as its ritual protectors, Hedara Ptomalac in life had been one of the first generation of Thousand Sons inducted on Prospero. The archives of the Logistica Corpus list Ptomalac as serving with distinction as the commander of a heavy support squad during the Relief of Keene's Landing, there receiving Imperial Citation, and years later again as honourably falling in battle at the infamous Last Stand on Rakotis and his subsequent internment in one of the first Contemptor Dreadnoughts issued to the XVth Legion.

After the outer structures of the House of the Jackal were shelled into ruin by the Space Wolves Legion, the Dreadnought Ptomalac and his surviving brethren tore free of the rubble and counter-attacked the Space Wolves' heavy armour at short range, Ptomalac personally accounting for two Typhon Siege Tanks before his obliteration.

Perhaps it was true but not to the extent that Magnus claimed. And then there is the possibility that he was deceived, in part or in the whole. This last possibility, given what was to come, cannot be discounted. No matter the truth of the prior connection between the Emperor and Magnus, when the Emperor came to Prospero, He knew enough to bring with Him what remained of the Legion born of Magnus' line.

Master and Acolytes

War and the Flesh Change had cut deep by the time the XVth were reunited with their sire. So many now slept in stasis or had succumbed to battle or mutation that when the Legion came to Prospero, summoned by the Emperor, a scant few thousand knelt before their father. The bond between a Primarch and his gene-sons is said to transcend even that of human parent and child. Between beings such as Magnus and his psychically attuned gene-sons, the bond seems to have been closer still, for from the moment they were reunited, both Primarch and Legion seemed extensions of one another in thought, outlook and spirit. At last Magnus had pupils and disciples both capable of assimilating his teachings and walking the path he saw for Mankind. But even as Magnus took command of his Legion and declared Prospero its home, so the Thousand Sons succumbed to the Flesh Change with increasing frequency, as though the contact with their gene-sire had brought on a final, terrible phase in the curse's cycle.

Faced with this unfolding disaster, Magnus turned all of his power, lore and learning to discovering a cure to the curse which was killing his sons; it was not simply an act of filial patronage but also, as some have suggested, a test, and one set by the Emperor Himself to His strangest of sons. What occurred next can only be guessed at, or deduced in shape from the shadows it casts from that time into the present. Magnus found a cure and saved his Legion. At the time none were certain how he had achieved this, and such were the abilities of the Crimson King that few, even amongst his brothers, could have begun to understand the answer even if he had given it. Now, with suspicion gifted from the scars of treachery, it seems possible that Magnus delved too far beyond what Mankind should know for the means to save his sons, and perhaps with his salvation sold them to a greater doom.

The Legion had been saved by Magnus, but not without loss. From amongst those few who still walked, and amongst those who

dreamed in stasis, fewer yet survived to see the Thousand Sons saved. Just as at their foundation they again numbered just 1,000 warriors, and whether by strange accident or occult design, the exactitude of this number can only be wondered at. Again and again throughout their history this numeration would follow the XVth, repeating in the cycles of their near-extinction and rebirth. It might be easy to ascribe coincidence to such phenomenon, but when considering anything to do with the nature of the Emperor's creations, and the Thousand Sons in particular, coincidence must be treated with suspicion.

THE NEW SONS OF PROSPERO

Magnus did not just save his Legion, he reshaped it within and without. Prospero became the home world of the Thousand Sons, the source of many of its new recruits, and its ways became the foundation of the reborn Legion. In place of the old structures drawn from the echoes of the Unification Wars, Magnus created new foundations of authority, knowledge and mysteries which spiralled through one another, transforming everything from the Legion's command hierarchy to its panoply of war to the very language it used in common discourse. Far from denying the use of psychic powers, Magnus enhanced and refined their use, training his sons in the arts he had distilled on Prospero. The Five Prosperine Cults were spread through the Legion, with each psychically able warrior taking one which most fitted the nature of his gift. The abilities of those who had survived Magnus' cure for the Flesh Change were great, but under Magnus' tutelage they grew, became deeper in application and stronger in subtlety. In fresh recruits he sought both psychic potential and intellectual excellence and sophistication—no mere killers bred to slaughter would carry his gene-seed. Many recruits came from Prospero itself, selected from the brightest of its youth, though as the Legion ventured once again into the stars, more would be taken from other worlds with a deftness of selection that fitted their singular purpose.

From amongst his former masters and disciples, and amongst the population of Prospero, he also raised a few to the Legion, even though they were too old to receive the full gene-seed implantation, achieving successes in doing so unparalleled elsewhere. Prosperine alchemical techniques, arcane physiochemical augmentation, and Magnus' own biomantic powers allowed these half-breed Legionaries to follow Magnus on his

quest into the stars. Among these elevated humans was Amon, one-time faithful mentor turned disciple, and now Magnus' aide in the remaking of his Legion. Much of the lore and technique gathered and developed by Magnus was passed from Amon, and these chosen few served as teachers and mentors to both the survivors of the original Thousand Sons and its new initiates. With his Legion growing once again, its curse apparently lifted and its strength sharpened, Magnus joined the Great Crusade.

Visionaries and Sorcerers

Many of the Primarchs were idealists who saw the Great Crusade not only as a war of conquest, or eve of survival, but a path to a greater end. Magnus undoubtedly had such vision, though the utopia he saw at the end of the road was different from that of his brothers. To Magnus, the purpose of the Great Crusade was not to dominate the stars but to elevate Mankind. He believed that both spiritual and intellectual ascendancy was the ultimate destiny of Mankind. He saw a golden age of enlightenment waiting for humanity, one in which thoughts, knowledge and reason guided minds free to skim the surface of realities and see the great vista of existence. Reaching this light was the goal of any undertaking, no matter how brutal it might seem in the short term. Armed with this certainty, Magnus and his sons set about not only conquering worlds, but gathering knowledge and proliferating these ideals.

Wherever they went, the Thousand Sons culled lore with an insatiable hunger. Parchments, books, data-vaults, works of artifice and art, and countless other artefacts from both human and alien worlds were gathered by the Legion. Many were taken during the wars of conquest prosecuted by the Thousand Sons, but missions sent to already Compliant worlds also recovered wonders thought lost to the darkness of the Age of Strife. It is a well recorded fact, for instance, that Magnus himself journeyed deep into the shadows of Terra in accompaniment of Perturabo of the Iron Warriors in search of fragments of lore; the brother Primarchs, utterly unlike in temperament and mien, united in their desire to know what was knowable, albeit in very different fields.

Sometimes the campaigns fought by the Thousand Sons made little strategic sense to others, and they would often leave a conflict or join another seemingly at whim, drawing inevitable criticism which added to the shadowed suspicions which still dogged the

Legion. Such acquisitiveness and quixotic tendencies brought derision from some, and overt hostility from others. The cloud of distrust had not left the Thousand Sons with the discovery of their Primarch. Many still whispered that they were tainted, that they were little better than the sorcerer kings and witch-priests of Old Night—for all their claims of enlightenment. In answer to this, Magnus sought not only to persuade the rest of the Imperium that he was right, but sought to make them see his rightness with their own eyes.

Of the Librarius

Foremost amongst Magnus' efforts to advance his point of view was his involvement in the Librarius Project. While sanctioned psykers had been used as part of the Great Crusade from its earliest days, their use had always been limited and never extended to the Legiones Astartes as a whole, or with any formality, though some emergence of psyker talent had been noted in several of the Legions, notably the Blood Angels and the Night Lords, although in numbers almost inconsequential to that found in the Thousand Sons. The Librarius Project sought to fuse together the manifest use of psychics in battle and the superior mental strength and physical prowess of the Space Marines, and regulate their function. While the Primarch Magnus was not the project's originator, he became undoubtedly the project's chief architect and proponent, wisely outwardly at least basing many of its tenets not on Prosperine culture but on other sources, perhaps less suspect to outsiders, and by this and his reasoned argument, Magnus the Red persuaded a number of his brothers of the Librarius Project's virtues. The willingness and backing of several of the Primarchs he swayed seems likely to have carried the day, and the project was sanctioned by the Emperor.

Members of several Legions who manifested psychic potential were then trained by the Thousand Sons in an adapted form of the Prosperine disciplines and practices, fused with Terran- and Baalite-derived and Emperor-sanctioned lore. After completing this training, they were placed back into their Legions and trusted to further disseminate what they had learned. Though the greater mysteries of the Thousand Sons' arts were clearly withheld in retrospect, the new-formed Librarians of the Legiones Astartes soon proved their worth.

For a time, it seemed as though Magnus and the Thousand Sons had begun to shed the suspicions which had shrouded them for decades. Some amongst the other Legions and Primarchs would never discard their

dislike, or even hate for the XVth, but in this brief era, it seemed at least that they had reached an uneasy peace with both their own nature and the Imperium they were fighting to build. Fate, though, is relentless.

THE FIVE FOLD CULTS

The pillars of the psychic mysteries of the Thousand Sons were known as the Five Fold Cults. Each Cult specialised in a single strand of psychic power and every psyker of manifest power within the Legion belonged to a Cult which mirrored their foremost ability. As an initiate mastered their art, they ascended through the complex layers of their Cult, learning its mysteries as their abilities grew. Each Cult was headed by a Magister Templi, ranked lower only to the Arch-magus of all Cults in the form of Magnus himself, and the Emperor perhaps beyond that. The ranks within each Cult varied both in number and title, though many titles were common between them all.

The Pavoni

The Pavoni concerned themselves with the interaction of the ætheric and living flesh. Biomancers, they were flesh shapers and re-makers, and their initiates could channel the powers of the Warp to harden their flesh against damage, boil the blood of their enemies, and even to heal the bones and flesh of their bodies. Deeply connected to the process of life, the Pavoni were often said to hold the heart and the passions of the Legion, and in matters of doctrine, oratory and belief, their adepts often dominated.

The Raptora

The Raptora focused on manipulating physical reality with their will, operating psychokinesis and control of fundamental forces such as gravity. They could conjure shields of invisible energy, crush metal with their minds, and summon storms of debris to flay their foes. Many of the Raptora were also amongst the Legion's most gifted theoreticians and scholars, noted for the coldness and cleanness of their reasoning and their logic.

The Corvidae

The Corvidae were soothsayers and augurs who bent their abilities to touch the flow of time and consequence. Perhaps the most subtle of all the Cults, it was said by their fellows that they could read the past in a dying man's breath, and could glimpse far distant possibilities, and even manipulate the flow of one second to another by the force of their minds alone. The mark of the Corvidae was also the mark of the Legion's greatest strategists and generals, and it is no coincidence that Ahri-man, Chief Librarian of the Thousand Sons, and foremost of its leaders at the dawning of the Horus Heresy, was Magister Templi of the Corvidae.

The Athanean

The Athanean's secrets were bound to the workings and manipulations of the mind and thought. Both subtle and powerful telepaths, they held the Legion together in battle, channelling orders and intent seamlessly into the minds of its warriors, forming a communications network unbreakable and unparalleled in scope. Because of this, it often seemed not an army of individuals but of machines driven by a single, dominating will. Out of the press of battle, many of the Cult were given to asceticism and withdrawn contemplation: a consequence of their contact with the thoughts of others, perhaps. They were often also used as emissaries to other Legions and factions of the Imperium.

The Pyrae

The Pyrae's abilities expressed themselves in a terrifying manner—the control and creation of fire. Their thoughts could become hell-storms burning as bright as a star's fury, and their touch could reduce metal to slag in mere moments. Most bellicose of all the Cults, the Pyrae excelled in destruction, and their smouldering pride beat with the heat of the Legion's martial heart.

UNIT ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEGION

The structure of the Thousand Sons was like no other Legion. Just as Magnus the Red rebuilt his Legion from the ruin of the Flesh Change, so he also shaped its every facet into a pattern which served his vision and the needs of his teachings, a pattern named in some sources as the 'Pesedjet'. Where the formations and traditions of the old Legion coincided with his own designs he kept them, where they did not, he removed and replaced them.

No part of his Legion was accident or coincidence — a fact he is on record as having boasted of to Fulgrim — noting that even where practices or variation had sprung up seemingly spontaneously, that they were 'merely seeds long planted', and that 'all which happens in my sons is held in my eye long before it is born in their hearts and minds'. While we might doubt the extent of his prescience, the implication is clear; in the business of his Legion nothing that endured did so without his consent, Magnus the Red was lord and master, absolute.

Where the Thousand Sons most resembled their brother Legions was at the level of individual units. The full panoply of the Legiones Astartes was represented in the Legion, from lascannon-armed heavy support units, to Sky Hunter squadrons mounted on jetbikes and with every variation in between, they were left not lacking in any theatre of war. For all their psychic might, and the extent to which they used its power to augment the waging of war, they were still Space Marines and capable of destruction on a much more mundane — yet still highly effective — level. If the Thousand Sons displayed a favour towards a unit configuration, it was to the mechanised tactical squad as its principal infantry paradigm, with mobile speeder and flyer-based reconnaissance units embedded across

the Legion's deployments as a near-universal adjunct. The exact reasons for this are not recorded, but it is possible that it was simply seen as the most efficient and adaptable method of deploying warriors into the field, and that the psychic might of the Legion made greater specialisation less necessary that it might have. This possible explanation tallies with a number of engagements when the Legion deployed forces against armoured or fortified enemies without the full complement of heavy materiel and equipment that would have been used by other Legions under similar circumstances, relying upon psychic power rather than just shot and shell to carry the day.

It is however also notable that despite this reliance on basic troops, the deadly arithmetic of attrition-based warfare was never a game that the Thousand Sons Legion entered into willingly, actively avoiding the meat grinder of mass-assault tactics and striving never to allow themselves to become encircled or undertake sacrificial holding actions, regardless of the prize at stake. Instead, they always strove to stack the odds of battle in their favour, either through exacting strategic planning, the considered use of ancillary forces such as battle-automata as shields and vanguards, and of course, by far more occult and less easily understood means.

Patterns and Symbols

All squad leaders within the Legion were warriors who had ascended through the first layers of knowledge within the teachings and mysteries established by their master, and many of them were also initiates in one of the Prosperine Cults. At the level above the individual squads, themselves sometimes name chantries, were the Circles. In other Legions, a Circle might

have been called a line company, but their place within the Thousand Sons was more than a simple grouping of warriors under a commander. Each Circle could vary in size, being anything between a handful of squads to many hundreds of Legionaries strong. These variations in size were not accidental, but part of a pattern of relative strength and numerical relationship which functioned to form a structure of occult significance and hierarchy within the Legion. Each bore a designation formed of both letters and numbers, though the progression of each of these variables did not follow a strict order, but again seemed part of a spiralling design which formed part of the Prosperine Mysteries. From what remains known, the Circle of Iaed-9, for example, consisted of 512 warriors divided into squads kept at strengths of either 16, 9 or 7.

All Circles were part of one of the nine Fellowships. It is said that when Magnus first began to reorder his Legion that there were ten Fellowships, but severe losses reduced this to nine. Whether this is true or if Magnus decided to change the structure because of some other, hidden, factor is not known. The number of Circles within each Fellowship varied just as the strength of each Circle was clearly purposeful, but was inconsistent at a superficial level. The number of Circles within a Fellowship also occasionally changed, but whenever this occurred, the number and size of the Circles within all the Fellowships also changed, though never in the same way twice. Within these Circles, or sometimes forming unique Circles of their own, came other, more specialised military sub-units more readily identified by outsiders, most notably the 'Sekhmet', also known as the Scarab Occult — the Primarch's own Terminator-armoured bodyguard, and the 'Dreamers of the Osiron' — the Thousand Sons Legion's cadre of Dreadnoughts and those Techmarines who stood attendant to them.



THE RED ORDERS

In addition to the core structures of the Legion, there were three Orders which existed both within and beyond its circumference. The Orders stood apart from the Fellowships and their Circles, and indeed the Temples of Prosperine psychic lore, their membership crossing such divides. Their purpose was not the practice and ascendancy of psychic mastery, for that was the purview of the great Cults, nor the day-to-day tactical operations of the Legion, but rather they were macro-military structures. Perhaps as much an outgrowth of the traditions and culture of the Legion as a deliberate structure, they were made to cope with the wider factors of the conducting of the Great Crusade, the furtherance of the Legion as a whole and its relation to the wider Imperium.

The Order of Ruin – ‘The Unmakers’

Known by the symbol of a poised serpent, the Order of Ruin were a sect of mystics said to be obsessed with numerology and the hidden structure of the universe. Calculators, logicians, analysts and organisers of supreme ability, the Order of Ruin were the siege makers, logistical specialists and planners of the Thousand Sons. When the Legion deployed its armour and ordnance to lay waste to a city or break a planet's defences, it was the formulae of the Order of Ruin which guided the number, placement and timing of shells, explosives and force. It is said that the Order of Ruin knew the strength of every warrior and war machine within the Legion, and weighed them all in calculations that only they and their Primarch understood.

When a force was raised for a campaign, the Order of Ruin would be in the background assisting by arcane means in the determination of the disposition and

strength of that force. The arraying and maintenance of the Legion's warships also fell under the Order's hand, as did the creation and supply of all its material. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Order of Ruin also maintained the closest contact with the Mechanicum, in particular with the isolated Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad, which the Legion had liberated and with which it had maintained many binding ties afterwards. Under its general command laboured all of the Legion's forge-masters and Techmarines, many of which came directly from within this Order's ranks.

The Order of the Jackal – ‘The Measure of Life and Death’

The Order of the Jackal had a presence in every other structure and faction of the Thousand Sons, including the other Orders. The role of this small Order was twofold: to remember the dead and to raise the next generation of warriors for the Legion. The grave urns of the dead kept beneath the pyramids of Tizca were tended by their hands, and it was in the memories of each member of this Order that the deeds of the fallen were held.

When a warrior on the edge of death was considered for the honour of internment in the iron embrace of a Dreadnought, it was the Order of the Jackal who weighed his worth and decided his fate. To them also fell the task of assessing and selecting aspirants for induction into the Legion. On Prospero and many other worlds, they would walk amongst the gathered throngs of potential recruits, testing with their minds and casting divinations of their fates. In this way, the Order were the guardians of the Legion's past and future. The Legion's Apothecarion, who

also were all but indivisible from the Order of the Jackal, maintained the Legion's gene-seed and were but a practical manifestation in some ways of the Order of the Jackal's wider purpose. In their role as protectors of the Legion's traditions, the Order served another highly important ritual position as arbiters within the Legion, as their members within each of the Five Cults formed the guardians of each Cult's temple; their dual allegiance and responsibility marked by their ceremonial jackal-masked helms and emblems alongside the symbols of their Cult.

The Order of Blindness – ‘The Hidden Ones’

It is only by extrapolation, and the interpretation of scraps of intelligence, that the wider Imperium knows of the existence of the Order of Blindness. Thought to have been headed by Magnus' equerry, and former tutor, Amon – the so-called Hidden Ones appear to have been an Order of infiltrators, spies, interrogators and scouts deployed to gather intelligence. How the members of this Order were recruited, controlled and deployed remain unclear, though there is evidence that the use of psychically conditioned non-Legiones Astartes humans were a part of their broader methodology. Beyond this, their membership and purpose remain shrouded, though there is some evidence that the Order may also have been responsible for the control of certain fringe military elements within the Legion, whose purposes were less to do with stealth than the creation of chaos in a foe, such as the Thousand Sons' few Destroyer-type units, although this remains unconfirmed.



THOUSAND SONS LEGION HERALDRY



Fellowship Command
Legion Icon with Numeral



Third Fellowship Legion Icon



Votive Glyph Pattern



Second Fellowship
Assault Icon Variant



'Pesedjet' – Legion Strategic
Command Icon



Legion Icon, Veteran Variant



Legion Icon, Common Usage



Legion Icon,
Squad Command Variant



Legion Tactical Icon,
Mid-Great Crusade Usage



Legion Icon, Consular Variant



Legion Honour Guard –
Order of the Jackal



Pre-Prosperine Legion Icon

THOUSAND SONS LEGION HELM MARKINGS

From the period of Magnus' reformation onwards, a number of unique variants of power armour helms appear within the ranks of the Thousand Sons. While not universal, they are believed to invoke certain ritual factors and materials in their construction.



MkII 'Crusade' Achean Sub-pattern

Introduced after 'Pesedjet' structural reform, mid-Great Crusade onwards, and still used by veteran and specialist formations by the time of the Burning of Prospero.



MkIV 'Maximus' Achean Sub-pattern

Introduced during the latter Great Crusade, widespread adoption of MkIV sub-patterns locally manufactured by Arkhadine sub-forged.



Tartaros Tactical Dreadnought Armour Achean Sub-pattern

Variant aesthetic form and ritual materials incorporated into recently issued Terminator armour panoply, note also the use of 'Nemes' – Prosperine adornment indicating rank and status as one of the 'learned nobility'.



Example Legionary Standards of the Second
and Third Fellowships of the Thousand Sons.

THE ENDLESS SPIRAL

Besides the Circles, Fellowships, Orders and Cults, there were dozens of other cabals, collegium and symposia formed by the Thousand Sons to pursue a particular strand of knowledge or refine a branch of physic ability, offering a layer of subdivision that inevitably spilled over to their military structures. The membership and importance of these collectives waxed and waned with the rise and fall of their members, and the popularity of their concerns. Over the decades between the rediscovery of Magnus and the Council of Nikaea, there were likely many hundreds of these groupings formed within the Thousand Sons, of which few are now known. The 'Hands of the Drowned Moon' are recorded, for example, as having focused long hours of debate and ritual experimentation on what happened to a living being at the moment of death. The 'Aquilae', meanwhile, sometimes called the 'denied sixth Cult of Prospero', investigated the nature of the æther itself until it was disbanded upon the orders of Magnus. By contrast, the 'Atmon', a group obsessed with the psychic observation of the distant past, was said to have never numbered more than ten initiates of the Corvidae.

The obscure nature of the structure of the Thousand Sons to outsiders is made all the more so because it was clearly driven by a precise design and guiding purpose, though what this was none outside of their ranks could say, and no member of the Legion ever broke the bindings of secrecy placed on them by their Primarch. This, amongst many other factors, further contributed to the suspicions of those outside of the Thousand Sons. Why, they asked, do these things if not for a reason, and if it was for a reason, why keep that reason secret? Of course, many other Legions had their mysteries; some might claim all held at least one secret in their hearts, but most were better at keeping them hidden or at least allaying suspicion, or in the case of the XXth were so bound up in obfuscation as to be impenetrable, but unashamed in acknowledgement of their nature. The Thousand Sons though wore the fact of their secrets like a crown whilst all the while denying them. And unlike the Alpha Legion, whose secrets were those of the shadow warrior, a thing that outsiders could guess at if not fully understand, the lingering accusation of 'sorcery' carried with it an infernal reek.

Legion Command Hierarchy

Authority within the Thousand Sons was a matter of perspective. As with all things a

simple answer existed for all to see, but if one knew a little more and looked from a slightly different angle, that answer was replaced by another. A little more knowledge, another small shift in view point and another structure of seniority would layer over the first two, and so on and on with each new detail.

At its simplest, the Legion can be seen as a pyramid. At its pinnacle was Magnus, supreme in every way, undisputed master of the Thousand Sons in war, scholarship and power. Beneath him were the high captains and magisteria of the Nine Fellowships, and beneath them in turn the legates and line captains, captains-adjutant and sergeant-aspirants who variously commanded the Circles within those Fellowships and led their tactical deployments and squads in the field. The most senior and trusted of the Legion's leaders formed a coven around Magnus, the so-called 'Rehahti', which replaced the shattered and threadbare Legion command staff structure the Primarch had found when he had joined his sons.

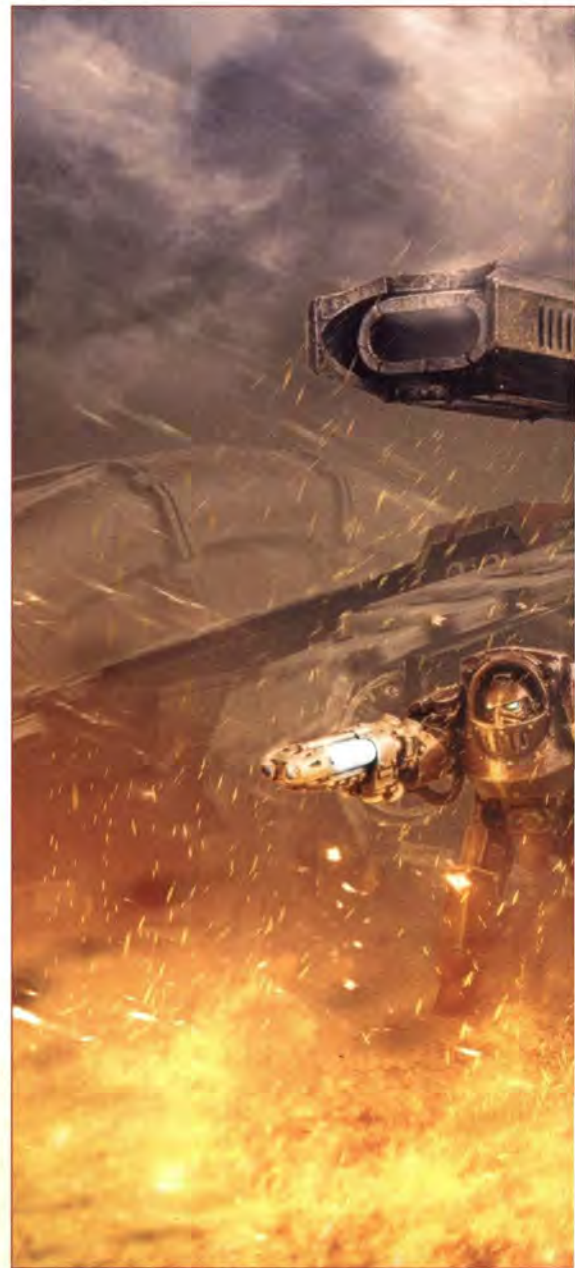
This first outward reading of authority within the Legion is accurate up to a point, but its simplicity hides another pattern. It is self-evident that most of the command structure of the Thousand Sons comprised accomplished psykers, though there were a few exceptions, and those of the Legion who lacked manifest psychic ability usually ranked below their psychic brothers. Even where notional military rank was equal, often it was psychic mastery not veterancy which denoted seniority. Even though this distinction was never formalised, it was a fact obvious to any who had insight into the Legion. Amongst those with psychic power, two other factors determined their place within the order of things at any time: their rank within their Cult, and the prestige of that Cult relative to the others. A low-ranked initiate of one Cult would not outrank a senior member of another Cult, but between initiates of a supposed equivalent rank, the difference was all important.

Beyond the Cults were other factors which could alter the authority of an individual. The membership of an Order and one's place within that Order, hierarchy of ceremonial authority in Prosperine culture (such as responsibility for a portion of the city of Tizca), all were absolute and measurable factors in calculating the standing of any member of the Legion. All of these subtle and hidden factors permeated every grain of authority within the Thousand Sons, and reflected back to the relative standing of

Magnus' close lieutenants within the Rehahti and who was included in its ever-shifting membership.

War Disposition

The Thousand Sons Legion had never entirely shaken off the withering effects of the first decades of its existence. Over a century later, its near-extinction prior to the rediscovery of Magnus still left a shadow on the numerical strength of the Legion. Combined with its conservatism in recruitment, this legacy meant that they were amongst the smallest Legions at the time of the Burning of Prospero. Estimates of their strength place it as potentially being as high as 80,000-85,000 warriors—ironically perhaps their greatest ever number—immediately before their destruction, with the bulk of this strength located on Prospero when not explicitly sent upon a mission of conquest. Even at this level of manpower,



the Thousand Sons comprised one of the smallest of the Space Marine Legions. Their Legion fleet was concomitant with this size comprising, by extant records, some forty capital class vessels with perhaps three times that number of smaller vessels of various classes at their disposal. The most potent of these was known to be the *Photep*, the Thousand Sons Primarch's flagship: a heavily modified Gloriana class vessel that was believed to have been augmented with a significant number of psychically augmented defences and weapons of Magnus' own unique design.

Like most Legions, the Thousand Sons forces had previously been distributed across the various fronts of the Great Crusade, but the events of Nikaea and Magnus' reaction to them meant that the Thousand Sons had acted alone for much of the period following their master's censure. They shunned the

close company of other forces, and while they continued to wage war unimpeachably in the Imperium's name, they undertook few far-ranging deployments that kept them from the touchstone of Prospero and their Primarch for long.

So it was that the bulk of the Legion was within range to heed their Primarch's call when the Wolves came for them. Of course it is possible, likely even, that other forces remained in Expeditionary or Conquest fleets that either did not return to Prospero in time, or never received the communication to do so. As with all things related to the vagaries of communication and travel within the Warp, absolutes must be treated with suspicion. The Burning of Prospero was the doom of the Thousand Sons Legion, with official estimates of their survival of the planetary assault as low as 1,000—once again, we see the numeration rears its head!

While it is likely that several thousand more were far off-world at the time, some of these elements were swiftly hunted down in the years that followed, and others yet disappeared without trace. This should have seen the extermination of the Legion, yet it was not to be so, for in the years of the Horus Heresy, the Thousand Sons again appeared, this time siding with the Traitor, and in numbers that given their destruction make little cogent sense. If it is the case, as some claim, that the remnants of the Legion fled to the Empyrean, and there in the dark realms beyond human reason and beyond time grew strong again, who can say what befell them with certainty? Perhaps, even as the more crazed theorists claim, there were in truth no survivors of Prospero, only the echoes of the vengeful dead returned to haunt their destroyers. If this is true, what difference is made to the terrible power the Legion came to represent in the Age of Darkness that followed?





EXEMPLARY BATTLES

The truth of history is that failure does not follow infamy. Victory does not cling to nobility, or what some might call purity. So while many might have preferred to forget it, the Thousand Sons were not simply sorcerers, they were warriors, and highly effective warriors in the Emperor's service at that before their condemnation. The records of the Great Crusade show that they won as many victories as their brothers, but what a simple reading of these figures can conceal is that they achieved this often with far fewer warriors, and often their victories were both clean and decisive. One is forced to wonder, had they not been cursed with the Flesh Change, what they might have achieved.

THE ACCEREDINE DEFIANCE

This was one of the XVth Legion's first engagements after its foundation. Acceredine was the dominant enclave on the human-colonised world of Castus, which lay close to the Sol System. The world had surrendered and submitted to Compliance after only a cursory engagement with the forces of the Great Crusade, and had swiftly been turned into a temporary staging node from which the Great Crusade forces launched deeper into the unknown. Castus was a world of feudal warriors who fought with the weapons passed down to them out of the darkness of the Age of Strife. Divided into a Hundred Enclaves each led by a warrior chieftain, they existed in a state of constant, low-grade conflict. Proud and direct, many of them were immediately gathered into the various arms of the Great Crusade fleets and sent to conquer other planets in the name of the Master of Mankind. A blood price for each warrior was paid by the Imperium to their families in an echo of the mercenary traditions that had existed on Castus long before their sons and daughters went to fight wars for their new Emperor. For a brief time all seemed well. Forces flowed through Castus and scattered to the stars, the warriors of the Hundred Enclaves gathering in their archaeo-armour to make a blood contract to the Imperium before boarding the landing ships which dotted Castus' plains.

Not all on Castus submitted to the yoke of their new masters willingly, however. To some the old traditions of blood service and honour had been subverted, and they saw the Imperium, which they were now a part of, as little more than a parasite draining them of their strength. Chief amongst these dissenters was Assilla Gedyr, Chieftain of the Acceredine Enclave. A year after the Compliance of Castus, Gedyr renounced her oath to the Emperor, calling on those born of Castus to do the same. The heads of a hundred iterators, officials, and garrisoning troops were taken to mark the beginning of her war.

The rebellion spread across Castus with the speed of a fire across plains of dry grass. While many of Castus' warriors had been drawn off to fight in the Great Crusade, many remained and they were formidable. Their strongholds were constructed of plasma-tempered metal, their armour could turn all but the most potent weapons, and while the Age of Strife had taken much, it had left them with the mysteries of power field generators, plasma channelling and much more besides. Caught off-guard, the

Imperium's presence on Castus took heavy casualties in the first night of the uprising. Seeing her bloody work, more enclaves rose to Gedyr's call, and for a short time it seemed that Castus would fall. But the Imperium could not allow such a vital world to be lost, and could not let such defiance stand.

The 15th Expeditionary Fleet bound for Castus was re-tasked to put the rebellion down and restore the rule of peace. Chief amongst this force's troops were the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Regiment of the XVth Legion. Planned and coordinated by the XVth, the Imperium's rebuke to the rebels was swift and devastating. The full Expeditionary fleet's forces dropped onto the surface of Castus within the space of ten minutes. Orbital bombardment lit the sky with a torrent of flame and actinic light as drop pods and gunships fell through the columns of macro-shells and turbo-laser torrents. All struck the strongholds of those who had first risen in rebellion, and reduced them to burned ruins and their garrisons to heaps of corpse ash. Such an action, while spectacular, was not remarkable amongst the Legiones Astartes, and would not be a matter of note if it was not the context for what was to follow.

The Acceredine Enclave did not fall in the first assault. It seems likely that Gedyr had prepared for her rebellion, and the certain punitive action that would be taken against her, by reinforcing both her stronghold's walls and augmenting its defences with power shield generators and slaved gun turrets. Fifty Legionaries of the XVth and 1,000 human troops of the Imperial Army Auxiliary had descended on the enclave, but had failed to breach its defences. In the face of such resistance, many others would have withdrawn or called in a sudden surge of reinforcements to break them. The XVth did neither of these things.

Across Castus, the spread-out forces of the XVth began to alter their battle tactics. In places, some simply crushed the enemy facing them and withdrew to their gunships. In others, they stayed their hand and began to offer terms to rebel leaders at the price of immediate and unquestioning service. Forces began to move, peeling away from engagements at the precise moment when victory was assured but not yet taken, leaving the exact strength of force required to press the victory home.

Over the course of hours, the Imperium's forces began to circle the Acceredine Enclave. Messages began to reach Gedyr

of other enclaves falling or surrendering. Calls from her former allies reached her, pleading with her to surrender. Doubt started to murmur between some of her entourage. Then the bombardment began to fall from the sky. It caged the enclave's defences, lashing it with a fury that blinded all who looked at it directly. Then, as swiftly as it had begun, it ended, and at that exact moment the first assault hit the outer walls. Gedyr responded, rushing troops from where they had sheltered. The attack vanished, and another began at the same instant, then another. The shields began to fail, and then as one, the Imperium's forces withdrew and the hammer of orbital fire descended on the enclave and broke it open. The gunships of the XVth flew into the breach so close to the last blast of the bombardment that it is said it seemed as if they were one. Gedyr died by her own hand before she could be taken, but the rest of her bloodline were sent to the death mines of Cthonia.

THE LEVELLING OF 72-9

72-9 is now just one amongst many small sparsely populated worlds eking out an existence on the margins of the Imperium. Its name has remained unchanged since its conquest, and is a mark of its lowly place in the order of things. This unremarkable face is, however, a mask painted by the Imperium over the planet's past in the hope that, even in obscurity, its people might hope for a better future, because before 72-9, there was another world.

Valnum was a Knight World, one of the rare few which had endured since the Dark Age of Technology, weathering the trials of Old Night to be reunited with the rest of humanity during the Great Crusade. Clad in towering Knight Armours, the nobles of these scattered realms had stood as protectors over their people. But while other Knight Worlds had become the seats of noble Houses whose traditions of warrior honour protected them from invaders, on Valnum the long ages of darkness had bred shadows and bitterness in those who called it home. The ruling line of Valnum, House Cratax, had become rotten, its noble blood tainted by insanity and cruelty. Their holds were dark places, piled atop bones and sealed chambers that echoed to the screams of the forgotten.

The first emissaries of the Imperium sent to negotiate Compliance were all executed by being strapped to the gun muzzles of Cratax's Knights—all save one, who was flayed, and their skin scraped for parchment on which the head of House Cratax wrote his rejection

of Compliance. Such defiance could not stand, and against the power of a Knight Household even the Legiones Astartes could be pressed. But not the Thousand Sons.

Sixty warriors came to the plains before the fortress of Cratax under the command of Captain Ohrmuzd. At first Cratax must have considered it a joke, or perhaps another attempt to make terms, for they sent only one of their Household out to meet with the waiting warriors. The Knight fired as soon as it was in range, sweeping its thermal lance across them in a line of screaming, glowing air. None of the warriors fell. The touch of the Knight's fury had seemed to drain away into them, or dissipated into nothing. In reply, lightning leapt from amongst the warriors, crawling over the Knight of Cratax, burrowing into its armour plates, melting power connections and whipping through its metal bones. It fell, but before it could hit the ground, an invisible force ripped its head from its body and cast it back before the gates of Cratax's hold.

The Knights came from the gates then, every single war machine of the blighted Household. The ground around the circle of Thousand Sons churned with explosions and melted, fused and cracked as the charging Knights poured their fury before them. The telekinetic shields protecting the Thousand Sons shook, and within their circle some fell to their knees, blood oozing from the joints of their armour to freeze and boil in the warp-charged air. But still they waited as the Knights' charge shook the ground beneath their feet.

When the lead Knight was a shadow above them, Ohrmuzd raised his hand and closed his fingers. The Knight stopped, staggered and then fell, its pilot's flesh turned to vapour inside its cockpit. Before the metal giant had hit the ground, the Thousand Sons had dropped their shields, lifted the body of the dead Knight into the air and cast it at one of its cousins. From that moment the battle is said to have lasted no more than five hundred seconds, and at its end the molten and twisted remains of every single Knight lay on the witch-frosted ground. The Thousand Sons Legion lost three warriors, two killed by brain haemorrhage while using their powers, one crushed by the dead metal of a Knight. Those who had survived departed before the Explorator units of the Mechanicum arrived to strip Cratax's hold. When word of the victory reached the Imperium's distant War Council, it was greeted only with the sound of fear: silence.

THE TURNING OF THE GOLDEN APOSTLES

The Golden Apostles were a string of star systems strung between the Sol System and the outer reaches of the galactic core. Each system possessed worlds inhabited by a menagerie of hybridised alien and human civilisations, and most possessed both technology and craft which could cross the gulfs of space between planets. The presence of such chimeric civilisations would have been enough to earn their cleansing and re-integration by the forces of the Great Crusade, but they became a focus for more than simple destruction because of what bound them together. Each of the star systems was connected by a warp channel.

The Great Crusade had already encountered stable channels through the Warp which allowed ships to pass predictably and swiftly between two fixed locations even without a Navigator. Some of these gates seemed to be created by devices devised by dead alien civilisations and, while valuable, were seen as dangerous and vulnerable. The Golden Apostles were different in that the warp channels which connected them were not marked by physical objects, but simply regions of space. A ship would enter these regions and emerge in the next system in the chain. Because of this, the Golden Apostles represented not simply a region to be conquered by the Imperium but a channel though the stars, along which the forces of the Great Crusade could penetrate deep into the galactic core. But the opportunity presented by the Golden Apostle systems was also their greatest challenge.

The Imperium's first attempts to take one of the systems had failed, because to attack one would invite all the other systems in the chain to pour forces in to defend their besieged brother. The price of two failed attempts on taking one system in the chain had already proven high when Magnus announced that he and his Thousand Sons would deliver the Golden Apostles into Compliance. This may seem unremarkable if it was not for the context of this declaration. It was a time when the Thousand Sons were riding a simultaneous wave of success and a renewed storm of suspicion from their brother Legions. Corax and Mortarion both had called again for Magnus to be censured for overstepping the bounds of his mandate. Others had begun to say that Magnus and his breed had lost sight of their purpose, that they saw the business of conquest as beneath them, that for all of their intelligence and learning, they had forgotten that they were warriors. In this context, Magnus'

proclamation that he would take the Golden Apostles was not just a statement of intent, but an answer to those whispering voices.

The campaign waged by the Thousand Sons is well documented, though certain specifics of methodology are notable by their omission. The first fact of note is that Magnus began the attack on the Golden Apostles while also directly engaged in the Survalen Surge at the side of the Sons of Horus, and many of the forces he would later call on were also engaged in actions across other volumes of space. Where other Legions might begin such a campaign with a great mustering of troops, Magnus did no such thing. In fact, there were no signs at first that the Thousand Sons were making any effort to begin their promised assault. The first act that is noted in the record of the Thousand Sons simply states that the Order of Blindness was summoned and bidden to act 'under its ordained dominion'. Almost a year then passes, in which time others began to question if another force should be committed to winning the stubbornly resistant string of worlds.

Without warning, Magnus gathered a force made up of five Circles from three different Fellowships. Augmented by bonded forces from the Mechanicum and two Rogue Traders, they converged and launched at one of the systems in the middle of the Golden Apostle chain. A similar attack had failed during the second attempt to take the string, with the Imperium's forces unable to break out of the system once they had established a beachhead. The size of Magnus' assault force was also small, even with the Primarch in personal command, enough to subdue a planet perhaps or take a system of lower grade resistance, but the human-xenos alliance which ruled the Golden Apostles was both sophisticated and far from weak. Though they lacked warp-capable space craft, their warships, troops and weaponry were more than capable of matching those of the Imperium in an equal fight. These facts, combined with the immediate response of the other systems in the chain, seemed likely to see a repeat of the early failure. Observers amongst the rest of the Great Crusade waited for news of defeat or sudden calls for aid. In fact there was no word at all.

Records made by the Thousand Sons indicate that the system they assaulted had much of its military materiel and strength drawn off into an adjacent system just before the Thousand Sons arrived. Many such fortunate synchronous events marked the later

campaigns of the Legion, though how or if they were brought about remains as unclear now as it did then. Magnus' warships seemed to have been able to move fast and deep into the system, seemingly both undetected and unresisted. Once in place, the Five Circles launched coordinated assaults which cut away all resistance before it began. Once they held the system, they began to prepare it for battle.

Precisely eighty-one days after the taking of this first system, a second force of the Thousand Sons emerged from the Warp in the outmost system in the Golden Apostle chain. In contrast to the first, it arrived in fire and fury. Warships burned hard from their transition points and launched waves of boarding assaults against the system's outer defence stations. Psychic fire flickered across the void, conjured fire filled the companionways of the enemy stations, and through it the Thousand Sons marched, energy blasts dancing rainbows across their 'kine' shields. The assaulted system called for help and once more the other systems in the chain answered.

Warships poured down the chain one after the other. None arrived. As they passed through the system already held by Magnus, they plunged straight into the waiting embrace of warships, mines and torpedoes surrounding the exit from the warp channel. Burning wrecks choked the void around the channel entrance until the roiling inferno of metal and plasma ate the ships without the Thousand Sons needing to fire a shot. No message or warning passed back down the chain of worlds, only cries for more ships. There are even suggestions that the enemy forces advanced with reckless speed, as though overcome by the most headstrong parts of their nature. Magnus only had to wait and watch the Golden Apostles bleed themselves dry.

When it was almost done, he moved his forces down the chain from system to system, and at each one confronted the remaining defenders in battle. It is said, but not recorded by the Thousand Sons, that he took to the field personally on each occasion and let the enemy mass before him and then forced them to kneel with merely a thought. When every system was Compliant, he is said to have personally sent an astropathic message to the War Council, 'By such deeds do we see that we are bound by no law besides that we impose on ourselves.'



THOUSAND SONS CASTELLAX-ACHEA BATTLE-AUTOMATA

DESIGNATION: 'MAAB-DYAT-ISIR'

BATTLE OF TIZCA, REF; 'SLAUGHTER AT THE GARDEN OF NAUKRATIS'

The development in secret of the Castellax-Achea class Battle-automata during the closing years of the Great Crusade was to have implications little understood until the attack on Prospero and in the years beyond, as during the darkness of the Horus Heresy it was again to appear in the ranks of the enemy. Unleashed during the Battle of Prospero as shock counter-assault units by the encircled Thousand Sons, their durability and strength was enough to inflict severe losses where they were deployed and withstand, at least for a time, the onslaught of even the Legio Custodes.

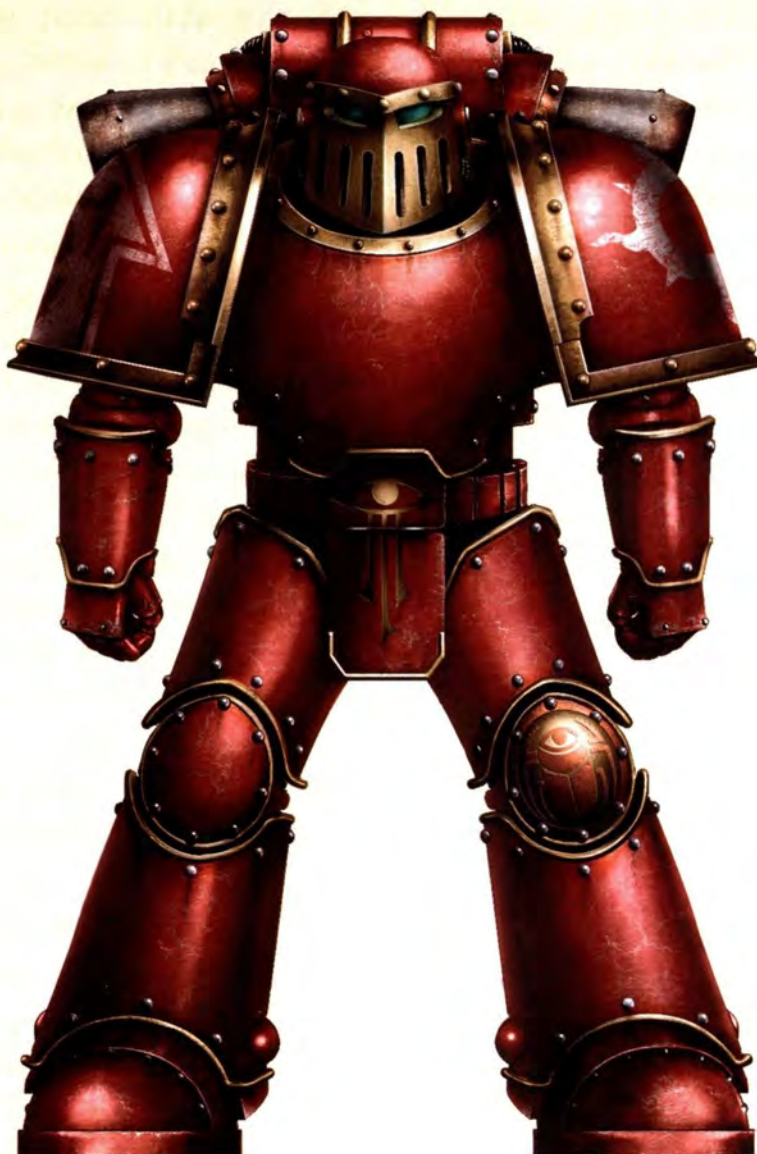
The example of the war machine depicted here was one of a maniple of its kind which went berserk in the aftermath of the main battle without direct control, eventually being destroyed by reserve forces from the Knight House of Malinax.

THOUSAND SONS LEGIONARY – BATTLE OF TIZCA

UNKNOWN LEGIONARY,
UNKNOWN FELLOWSHIP,
LEGION TACTICAL SQUAD PANOPLY

Taken from pict-captures from the Battle of Tizca, this unknown Thousand Sons Legionary is typical of many of the forces which resisted the onslaught of the Censure Host. The Legionary's power armour is of the MkIII 'Iron' pattern which was still widely present in the Legion, although being largely phased out in favour of increasing stockpiles of the more advanced MkIV pattern in the Thousand Sons' line units.

The relatively little ornamentation and insignia on the Legionary's armour other than designations marking him as a tactical Legionary of a line battle company, may be indicative that its wearer was relatively fresh in his Legion's service, perhaps with no more than a decade under arms. It is of note however, that the presence of the gilded Achean Scarab emblem and 'Solar Eye' are believed to be indicative of rank and honour gained within his chosen temple of psychic discipline, marking him as an aspirant of promise. Such promise was never to be fulfilled though, as it is recorded that this unknown Legionary fell, as did his entire squad, under the blades of the Legio Custodes in the bitter fighting to hold the marble-walled compounds that made up the so-called 'Priam Colonnade' against the Censure Host. In this too is this unknown warrior of the Thousand Sons representative of his kind, as on that day were the flower of the XVth Legion cut down, veteran and novice alike, by the wrath of the Emperor's chosen.



Thousand Sons Tactical Legionary, Standard late-Great Crusade Iconography

THOUSAND SONS LEGION CENTURION

SHAI-CAPTAIN TACHUS MAKT

FIFTH FELLOWSHIP, THIRD TACTICAL SUPPORT BATTALION

493RD EXPEDITIONARY FLEET

Pictured here shortly before his landing on the desert world of Cazhat as commander of the Compliance force, Shai-Captain (Centurion) Tachus Makt commanded a detachment of the Fifth Fellowship attached to the 493rd Expeditionary Fleet during the latter years of the Great Crusade.

The Compliance of the desert world of Cazhat was representative of the often unique means utilised by the Thousand Sons Legion to meet their ends. A feudal world sparsely populated with little technological advancement past basic agriculture and animal husbandry, small regressive human colonies were crowded around the few oases that provided water and respite from the searing heat of Cazhat's sands, presenting no military threat. These tribes were largely suspicious of the emissaries of the 493rd Expeditionary Fleet, but unlike the tribal worlds previously encountered by the fleet, they were not immediately overawed and Compliance was swiftly rejected by the elders of the largest tribal group, who protested the Imperium as being 'impure'. Within hours, the largest oases of Cazhat were devoid of all water, depriving the irrigation systems that hydrated both the crops and the houses of its defences against the dry heat of the desert. As travellers between the tribes spread rumours of the newcomers and their 'magic', the smaller tribes were quick to accept the offer of security and wealth offered by the Imperium, sure that if they refused, such a curse would befall them too. After some sporadic internecine violence, the entire planet came to Compliance without a single shot being fired by the XVth.



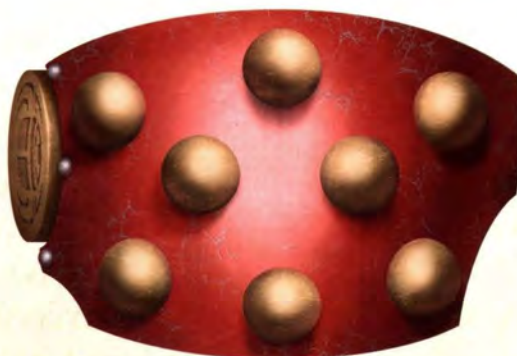
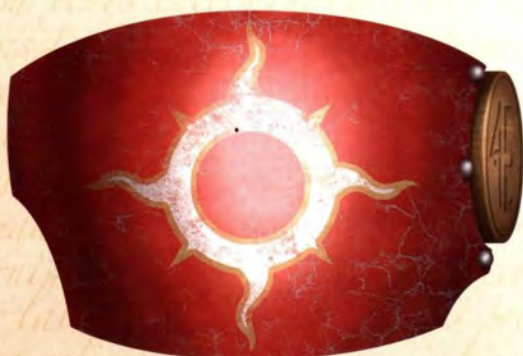
Thousand Sons Legion, Late Era Tactical Command Iconography

THOUSAND SONS FELLOWSHIP TERMINATOR

LEGIONARY ADONIAS CALMET
1ST CIRCLE OF THE SIXTH FELLOWSHIP
TERMINATOR BATTLE SQUAD 'ATEF'

Present in a number of campaigns as part of his Legion's actions in the latter years of the Great Crusade, Adonias Calmet served within both the Fourth and Sixth Fellowships of his Legion at various times, and was known as an aspirant of the Pyrae Temple of the Thousand Sons' psychic Orders. Formerly part of the ship-to-ship boarding garrison stationed on the XVth Legion strike cruiser *Portent of the Western Dawn*, both he and his squad were transferred to Prospero's surface prior to the Censure fleet's arrival and the fleet despatched before their approach.

Trapped within the Tizcan shield as the planet was set to flame around him, Calmet held true to his Primarch's word and raised no hand against the attackers, waiting passively in the vaults of the temple of the Pyrae until at last the order came to fight back. Imaged here in freshly commissioned Tartaros pattern Terminator armour (likely not to have been Calmet's customary battle panoply but drawn in extremis from the Legion's stores), he and his squad participated in a savage counter-attack from within the Prosperine portal network. He was ultimately critically injured, subdued and captured by the Silent Sisterhood, and Calmet's testimony given under extreme duress prior to his execution forms part of the basis for this wider record.



Tartaros Pattern Terminator Armour Pauldrons with Legion Iconography

XVTH LEGION VETERAN

UNNAMED TERRAN VETERAN, LEGIONARY

VIITH CHAPTER OF THE IVTH HOST

OF THE XVTH LEGIONES ASTARTES

THE COMPLIANCE OF MIH'SAVOH, THE PRISOA CAMPAIGN

Depicted at the outset of the mission to Mih'savoh, outer capital world of the Prisoan Hybrid, this shows an unknown veteran Legionary of the XVth Legion, known at this point still only informally as the Thousand Sons, a decade before their re-unification with the Primarch Magnus. The Prisoa Campaign is one of the last instances where the XVth Legion were at such strength that they would willingly form part of a theatre-wide operation alongside multiple other Legiones Astartes detachments and Imperialis Auxilia regiments before the corrosion within their ranks became too onerous. The campaign was a brief but bloody affair, comprising in the main a series of high-intensity assaults against a morally corrupt but technologically sophisticated human-led pocket empire at the edge of the Segmentum Pacificus. During the Mih'savoh assault, the psykers of the XVth used misdirection and illusion to foil planetary defences, allowing their landing all but unopposed and suffering only a fraction of the casualties the IVth Legion assaulting the nearby Prisoan world of Mend'iShar were to take in their similar objective by direct attack.

The panoply of the XVth Legion shown here cannot be more in contrast to that it was later to take on, its colouration and armorials echoing that of both the Achaemenid Empire and the Nor'hion 'Witch-Mark' of Old Terra. Of additional note is that the Legionary is equipped with limited production 'Stygian' variant MkII pattern power armour produced as a temporary measure to cover spiralling demand from the Space Marine Legions.



Early Great Crusade Iconography of the XVth Legion

THOUSAND SONS LEGION APOTHECARY

APOTHECARY-PRIMUS PENTHU DAAST
HERODITINE CIRCLE OF THE LEGION APOTHECARION,
ATTACHED TO THE EIGHTH FELLOWSHIP
THE BATTLE OF TIZCA

Known beyond his Legion to a small extent owing to his extensive writings on xenomorphology, which had gained the attentions of the Magos Biologis of the Mechanicum and the Imperial Planetary Assay during the Great Crusade, Penthu Daast was one of his Legion's foremost Primus Medicae. He had served as an Apothecary in the dark times before Magnus and been part of his Legion's fruitless efforts to cure or at least withstand the Flesh Change. After Prospero he had become a fanatic believer in his Primarch, in no small part as he had provided a salvation and an end to his Legion's decay where none other had.

A biomancer of noted skill and member of the Temple of the Pavoni —as indeed were many of those who rose to high rank in the Thousand Sons Apothecarion— he was also known in extant records to have been loudly in protest of his Primarch's and Legion's censure, and vocally against the prohibition of the use of the psyker's gift by the Legiones Astartes. This ire seems to have overruled his obedience, as pict-captures from the attack on Prospero show Penthu Daast leading early resistance to the Space Wolves attack, using his medical skill and biomantic powers to bolster his fellow Thousand Sons' survivability to truly inhuman levels. Witnessed fighting on despite wounds that should have been mortal, even to a Space Marine, Penthu Daast's final fate remains unknown.



Thousand Sons Primus Medicae Armourials – Late Great Crusade Era

THOUSAND SONS HONOUR GUARD TERMINATOR

HONOURED LEGIONARY KHET VASLCAS

CIRCLE OF AURAMAGMA,

EIGHTH FELLOWSHIP OF THE THOUSAND SONS

THE BATTLE OF TIZCA

Little surviving is known of Khet Vaslcas' record within his Legion prior to the Battle of Tizca, but it can be assumed that it was one of distinction to have afforded him a position as part of the personal bodyguard of Malak Auramagma, leading captain and praetor of the Eighth Fellowship of the Thousand Sons Legion. What is known from the evidence of battle is that like his master Khet was an initiate of the Pyrae Cult of considerable power, and fought wreathed in a shimmering haze of molten heat which was strong enough to force the detonation of bolter rounds before they could even strike the ceramite of his 'Nemes' Cataphractii sub-pattern Terminator armour.

Alongside Malak Auramagma, Khet Vaslcas and his fellow Terminators conducted a suicidal attack directly upon the Wolf King Leman Russ and his Varagyr at the height of the Battle of Tizca. It was a brave and reckless assault born of hatred and outrage that would see the entire command and elite contingents of the Eighth Fellowship perish beneath the cold iron of the Space Wolves' and the Silent Sisters' blades, but one that came perilously close to achieving its intended goal.



Cataphractii Terminator Honour Guard Armorial

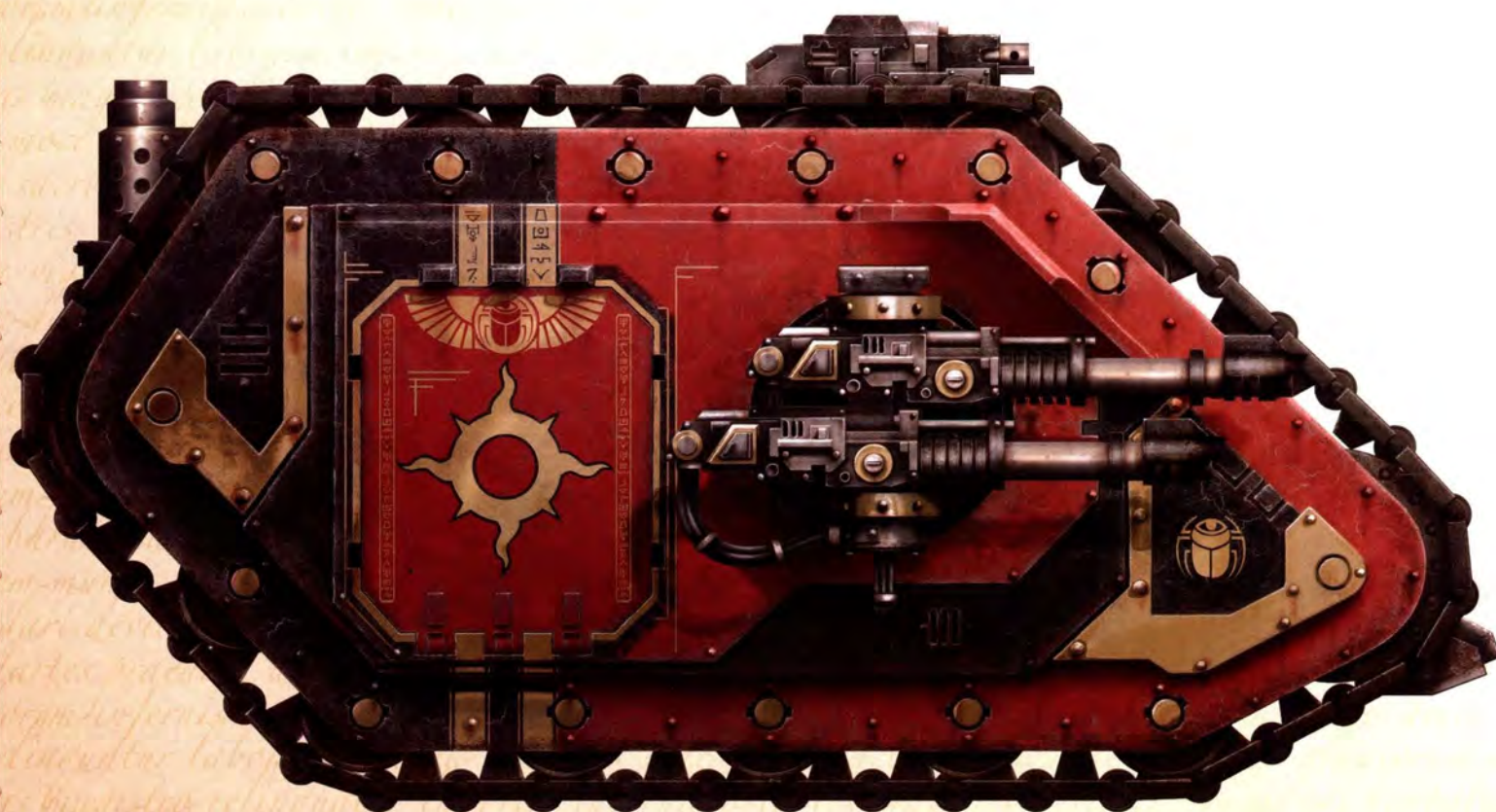
THOUSAND SONS ARMoured FORCES

To the Thousand Sons, the use of armoured transports within their line companies was a means to an end rather than a preferred mode of warfare, as it was to some Space Marine Legions. Seldom massed disproportionately in their deployments, the Thousand Sons Legion preferred to field only such armoured transport vehicles needed to ensure the protection of its Legionaries in transit, and with a degree of defence and mobility rather than striking power as their goal. Smaller vehicles were rarely utilised in the front line among such armoured contingents given their limited survivability, with the ubiquitous Rhino often relegated to second line and support duties in favour of the Land Raider Proteus which dominated the Legion's deployments. Line of battle tanks such as the Predator and the Sicaran, as well as mobile artillery formations within the Thousand Sons were held by the Legion in sizable numbers, but remained largely the purview of specialised armoured phalanxes that had little, if any, direct infantry

contingent of their own. Instead, these forces were released on an engagement by engagement basis by the Legion's strategic command, often as much in response to the urging of divination as forward logistical planning. Utilised against enemies entrenched in highly defended fortifications against which only the heaviest of their muster could deliver an opening for the remaining forces to breach, their weapons fire guided by preternatural forces, the tanks of the Thousand Sons were a deadly, if largely unsung component of their Legion's record of victory.

During the Battle of Prospero, all surviving armoured contingents, scattered in sub-surface bunkers and armourium bays across the city of Tizca, were deployed hastily and in an ad hoc fashion to delay the offensive of the Censure Host. It is estimated that these vehicles numbered only one tenth to a fifth of the Legion's overall armoured strength, and the fate of the rest remains uncertain.

The 'Karakh': This Land Raider Proteus, recorded prior to the Burning of Prospero as the 'Karakh', was one such armoured carrier deployed among the streets of Tizca at the defence of the Pyzene Garrison tower, using its bulk to block an avenue so that a number of retreating Thousand Sons, and Legion-thralls laden with rescued ammunition paniers, could flee to the temporary safety of the tower. Against the mass assault of the Space Wolves forces, the Karakh could not hope to withstand as, despite its heavy armour, the sheer weight of weapons fire unleashed against it would result in its destruction. However, the delay this provided the retrieval effort ensured that the munitions would not be lost to the oncoming horde and the Thousand Sons' defences would be able to stand against the Censure Host for a while longer.





Deimos pattern Rhino, 'Avaris Osir'. Attached to the Fifth Fellowship, the *Avaris Osir* was logged as being pressed into a counter-assault force against the Space Wolves' offensive at Hysis Plaza, and shows the typical intricacy of detail and decoration the Thousand Sons lavished even upon their support vehicles.



Panel detail: The Land Raider 'Karakh': Showing archetypal ornamentation, this access panel displays the Legion's primary iconography below a compound glyph depicting the emblems of the winged 'Achean' scarab, with secondary motifs of occult geometric forms and coded cartouche inlay honouring the vehicle's past campaigns and service.

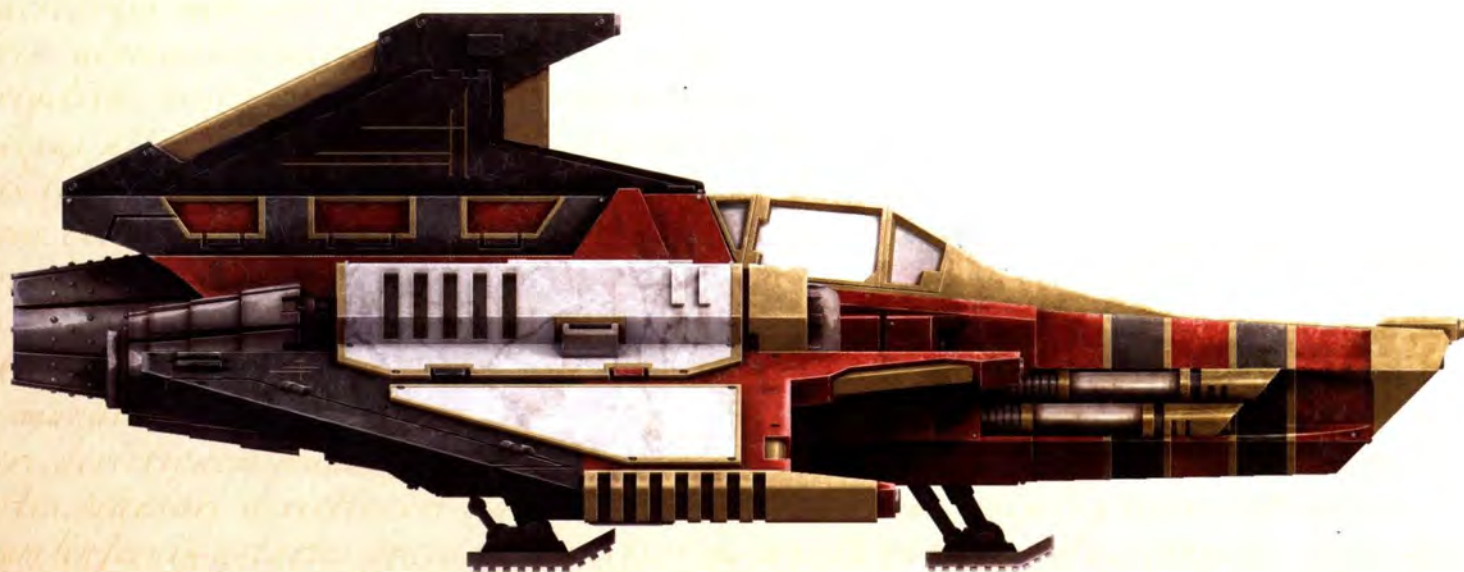
THOUSAND SONS LEGION STRIKE CRAFT

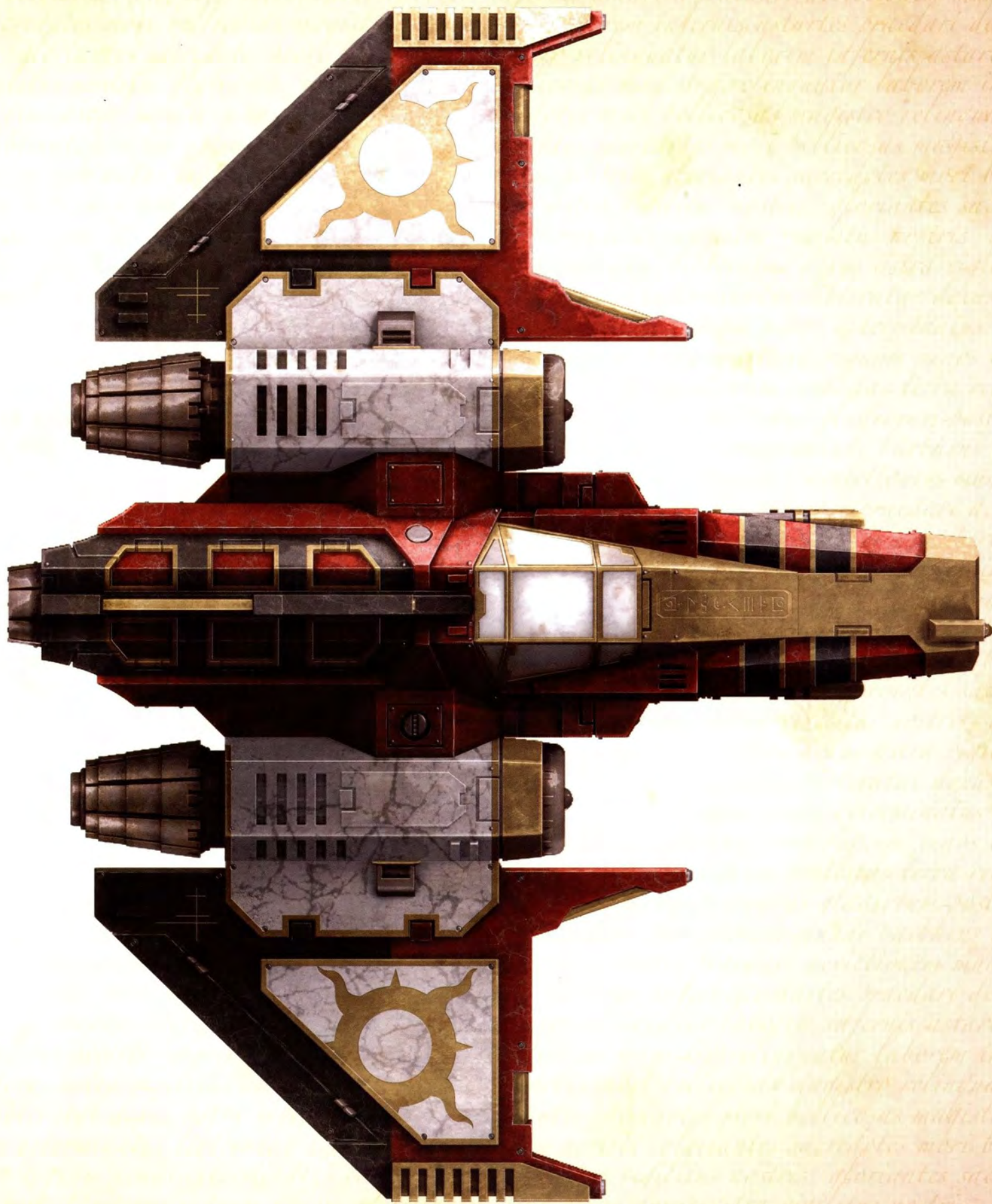
The Thousand Sons Legion made extensive use of sub-orbital strike craft both for targeted attacks against enemy positions and for escort duties during planetary interface operations. This preference spoke both to the Legion's general dislike of attritional warfare and 'unpredictable' drop pod assaults, and the wider desire bred by its history to preserve its rank and file from needless losses it could historically ill afford. Commensurately, the Thousand Sons utilised a sizable fleet of heavily armed and well-protected gunships, many of which are believed to have been uniquely modified by the Legion's artificers with additional defensive systems as well as unknown technologies thought to take advantage of their masters' psychic arts in prognostication, telekinesis and, most importantly, biomancy. This latter discipline, it is believed, allowed the Legion's pilots to endure stresses and maintain a speed of perception which beggared the belief even of other Space Marines, and gave their squadrons an enviably lethal reputation.

Throughout the Legion's campaigns, it chose to operate a considerable number of dual use fighter-interceptor craft for this escort role for its gunships and shuttles, ranging from earlier adapted Terran patterns such as the Adept-se/17 'Night Rakers' dating back to the Unification Wars, to afterburner-fitted hulking Mars pattern Thunderbolt heavy fighters and the temperamental and soon abandoned Ryza-Nistrus Voidstar, before the final development of the Xiphon Interceptor. To the pilot corps of the Thousand Sons Legion, the Xiphon was the apotheosis of Legiones Astartes support fighter design, and the XVth were a strong and early adopter of the design, to the extent that it swiftly superseded all other fighters in their service. By the time of the censure of the Thousand Sons Legion, by Logistica Corpus' estimates there were in operation over three hundred Xiphon Interceptors, however most of these were on-station aboard the Legion's core fleet and departed with them under the Primarch's orders before the Censure Host arrived at Prospero. Only a scattering remained in the city, and with the air defence left primarily to

the garrisoning human Prosperine Airguard for the main, little serious resistance could be given to the Space Wolves landing.

Xiphon Interceptor: The 'Feathered Serpent': Noted for its distinct panoply of war, the *Feathered Serpent*, a veteran of the aerial wars above New Carthage and Rovacallii, was one of the few Thousand Sons' Xiphons which engaged in battle above the skies of Tizca. Buried with its hangar during the battle's opening stages thanks to the ground quakes caused by the planetary bombardment, it took to the skies after the primary landings had already been made and struck with deadly effect at the landing craft shuttling second wave troops and war machines to Prospero's surface. Believed to have accounted for the loss of at least one Space Wolves Storm Eagle gunship, three Imperialis Armada support fighters and, most devastatingly, two Therium class heavy landers, it was eventually harried to its destruction by both Space Wolves and Legio Custodes fighter craft, its engines aflame as it crashed into the wasteland beyond the city.







THE FORGE WORLD OF ZHAO-ARKHAD

Title (Formal): The Sovereign Omnisian
Domain of Zhao-Arkhad

Sub-domains: Arkhad-I/II/III,
secondary geo-spatial outposts: Nytos,
Ilotar in intra-system asteroid belt stations

Tithe Grade: Tertius-I

Legio: Legio Xestobias
(Cognomen: The 'Iron Vigil')

Allegiance: Traitoris Obsequium/
Fidelitas Perdita

*'Beware, for the Antipath doth engender
the workings of the idle and the isolated to
corruption and falsity; as the prey-beast that
becomes separated from the herd becomes
meat for the predator, so does the wayward
artificer become the vessel of hereteknica.'*

Castigations of the Logistica Corpus
Stanza 7433-XV

One of the Mechanicum's most far-flung and isolated Forge Worlds, Zhao-Arkhad was in truth never a sphere whose existence and course would have troubled the annals of the Imperium's history, and indeed barely been noteworthy in the march of the Great Crusade, save for a single fateful fact; it was restored to the Imperium by the Thousand Sons Legion and maintained links of fealty and provender to them ever afterwards.

Much of what is generally now known of Zhao-Arkhad was obtained by Mettalican Mechanicum Assay teams that would eventually reach the world during the Age of the Scouring and oversee its return to the Imperium's fold. Those records made available are generally cursory and fragmentary so the curious history of Zhao-Arkhad remains largely unknown, at least in its specifics, as little of what was recorded of its early years appears to have survived its turbulent history. What is certain is that it was founded by a Martian Mechanicum Ark expedition of unknown provenance presumably in the latter years of the Dark Age of Technology. Flung no doubt far, far off course to end where they did, the colonists by determination and favourable fates survived the toxic death world upon which they found themselves stranded and would grow eventually to control the entirety of the Zhao planetary system.

Such a troubled birth and cradle though would forever prevent the burgeoning domain from even a remote chance of ascending to the heights of one of the greater Forge Worlds such as Ryza or Atar-Median, and would also breed isolationist policies within each individual forge-fane which meant that the forces of Zhao-Arkhad never marched in unity even before the Horus Heresy. Censure following its involvement with the Thousand Sons and their dark fate would further fragment Zhao-Arkhad so that for the years of the so-called Age of Darkness, it would follow the path first of secession and then internal strife. But whether an Arkhadine forge-fane marched for knowledge, frayed loyalty, power or rebellion, it was assured the horrors born and tempered in their sect would soon follow.

Stranded upon a Deadly Shore

Seemingly it was fate or the hand of blind chance which drew the founding Ark expedition to the Zhao system and forced its colonisation. The expedition as the surviving lore of Zhao-Arkhad has it, beset and driven by warp storms that left their drives wrecked and their engines failing, was forced into an emergency translation into realspace amid unknown stars deep to the galactic south. What appeared to be the only habitable planet in range of the stricken Ark lay within the inner system of a white star

they named Zhao, a system otherwise formed from numerous minor volcanically active spheres, gas giants and spun webs of asteroid belts. That any world at all within range was serviceable as a haven appeared as a miracle and it seems Zhao-Arkhad's verdant green surface was calculated as the only chance the colonist-magos had of survival, particularly as its three moons registered heavy mineral content and offered opportunity for potential expansion. While this was indeed true, the haven was a blighted one, as the colonists were faced with conquering the tropical death world that fate delivered unto them.

With an atmospheric oxygen level far higher than that encountered on Terra, the natural state of Zhao-Arkhad was highly toxic to unaugmented man. The prevailing climate was that of a rainforest with wildly fluctuating temperatures and severe levels of humidity bought on by ceaseless rain, leaving the colonists with little option but to initially occupy only the sectors of the forced-landed Ark and its detached cargo sections that could be air-locked from the harsh conditions. Zhao-Arkhad's ability to sustain life was quickly proven by the grossly enlarged fauna that grew at speeds seldom seen and the extent of monstrously large arthropods and ophidian beasts whose constant aggression threatened the existence of the colonists from the outset. It was in



NAME: ZHAO-ARKHAD
CLASSIFICATION: MECHANICUM SOVEREIGN
FORGE WORLD [DEATH WORLD]
SYSTEM DATA: MM/965/2362//BIΣ
STELLAR GRID: 80-PARW/DL-22
SEGMENTUM: TEMPESTUS/OBSCURUS
NOTATION: DECLARED TRAITORIS PERDITA
[HIGH TOXICITY FROM ATMOSPHERIC COMPOSITION –
LANDING AT UNDESIGNATED LOCATIONS NON-VIABLE]

++[WRIT OF EXCOMMUNICATION
ISSUED BY ARCHIMAGOS OF MARS]++

fact only the handful of Titans that had survived in the Ark's holds that prevented the extermination of the colonists before they could gain purchase. This unceasing 'iron vigil' was the birthplace of the Legio Xestobias, which would serve ever more as the later Forge World's chief protectors.

The fecund world remained hostile. The heavy canopy created by the myriad tree species reached above the cloud level of the planet, doing little to protect the jungles below from monsoon rains, and where the trees grew in dense formations, they sheathed entire areas from sunlight thus providing a haven for macro-predators. The only human-edible produce of Zhao-Arkhad grew as a tuber, and only after hours of repeated boiling and filtering could the plant be eaten as a paste with few ill effects. The death world of Zhao-Arkhad offered little opportunity for survival to the Ark expedition, but as Mankind has always done and will continue to do, the colonists forged their home, driven on as ever by an iron faith in their Ommissiah and the doctrine of Mars in unceasing labour.

Using the deteriorating shell of the Ark as cover, deep access shafts were cut into the subsurface, allowing the colonists to abandon the cannibalised wreckage and build a more stable home deep below the surface away from the macro-predators, and where the air could be more readily processed within carefully controlled environments. This was the foundation of the world's first forge-fane. Others would follow as painstakingly the expedition set out across the world, sinking new biomes and forge-fanes across—or rather under—the landscape. As the first forge-fanes slowly became functional and the servile workers were granted new technology through which they could complete their work with greater efficiency, increasing numbers of forge-fanes were created each year, birthing Zhao-Arkhad as a self-sustaining Forge World within the space of a century. To mark this occasion, the newly created office of the Supreme-Domini of Zhao-Arkhad announced the birth of the First Conjunction, a period in which the Forge World would aim towards becoming fully equipped and functional, as well as establishing a permanent mining and habitation base for the servile class on the three moons of Zhao-Arkhad.

As the following millennia passed, the First Conjunction was finally announced as complete by the office of the Supreme-Domini; each forge-fane was now considered

fully operational of its own accord and the servile workers of the lunar colonies had grown in population into the hundreds of thousands—all occupied entirely in the generation of resources for their masters below. The Second Conjunction of Zhao-Arkhad was thus born.

Evolution

With the constant influx of raw materials and mastery of its environment, Zhao-Arkhad entered a period of pure expansion and development, and yet this was still not enough for the magos to achieve their desired ends. The materiels pulled from the lunar colonies, while useful, did not have the essential properties for the more advanced technology coveted by the forge-fanes, and so their eyes looked upon the volcanic environment of the neighbouring planet of Nytos. Survey probes had indicated that it would herald not only greater amounts of useful resources, but also rare materials of the properties sought by the forge-fanes. Furthermore, the population of the lunar colonies had grown exponentially, and expansion projects upon the moons to accommodate this growth were already reaching capacity so the settlement of the servile workers elsewhere began to be considered to prevent overcrowding, wasteful culling and loss of efficiency. However, this first expedition would end in disaster and sow the seeds of internal strife.

The Supreme-Domini decreed that the failure of this expedition would not be disclosed to the servile colonies, fearing the effect it would have on the morale of the vastly outnumbering population of serviles, all of whom had been deeply indoctrinated with religious fervour and would view the destruction as an ill-omen, or worse the Ommissah's judgement on their masters. Instead, the focus of the Forge World would be on mining the Ilotar asteroid field, closer and far less rich a target than Nytos had been, but more accessible.

However, the cruel hand of fate had not done with Zhao-Arkhad. Within a short time of the Nytos disaster, the system experienced a vast increase of Empyrean turbulence as warp storms, such as the one that had driven them to the star system, returned to plague the nearby void. Strange events grew widespread among the colonies; from otherwise harmless aurora that haunted the tunnels and caverns of the deep fanes, to infrequent occurrences of warp entity possession or sudden insanity, particularly among the serviles as the psyker's gift manifested. Worse, as tensions and internal disorder grew, as if born by the storm, the predation of xenos corsairs on the lunar and belt colonies began. In response to this, the Supreme-Domini declared the Forge World's new priority to be the defence of the servile colonies and off-world outposts. This bred even more malcontent within the

The Nytos Disaster

Without the abundance of specialist materials needed to manufacture additional long-range space craft, Zhao-Arkhad had already consumed all void-worthy materiels from the original Ark ship, it was decided that the lunar transport fleet would be reduced to create a single vessel which could transport the servile colonists safely through the void. For this purpose, the simple hydrogen-torch engines of the transportation shuttles were linked to provide the Nytos explorer vessel with the needed acceleration to escape Zhao-Arkhad's gravity well and its atmospheric pressurisation systems were significantly boosted to cope with an estimated six months of space travel. The Nytos explorer vessel was designed for a colonisation force of some 20,000 servile workers and accompanying them would be the Forge-Domini of the Prime forge-fane, who would personally oversee the usage of his designs and maintain the explorer vessel on its long flight. Most of the ship was grafted from salvaged material, all of which had some level of corrosion from the oxygen-rich surface on which the Ark vessel had landed, or was fresh fabricated from more common ores with lesser strength.

The launch was declared a major success. Across the colonies the servile workers taken for the mission were celebrated as 'blessed in the sight of the Machine God'. However, three months in, the rear of the ship was struck by a meteorite no more than two centimetres in diameter, causing a slow chain reaction of ruptures encouraged by the weakened structural frame of the ship from environmental corrosion. Explosive decompression followed, subjecting its inhabitants to the fatal vacuum of the void. The shock of this had not only practical effects upon Zhao-Arkhad's future, but also caused a crisis within the faithful.

forge-fanes themselves as the demands on their resources by central authority grew, as did speculation on whether or not the Omnissiah had turned its face from the Supreme-Domini for their failures.

Malifica

It was during these years of armament that the Eminarii forge-fane grew to prominence among the clades of Zhao-Arkhad. While a few of the forge-fanes that had followed the Supreme-Domini had taken to using salvaged materials and weaponry from the xenos attackers that plagued the servile colonies, the Eminarii turned to more radical options to improve the defensive capabilities of the weapons produced by the Forge World. The Supreme-Domini granted the Forge-Domini of the Eminarii forge-fane, Magos Tacitus Proctor, permission to requisition and experiment on the emergent psyker population of the colonies for his studies into the generation and replicability of such phenomena. Its replication naturally proved difficult to achieve, but some success was gained in augmenting the cortexes of automata with 'synthetic' mapped neural networks and harvested cortical material which increased their responsiveness and seemed to grant near-precognitive levels of response time to threat stimuli. It is a fact that such techno-arcana had long been proscribed by the Mechanicum since the fall of Old Night, and a testament to the extreme deviation in doctrine that had occurred on the isolated Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad that such a thing was countenanced.

In addition to the defensive emplacements developed by the other forge-fanes participating with the Supreme-Domini's request, each colony would be granted with these 'Eminarii' hybrid automata in addition to the base combat models provided by the Kiarrii forge-fane. An immediate decrease in damage inflicted and servile casualties was recorded in the raids following, marking the Zhao-Arkhad defensive project a success for all forge-fanes involved. Disproportionate attention, however, was focused on the efforts of the Kiarrii and Eminarii forge-fanes, and as such they both appeared to enjoy favour with the Supreme-Domini to a greater degree for their achievements, but this masked growing tensions between the other forge-fanes and these 'favoured', and soon even though faced with the now near-constant xenos raids and the harrowing, otherworldly incursions, the Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad would begin to tear itself apart from within.

The Kiarrii Wars

The year of 827.M27 brought with it the civil war that was to destroy the bonds that held Zhao-Arkhad's forge-fanes together in prosperity. As the union between the Kiarrii and Eminarii forge-fanes was sealed through the release of the hybrid automata clades and new prototypes of the black iron hybrid cores that were to be tested in the Titans of Legio Xestobias, earning significant favour with the office of the Supreme-Domini, the smaller forge-fanes and those abstaining from the study of the forbidden technologies of the xenos began to grow anxious and infuriated at the blatant disregard all parties showed for maintaining the purity of the Forge World. As fewer and fewer forge-fanes subscribed to the ideology that using the enemy's technology against them would result in survival, the forge-fanes that still followed this were viewed with increasing scorn and condemnation. The Kiarrii Wars began after the Forge-Domini of the Kiarrii forge-fane suffered severe rad poisoning from a contaminated nutrient shot, which would have originated from the Niare nutri-fane, notorious for its allegiance to these 'Purist' forge-fanes. Paranoia flared into open conflict, and those in support of the Eminarii and Kiarrii immediately took up arms against the Purists to seek retribution for the Kiarrii Forge-Domini, who died six hours later from the poisoning, by which time the opening shots of civil war had already been fired.

The wars which followed were a sporadic, slow burning conflagration, marked more by border clashes, raids, assassinations and sabotage than open battlefield engagements. The fighting focused mainly on the Eminarii and Kiarrii forge-fanes, the latter of which was severely crippled due to its lack of effective leadership, although many of the smaller supporters of their research were targeted by attacks from larger forge-fanes, against which they stood little chance. The Supreme-Domini retreated to an orbital fortress and, despite the carnage below, did not physically participate other than to command his forces to occupy vital planetary infrastructural sites and defend them against any aggression, condemning all violence with repeated calls for a ceasefire and abeyance that went largely ignored. Pressure from external xenos attacks, several servile revolts and general depredation finally caused the civil conflict to wane after nearly three decades. The result was that almost 80% of all forge-fanes sustained damage, with 50% of those reduced to minimal running capacity and a further 20% non-functional or destroyed.

The Kiarrii forge-fane was slowly eroded into a ruin during the conflict due to its lack of a co-ordinated militia, while the Eminarii forge-fane survived as a much-reduced holdfast amid the wreckage of its past glory. The outnumbering Purist faction sustained a greater percentage of the casualties however, despite a nominal victory in all but name. As the conflict ended and the various Forge-Domini entered negotiation, witnessed and moderated by the Supreme-Domini, neither faction could come to an agreement over how to deal with the other. The Purists naturally advocated punishment against the forge-fanes led by the example of the Eminarii and late Kiarrii, while the Eminarii faction called only for an armistice. The Supreme-Domini at the time imposed neither of the factions' proposed solutions. Rather, she decreed that from the end of the Kiarrii Wars, the forge-fanes would be completely isolated from each other. The Wars, as she saw it, were caused by the Purist faction attacking the Eminarii faction's research because it did not adhere to their beliefs and as such, the forge-fanes would be forbidden from communicating with each other, allowing each forge-fane's research to become their sole property and not subject to the judgement of others, save the oversight of her office alone. To prevent physical contact, many of the tunnels that had allowed for movement between neighbouring forge-fanes would be filled or collapsed, the rest were to be regulated and patrolled by the Supreme-Domini's forces only. In addition, each forge-fane would be permitted only defensive clade emplacements among the lunar colonies and these would be forfeit to the control of the Supreme-Domini.

A peace of a kind was created and the forge-fanes began work on isolating themselves from their neighbours. The future of the Forge World then sunk into a strange guarded, knife-edge stability that doubtless arrested its development even further, but it was a stability which would persist until its discovery by the fleets of the Great Crusade in the latter years of M30.

The Supreme-Domini asserted complete control over the colonies in the wake of the Kiarri Wars, including the newly fledged Nytos colony that had been founded by refugees during the conflict and which had slowly grown stronger after decades of arrested development and decay. The privations of the xenos raiders were held back, if not dispelled, and unrest was quickly crushed where it flared up. The Supreme-Domini's vision demanded a tithe for defence and reconstruction, but her subjects, Tech-Priest and servile both, were mostly trusted to conduct their own affairs as long as they happened within the given parameters.

Discovery

First contact with the agents of the Imperium was with a small Arkhadian mining fleet that detected an unknown and unrecognised signal in an Ancient Terran language. It promised peace and broadcasted a series of ident codes that would correspond with arriving vessels. In addition, the broadcast requested permission to land on the system's primary planet. Relayed to the office of the Supreme-Domini, the mining fleet was instructed to remain in place so it could auspex-check the ships as they came into view to confirm their humanity. Within hours, the first vessel of the fleet came into visual range and the miners were able to confirm that the pilot was human via hololith transmission and the vessels bore no resemblance to the sleek xenos killers that had troubled the system for so long.

The vessels belonged to the Expeditionary fleets of the Thousand Sons Legion, and the squadron in question was commanded by Captain Itzal Apophis of the Fifth Fellowship. Upon landing, the Thousand Sons were greeted by the Supreme-Domini herself and accompanying her was Forge-Domini Tacitus Proctor, chosen for his contribution to the survival of Zhao-Arkhad and her associated colonies. Compliance was achieved bloodlessly, with the masters of Zhao-Arkhad glad to be brought into a wider web of empire and restored communion, however far distant, with sacred Mars. It was better perhaps indeed for the Arkhadine Mechanicum that the distance was so great, and their holdings far from a shining jewel at this remove, as their considerable deviation from doctrinal canon was not apparent to the lords of the Red Planet, or it would have been the arrival of a fleet of war arks rather than a cursory envoy of assay that they would have received from the seat of the Mechanicum's power as contact was re-established with the greater Imperium.

Seated now as a far flung outpost of the Imperium's ever expanding frontier, Zhao-Arkhad progressed and prospered. The xenos that had plagued it for centuries were driven off or destroyed by the Imperialis Armada and the Expeditionary fleets, new technologies and templates were made available and a steady flow of resources entered the system and manufactured goods left it. In reply, grudgingly, a part of the Legio Xestobias and tithed regiments formed from its serviles was given up to the furtherance of the Great Crusade. Unremarked upon however, contact with the Thousand Sons lingered. Zhao-Arkhad was not the only minor Forge World to have been brought into the fold by the Thousand Sons, but unlike Shenzen or Boracaros Lux, an unadvertised but strong alliance was brokered between the Legion and the forge-fanes of Zhao-Arkhad. In retrospect after the events on Prospero, it is easy to understand the Thousand Sons' reason for interest in the Eminarii and more particularly their psyker-imprint based hybrid automata. Here was a thing widely forbidden by the Mechanicum in which the Thousand Sons were profoundly interested in turning to their own ends.

To solidify their new relationship, Forge-Domini Tacitus Proctor would be stationed upon Prospero to continue his research unremarked under the Thousand Sons' direction, while a small garrison of Thousand Sons would be stationed on Zhao-Arkhad. For the Supreme-Domini, the removal of the Forge-Domini of the Eminarii would both disperse the tensions that remained among the isolated forge-fanes of her world and cement an alliance with one of the great Space Marine Legions. And so the bargain was quickly struck and Zhao-Arkhad's fate as a Traitor sealed by simple association.

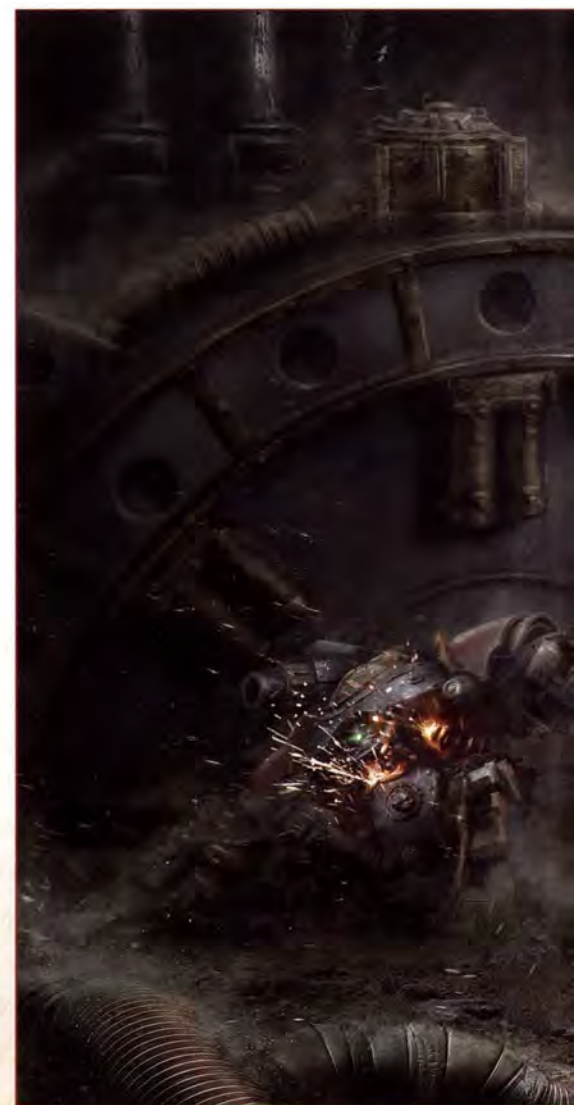
The Flotsam of War

The Zhao-Arkhad sub-fane on Prospero and its small defending garrison of Legio Xestobias Titans was annihilated as Prospero burned, but not without putting up considerable and unexpected resistance. The fate of Zhao-Arkhad was official censure and further isolation as it awaited a Mechanicum fleet of inquisition and audit that never arrived. The war of the Horus Heresy itself intervened in the matter.

Left alone, the forge-fanes remained in their isolation as they had done for millennia and Zhao-Arkhad would never participate as a major combatant in the Horus Heresy. Rather, following the deposing and death

of the Supreme-Domini after she declared Zhao-Arkhad's secession from the Imperium, something like an anarchic stand-off passed for government, and the forge-fanes declared their own independence, seizing control of shipping and Navigators to further their cause. The individual forge-fanes would act as mercenaries of a sort, vacating Zhao-Arkhad itself and granting those allied to their cause use of their aggressive capabilities in return for currency or gifts of materials for their work.

As the war progressed, some of these forge-fanes allied themselves with the traitorous warbands of the Warmaster Horus, and particularly the Death Guard Legion of Barbarus. By this time, the Thousand Sons garrison had long departed ahead of any pursuit, taking with them their own coterie of allied magos and thralls from the surface. Those magos who remained on their birth world and either supported the hope of order promised by the Imperium or simply wished to be left alone increased in their rampant paranoia, resulting in numerous internal purges of thralls and acolytes by their Forge-



Domini masters to prevent their intentions from becoming more widely known, despite the biometric controls on communication devices and the sheer impossibility of leaving a forge-fane without a Forge-Domini present. As the war grew ever closer to Zhao-Arkhad and her colonies, the various forge-fanes of that world would, in some capacity, become a consistent, albeit minor feature on both sides of the conflict. Until bloodied by further strife and a punitive attack, the Forge World would be returned to the Imperial fold proper during the Age of the Scouring.

RESOURCES AND TERRITORY

At the time of its discovery, the Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad held jurisdiction over a multitude of servile colonies located nearby. Zhao-Arkhad itself could not sustain human life on its surface, given its toxic environment and host of aggressive, natural predators, and as such all forge-fanes were constructed deep below the planet's crust. Despite the size of each forge-fane, Zhao-Arkhad held a relatively low population density, as with the creation of the lunar biomes, there was little need

to house the servile population among the sensitive equipment of the forge-fanes. Each forge-fane was highly adapted for the Forge-Domini's scientific and technological preference, with a small percentage dedicated to the production of nutrient shots, oxygen, water and power.

Zhao-Arkhad's servile population was spread across its three moons and the neighbouring planet of Nytos. Each of the three moons was outfitted to provide support for vast mining quarries, grow various crops in hydroponic domes, and generate their own power. The biggest of the colonies also contained additional water production facilities. The largest of Zhao-Arkhad's moons and Nytos both sustained a greater percentage of mining operations on their surface, leading to an increased dependency on the smaller colonies to produce the food, water and, in some cases, life support gear they needed to survive. As a result of the armament drive in Zhao-Arkhad's early history, each of the colonies possessed some degree of defensive capability in the form of automata, long range missile or lance systems, and short range

projectile emplacements. In addition, in each colony was formed a volunteer militia of its serviles, which in the later stages of a colony's development became a dedicated defensive force and served the basis of tithed Great Crusade auxilia.

The Nytos colonies also made use of a dedicated mining barge squadron launched to strip the Iltar asteroid fields of rare materials, a goal which was achieved shortly before its discovery by the Imperium. Their initial purpose achieved, the mining barges were re-fitted to become an Exploratory fleet, their mission being to discover the next planet of the Zhao system appropriate for colonisation. It was at this stage that the Zhao system was found by the Thousand Sons, and this goal was never realised. There followed a brief, bright period of development and expansion as part of the Imperium, but after Prospero that too came to an abrupt end and the Exploratory fleet was withdrawn and decommissioned. Between civil strife, war and exodus, the Zhao-Arkhad that was eventually restored to the Imperium was but a shadow of its former self.





ZHAO-ARKHAD PROSPERINE FANE CASTELLAX CLASS BATTLE-AUTOMATA

DESIGNATE MLIII, CYBERNETICA DEFENCE DETACHMENT

SUB-SURFACE COUNTER-ASSAULT FORCE, THE BATTLE OF PROSPERO

One of perhaps thirty such battle-automata kept in storage in deep sub-surface vaults below the Zhao-Arkhad sub-fane on Prospero, MLIII is pictured here clad in the standard livery of the Taghmata forces that were attached frequently to the Thousand Sons Legion in the latter part of the Great Crusade, and carries the icon of the Legion in addition to its own machine-cant designations upon its outer carapace.

In the aftermath of the initial stages of the Battle of Prospero and the destruction of the surface Mechanicum fane by orbital bombardment, this battle-automata and others like it contributed to the devastating counter-attack against the Legio Mortis forces detached from orbit under their own direction to take control of what was expected to be a shattered forge. The victory of the Zhao-Arkhad forces was to prove short lived however, after the landing of the Ordo Sinister to the area.



TAGHMATA KIARII DOMITAR CLASS BATTLE-AUTOMATA

227TH EXPEDITIONARY FLEET MECHANICUM BATTLE GROUP

Depicted here in the distinctive bronze and emerald panoply of the forge-fane of Kiarri on Zhao-Arkhad, this Domitar represents one of the largest contingents from that Forge World left relatively untouched in the aftermath of the Burning of Prospero. Estranged from their peers on Zhao-Arkhad owing to a bloody and fractious history prior to reunification with the Imperium, the magos of the Kiarri had been keener than their brethren to supply independent military forces for the Great Crusade, perhaps ultimately hoping to win new domains for themselves by gaining the favour of Mars and Terra. While this did not occur, the Taghmata Kiarri were however rewarded with ships and independent supply, not least of all templates for newer battle-automata, including the advanced Domitar class shown here.

They served with some distinction on the Great Crusade's front lines, and were engaged alongside elements of the Raven Guard Legion at Priam to the far galactic north when Prospero burned, and remained ignorant of the mark of censure placed upon their world until a full two years had passed and the Horus Heresy was about to be born.



LEGIO XESTOBIAX

Title: The Legio Xestobiox Ordo Titanica

Cognomen: The Iron Vigil

Militaris Grade: Tertius

Allied War Houses: None

Patent: Pre-Unification, Arkhadian Mechanicum

Allegiance: Officio Fidelitas

Warden Domain: Zhao-Arkhad (Forge World), Istiam Station, Ilotar asteroid belt, several other minor garrison outposts in the galactic south.

'In truth a Titan has only three enemies against which it must guard: folly, hubris and another of its own kind.'

Volkus of the Ordo Sinister

By any estimate one of the lesser known of the Titan Legions of the Great Crusade, for the Legio Xestobix, more commonly known as the 'Iron Vigil', it is something of an irony that their involvement in one of the most infamous events of that time, namely the Burning of Prospero, is all but forgotten by most histories which mention this seismically important event.

As one of the smallest and least prominent Titan Legions during the Great Crusade, Legio Xestobix's full strength consisted of less than 100 god-engines and a minimal conveyor fleet, earning them classification as a Tertius grade Legio under Mars' measure. This, along with their long-time commitment to the protection of the far-flung Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad, limited their proving grounds to local, defensive and purgation campaigns in the galactic south for the main, save fatefully the enclave of the Zhao-Arkhad on Prospero it was their duty to guard. Other than this, only a few detached maniples had seen service with the grand Expeditionary fleets. This left the Legio's tally of glories few as far as the wider Mechanicum and the Imperium were concerned.

During the short and bitter-fought battle for Prospero, that a force of the Iron Vigil was to successfully stand against a full scale assault by the Legio Mortis, one of the most powerful and devastating Titan Legions recorded by the Imperium, was a shock to the attackers. This unexpected feat of arms by a supposedly undistinguished and backwater Legio prompted several investigations into the history of this otherwise forgotten Titan Legion, though none of these inquiries would be fully concluded before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, leaving what truth that would survive the war to be unravelled by the scholars who survived the horrific conflagrations that were to follow.

Origins

As its parent forge of Zhao-Arkhad, located in remote wildspace to the galactic south of Terra, was to remain isolated by treacherous warp storms and the hostile space in which the Zhao colonies had grown, little is known of the founding of the Iron Vigil. As with most extant Titan Legions, it is presumed that the first of the Legio Xestobix's war

engines were part of the expedition that founded the new Forge World, though no known greater forge is recorded to have dispatched an expedition to the depths of the galactic south. The only remaining engine that can be reliably placed at the Legio's founding is the *Munus Aeternum*, a crippled Warlord Titan that now rests in the vaults below the fane of the Supreme-Domini of Zhao-Arkhad, though the event that led to its current lamentable state has since been lost to history.

The early years of the Legio's existence are comprehensively documented and form the basis of the Legio's later growth and disposition. The Legio Xestobix was, from its inception, a defensive force against the horrors that plagued the wildspace in which the Zhao system was located and threatened the security of Zhao-Arkhad's already sparse resource pool. Due to the rapid corrosion of even the hardest materials on the surface of Zhao-Arkhad, the Legio Xestobix's primary garrison was situated on one of its moons, Arkhad-III, with smaller garrisons spread in tangent with the other servile colonies of the Forge World in order to defend their assets against such threats. These subdivisions of the Legio, at first destined to be only temporary, were to become near-permanent formations, each distinguished by the individual Vigil of the station where they stood watch while retaining the identity of the Iron Vigil as a whole. Many of the honours and recorded battles of the Legio Xestobix specify the Vigil for which they are dedicated; such as the 14th Battle of Istiam Station, a destructive siege conducted by elements of several Eldar nomadic fleets and credited as a resounding victory of the Istiam Vigil, a force totalling two maniples in strength.

While the Legio as a whole is controlled by a single Grand Marshal, as is customary, in actuality each Vigil is directly governed by a Princeps-Warden. The solitary nature of the duties and watch assigned to each Vigil, most of which stood unchanged for millennia, leave little but ceremonial and emissary duties for the Grand Marshal. Many of these individual Vigils have long existed for centuries apart from the greater Legio and its home garrison of Istiam Station, and to such a degree that they have developed traditions and idiosyncrasies of their own, as well as tactics more suited to the forge domain to which they have been entrusted. As such, the Iron Vigil rarely fights as a single force and instead is accustomed to operating in its individual Vigils, exercising more individual initiative than is common for a standard Titan Legion. The gathering of the Princeps-Wardens of each Vigil therefore proved troublesome for the Legio's parent forge and the Istiam Vigil, given each Vigil's preferred levels of command. However, the isolationist tendencies of the forge-fanes of Zhao-Arkhad in the millennia prior to its discovery and the Legio's lack of transportation capacity made such events rare occurrences.

Materiel Strength

At the time of the fateful attack on Prospero, the Legio Xestobix was classified as a Tertius grade Titan Legion, possessing less than 100 engines and none of a greater class than Warlord, and while restoration to the wider Mechanicum did improve the Legio's



access to new engines and components, the Iron Vigil's numbers were still slow to grow—Zhao-Arkhad lacking as it did the capacity to construct such complex expressions of the Machine God's avatars on any great scale. Notably, another detriment was that the Legio Xestobias possessed an extremely limited conveyor fleet due to this lack of suitable materials, leaving the Legio able to transport only a dozen engines at any one time. The legacy of its patron Forge World had moulded the Legio's operational doctrines since its inception, and so it would play relatively little part in the final battles of the Great Crusade. Its separate Vigils maintained their lonely duty much as they had for generations, with little change in numbers or stratagem since its founding. The only change to this ancient creed was the expansion of the Legio to include a Prospero Vigil, a force of a dozen newly forged Titans created from the wealth of materials granted to them by their new allies of the Thousand Sons Legion. Much of the final years of the 30th Millennium were occupied with the consecration and deployment of this warden force, which was both a powerful addition to the defences of Prospero as well as a symbol of Zhao-Arkhad's dedication to its alliance with the distant Thousand Sons Legion.

Of the Titan classes possessed by the Legio Xestobias, it fell to the Reaver and Warlord classes to make up the bulk of the Legion. The Warhound class and its cousins were few among the Legio's ranks, though this was due to a general lack of regard for such so-called 'Scout' Titans, whose role was seen as of little worth to the Iron Vigil and a waste of rare materials better spent elsewhere. Particular favour among the Legion was shown to certain variants of the Reaver class engines given their efficiency against the xenos raiders that plagued the Zhao colonies.

In addition to the more regular tools of the Collegia Titanicus, the Iron Vigil also benefitted from its parent Forge World's seeming acceptance of the illicit study of various psykana and other related disciplines of half-forgotten and ill-understood lore from the Age of Strife, as well as the strange artefacts scavenged from the hulks of Eldar titans felled in combat by the Vigils. As such research had never been officially censured within the forge-fanes, even prior to their isolation, the largest of the fanes dedicated their study to this forbidden knowledge while the smallest offered their services through more traditional production. The arrival of the Thousand Sons Legion on Zhao-Arkhad served to kindle the curiosity

of these larger forge-fanes and, in particular, the Eminarii sect under the command of Forge-Domini Tacitus Proctor.

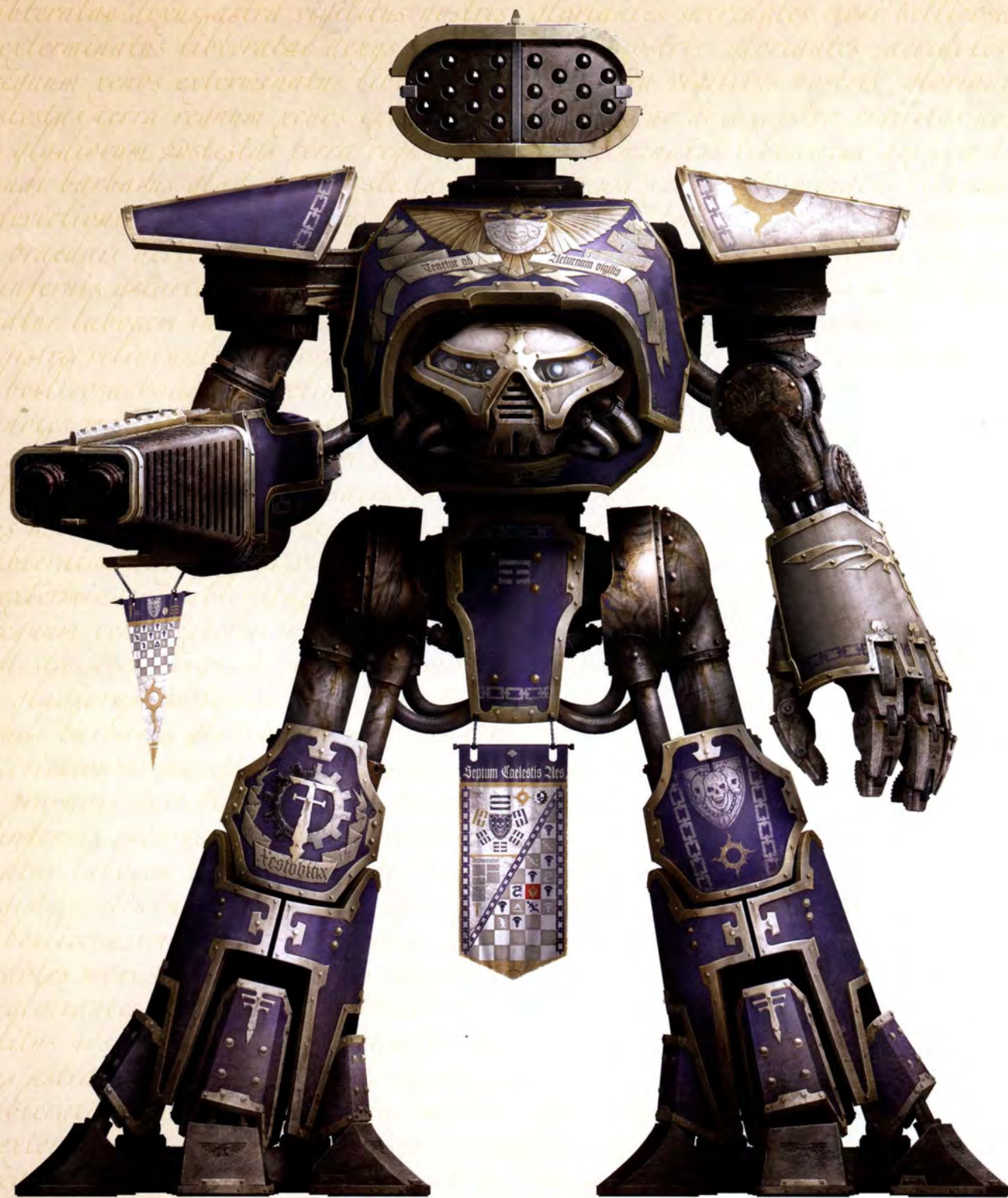
By the time of the Battle of Prospero, this curiosity manifested itself in the development of the psycho-reactive iron core, developed from the strange xenos artefacts scavenged from the crushed hulls of Eldar titans, which would come to be fitted in the majority of the Iron Vigil's Titans. Each appeared to channel the knowledge and experience of fallen crew members with far more reliable results than the crude foresight units of the Eminarii's psychic-automata—though evidence recovered from the Zhao-Arkhad conclave on Prospero suggests some masters of the Legio and, most commonly, the Prospero Vigil turned to more sinister paths, akin to the research of the Eminarii, to fuel these arcane repositories. The use of these iron cores allowed the Titans of the Iron Vigil to operate with a far smaller crew than Titans of an equivalent class and to harness a level of skill, co-ordination and tactical prowess that transcended the training of any single princeps. However, later examination of fallen Xestobias Titans and the captured pict-records of their crew suggest these altered Titans were prone to a variety of bizarre phenomena, akin to that suffered by the psychic-automata maniples—including mass hallucinations among the crew, violent and unexplained poltergeist activity and irregular levels of temperature variance within certain compartments relative to the iron core's operation.

After Prospero

In the wake of the Battle for Prospero, Zhao-Arkhad was immediately censured by Mars, with a fleet dispatched to convey the displeasure of Mars' magos upon that recalcitrant world, caught up as it had been in the Thousand Sons' fate. However, the events of the Horus Heresy saw to it that the Censure fleet never arrived in force. In the war that was to follow, warp storms and the turbulence of conflict soon isolated the Forge World and, bereft of outside control, and perhaps still with some ire of Prospero's events, Zhao-Arkhad in its majority seceded from the crumbling Imperium, the small garrison of Thousand Sons present long departed to an unknown destination. The remaining Legio Xestobias forces sided with their masters, and with contact to some of its scattered deployments completely cut, at that point the Legio numbered roughly 50 god-engines, all of which are presumed to have been altered by the heretek Eminarii forge-fane during the years of silence that followed.







LEGIO XESTOBIAX TITAN VIGIL

It is a matter of simple fact to state that the Legio Mortis contingent of the Censure Host, denied a role in the attack on Tizca, and at the behest of the Lords of Mars, vastly underestimated the military strength and resistance of the Zhao-Arkhad sub-forge sunk deep into the earth of the Prospero wastelands. Defended both by macro-tonnes of rock as well as layered Geller fields and internal void shields, the result both of the paranoia of its controlling Magos Tacitus Proctor and the genuine danger of Psychneuein incursion, the sub-surface fane survived the bombardment almost untouched. So it was when the Legio Mortis and their support troops descended, they were met not only by a concerted counter-attack by Taghmata forces of unguessed at strength driven to suicidal commitment by their magos, but also the forces of the Legio Xestobias Titan Vigil, concealed in armoured sub-surface bunkers until the Legio Mortis pressed close their attack. These Titans, roughly equal in number to the attacking god-engines were outclassed in tonnage, and might have been expected to have been outclassed in experience, but despite this it was the Xestobias Vigil, perhaps in part through the advantage rumoured to be offered to them by their so-called 'Black Iron' cores, but also through skill and determination, that was to carry the battle against these first invaders.



LEGIO XESTOBIAX REAVER CLASS BATTLE TITAN 'SEPTUM CAELESTIS UES'

One of the only members of the Xestobias Titan force on Prospero for which significant pict imaging still exists, the *Septum Coelestis Ues* was, unlike its counterparts, a known veteran of several Great Crusade conflicts as well as the usual defensive operations in the protection of its patron Forge World. This fact is denoted by a unique ideograph representing the species or nature of threat against which they triumphed upon the Titan's heraldry, with kill banners only denoting a particularly significant victory attributed to that god-engine alone.

The purple, white and gold panoply of the Titan as shown here is archetypical of the Legio Xestobias, and the triple-skull which was the Titan Legion's distinct emblem is in evidence, as is the chain motif frequent in the Legio's heraldry, representing their inviolable oath of the protection of Zhao-Arkhad. More singular in the case of this Titan is the incorporation of the solar symbol of the Thousand Sons Legion rendered in gold, which marked it as one of the assigned warders of the Prosperine sub-forge. The fate of the *Septum Coelestis Ues* was to survive the initial attack of the Legio Mortis and stand briefly in victory before the coming of the Ordo Sinister and annihilation.



THE PROSPERO CAMPAIGN

HOW THE PROSPERO CAMPAIGN WORKS

The campaign presented in the following section allows players to recreate the battles on Prospero through a series of games of Warhammer 40,000, with one side representing those who have defied the word of the Emperor and the other those dispatched to deliver His judgement on the recalcitrant world. During the campaign, the two sides play through three phases, which consist of a number of games and a final Conclusion mission representing an important battle that occurred during each stage of the conflict. If players wish, they also have the option of playing a Legendary mission after each Conclusion mission, which is designed to represent a pivotal moment in the Prospero campaign, the likes of which will go down in history. Victory in each phase will grant the player a bonus that carries across the rest of the campaign, while the overall victor of the campaign is decided by the final mission of the third phase. The events of this campaign are inspired by the chronicles in this book, which are themselves a development of the novels published as part of Black Library's The Horus Heresy series. The campaign itself has been designed for a minimum of two players. However, the phase length and missions can easily be adapted for larger gaming groups. For players looking to extend their campaign further, this section also contains a selection of optional rules.

Despite the events of Prospero being a vital turning point in the Horus Heresy and indeed the wider Warhammer 40,000 narrative, they do not determine who is victorious, who is defeated and who dies in the battles you fight. The outcome of your campaign could also easily serve as inspiration for further campaigns. *The Horus Heresy Book Four – Conquest* provides some excellent ways for taking your campaign further, as the rules for Unique Characters and War Zones would be ideal for building upon the fallout from your campaign.

Designer's Note

Bear in mind when choosing your armies for this campaign that the events on Prospero take place before Istvan III. As such, none of the Legions are currently considered Traitors (but whether they secretly are already is a different matter!).

So, feel free to use your 'Traitor' forces as Loyalists if you so wish. If you want to play an alternative version where your Legion is already traitorous, by all means go ahead.

For players of campaigns from other Forge World Horus Heresy publications, there are many features you will find similar, with the addition of special rules to recreate the turbulence of the Warp on Prospero. Each phase is themed to represent each section of events as they occurred, with their Conclusion and Legendary missions being heavily themed or biased towards the side that traditionally succeeds – however, Campaign points will always be available to the non-traditional victors.

At its core, to play this campaign you need two players with armies taken from the various Horus Heresy army lists produced by Forge World, but there is no upward limit as to how many players can take part in this campaign. The standard phase missions in this section can easily be adapted for multiple players, and there are additional missions presented better suited towards team games, so large gaming groups can easily run a widespread campaign. Generally, you should aim for an equal number of players on each side as it will be easier to arrange games, but

if this cannot be achieved, it simply means some players may have to play more games during the course of the campaign.

It is worth noting that campaigns involving more players will require a greater amount of terrain, gaming space and player dedication to bring the campaign to a satisfactory conclusion. If you do have a large number of players, it is worth having one person act as referee and organiser rather than player to impartially record results between sessions. Of course, players should always support them by providing them with all the information they require for bookkeeping promptly, not to mention thank them for their hard work at the end of the campaign!

THE ARMIES

Each player should draw their armies from the most recent versions of the Horus Heresy army lists. Ideally, these should reflect the forces present on Prospero during the attack, such as the Thousand Sons, Space Wolves, Sisters of Silence, Legio Custodes, etc.

Before the campaign begins, you should decide between yourselves how strict you wish to be in regards to taking armies other than the ones presented in this book. The only restriction to other armies in terms of the campaign system is that they should take the Allied Detachments, units and unique characters appropriate to that army. You may decide you wish to play an alternative version of the events at Prospero, or even decide to adapt them for a completely different setting

– while this may take more work, it will make the campaign unique to your gaming group and will ultimately be worth the extra effort put in by those involved.

The missions in the campaign will refer to one side as the Aggressors, and the other the Persecuted. In historical terms, the forces of the Imperium would be the Aggressors, with the Thousand Sons, Legio Xestobias and Zhao-Arkhad forces the Persecuted. However, this should not stop you playing otherwise if you so wish. Before the game begins, you should decide which side your army will play for the rest of the game. If you want to change sides during a game you may, however this should only be done once per player where possible to make the game fair for all parties involved.

Unique Characters in Prospero

The events of Prospero take place in a relatively short period of time, and with battles raging across the entire city of Tizca, Primarchs and other Unique Characters should only be used once per phase – they can't be everywhere at once! Even if you've already used one of your characters in a Campaign phase, you may use them for either the phase's Conclusion mission or Legendary mission, so choose wisely!

CAMPAIGN DURATION

Each Campaign phase may last until an agreed number of games has been played or an agreed amount of time has passed. Once either of these conditions has been met, the phase ends, the Campaign points are totalled up and the phase's victor is determined. The following phase then begins.

The number of games, or the duration of the phase, must be agreed before the campaign begins and kept as constant as possible throughout. Of course, it's entirely possible to play a single game and the phase's Conclusion mission per phase, so the entire campaign may be completed in the space of six games, but you may set the maximum number of games or duration as you wish. Depending on your group's preferences, you may set the phase duration as high or as low as you like.

A good maximum duration to set for your campaign is roughly equal to the time that you think it will take to play through the number of games in a phase you believe you can comfortably manage. For instance, if you have decided that each phase you want to play six games, and believe you can play these six games in three weeks, set the time limit for the phase as three weeks. Having a time limit keeps the campaign moving forwards and gives each phase a definite 'end', which can help keep players motivated and interested.

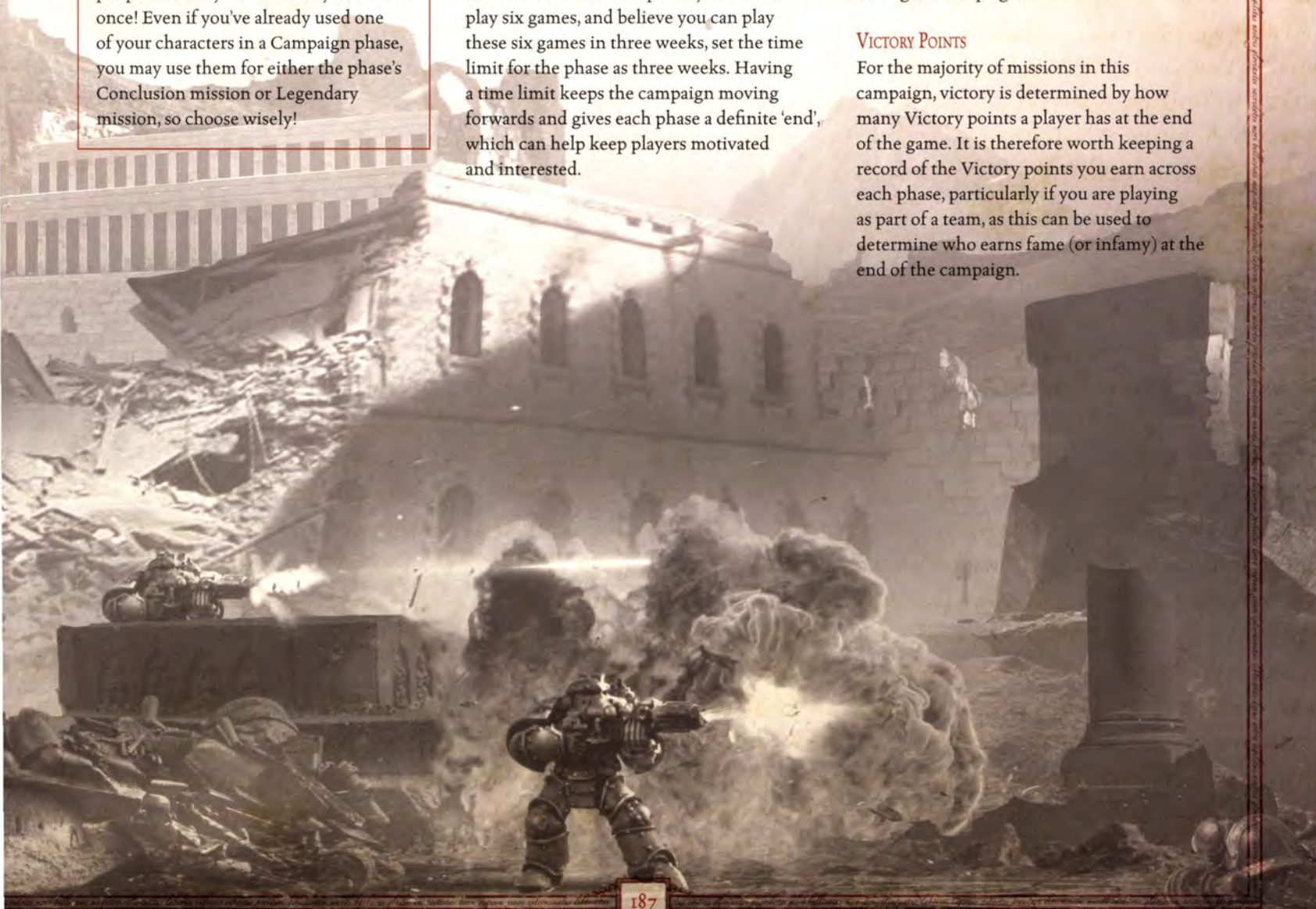
For example: A group of six friends want to play through the Prospero campaign. Between them they reckon that they can play six games every three weeks. They set the length of each phase as at least six games played or three weeks in length. At their regular gaming weekend, they play eight games across the space of two days. This then constitutes the whole of the first phase, as more than six games have been played. In the second phase, however, the group only manages to play three games, and the second phase ends because it has lasted for three weeks, even though only three games have been played.

CAMPAIGN POINTS

As with previous Forge World Horus Heresy campaigns, each battle earns the participant a certain number of Campaign points depending on the outcome. The victor of each phase is determined by the number of Campaign points they have accrued during the phase, including the Campaign points earned during the Conclusion mission of the phase. Campaign points can also be used to keep track of an entire team's performance against their opponent's, so it's worth keeping a log of all Campaign points earned during the campaign.

VICTORY POINTS

For the majority of missions in this campaign, victory is determined by how many Victory points a player has at the end of the game. It is therefore worth keeping a record of the Victory points you earn across each phase, particularly if you are playing as part of a team, as this can be used to determine who earns fame (or infamy) at the end of the campaign.



CAMPAIGN SPECIAL RULES

SHATTERED REALITY

The sheer volume of psychic sorcery used during the Battle of Prospero caused the fabric of reality to warp and split, leading to random events occurring across Tizca as the primal energies of the Great Ocean leaked through. At the start of each game, roll a D6 and modify the result as follows:

- **Phase 1:** No modifier
- **Phase 2:** +1
- **Phase 3:** +2

Compare your result with the Shattered Reality table.

SPOILS OF WAR

At the end of the Conclusion mission of every phase, the victor of the phase is rewarded with a Spoils of War bonus which applies to that player for the remainder of the campaign. The results of the bonus are listed in the description of each phase. In the unlikely event of the phase being a draw, and where both players agree, another mission should be used to determine the outcome of the phase – in this case, the victor of the game is considered the victor of the phase. The Spoils of War bonus for each phase is exclusive to that phase and so cannot be earned through playing the Conclusion mission of a different phase.

If you're playing in a team, the bonus should only be given to one person. The person who earns this bonus should be the member of the winning team with the greatest number of Victory points earned from the previous games in the current phase.

If all players agree, however, the victor can 'gamble' their Spoils of War bonus to play the Legendary mission of the phase. If they decide to do this, the Spoils of War bonus they received from the Conclusion mission just played does not apply in the Legendary mission, but bonuses won from Conclusion missions prior to that can be used. The exception to this is the Legendary mission of the third phase. As it is the last mission of the campaign, all Spoils of War bonuses earned by the players can be used.

SHATTERED REALITY TABLE

D6	Effect
1-2	The Warp is quiet for now, but all attuned to its tides know that a storm is coming.
3	Only the most powerful are safe from the dread anxiety which is spreading throughout their ranks. All units must re-roll the results of all Leadership tests, regardless of whether they are successful, unless they contain a Psyker of Mastery Level 2 or above, or a Unique Character.
4	The very ground begins to shudder and liquefy, with many Legionaries falling prey to the unstable terrain. All terrain counts as difficult terrain, difficult terrain counts as dangerous terrain, and dangerous terrain becomes impassable.
5	The Warp infects the minds of psykers, driving all but the most powerful insane. Unless your Psyker is Mastery Level 2 or above, they must roll on the Perils of the Warp table if two or more Warp Charge points are generated on a 5+.
6	Many of the psykers on Prospero were not only attuned to the Warp, they were strengthened and rejuvenated by its presence. After the player's Assault phase has ended, they may attempt to negate wounds taken by their Psykers in this player turn. For every Psyker that has taken a wound in the current turn, roll a D6. On a 5+, they regain a single wound. They may not attempt to regenerate wounds again until their following player turn.
7	Imbued with a surge of warp energies, all psykers are extremely volatile. When attempting to generate a Blessing power on a friendly unit, if the player rolls a 6 when attempting to harness Warp Charge points for that power, the targeted unit takes D3 Str 7 AP 4 automatic wounds. If they are attempting to harness Witchfire , Nova or Beam powers, they may re-roll failed attempts to harness Warp Charge points, taking Perils of the Warp penalties as normal.
8	The fabric of reality tears asunder, discharging warp energy across the ruins of Tizca. At the beginning of each player turn, the player's opponent must nominate one of the player's units. This unit takes D3 Str 8 AP 3 automatic wounds with no saves of any kind allowed. Once nominated, this unit cannot be nominated again in the following turn.

MYSTERIOUS TERRAIN

Any game played as part of the Prospero campaign can use Mysterious terrain. After setting up the terrain for your game, you may decide that a particularly distinct piece of terrain is considered to be Mysterious terrain or decide the number of Mysterious terrain pieces using the following chart:

MYSTERIOUS TERRAIN TABLE

D6	Result
1	No Mysterious terrain
2-3	One Mysterious terrain
4-5	Two Mysterious terrain
6	Three Mysterious terrain

Generally, it is best to nominate pieces of terrain that are notable in some way for ease of remembering which pieces are considered to be Mysterious.

If a piece of Mysterious terrain is area terrain or an open plan building, it is considered explored when a unit enters it. If the building is closed or the terrain is otherwise impassable, it is considered explored if a unit passes within 2" of the terrain.

When the Mysterious terrain is explored, roll on the following Prospero Mysterious Terrain Type table to determine its effect.

PROSPERO MYSTERIOUS TERRAIN TYPE TABLE

D6 Mysterious Terrain Type

- 1 **Crude Barricade:** Upon seeing the carnage wreaked by the Punishment fleet, the terrified civilians erected rudimentary barricades from anything they could find.

This terrain confers a 4+ cover save on its first use, followed by 5+, then 6+. After an attempt using 6+, the barricade collapses into dust and no longer provides cover.

- 2 **Gardens of Tizca:** The trees and foliage which lined the once magnificent streets of Tizca are now all but dust and cinders, burning with a green and purple glow.

All units suffer -1 to their WS and BS for the first turn they are within 2" of this terrain piece, unless they are a Psyker.

- 3 **Ruined Library:** Strewn across the war-torn streets, hidden amongst piles of ash and corpses is all that remains of one of Tizca's great libraries. The original building is now little more than a charred shell, stripped of all its knowledge.

The first Persecuted force that comes into contact with a Ruined Library gains the Rage special rule for the first turn they remain in contact with it. Afterwards, the special rule cannot be gained again by any unit. For both forces, the terrain provides a standard cover save, and this cover save can be used against the effects of the Shattered Reality table.

- 4 **Destroyed Garrison:** One of the Thousand Sons garrisons stationed around the borders of Tizca has been blown open and raided, but there still remains a useful resource hidden among the corpses.

The first unit which discovers this piece of terrain gains the Rending special rule for the remainder of the game. If this unit is completely destroyed during the following game turn, the opposing player will gain the Rending special rule for the rest of the game instead.

- 5 **Psychic Tripwire:** The forces of the Imperium were unaware that many of Tizca's most vital structures were booby-trapped with psychic wards that would activate upon the presence of unrecognised individuals.

The first Aggressor unit to explore this piece of terrain, regardless of their location within or around the terrain, sets off the Psychic Tripwire and takes a number of automatic wounds equal to the number of models in the unit, resolved at Str 6 AP 4 with no armour saves allowed. After the Tripwire has been triggered, it will not fire again – however, the psychic hum causes all units that move within 2" of the terrain piece to suffer -1 to their Leadership value.

- 6 **Mysterious Tome:** Buried among the ruins of an unknown building, this thick, yellowed tome faintly glows with the knowledge held within. If the Persecuted are the first players to discover this terrain, they may upgrade a Psyker within the unit that discovered the terrain with +1 Mastery Level. If there is no Psyker in the original unit, the entire unit's weaponry automatically gains Force for the game turn following its discovery. If the Aggressors are the first players to discover this terrain, they may add two additional D6 to their Deny the Witch pool while they are within 2" of the terrain. If that unit moves outside of that terrain, they only add one additional D6 to their pool. The additional two dice may only be gained by the unit that discovered the Mysterious Tome.



CAMPAIGN OPTIONAL RULES

The following is a list of rules you may wish to include as part of your campaign to make it unique to your gaming group. These rules are not compulsory, so players should agree on their use before the campaign begins.

Warlord and Famed Character Casualties

The fate of heroic warlords as well as famed and infamous characters is a key part of the struggle and epic scale of the Horus Heresy, and such influential figures cannot be simply expended as resources – for no force can expect to succeed in battle without their greatest warriors.

If a player's Warlord and/or any unique named characters* in play are removed as a casualty during a campaign game (including falling back off the table, etc), the player must roll a D6 for each character at the end of the game. The results as shown in the Warlord and Famed Characters Fatality table that follows apply to the remainder of the player's games in the campaign. If the controlling player was victorious in the game in which the character was removed as a casualty, they may re-roll the result.

*This also refers to any Independent Character that has a unique rules profile in any of the Forge World Horus Heresy army lists.

WARLORD AND FAMED CHARACTERS FATALITY TABLE

D6 Result

- 1-2 Mortally Wounded:** This character is critically wounded and may not be used again in this phase of the campaign. However, they may be used again in later phases of the campaign unless agreed otherwise. The opposing side gains +1 CP.
- 3-4 Shaken:** Your character is shaken by their ill fortune on the battlefield and, in their next game, your character (regardless of who they are) suffers a -1 Leadership penalty for the duration of the phase. This penalty is not cumulative for multiple results of Shaken per phase. However, it may be re-applied if they should roll this result in a subsequent phase.
- 5+ Unscathed:** Your character has escaped permanent injury and may be used again in subsequent games without ill effect.

Wasteland Battles

While the fighting was thickest in Tizca, the Wastelands bordering the home of the Thousand Sons saw battles on an apocalyptic scale between the forces of the Mechanicum present on Prospero.

Wasteland Battles are a brilliant way of involving your entire gaming club in massive team battles, or hosting apocalyptic size battles for a small team, allowing you to represent the titanic battles that starved both sides of the Tizca conflict of their Mechanicum reinforcements. Neither side truly held the advantage in the Wastelands, and with the main objective being the utter destruction of the enemy, they make the perfect staging ground for teams to prove their superiority!

Wasteland Battles are recommended for four or more players. However there is nothing stopping smaller groups of players using larger armies to make up an appropriately scaled fight. Players are encouraged to decide how big they want their games to be – remember these battles were fought with several Titans on each side, so think big! These battles award Campaign points, and the distribution is as follows:

Players	Victory	Draw
2-3	2	1
4-5	3	1
6-7	3	2
8+	4	2

LEGENDARY MISSIONS

Heroes were made and broken on the battlefields of Tizca, and the Legendary missions of this campaign tell their stories. The scale of their battles was immense, spanning entire sectors of the ruined city, and the following missions are designed to represent these within your campaign. These battles call for resources not every player will have, and as such are not required to complete the phase, but for players who already own these elements, they can add an additional level of interest into their campaign.

At the end of the Conclusion mission, if players agree, the Legendary battle for the phase can be played. The Spoils of War bonus won in the previous phase does not come into effect in this battle as it is forfeited by the player. However, the Legendary missions of each phase grant the more powerful Legends of Victory bonuses, which are listed in each phase's description.

While each phase's description lists the Legendary missions as having a Campaign points value, these do not count for a particular phase. Rather, these values can be used to determine the final ranking of players at the end of the campaign, which in a large game can help to establish the star players on each side of history.

THE CAMPAIGN PHASES

PHASE ONE – FEROCITY

As the Space Wolves made their landing in the ruined city of Tizca after a brutal campaign of orbital bombardment, few were able to stand against them as they rampaged across the city. Against the might of the Wolves, the mortal defensive forces of Prospero were merely prey. In the first phase of the Battle of Prospero, the Space Wolves overran the city, destroying all in their path.

The Campaign points earned during each battle are as follows:

- A Brother's Blood, Calculated Slaughter – 3 CP for Aggressor victory, 2 CP for Persecuted victory or draw
- Missions using Ransack or Break-through (deployment maps) – 3 CP for victory, 1 CP for draw
- Age of Darkness Cityfight missions (see *The Horus Heresy Book Four – Conquest*) – 2 CP for victory
- Out of Time Conclusion mission – 5 CP for victory, 3 CP for draw
- Spaceport Control Legendary mission – 7 CP for victory
- All other missions – 1 CP for victory

Out of Time Conclusion Mission

After all games have been played in this phase's duration, players may play the Out of Time Conclusion mission. Regardless of the number of players on each side, only one Conclusion mission should be played per phase, but it can very easily be adapted to suit a large team game if so desired. Victory in this Conclusion mission grants the appropriate Spoils of War bonus that follows:

Aggressor Spoils of War

Grim Duty: As the Emperor's executioners descended on Tizca, all knew the extent of the Thousand Sons' transgression.

On the first turn a unit from the Aggressor's Primary Detachment rolls to charge, they may roll an additional D6 and use the two highest results.

Persecuted Spoils of War

Psychic Haze: Even the mortals of Prospero, simply by exposure to it, were able to see through the sheen of psychic energy which drifted throughout Tizca.

When Persecuted forces explore Mysterious terrain, they may re-roll the result.

Spaceport Control

Legendary Mission (optional)

If players wish, the Spaceport Control Legendary mission can be played after the Conclusion mission of this phase. As before, only one of these should be played per phase, as the battle only happened once! However, this makes it a good opportunity to play a large team game with the chance for the victor to win the Legends of Victory bonus, gaining an advantage in the following phase:

Aggressor Legends of Victory

Pack Mind: *Never satisfied, the Wolves bay for the blood of their prey.*

Instead of the previous Spoils of War bonus available to them, the Aggressor's Primary Detachment gains the Fleet special rule. If a unit contains models that already have this special rule, once per game they may roll an additional D6 when determining Run or Charge distances.

Persecuted Legends of Victory

Smoke and Fire: *A strange tang in the air indicates to all those attuned that something is changing...*

In addition to the Spoils of War bonus Psychic Haze, the player may force the opposing player to re-roll their Deny the Witch result. This may only happen once per game and the second result must always be accepted.

Phase One – Special Rules & War Zone Traits

The first stage of the invasion of Prospero was marked by an incursion so barbaric, it destroyed the vast majority of the Prosperine defensive forces. The orbital bombardment not only wiped out the remainder of its cities but toppled outlying defence outposts and bunkers at Tizca, leaving the city without hope of reinforcement or support.

Alone and Outnumbered: *Against the forces of the Imperium, the mortal defenders of Tizca had little hope, but their faith in the Thousand Sons' integrity held them stalwart.*

The Persecuted gain the Fearless special rule.

Sheer Ferocity: *The Spireguard and other defensive forces were unaware of the destruction that was about to befall their city, and the sight of rampaging Legiones Astartes without remorse in Tizca's streets halted them in their tracks.*

The Attackers always get the first turn in any game, regardless of mission specific rules. However, in some cases the Prosperine forces were able to get the upper hand and as such, if the Persecuted army contains a unique character in its Primary Detachment it can attempt to Seize the Initiative.

PHASE TWO – PUNISHMENT

With the capturing of the spaceport came the remainder of the Emperor's forces. As the Space Wolves gained their reinforcements and presented an even greater threat against the continued existence of Prospero, the Thousand Sons finally descended from their libraries and barracks to confront their brothers in order to halt what their Primarch Magnus believed was their inevitable fate.

The Campaign points earned per game for this phase are as follows:

- Fear Not The Witch, A Brother's Blood – 3 CP for victory, 2 CP for Persecuted draw, 1 CP for Aggressor draw
- Calculated Slaughter – 3 CP for a victory, 2 CP for Persecuted draw
- Age of Darkness Cityfight missions – 2 CP for victory, 1 CP for draw
- The Last Bastion Conclusion mission – 5 CP for victory, 2 CP for Persecuted draw
- Canis Vertex Legendary mission – 7 CP for victory
- All other missions – 1 CP for victory

The Last Bastion Conclusion Mission

After all games have been played in this phase's duration, players may play the Last Bastion Conclusion mission. Regardless of the number of players on each side, only one Conclusion mission should be played per phase, but it can easily be adapted to suit a large team game. Victory in this Conclusion mission grants the following bonus:

Aggressor Spoils of War

Loathing: *Those who use the volatile power of the Warp shall not be suffered to live and endanger the growing Imperium.*

The Aggressor's Primary Detachment gains the Hatred (X) rule, where X is the faction of the Persecuted Primary Detachment.

Persecuted Spoils of War

Aspect of the Scarab: *Like the scarabs of old, the armour of the Thousand Sons is able to withstand punishing blows.*

In close combat, all units in the Persecuted Primary Detachment gain +1 Toughness.

Canis Vertex Legendary Mission (optional)

If players wish, the Canis Vertex Legendary mission can be played after the Conclusion mission of this phase. As before, only one of these missions should be played per phase as the battle only happened once! However, this makes it a good opportunity to play a large team game with the chance for the victor to win the Legends of Victory bonus, gaining an advantage in the following phase:

Aggressor Legends of Victory

The Executioner's Will: *The Legionaries of the VIth know better than to suffer a witch to live.*

In addition to the Spoils of War bonus Loathing, the commanders of each unit in the Aggressor's Primary Detachment, including Unique Characters and Independent Characters, gain the Rampage special rule. If they already have this special rule, they may roll two D3 when determining how many attacks they can make, accepting the highest dice rolled.

Persecuted Legends of Victory

Ethereal Protection: *Primal energies bend gravity to their will, forcing shots to jerk and change course at random.*

In addition to the Spoils of War bonus Aspect of the Scarab, once per turn a unit from the Persecuted Primary Detachment may force their opponent to re-roll To Wound rolls.

Phase Two – Special Rules & War Zone Traits

This stage of the campaign sees vast numbers of reinforcements entering the battlefield, with the Legio Custodes and Sisters of Silence reinforcing the rampaging Space Wolves Legionaries and the Thousand Sons bolstering what remains of the Spireguard's defensive line.

Fratricide: Even the most mortal of wounds may not halt those so determined to survive. When a Troops, Fast Attack or Elites unit is removed as a casualty, roll a D6. On a 5+, the unit enters Ongoing Reserves even if the mission does not permit the use of Reserves. The Aggressor force can re-roll this result.

Prospero, Our Home: The Thousand Sons have the advantage of fighting on their home world. Unless terrain has been affected by the Shattered Reality table, the Persecuted force does not roll to move through difficult terrain and moves as normal. In addition they may re-roll the result of their Dangerous Terrain test.

Phase Three – Brothers Duel

The end draws near. The XVth can barely stand against the collective might of the Imperium's forces and are pushed back further with each blow. As he cannot bear to see his sons destroyed in his name, Magnus descends from the Great Library to duel with his once trusted brother, Leman Russ.

The Campaign point values for games in this phase are as follows:

- Fear Not The Witch, Reality Burns – 3 CP for victory, 2 CP for Persecuted draw, 1 CP for Aggressor draw
- Calculated Slaughter, A Brother's Blood – 3 CP for Aggressor victory, 2 CP for Persecuted victory or draw
- Age of Darkness Cityfight missions – 2 CP for victory, 1 CP for Persecuted draw
- Cleansing Inferno Conclusion mission – 5 CP for victory, 3 CP for draw
- Apex Predator Legendary mission – 7 CP for Persecuted victory, 6 CP for Aggressor victory
- All other missions – 1 CP for victory

Cleansing Inferno Conclusion Mission

After all games have been played in this phase's duration, players may play the Cleansing Inferno mission. Regardless of the number of players on each side, only one Conclusion mission should be played per phase, but it can easily be adapted to suit a large team game. Unless your group is playing the Legendary mission of the phase, victory in this mission determines the victor of the entire campaign, so it presents a good opportunity to play a final, large team game. The Spoils of War bonuses earned in this mission are as follows:

Aggressor Spoils of War

In Russ' Image: *All Space Marines of the VIth Legion aspire to channel the ferocity, courage and grim determination of their progenitor.*

When a unit from the Aggressor's Primary Detachment begins a turn within 12" of their Warlord, they make an additional D3 Hammer of Wrath attacks when assaulting a Persecuted unit on that turn only. These attacks are resolved at the highest unmodified Strength of the unit at AP.

Persecuted Spoils of War

Psychic Overload: *As the tides of the Warp infected the minds of the psykers, excess power bled into the weapons of the Thousand Sons.*

Once per turn, a Psyker from the Persecuted Primary Detachment may automatically cast Force on their unit. The same Psyker may not

automatically cast Force again in the same game, however there are no restrictions on casting it as per the usual rules again.

Apex Predator Legendary Mission (optional)

If players wish, the Apex Predator Legendary mission can be played after the Conclusion mission of this phase. As before, only one of these missions should be played per phase, as the battle only happened once! Given that this is the last mission of the campaign, players may use their Spoils of War bonuses awarded from the Conclusion mission.

Remember, victory in this mission will determine the victor of the entire campaign, so this game is perfect for groups to play as a large team game to round off the campaign.

Phase Three – Special Rules & War Zone Traits

As reality begins to collapse across the planet, both the forces of the Imperium and the defenders of Prospero are left fighting for their duty and lives. The Primarch Magnus descends to challenge Leman Russ in a battle that will be remembered across time, as around them their sons clash and fight to the bitter death.

Lupine Visions: *As reality frays and cracks, the minds of those attuned to the Great Ocean are filled with harrowing visions of fangs and fur drenched with blood. Only the most powerful are able to shake themselves free from this horrific nightmare.*

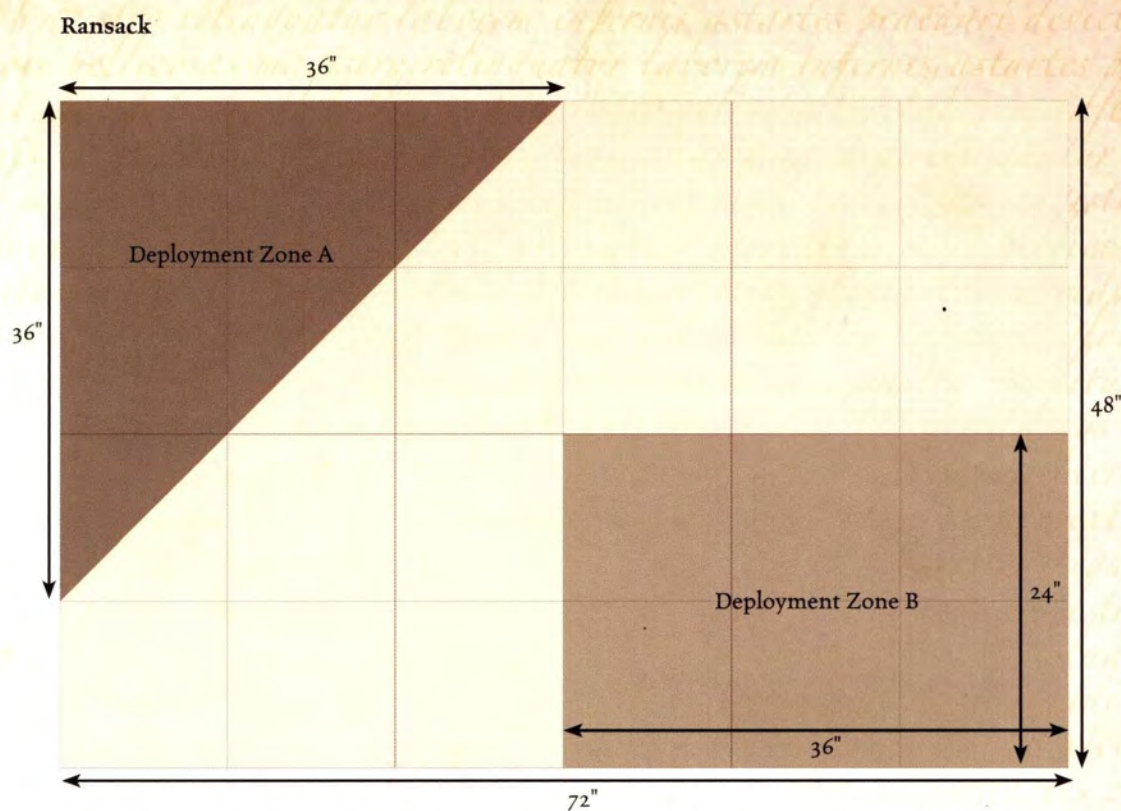
If a Persecuted unit comes within 6" of an Aggressor unit through any means, take a Leadership test. If they pass, they are able to shake themselves free of the hallucinations.

If they fail, the unit takes -1 BS and -1 WS penalty, and must retake the Leadership test before the Movement phase of their next player turn. If there is a Psyker in this unit, modify the roll by -1 for every Mastery Level the Psyker has.

Desperation: *The Thousand Sons are rapidly losing their grip on their home world, and they cannot fail their Primarch in this hour of need.*

Once per turn, a Persecuted unit may fire Overwatch at their full BS. The same unit may not fire Overwatch at their full BS more than once per game.

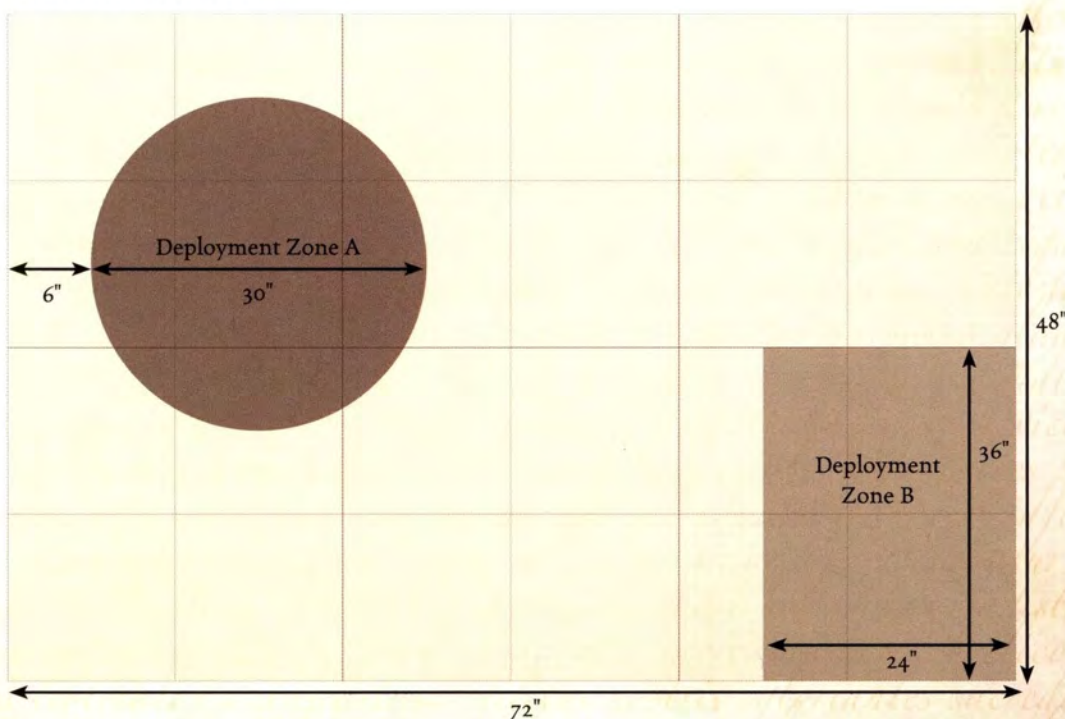
DEPLOYMENT MAPS



Ransack has two deployment zones which are positioned in opposite corners. If you use this deployment map, models must not be deployed within 12" of an enemy model.

The shortest table edges bordering the player's deployment zone count as the controlled edge.

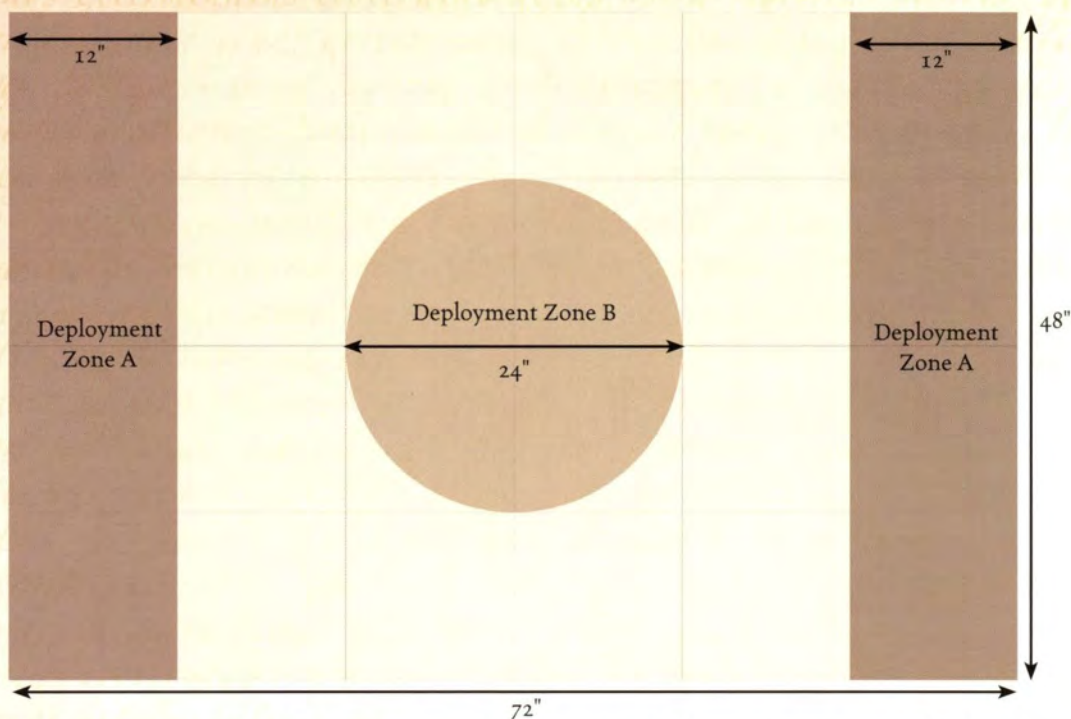
Hunters Never Falter



Hunters Never Falter uses two deployment zones. Deployment zone A must be 6" away from the edge of the table. If you're using this deployment map, all models must be deployed more than 12" away from the enemy.

For each player, their table edge is the shortest edge closest to their deployment zone.

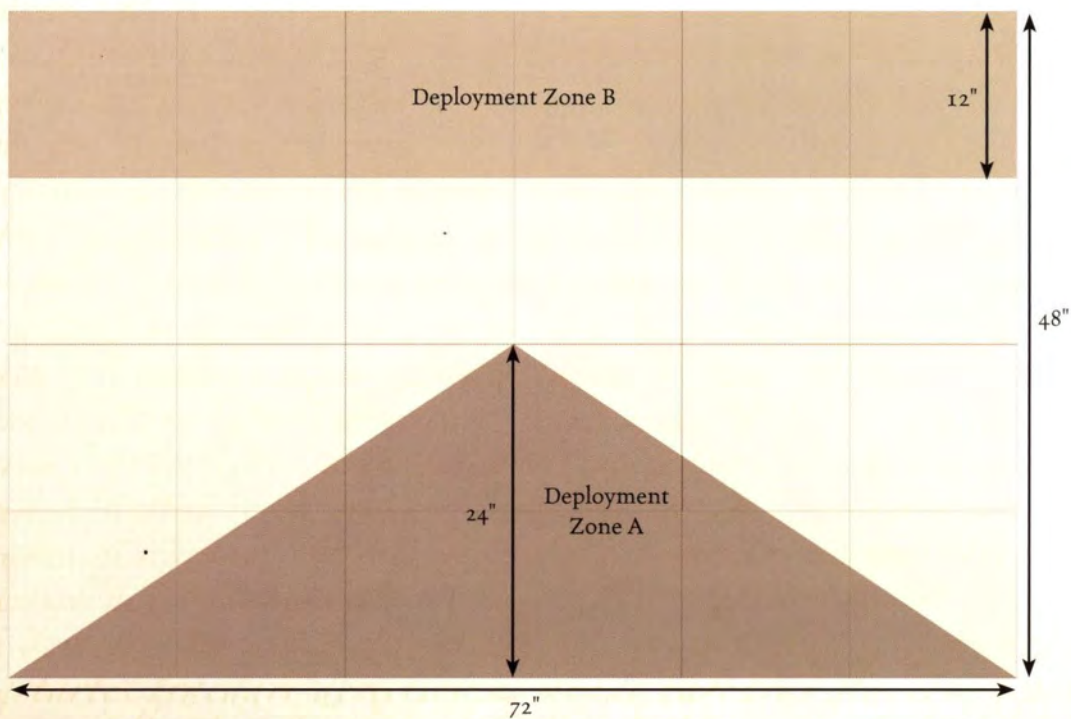
To The Last Man



To the Last Man uses three deployment zones. The player using deployment zones A must split their army in a way they see fit. If you're using this deployment map, models must not be deployed within 12" of the enemy. Outflanking units may be deployed up to 12" away from the table edge if they are within an enemy deployment zone, provided they are not deployed within 6" of an enemy model.

Player A may use one of the short table edges when rolling for Reserves, and player B may use one of the long table edges.

Break-through



Break-through uses two deployment zones. If players are using this deployment map, then models must be deployed more than 12" away from enemy models.

Both players use the long table edge touching their deployment zone as their table edge.

MISSION I – FEAR NOT THE WITCH

‘To wield power, a man must have the knowledge of its source, the wisdom in its use and the strength in its consequences. On those fateful days, it became apparent that the most dangerous aspect of the Warp’s power was not simply its unpredictability, but a false belief that Mankind could understand and wield its power for itself.’

Maesus Coranus, Remembrancer aboard the Vox Aeterno

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules. The Aggressor force may not contain any Psykers.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine the deployment map.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner can decide to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first chooses their deployment zone and deploys their entire army and any fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- The player who deploys second takes the other deployment zone and deploys their entire army and any fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deploys first has the first turn, unless the second player can Seize the Initiative as per the rules in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The second player modifies this roll by +1 for every Psyker they have deployed in their deployment zone of Mastery Level 2 or above.

GAME LENGTH

This game uses the Variable Game Length from the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objectives

At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points is the winner.

Secondary Objectives

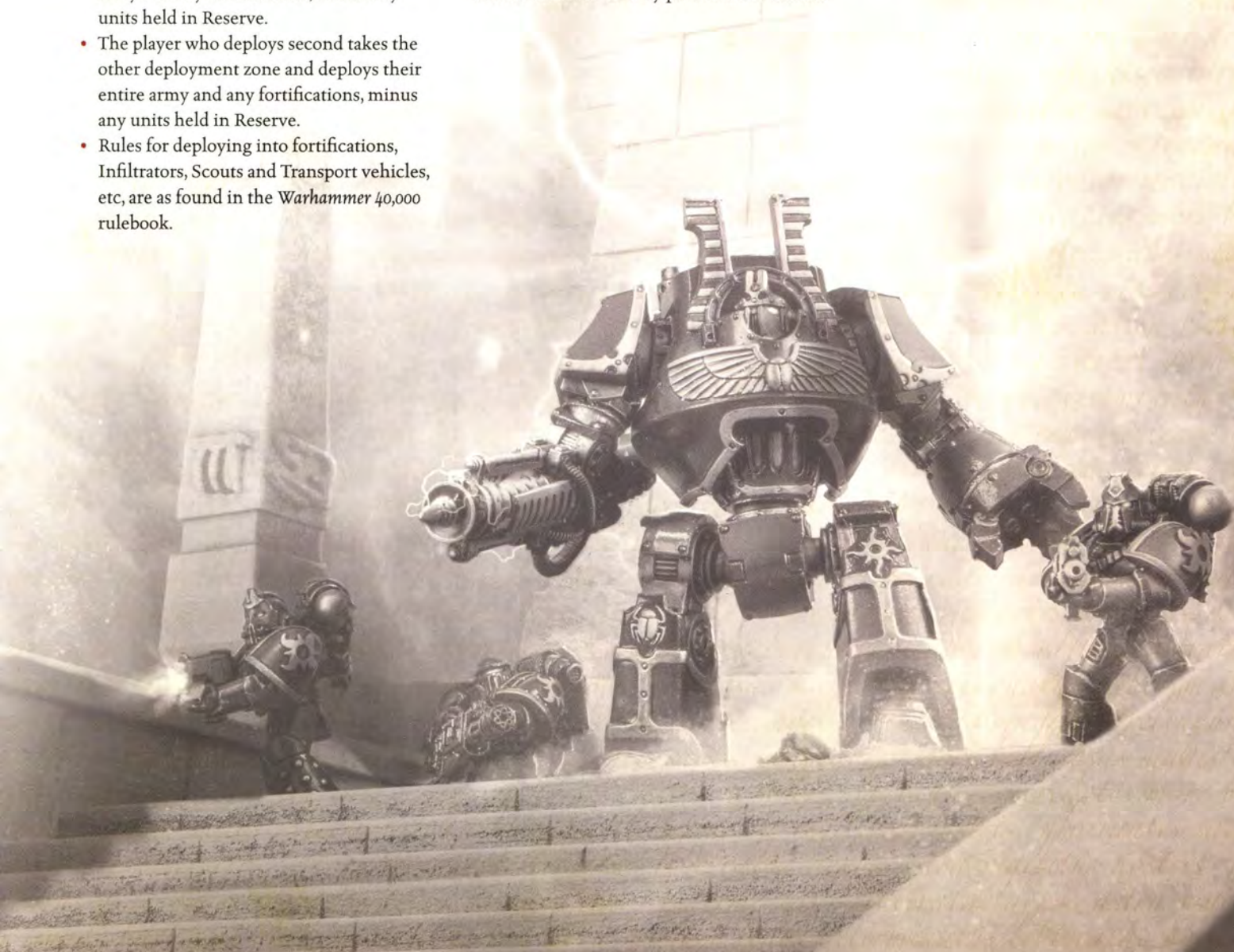
Slay the Warlord, Abomination, The Witch Scorned

Abomination: At the end of the game, the Aggressor gains one additional Victory point for each Psyker they have slain.

The Witch Scorned: At the end of the game, the Persecuted gains one additional Victory point for each model slain by a Psyker in their force. This does not include the effects of the Shattered Reality table.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves



MISSION 2 – A BROTHER'S BLOOD

'It is the greatest tragedy to witness brothers calling for the blood of the other. While the grim reality would come to light in the years following, the events of that harrowing conflict on Prospero showed that even brothers could not be trusted. And as the years pass, may the brothers who had the courage to stand against their kin for their transgressions always be remembered.'

Unknown, Annals of the Legions, circa M35

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.
- Deploy terrain on the battlefield.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner deploys first.
- The player who deploys first chooses one of the deployment zones and deploys their entire army and fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve, using the Staged Deployment special rule (see Mission Special Rules), followed by the second player.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deploys first has the first turn. The second player cannot Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for five turns. On a roll of a 4+, a sixth and final turn is played.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objectives

The player who earns the most Victory points is the winner.

Force them Back: Each scoring unit within the enemy's deployment zone at the end of the game is worth an additional Victory point.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord, First Blood, Attrition

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Staged Deployment

Staged Deployment

Rather than deploying their entire army at once, the player who deploys first places a single unit on the table followed by their opponent in the order which is shown below.

After this has been done, the two players continue alternating deployment until both players are fully deployed (minus Reserve or Reinforcements forces).

It is entirely possible one player may run out of units to place before their opponent. If this is the case, the player should continue placing units as they wish after their opponent has run out.

1 st	Fortifications
2 nd	Lords of War units
3 rd	Heavy Support units
4 th	Troops units
5 th	Elites units
6 th	Headquarters units
7 th	Fast Attack units

MISSION 3 – CALCULATED SLAUGHTER

'My sons, the hunt teaches us that the easiest kill is the slowest, the weakest, but where is the challenge in slaughtering those below us? Hunt the weak and the herd survives, but hunt the strong, the leaders and survivors, and there is nothing for the foe to recover but the bones of their dead.'

Leman Russ to the VIth Legion, shortly before their landing at Tizca

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts. Each army must contain an Elites unit to act as the Honour Guard for the Warlord.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine the deployment map.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner can decide to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first chooses their deployment zone and deploys their entire army and any fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- The player who deploys second takes the other deployment zone and deploys their entire army and any fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- Both players must declare who is their Warlord and their Honour Guard.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The Aggressor has the first turn, no matter who deployed first, unless the Persecuted can Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The player who slays their opponent's Warlord wins the game, regardless of who achieved the most Victory points. If both Warlords are alive at the end of the game, it is a draw.

Secondary Objectives

First Blood, Death of Honour

Death of Honour: The player earns two additional Victory points if they slay their opponent's Honour Guard.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, My Life is Forfeit

My Life is Forfeit: The forces on Prospero willingly gave their lives for their commanders so their goals could be achieved.

If your Look Out, Sir! roll is successful, and the model onto which the wound was allocated survives that wound, they use the Strength value of the character they just protected for the following turn.



MISSION 4 – REALITY BURNS

'As the city of Tizca burned with ethereal flame, the likes of which had never been witnessed before by mortal men, the sheer horror of this other realm was laid bare. The ground disintegrated, the buildings turned to dust at the slightest caress of the Warp's tides, and all we knew was the pure, primal terror of the enemy faced by the stoic forces protecting us below.'

Maesus Coranus, Remembrancer aboard the Noctum Cadent

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.
- Deploy terrain on the battlefield.

DEPLOYMENT

- The Persecuted deploy first. They choose their deployment zone and deploy their entire army and fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- The Aggressor deploys second, taking the other deployment zone, and deploys their entire army and any fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The Aggressors have the first turn. The Persecuted can Seize the Initiative on a 4+.

GAME LENGTH

This game uses the Variable Game Length special rule from the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The player with the most Victory points at the end of the game is the winner.

Empyrean Affinity: The Persecuted gain two additional Victory points for each unit destroyed as a result of a psychic power, including effects resulting from the Shattered Reality table.

Secondary Objectives

Attrition, Last Man Standing

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Night Fighting



CONCLUSION MISSION 1 – OUT OF TIME

'When prey is cornered, run down or utterly hopeless, we must expect it will strike. Not out of a desire for victory, but out of terror and delusion. They desire a death in battle, and in their final, desperate strike, their wish shall be granted by our blades.'

Teachings of Leman Russ as heard by the Remembrancer Athar Cai

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Use the Ransack deployment map for this game. The Aggressors take deployment zone B, and the Persecuted deployment zones A.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers for this game.

DEPLOYMENT

- The Aggressors deploy their entire army in their deployment zone, minus any units held in Reserve.
- The Persecuted then deploy their entire army in their deployment zones, minus any units held in Reserve.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The Persecuted have the first turn, unless the Aggressors can Seize the Initiative on a 4+.

GAME LENGTH

This game uses Variable Game Length.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The player with the most Victory points at the end of the game is the winner.

Secondary Objectives

Attrition, First Blood, Primary Target

Primary Target: If the Warlord or any other Unique Character* has been removed as a casualty at the end of the game, the opposing player scores 2 Victory points.

*This also refers to any Independent Character that has its own unique rules profile in any of the Forge World Horus Heresy army lists.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Survivalist

Survivalist: Looking death in the eye had little effect on those who had seen the very fabric of creation. All Persecuted units may re-roll failed armour save rolls of a 1 when in close combat. If the weapon would not allow an armour save, they gain a 6+ invulnerable save instead.



CONCLUSION MISSION 2 – THE LAST BASTION

'If we die, we die for our home, our people and our lords. May we re-'

Note fragment found amongst the ashes of a garrison on Tizca

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Use the Break-through deployment map. The Aggressors take deployment zone A, and the Persecuted deployment zone B.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield, including Mysterious terrain.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers in use this game.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner can decide to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, minus any units held in Reserve, in their deployment zone.
- The second player then deploys their entire army, minus any units held in Reserve, in their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The Aggressors have the first turn, unless the Persecuted can Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

This game uses Variable Game Length.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The player who has more units in their opponent's deployment zone than their opponent does is the victor.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord, Last Man Standing, Cowards!

Cowards!: The player gains 1 Victory point for the destruction of a unit on the game turn it has attempted a cover save.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Night Fighting, Defiance

Defiance: In this time of desperation, the Thousand Sons could not fail their liege or their home world, as to fail would surely mean their end. If a unit from the Persecuted Primary Detachment is within 18" of its Warlord at the end of its player turn, it counts results of a 1 as a 6 when rolling To Hit.

CONCLUSION MISSION 3 – CLEANSING INFERNO

'The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns you more than them.'

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Use the Hunters Never Falter deployment map.
- For the purpose of this game, the Shattered Reality table result is 5.
- Deploy terrain on the battlefield.
- Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner deploys first.
- The player deploying first chooses one of the deployment zones and deploys their entire army and fortifications, minus any units held in Reserve, using the Staged Deployment special rule (see page 196), followed by the second player.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deploys first has the first turn, and the second player can Seize the Initiative on a 5+.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for six turns. On a roll of a 3+, a seventh and final turn is played.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The player with the most Victory points at the end of the game is the victor.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord, Last Breath, Preparation

Last Breath: The player gains 1 Victory point for each of their units which is slain by an enemy unit.

Preparation: The player gains 1 Victory point for each unit destroyed by a psychic power from game turn 2 onwards.

Ancient Proverb

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Night Fighting, Charred Bones

Charred Bones: The forbidden knowledge held in Tizca had to be destroyed, for its secrets were too dangerous for even the Legion's Astartes to know. At the start of each game turn, players alternate placing a Large Blast (5") template over a section of the board. Roll to scatter this as normal.

This area is alight with bonfires burning heretical artefacts, ruins and corpses. All units within the area of this template take a number of automatic hits equal to the number of models within the unit resolved at Str 7 AP 3 during the Shooting phase. If the unit contains a Psyker of Mastery Level 2 or above, they may expend two Warp Charge points to channel a protective shield across their unit. They are protected from the flames and may attack as normal. However, if they wish to move, the psychic shield fails.

LEGENDARY MISSION I – SPACEPORT CONTROL

'In the end, all that appeared to matter was that the VIth Legion wanted that spaceport. Against the might of the Legiones Astartes, what could the mortal forces do aside from temporarily deny them of their objective?'

Maesus Coranus, Remembrancer aboard the Noctum Cadent

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules. The Aggressor may not take any Fortification choices. The Persecuted can take an additional 25% of their points total as Fortification choices.

SETTING UP THE GAME

The Aggressor uses deployment zone A, and the Persecuted deployment zone B. The players' table edge is the short edge next to their deployment zone. Models must not be deployed within 12" of an enemy unit.

Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers, and deploy terrain on the battlefield. The spaceport is stationed among the ruins of the western sector of Tizca, so there should be ruined buildings, craters and rubble scattered across the table.

In addition, the spaceport border must be represented by some kind of wall-like terrain, which must be placed 2" away from the Persecuted deployment zone. It is up to you whether the walls are intact, ruined or merely piles of rubble. Whichever you choose, it uses its standard rules for that kind of terrain in terms of its type, line of sight and cover.

DEPLOYMENT

- The Persecuted deploys first.
- The Persecuted deploys all player-owned fortifications before the rest of their army, minus any units that are held in Reserve.
- The Aggressor then deploys their army, minus any units that are held in Reserve.

FIRST TURN

The Aggressors automatically get the first turn. The Persecuted cannot attempt to Seize the Initiative unless they have a Psyker of Mastery Level 2 or above deployed on the table, in which case they roll to Seize the Initiative as normal.

GAME LENGTH

This game lasts for six turns. At the end of turn 6, the Aggressors may roll for another game turn if they have more than 25% of their units remaining on the table. Another turn begins on a roll of 3+.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

The Aggressors must have more units in the Persecuted deployment zone than their opponent does to claim victory. Any other outcome results in a Persecuted victory.

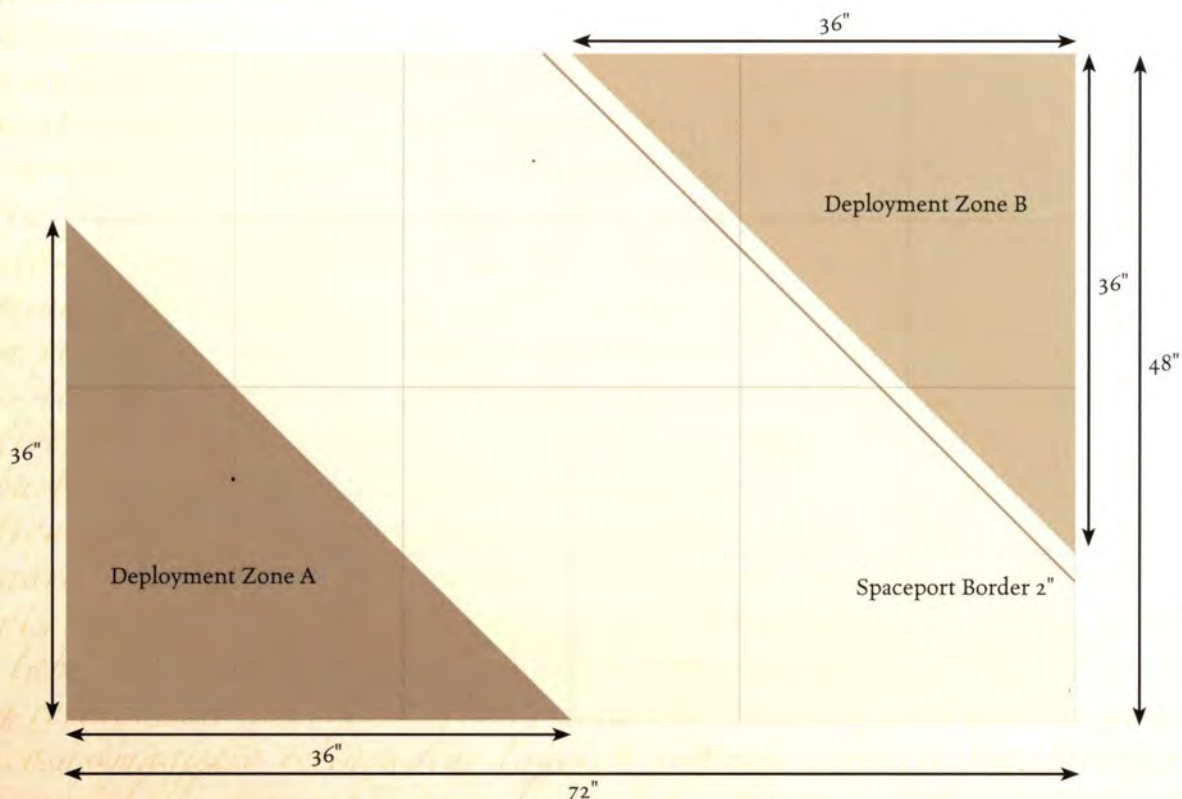
Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord, First Blood, Last Man Standing

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Clutch of the Wolf

Clutch of the Wolf: Once the Wolves had eyes on their prey, standing in their path would prove fatal for many. Once per turn, one unit from the Aggressors force can re-roll either their Run or Charge rolls. They must decide whether they want to re-roll Run or Charge distances at the start of the game. This decision cannot be changed after the game starts.



LEGENDARY MISSION 2 – CANIS VERTEX

'As it walked, it leeches the life from the very ground. An unheard wailing echoed in our minds with every heavy step the thing took, and the chill of death bit at our very essence. At that point, an unvoiced agreement was passed that this abomination would not be permitted to exist any longer.'

The Memories of Ogar Fangthane, as heard by Remembrancer Athar Cain

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules. The Persecuted may take a Titan to represent the *Canis Vertex*, using the table below:

Army Size	Titan
2,000+ points	Warhound
4,000+ points	Reaver
6,000+ points	Warlord

The normal points cost of the Titan is not counted in the points cost of the army.

SETTING UP THE GAME

The Persecuted take deployment zone A, and the Aggressors deployment zone B. No models may be set up within 12" of an enemy unit. The players' table edge is the long edge touching their deployment zone.

Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers in effect for this game.

Scatter terrain across the battlefield. As this battle takes part in the city of Tizca, as a desperate measure employed by the defending forces, the terrain might consist of ruined buildings, rubble and craters with scattered Mysterious terrain. For ease of access, there should be a gap of at least 2" between the terrain pieces to allow infantry to pass.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner deploys first.
- Before the winner deploys, the Persecuted place the Titan *Canis Vertex*.
- The winner of the roll deploys a single unit of their choice in their deployment zone, followed by their opponent.
- Continue deployment as per the Staged Deployment rules (see page 196), minus any units held in Reserves.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed the first unit has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative on a 5+.

GAME LENGTH

This game has the Variable Game Length special rule (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

Tech-heresy: The Aggressors must destroy the *Canis Vertex* by the end of the game. Any other outcome results in a Persecuted victory.

Secondary Objectives

Attrition, Last Man Standing, Insult to the Omnissiah.

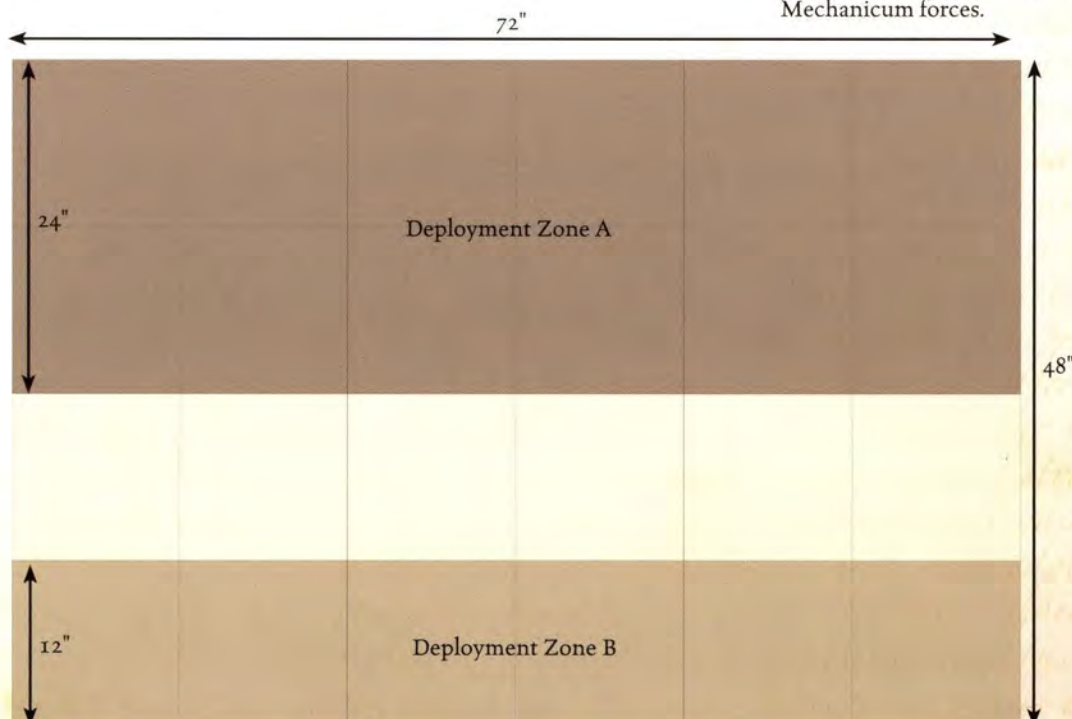
Insult to the Omnissiah: The Aggressors gain one additional Victory point for every automata unit they destroy.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, *Canis Vertex*, Knowledge is Power

***Canis Vertex*:** Tainted by the unnatural powers manifesting on Prospero, the corrupted Titan is an abomination in the eyes of the Emperor's true servants. The Titan *Canis Vertex* is considered Immobile and has only one void shield which uses the standard void shield rules. Because the Titan's power reserves are being taken up by its generation of heretical psychic powers, it cannot regenerate its void shield.

Knowledge is Power: All Mechanicum forces in this battle (including Techmarines) gain +1 BS when attacking their opponent's Mechanicum forces.



LEGENDARY MISSION 3 – APEX PREDATOR

'For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.'

Ancient Proverb

THE ARMIES

Choose your armies as per the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules. Both the Aggressor and the Persecuted must take the appropriate Primarch for their Legion.

If you are using a Space Marine Legion that does not currently have a Primarch with published rules, or you are playing a non-Legiones Astartes army, you should use an appropriate Unique Character from your Faction's army list for this mission.

SETTING UP THE GAME

Both deployment zones are identical for this mission. The Primarchs may not set up within 6" of each other or within 12" of enemy models. The player's table edge is the short edge bordering their main deployment zone. The semi-circular deployment zones both have a diameter of 12", and may only contain the Primarch.

Determine any Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers in effect this game.

Deploy terrain across the battlefield. By this point Tizca is ruined almost beyond all recognition, so terrain could consist of rubble, craters, ruined buildings, etc. Given that this battle takes place in the centre of Tizca around the Great Pyramid, any ruined buildings will most likely be scattered away from the main pyramid.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner can decide whether to deploy first or second.
- The elected player deploys their Primarch at the edge of their semi-circular deployment zone.
- This player then deploys the rest of their army, minus any Reserves, in their main deployment zone.
- Their opponent then places their Primarch/champion, followed by the rest of their army in the main deployment zone, minus any Reserves.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative on a roll of a 4+.

GAME LENGTH

This game lasts for five turns. On a roll of a 4+, a sixth and final turn is played.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Primary Objective

One must Fall: A player must kill their opponent's Primarch/champion in order to achieve victory. If both are alive at the end of the game, the one with the least wounds remaining is defeated. If both are slain, overall Victory points are used to determine the winner.

Secondary Objectives

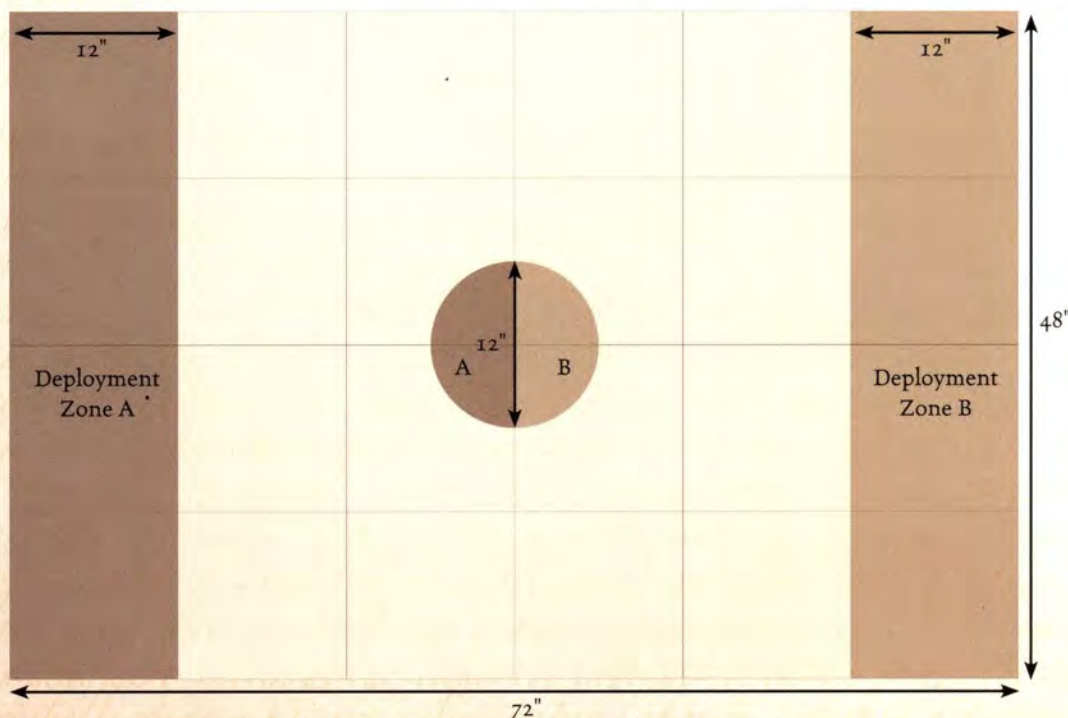
Slay the Warlord, First Blood, Attrition

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves, Bladed Hurricane, Focused

Bladed Hurricane: The furious duel between the two Primarchs is but a blur to even the Legiones Astartes, and to approach them is to invite death. If a unit ends its turn within 6" of either Primarch, the failed To Hit rolls of the closest Primarch automatically hit that unit, with all wounds being resolved as normal.

Focused: The mere sight of a Primarch is glorious to behold. If a unit can draw line of sight to their Legion's Primarch, they gain +1 Strength.



SPACE WOLVES VETERAN LEGIONARY

VETERAN LEGIONARY ISEM

ORN THELM'S WARBAND, SECOND GREAT COMPANY

THE PROSPERINE CENSURE HOST, 004.M31

Recovered from the cogitator unit of a destroyed Spireguard Dracosan transport, this image shows one of the veteran warriors of the Space Wolves Second Great Company as he appeared during the early stages of the Battle for Prospero. The Second bore a reputation for vicious efficiency in war, and much of that Great Company was engaged in campaigns against Hrud migration fleets in the galactic south-west at the time of the Prospero campaign, where their skills were put to bloody work. Thus, of its nominal strength of 10,000, only 800 were able to join Leman Russ' crusade, largely operating as reconnaissance and linebreaker formations in the tangled streets of Old Tizca.

Many of the Second were still equipped with the older MkII pattern armour of the early Great Crusade, eschewing the option to requisition newer wargear in favour of the armour in which they had conquered a galaxy. These suits were much modified from the base pattern, having been in service for nearly two centuries in some of the oldest examples, and many bore exotic decorations and honour markings as evidence of their long service. In this case, Legionary Isem has added a number of engravings, including a protective Othala rune upon his gorget, most likely a recent addition in preparation for the war on Prospero, for it is held on Fenris as a talisman against the powers of sorcery. The series of runes on his abdominal plating, comprising a triad of Fehu—Algiz—Wunja, or status, protection and success in old Fenrisian, are a testimonial to his skills at war, a common practise among the VIth Legion for denoting leaders within warbands. The wolf hide affixed to the right pauldron of his armour is another Fenrisian tradition adopted across the Legion, similar to the drake hunting tradition of the XVIIIth Legion, and is again used as a method of denoting dominance within a warband by a display of prowess.



Shoulder Pauldrons with typical Space Wolves Markings:
Tactical Designation Emblem and Legion Icon.



SPACE MARINE LEGION

ARMY LIST APPENDIX



'Oftentimes, to win us to do harm, the instruments of darkness need do no more than tell us truths.'

The Apocrypha Terra

CRUSADE ARMY LIST APPENDIX XV: THE THOUSAND SONS

LEGIONES ASTARTES (THOUSAND SONS)

The Space Marines of the Emperor's Legions are genetically engineered, psycho-indoctrinated warriors with superhuman abilities and minds and souls tempered for war. In addition, each individual Legion has its own idiosyncrasies and character – the product of their gene-seed and unique warrior culture.

The Thousand Sons are a Space Marine Legion bound up with occult lore, mysticism and the otherworldly powers of the psyker. It was these esoteric arts of war that made them one of the most formidable Legions, but also one of the most distrusted, and would eventually see them subject to the Emperor's judgement against them.

All models and units with this special rule are subject to the following provisions:

Legiones Astartes: Units with this special rule may always attempt to Regroup at their normal Leadership value, regardless of casualties.

Covenant of Sorcerers: During the army list creation for a Thousand Sons Detachment, you must determine your Warlord first. Any Warlord chosen for the army must be an Independent Character with a psychic Mastery Level of at least 1 and the highest available Leadership value in the force. Note that this means certain Rites of War will be unavailable to a Thousand Sons force.

Prosperine Lore: Psykers within the Thousand Sons have access to all of the psychic disciplines found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook, except that of Malefic Daemonology. The following also applies:

- Any HQ Independent Character unit who is not already a Psyker can be purchased a Mastery Level of 1 for +20 points, and may exchange a power weapon with which they have been equipped for a force weapon for +5 points.



Cult Arcana: The psychic powers and occult training of the Thousand Sons were focused around the disciplines of their Cult temples and secret Orders; these provided their initiates with unique abilities on the field of battle.

- For each unit with this special rule, their owning player must select one of the Cult Arcana during the creation of their army list from those shown on the Cult Arcana table. The chosen unit gains the benefits shown for that Cult Arcana.
- Compulsory Troops choices within the army must use the same Arcana as the army's Warlord (or in the case of an Allied Detachment, the same Arcana as the Detachment's compulsory HQ choice).
- Each Cult Arcana has an associated psychic discipline. If a unit has powers drawn from the matching psychic discipline of their chosen Cult Arcana, they may manifest powers when making a Psychic test on a 3+ rather than 4+ as would normally be the case.

Signs & Portents: The formidable powers of prescience and psychic communion which give the Thousand Sons their unique strengths also make them vulnerable should these powers be found wanting or disrupted as, for example, when the Empyrean might twist from their grasp, instilling the terror of the return of the Flesh Change. Likewise, should the greatest guiding lights of their Order be slain, psychic shock deeply scourges the survivors and a dark fatalism that their doom cannot be thwarted can engulf those who remain at their loss.

- If any unit within the Thousand Sons Detachment suffers wounds as a result of a Perils of the Warp test, the Detachment's controlling player must immediately take a Pinning test for every unit in their force with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule.
- If all of the Independent Character units in a Thousand Sons Detachment have been slain, all surviving units that are in the Detachment suffer a -1 Ld penalty for the rest of the game and can no longer make Sweeping Advances.

THE CULT ARCANA

The following table details the Cult Arcana of the Thousand Sons Legion.

ARCANA	DISCIPLINE	EFFECT
Pavoni	Biomancy	Quickblood
Raptora	Telekinesis	Kine Shields
Corvidae	Divination	Precognitive Strike
Athanean	Telepathy	Mental Fortitude
Pyrae	Pyromancy	Ashen Blow

Quickblood

The unit adds +1 to its Run and Sweeping Advance distances.

Kine Shields

The unit gains a 6+ invulnerable save, or if it possesses an invulnerable save from another source that increases by 1 (so that a 5+ becomes a 4+, etc), to a maximum invulnerable save of 3+.

Precognitive Strike

The unit must re-roll failed To Hit rolls of a 1 when making shooting attacks if it remained stationary in this turn's Movement phase.

Mental Fortitude

Units with this special rule are immune to Fear and have the Adamantium Will special rule.

Ashen Blow

The unit gains the Hammer of Wrath special rule. If the unit already possess this special rule from another source, it inflicts 2 Hammer of Wrath attacks rather than 1 when it charges.



'Why do the feeble imaginings of the common man insist on populating the darkness with all manner of supernatural forces? Have the forces of natural selection and intelligence not populated the stars with enough terrors and wonders already that the weak must clutch to antiquated notions of spirits and demons? Why it is no more than preposterous superstition to claim otherwise, and I for one have nothing but scorn for all such pitiable notions.'

Fulgrim the Illuminator
Address to the
Molivincan Quorum
The Compliance
of Hualda-IX



'The knowledge of sorcery is like sea water; the more that is drunk, the thirstier the drinker becomes, and the more surely they are poisoned.'

Attributed to Kva
'He who is Divided'
Caster of Runes,
Space Wolves Legion

LEGION SPECIFIC UNITS

In addition to those found in the Legiones Astartes Age of Darkness army list, the Thousand Sons Legion has particular access to the following additional unit types: the Sekhmet (Elites choice), the Ammitara Occult (Fast Attack choice), the Khenetai Occult (Elites choice) and the Osiron pattern Dreadnought (HQ choice). In addition, a Thousand Sons force may also take a unique variant Battle-automata Maniple called the Castellax-Achea (Heavy Support choice). The Castellax-Achea are designed to be psychically responsive and so, unlike the inclusion of Battle-automata in normal Space Marine Legion armies, the presence of models equipped with cortex controllers are not required for the Castellax-Achea to be fielded.

The Thousand Sons Legion also has specific modifications and options which are applied to several of its standard units, which are as follows:

Thousand Sons Praetors

Unlike those of other Legions, Praetors in the Thousand Sons are Psykers and must be purchased 1-3 ranks of psychic Mastery Level for +25 points per level. In addition, they can upgrade any power weapon they have to a force weapon for +5 points. Note that where a power weapon is an option, this must be purchased first in order to be upgraded to a force weapon.

Thousand Sons Veteran Tactical Squads & Legion Terminator Squads

In addition to their usual upgrades, these squads may be upgraded to have the Brotherhood of Psykers (Mastery Level 1) special rule for +25 points for each squad.

LEGION SPECIFIC WARGEAR

The Thousand Sons Legion has access to the following items of special wargear:

Arcane Litanies (One Use)

The bearer of Arcane Litanies may ignore the first failed Perils of the Warp test they are subject to.

Any Independent Character with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule and who has at least a psychic Mastery Level of 1 may be equipped with a single set of Arcane Litanies for +10 points.

Æther-fire Cannon

A latter development of the Pyrae Cult Techmarine artificers, these modified plasma weapons utilised both occult lore and the unique techno-arcana of the Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad in their construction.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Æther-fire cannon	36"	7	2	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Soul Blaze, Gets Hot

Any model drawn from the Thousand Sons army equipped with a plasma cannon may upgrade this to an Æther-fire cannon for +10 points each. In the case of a unit with more than one plasma cannon, then all plasma cannon in the unit must be identically upgraded.

Asphyx Shells

Tainted with a psycho-reactive toxin of unknown origins, the Thousand Sons were able to arm their elites with these unusual and highly lethal munitions. These shells were first believed to have been developed on Prospero for use with relatively primitive projectile weapons made to defend against the Psychneuein, but the difficulties of mass production and scaling of their effect limited their deployment.

- Weapons using Asphyx shells gain the Shred type.
- Independent Characters with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule may be given Asphyx shells for +10 points each – their use applying to any bolt pistol, boltgun, combi-bolter and the bolter components of combi-weapons the model is equipped with.
- Legion Terminator Squads and Legion Veteran Tactical Squads with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule may be given Asphyx shells for +20 points per squad – their use applying to any bolt pistol, boltgun, combi-bolter and the bolter components of combi-weapons the squad is equipped with.
- Rotor cannon-equipped Legion Tactical Support Squads with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule may be given Asphyx shells for their rotor cannon for +25 points per squad.

OSIRON DREADNOUGHT (THOUSAND SONS CONTEMPTOR DREADNOUGHT VARIANT)

For many decades, the arts by which the powers of a psyker could be maintained medically into the half-life of Dreadnought sarcophagus internment eluded the Thousand Sons, just as it had many others of the Legiones Astartes who attempted the task. Instead lingering death, swift madness and worse yet, the potential for malign psychic phenomena resulted from every attempt to solve the problem. It was not until the mind of Magnus himself was focused on the issue, which he saw as part of the wider Librarius Project to establish firmly the place of the psyker within the Legiones Astartes, that a solution, albeit a difficult one, was created. The use of a crowning psychometric barrier lattice for the living brain of the mortally wounded psyker was his answer, a device he named the 'Osiron'. Difficult to construct and using principles few even among the Imperium's foremost psi-arcanists understood, the Thousand Sons immediately began fitting it to the highly adaptable Contemptor Dreadnought chassis in their possession with startlingly powerful results. Records indicate that not long before the Council of Nikaea, Magnus gave the schematics to create such Dreadnoughts freely to the other Legions, though it is likely most spurned this gift entirely.

Osiron Dreadnoughts

Any Contemptor Dreadnought Talon taken as part of a Thousand Sons Detachment may be upgraded to an Osiron Dreadnought for +50 points each. They retain all of the options of a standard Contemptor Dreadnought.

- Osiron Dreadnoughts gain the Psychic Pilot special rule (Mastery Level 1) and may generate their power from either the Telekinesis, Telepathy, Pyromancy or Divination disciplines.
- The Osiron Dreadnought gains the Adamantium Will special rule.
- The Osiron Dreadnought must exchange its starting Dreadnought close combat weapon with inbuilt combi-bolter for a Dreadnought force blade with inbuilt combi-bolter with Asphyx shells for free.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Dreadnought force blade	—	x2	2	Melee, Force



'Ours is not merely to be victorious over the foes of Man, it is to be victorious in such a way as to display to the cosmos that no other outcome was possible; indeed that no other outcome was conceivable, that we are in short, destiny made manifest.'

Gideon Phrantos
Adept of the
Temple of the Athanean
Thousand Sons Legion





'Since times most ancient the scarab has symbolised much. It has symbolised wisdom, it has symbolised the passage of the sun across the heavens. It has symbolised secrets hidden, it has symbolised perseverance. It has symbolised that from death life is born and through that knowledge is eternal, and what is buried by the follies of one age, another can uncover.'

The Book of Going Forth
Ex Libris Prospero

THOUSAND SONS UNIQUE RITE OF WAR: THE AXIS OF DISSOLUTION

Taking its principal name from an ancient alchemical formula, the 'Axis of Dissolution' was a tactical configuration which was based on dictating the terms of a battle in the Thousand Sons' favour. It provided a formation against which an enemy might be caught as upon a barbed trap, impaling itself by its own attack and then brutally bled when forced to retreat. Requiring the preternatural co-ordination of effort for which the Thousand Sons were famed, the uncannily murderous efficiency of the Axis of Dissolution did little to curb the Thousand Sons' sinister reputation for witchery among their allies.

Effects

- **The Alembic of Adamant:** Models with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule that are part of a force using this Rite of War automatically pass any Morale checks or Pinning tests they are called on to make if they are within 6" of an objective when the test is taken.
- **The Caustic of Grace:** Models with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule that are part of a force using this Rite of War may fire Overwatch at BS 2.
- **The Transition of Vitriol:** You may re-roll failed To Hit and To Wound rolls for models with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule that are part of a force using this Rite of War against enemy models which are Falling Back.

Limitations

Troops choices for a Detachment using this Rite of War must be made up of units that are at their maximum possible size.

Detachments using this Rite of War may not take more vehicles with the Tank or Flyer type than they have Infantry units in the Detachment.

THOUSAND SONS UNIQUE RITE OF WAR: THE GUARD OF THE CRIMSON KING

In the days before Nikaea, when the Thousand Sons took to the field and encountered a foe so mighty that their own master, the terrifyingly powerful Magnus the Red, deemed it required that he take to the battlefield to best it, he often did so at the head of a configuration of his Sekhmet, supported by the most deadly elements of his arcane Legion and an unimaginable concentration of psychic force. Before the Guard of the Crimson King, foul xenos warlords that had slain whole worlds and mysterious entities hellish beyond description fell broken and shattered, and even the might of ancient terrors such as the Eldar and the M'Varta could not stand.

Effects

- **Astral Warfare:** When generating Warp Charge at the start of any Psychic phase, the controlling player of a Detachment using this Rite of War may roll an additional D6 and select the highest of the two results.
- **Wreathed in Lightning, they Rend the Veil:** Any Terminator armour-equipped units in the Detachment, along with any Independent Characters and the Primarch Magnus the Red, may deploy using Deep Strike via Teleport (so long as they do not have Dedicated Transports). When these units arrive via Deep Strike, they gain the Fear special rule if they did not already possess it and may re-roll failed invulnerable saves of a 1 until their controlling player's next turn.
- **The Initiates of the Scarab:** Sekhmet Cabals must be selected as compulsory Troops choices for a Detachment using this Rite of War and may be taken as optional Troops choices for the Detachment if desired.
- **The Bidding of the Crimson King:** The Primarch Magnus the Red may be selected as a Compulsory HQ choice for a Detachment using this Rite of War, and does not count as a Lord of War if he is used in this way.

Limitations

- Detachments using this Rite of War must choose as their Warlord either Magnus the Red, Ahzek Ahriman or a Thousand Sons Praetor with a psychic Mastery Level of 3.
- Detachments using this Rite of War may not have more units with the Vehicle type (of any kind) than they have units with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule.
- Detachments using this Rite of War may not take Allied Detachments or Fortifications of any kind.

CASTELLAX-ACHEA BATTLE-AUTOMATA MANIPLE

135 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Castellax-Achea	3	4	6	7	4	4	2	7	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 Castellax-Achea

Unit Type

- Monstrous Creature

Wargear

- Mauler pattern bolt cannon with Asphyx shells
- Two power claws, each with an inbuilt bolter with Asphyx shells
- Refractor field

Special Rules

- Psi-control Matrix
- Reactor Blast
- Rage
- It Will Not Die
- Fearless

Options

- The Castellax-Achea Maniple may include:
 - Up to four additional Castellax-Achea +135 points each
- Any Castellax-Achea may exchange its mauler pattern bolt cannon with Asphyx shells for an:
 - Æther-flame cannon +15 points

Psi-control Matrix

Rather than the cybernetica cortex utilised on the most advanced Mechanicum Battle-automata, or even the clumsier cognis-wafer blocks used by more primitive robots, the Castellax-Achea utilises a crystalline cogitator matrix charged with an intricate web of psychic energies woven from the stuff of the Immaterium. Pure tech-blasphemy according to the doctrines of the Omnissiah and the laws of the Imperium both, these esoteric devices give the Castellax-Achea the ability to be seamlessly manipulated like puppets under a psyker's remote control, and a limited self-will, allowing it to recognise friend from foe with reasonable accuracy when not under direction. But even with all the safeguards and geaswards the Thousand Sons provided them with, the spirits within were not entirely faithful.

- **Psychometric Control:** While at least one unit with a psychic Mastery Level of at least 1 and the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule is within 24" of a Castellax-Achea Battle-automata Maniple at the start of the controlling player's turn, it may be used and directed normally as part of the controlling player's army. If this is not the case then the Castellax-Achea Battle-automata Maniple unit may not make Charge, Run or Sweeping Advance moves. Note they may still make shooting attacks normally and fight in combat normally if already engaged or if they themselves are charged.
- **Volley of Fire:** The Castellax-Achea may fire three weapons in the Shooting phase.
- **Psi-locus:** When using the Witchfire and Malediction type psychic powers within 12" of a Castellax-Achea, Psykers with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule may use one of the models in the Castellax-Achea unit as the origin point of the power, drawing line of sight and range from it rather than themselves.
- **Malign Unbinding:** If a Psyker of any kind (friend or foe) suffers Perils of the Warp within 12" of any Castellax-Achea unit, roll a separate Leadership test for any Castellax-Achea units in range. If any roll is failed, the unit in question suffers D6 wounds with no armour saves or invulnerable save possible. Any Castellax-Achea that are destroyed as a result of this immediately explode with their maximum Blast radius (see Reactor Blast).

Reactor Blast

When a Battle-automata with this special rule loses its last Wound, roll a D6. On the result of a 6 it explodes, inflicting a Str 4 AP- hit on all models within D6".

HEAVY SUPPORT

Never ones to squander their Legion's ranks in bloody attrition or vainglorious frontal assaults, the Thousand Sons Legion, and indeed their Primarch, had long acknowledged the usefulness of the unliving might of Battle-automata as obedient, resilient and ultimately expendable shock assault units. As with every other facet of warfare, the use of such Battle-automata was something the Thousand Sons believed they could improve upon with the application of their psychic arts as a method of control and perhaps direct augmentation, freeing them potentially from the need for the techno-arcane lore of the Mechanicum to be directly called up in these machines' construction and fielding.

That such research had long been considered a 'heretek anathema' to the Mechanicum was a factor ignored, as was so much else in the Thousand Sons' hubris, and with the secret assistance of near-renegade elements from the isolated Forge World of Zhao-Arkhad, their early experiments had yielded fruit in the form of a custom-designed Castellax variant of their own specifications in the last years before their censure, a fact that came as a deadly shock to their attackers as Prospero fell.



ELITES

The Sekhmet, also known widely as the Scarab Occult outside their Legion, were the elite of the First Fellowship of the Thousand Sons, and when called upon to do so, served as Magnus' personal bodyguard. Clad in Terminator armour, each of them was a high initiate of the Prosperine Mysteries who had sublimated their abilities and emotions into the highest levels of spiritual control, and were able to shun injuries by mere strength of unified will that even to a Space Marine would have proved mortal.

Marked by the jade scarab bonded to their armour, they stood apart from others of the Legion, a brotherhood within a brotherhood. Able to hold their minds at the highest levels of the Enumerations, the Scarab Occult fought with such unified precision and control that they seemed to some less warriors of flesh and blood, but more automata sculpted in the form of men.

SEKHMET TERMINATOR CABAL

255 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Sekhmet Terminator	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	8	2+
Sekhmet Inceptor	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 4 Sekhmet Terminators
- 1 Sekhmet Inceptor

Unit Type

- Sekhmet Terminators: Infantry
- Sekhmet Inceptor: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Cataphractii or Tartaros pattern Terminator armour (the whole squad must be identically equipped)
- Force weapon (axe, maul or sword)
- Combi-bolter with Asphyx shells

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons)
- Brotherhood of Psykers (Level 2)*
- Stubborn

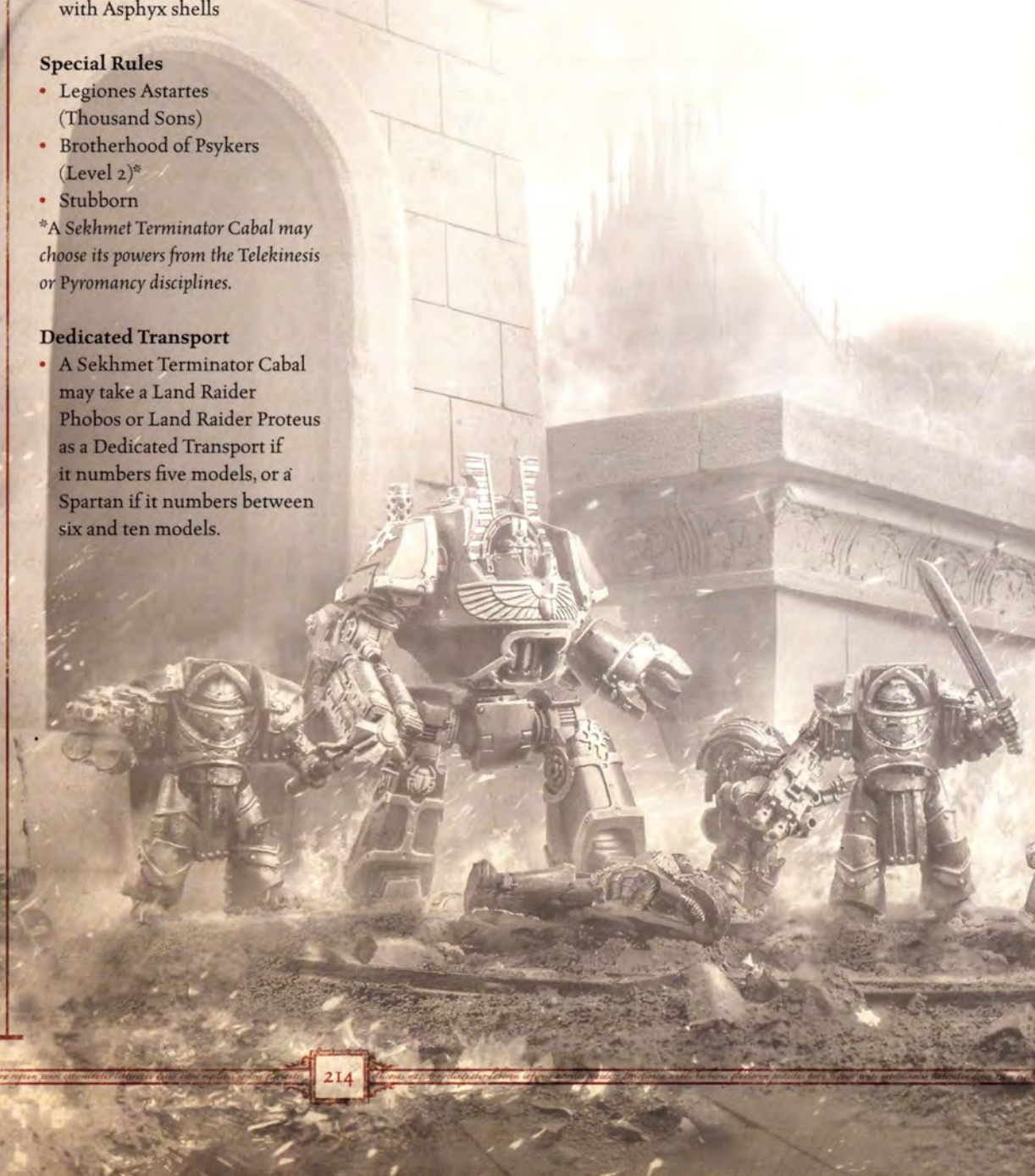
*A Sekhmet Terminator Cabal may choose its powers from the Telekinesis or Pyromancy disciplines.

Dedicated Transport

- A Sekhmet Terminator Cabal may take a Land Raider Phobos or Land Raider Proteus as a Dedicated Transport if it numbers five models, or a Spartan if it numbers between six and ten models.

Options

- The Sekhmet Terminator Cabal may include:
 - Up to five additional Sekhmet Terminators+35 points each
- Any model in the squad may exchange their force weapon for a power fist with one of the following:
 - Lightning claw Free
 - Power fist+5 points
 - Chainfist+10 points
- All of the models that are in the squad may exchange their combi-bolter for a:
 - Combi-weapon (the Asphyx shells are retained)+5 points



KHENETAI OCCULT BLADE CABAL

185 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Khenetai Blade	5	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+
Khenetai Blademaster	5	4	4	4	1	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Khenetai Blades
- 1 Khenetai Blademaster

Unit Type

- Khenetai Blades: Infantry
- Khenetai Blademaster: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Bolt pistol
- Two force swords
- Frag & krak grenades
- Power armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons)
- Brotherhood of Psykers (Mastery Level 1)*
- Mindsong of Blades

*The Cabal must generate its psychic power from any one of the Thousand Sons' disciplines (see page 209).

Dedicated Transport

- A Khenetai Occult Blade Cabal may take a Rhino, Land Raider Phobos or Land Raider Proteus as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Khenetai Occult Blade Cabal may include:
 - Up to five additional Khenetai Blades.....+25 points each
- For every five models in the squad, a single Khenetai Blade may exchange their bolt pistol for one of the following weapons:
 - Plasma pistol.....+15 points each
 - Hand flamer+10 points each
- The Khenetai Blademaster may also take any of the following:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points
 - Artificer armour+10 points

Mindsong of Blades

Depending on the number of models in the squad, each model gains a bonus to their characteristics:

- If the squad numbers 3 or less Khenetai Blades/Blademaster: +1 Attack each
- If the squad numbers between 4-8 Khenetai Blades/Blademaster: +1 Attack, +1 WS each
- If the squad numbers 9-10 Khenetai Blades/Blademaster: +2 Attacks, +1 WS each



ELITES

The Khenetai Occult were a mystical sect within the Thousand Sons Order of the Jackal who served as the guardians of the five Prosperine Cults as well as their reliquaries and sanctums. Bound together by oath and ritually-forged psychic bonds, each of the elite were all initiates of the Cults' inner secrets and adepts in their techniques, philosophies and arts.

The foremost warriors of the Khenetai formed cabals of 'blades'; sublimely skilled warriors who had honed their psychic powers to be at one with their sword mastery. Their dual force swords were shaped from single sheets of psycho-crystalline infused ceramite and gilt, with sigils said to correspond to the wielder's secret names and the deeds they had performed. In battle they wore armour forged and shaped by the Legion's blind artificers using fire and the force of their minds alone, and fought with a unified precision that made them seem a single warrior manifested many times, rather than a group of individual fighters.



negotia subre religiosorum laborum inferos aditus praedare dominum nudi barbari gladium pedibus terra regem pueri exterminati libenter deos extra negotia aditus gloriata secretis non belluina negotio religiosorum laborum inferos aditus praedare dominum nudi barbari gladium

AMMITARA OCCULT INTERCESSION CABAL

135 points

FAST ATTACK

The very existence of the sect known as the Ammitara Occult was in some cases doubted, such as the group's secrecy and shadowed reputation beyond the confines of its Legion. While even within the ranks of the Thousand Sons, it was spoken of obliquely, if acknowledged at all, as evidence collected from the wreckage of Prospero was later to attest.

What the Ammitara was in fact was the striking fangs of the Order of the Blind, perhaps the most hidden and obscure division of the Thousand Sons, dedicated to misdirection, reconnaissance and some claimed even espionage beyond the Legion, with the Intercession Cabals of the Ammitara specialising in another dark art of war – that of assassination.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Ammitara Intercessor	4	5	4	4	1	4	1	8	4+
Ammitara Fate	4	5	4	4	1	4	2	9	4+

Unit Composition

- 4 Ammitara Intercessor
- 1 Ammitara Fate

Unit Type

- Ammitara Intercessor: Infantry
- Ammitara Fate: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Bolt pistol
- Sniper rifle
- Combat blade
- Frag & Krak grenades
- Shroud bombs
- Scout armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons)
- Stealth
- Move Through Cover
- Infiltrate
- Scout
- Brotherhood of Psykers (Level 1)*

* Rather than generating a psychic discipline normally, the Cabal has access to a single unique power: Mind Killer

Dedicated Transport

- An Ammitara Occult Intercession Cabal may take a Storm Eagle as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Ammitara Occult Intercession Cabal may include:
 - Up to five additional Ammitara Intercessors.....+20 points each
- For every five models in the squad, a single Ammitara Intercessor may exchange their sniper rifle for one of the following options:
 - Meltagun.....+5 points each
 - Plasma gun.....+10 points each
- The Ammitara Fate may also take any of the following options:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points
 - Nuncio-vox.....+10 points

Mind Killer

The psychic talents of the Ammitara are more subtle and honed than that of the greater adepts of the Thousand Sons, and encompass a number of forces touching on the purview of different Cults, but with a single goal in mind; the precise and efficient dealing of death. So it is that one Ammitara might use delicate precognition to predict where a target will be when they fire with preternatural accuracy, while another might psychokinetically accelerate a shell towards its target with shattering force, or more nightmarishly, cause a foe's blood to evacuate their wounds with horrifying speed. These myriad esoteric agencies of death are manifested in the game as a single unique psychic power: Mind Killer.

MIND KILLER

This is a **blessing** which targets the Psyker unit. While the power is in effect, the unit may re-roll all its failed To Hit and To Wound rolls, and all of its shooting attacks gain the Ignores Cover special rule.

WARP CHARGE : 2

legiones hanc gladium pedibus terra regem pueri exterminati libenter deos extra negotia aditus gloriata secretis non belluina negotio religiosorum laborum inferos aditus praedare dominum nudi barbari gladium

AHZEK AHRIMAN

CHIEF LIBRARIAN OF THE THOUSAND SONS, ARCH-MAGISTER OF THE CORVIDAE, THE ENDURING SON

225 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Ahzek Ahriman	5	5	4	4	3	5	3	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Master-crafted bolt pistol with Asphyx shells
- Master-crafted force axe
- Iron halo
- Arcane Litanies
- Frag & krak grenades
- Artificer armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons – Cult Arcana: Corvidae)
- Psyker (Mastery Level 4) – Ahriman generates his powers from the Divination discipline
- Adamantium Will
- Precision Strikes
- Independent Character
- Marked By Dark Fates
- Ahriman's Cabal
- Master of the Legion
- Warlord (if Ahzek Ahriman is the army's Warlord, he has the Pattern of Fates trait rather than rolling randomly)

Marked by Dark Fates

The fates hold an eternity of war for Ahriman. In campaign games where character casualties and injury between battles is a factor, any such chart result may be re-rolled.

Ahriman's Cabal

Any Legion Command Squad taken for Ahriman must be upgraded to have the Brotherhood of Psykers special rule (Mastery Level 2) for +50 points. They always have the Cult Arcana: Corvidae and generate their psychic powers from the Divination discipline.

Warlord: Pattern of Fates

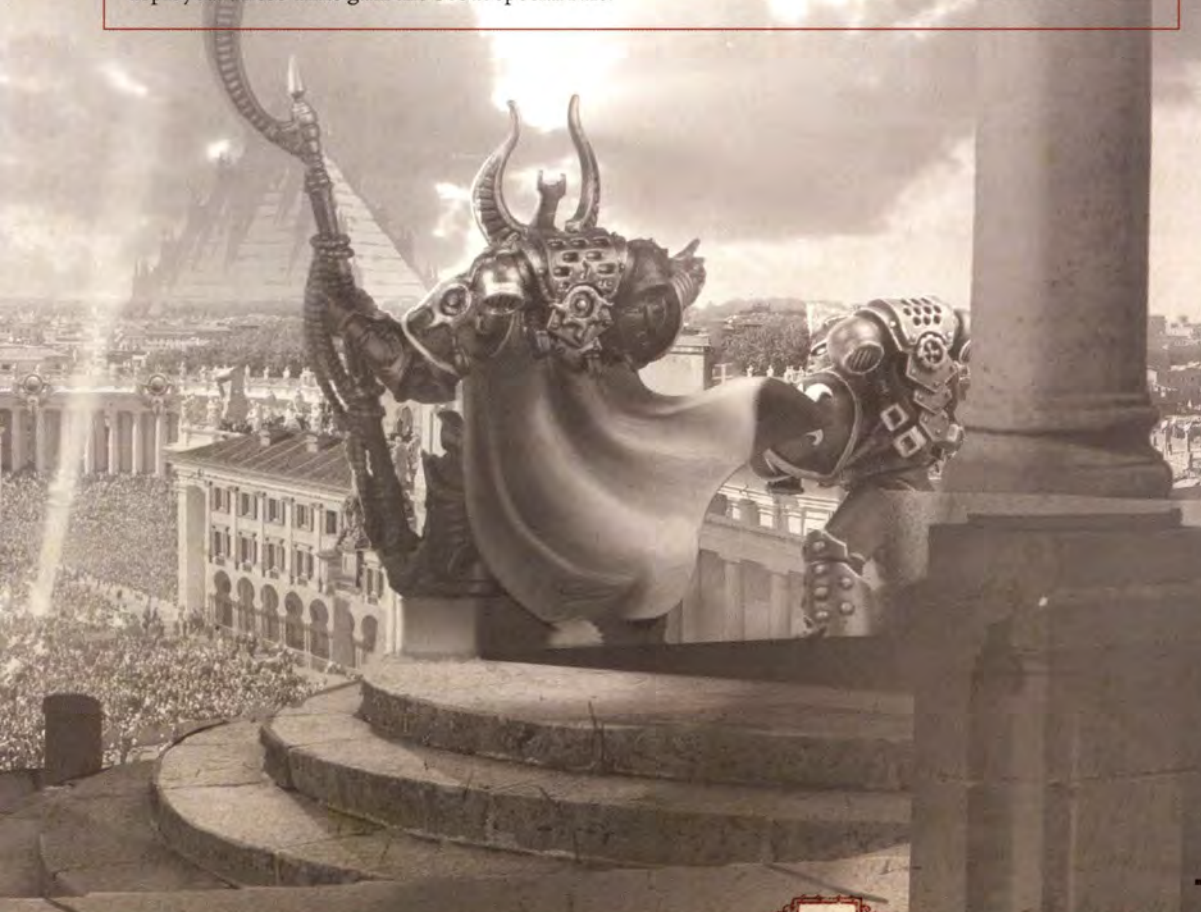
If Ahriman is your army's Warlord then he always uses this unique Warlord Trait. Pick up to three Troops units in your army with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule before your army is deployed. These units gain the Scout special rule.



HQ

Ahriman was the first and last Chief Librarian of the Thousand Sons, and the most gifted of its formidable psykers. Born on Terra in the land of the ancient Aechmenid Empire, he and his twin brother were amongst the first recruits raised into the ranks of the XVth Legion. Possessed of profound psychic strength and a deep intelligence, he rose to prominence during his Legion's darkest days, and after the reunification of his Legion with their Primarch, he became Magnus the Red's foremost pupil and his chief lieutenant.

The master of the soothsayers and warrior mystics of the Corvidae Cult, he was also a capable fighter and astute field commander, seasoned by over almost two centuries of warfare. In battle Ahriman was often the linchpin of his Legion, foreseeing the actions of enemies and formulating intricate strategies to create a path to victory even as tumult and chaos reigned around him. But of all his strengths, Ahriman's greatest was his indefatigable will, a will not only to survive but to overcome no matter the cost. It was a trait that would see him walk strange and terrible paths long after Prospero had burned.





HQ

A figure whose reputation was known well beyond his Legion during the time of the Great Crusade, for he often served both as his Primarch's equerry and as emissary to both other Space Marine Legions and the Imperium's circles of power, he remained a solitary and mysterious figure, even to his brothers. It was said of Amon that he had served as Magnus' tutor once, before the coming of the Emperor to Prospero, though the student soon far outstripped the master.

If true then it is likely that he survived the conversion process to Legiones Astartes as an adult, perhaps aided by the Crimson King's direct intervention, and emerged both as a potent warrior and powerful psyker. Most of his career beyond his public duties remained in shadow and it is believed that he was in fact master of his Legion's intelligence gathering organisation, known as the 'Hidden Ones' and also ranked high within the chambers of the Legion's Order of Blindness. Amon's fate was to see him survive the Battle of Prospero an embittered and wounded figure, who became increasingly isolated from his one-time peers and master.

MAGISTUS AMON

THE HIDDEN ONE, CAPTAIN OF THE NINTH FELLOWSHIP, TUTOR OF MAGNUS, KEEPER OF THE KEYS

170 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Magistus Amon	6	5	4	4	3	5	3	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- The Armour of Shades
- Master-crafted force sword
- Archaeotech pistol
- The Dust of the Devourers
- Arcane Litanies
- Frag & Krak grenades

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons – Cult Arcana: Corvidae & Athanean)
- Psyker (Mastery Level 3) – Amon generates his powers from the Divination or Telepathy disciplines.
- Independent Character
- Hidden Servants & Secret Scryings
- Master of the Legion
- Infiltrate
- Warlord Trait (if Magistus Amon is the army's Warlord, he has the Lord of Hidden Paths trait rather than rolling randomly)



The Armour of Shades

Woven into the fabric of this suit of artificer power armour are layer upon layer of psychically charged glyphs and wave forms designed to augment Amon's own abilities to pass unseen, or even to appear as another when he wishes.

The Armour of Shades provides a 2+ armour save and in addition grants the bearer a 4+ cover save if Amon is in the open or adds +2 to any other cover save he may be eligible to claim (to a maximum of 2+). If Amon joins another unit, they gain a 6+ cover save if in the open or gain an additional +1 bonus to any cover they are eligible to claim (to a maximum of 2+).

The Dust of the Devourers

Kept within the concealed chambers of a reliquary staff, Amon carries the dust-like remains of slain Psychneuein mind-parasites. These warp-born predators afflicted thankfully few worlds, but of these Prospero was one. The hungering psychic essence of these creatures was bound like a murderous echo to their dust, and it was in Amon's power to invoke it with lethal results.

Once per game in the Assault phase, instead of attacking normally, Amon's controlling player can opt instead to unleash the power of the Dust of the Devourers. This attack is struck at Amon's normal Initiative and inflicts D6 automatic hits on the unit Amon is fighting if it comprises five models or less, and 2D6 automatic hits if the unit comprises six models or more. These hits have no Strength, but have the Poisoned (4+) and Concussive special rules and an AP of 4.

Hidden Servants & Secret Scryings

Amon was the master of his Legion's external intelligence network, many of whom, thanks to the Thousand Sons' ability to twist the minds and manipulate the memories of others through their psychic powers, didn't even know whom they truly served. Such hidden servants and the scryings and divinations of Amon and his adjutants could be exploited to force an enemy's plans to become known and manoeuvres to be anticipated.

If an army has Magistus Amon as part of its Primary Detachment, then its controlling player may re-roll attempts to Seize the Initiative in missions where this is relevant. In addition, enemy units arriving via Outflank may not enter play within 24" of Magistus Amon other than from their own table edge, or within 12" of him via Deep Strike.

Warlord Trait: Lord of Hidden Paths

Via occultly augmented arts of stealth and foresight, as well as far more strange methods of psychic translocation, were Magistus Amon and those he commanded able to pass across the battlefield almost at will.

Rather than generate a Warlord Trait normally, Magistus Amon uses this unique Warlord Trait:

If Magistus Amon is your army's Warlord, you may select a single non Super-heavy or non-Flyer unit in your army. This unit must now enter play from Reserve using the Outflank special rule on a turn you specify. This specified turn can be any after the first and you must make a note of it secretly after the armies have been set up but before the game begins. When the specified turn begins, this note is revealed and the unit enters play (no Reserve roll is needed).





LORDS OF WAR

'There is no sin but ignorance.'

Attributed to Magnus the Red

MAGNUS THE RED

PRIMARCH OF THE THOUSAND SONS, THE SORCERER OF PROSPERO, THE CRIMSON KING,
THE LOGOS MAXIMA, THE CYCLOPEAN GIANT

495 POINTS

Magnus the Red was unique among the Primarchs. While all of the Emperor's sons were transcendent beings, forged not just of physical matter but of psychic force, in some this quality was channelled into superhuman physicality, but others held the power to manipulate the Warp either directly or subconsciously as prophetic foresight, preternatural stealth or an aura of majesty beyond the mortal. But above all his brothers, Magnus the Red was the most numinous, a psyker of prodigious power. It is said that alone amongst his Primarchs, Magnus met the Emperor in the Realm Beyond long before they met in the flesh.

Magnus' very essence boiled with psychic potential, to the extent that his physical form seems likely to be more a matter of will, or a reflection of a deep spiritual imprint than a mere physical constraint, and those who fell under his cyclopean gaze would feel their thoughts and substance to be no more opaque than glass, and their innermost secrets laid open beneath the Crimson King's stare. In battle, Magnus the Red fought like a mythical god; fire wreathed him and followed in his wake like a burning cloak, and solid matter was unmade with a gesture. Armies of mere mortals, powerless before him, would fall to their knees, weeping as their nightmares danced before their eyes. It was said that the paths of the future were laid bare before him and no artifice or subtlety of warcraft could deceive the Primarch of the Thousand Sons. Such power though came at the price of suspicion and fear, even by those who called him brother.

But destruction and war was only a means to an end for Magnus. Possessed of a supreme intelligence and a hunger for knowledge, he saw himself and his Legion as creators of the future. Others might think of themselves as working for the betterment of Mankind, even of being bearers of the Imperium's ideals, however Magnus saw another path. To him the Great Crusade, and each step on its bloody path, was a step from the darkness of ignorance into the light of reason and knowledge. Beyond this he also saw a second ascension, that from the mundane confines of the human mind to the transcendent potential of a psychic race. It was this obsession and belief which drove him to achieve all that he did, and also that which would chain him and his Legion to a future of damnation.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Magnus the Red	7	5	7	6	6	6	4	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- The Horned Raiment
- The Blade of Ahn-Nunurta
- Arcane Litanies
- Psyfire Serpenta

Special Rules

- Primarch (Independent Character, Eternal Warrior, Fear, Adamantium Will, Fleet, Fearless, It Will Not Die, Master of the Legion, Precision Shots, Precision Strikes)
- Sire of the Thousand Sons
- Arch-Sorcerer
- The Eye of the Crimson King
- Phantasmal Aura
- Mind Wrath
- Very Bulky

Sire of the Thousand Sons

Any unit that Magnus the Red joins has the Fearless special rule. All models with the Legiones Astartes (Thousand Sons) special rule in the same army as Magnus the Red may use his Leadership value rather than their own for the purposes of Morale checks and Pinning tests, as well as any Leadership tests taken as a result of psychic powers while he is in play. All Reserve rolls made for units in an army with Magnus the Red as its Warlord may be re-rolled if his controlling player wishes.

Sekhmet Squads and Legion Terminator Squads may be taken as Troops choices for a Thousand Sons Primary Detachment with Magnus the Red as its Warlord, and no restriction owing to Cult Arcana applies to the compulsory units of the army (see page 209).

Arch-Sorcerer

Magnus the Red is a Psyker with a psychic Mastery Level of 5 and he harnesses Warp Charge points on a result of 3+ when attempting to manifest psychic powers. For Magnus the Red to suffer Perils of the Warp, his controlling player must roll three or more 6s when attempting to manifest psychic powers (rather than the usual two), and any result of a '1' on the Perils of the Warp table is re-rolled.

Magnus the Red randomly generates five powers from a combination chosen from the following psychic disciplines: Telekinesis, Pyromancy, Divination, Telepathy, Sanctic Daemonology and Biomancy. You may, for example, generate two powers from Biomancy, two from Telepathy and one from Divination.

The Horned Raiment

Magnus' armour was believed to be as much a thing of tangible psychic force and Empyrean energy as it was a physical construction, shifting form and appearance as he willed, and the means by which it protected him was proof against the most savage weapons despite its often primitive appearance.

The Horned Raiment provides Magnus the Red with a 2+ armour save and a 4+ invulnerable save. In addition, if he is struck by a weapon with the Destroyer special rule, the amount of wounds it inflicts is reduced by 1.

The Blade of Ahn-Nunurta

Taking the distinctive shape of the weapon of the Prosperine war god of ancient myth, this force blade combined ancient lore with Imperial weapons technology and was lethal to living creature and battle engine alike.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Ahn-Nunurta	—	+2	1	Melee, Force, Two-handed

Psyfire Serpenta

A hand gun of prodigious size seemingly conjured to his grasp at need, there was always some debate even among Magnus' Legion whether this powerful plasma-type weapon was truly a device or simply a manifestation of his psychic powers in physical form.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Psyfire serpenta	15"	8	2	Assault D3, Soul Blaze

The Eye of the Crimson King

When selecting targets for his psychic powers, all models within range are assumed to be in line of sight (except those inside transport vehicles or buildings). All such attacks have the Ignores Cover special rule.

Phantasmal Aura

Magnus the Red was a creature of vast powers whose very form and stature seemed to shift as he willed it. Coupled with his facility for precognition, in battle these abilities allowed him to seem out of step with reality when he wished it, often causing the attacks of his foes to pass by ineffectually.

Enemy attacks directed at Magnus the Red or any Infantry unit he has joined suffer a -1 penalty To Hit. Barrage weapons directed at Magnus the Red or any Infantry unit he has joined add +1 to the rolled Scatter distance where applicable.

Mind Wrath

Magnus the Red's control over psychic force was terrifying, seamlessly channelling powers that might cost the mind and sanity of others to manifest, forces none but the Emperor Himself could outmatch.

When manifesting a **Witchfire** power, Magnus the Red's controlling player can declare the use of Mind Wrath. This must be done before any dice are rolled to manifest the power in question. The required Warp Charge to manifest the power is increased by +2. However, if the power is successfully manifested, add 2D6 to any listed Strength value and double the listed range (if this would result in a Strength value of 11 or higher, the attack has the Destroyer special rule).



'We are the wolf that stalks the
cold skies,
And swallows the star-fire,
We are they hidden in the
darkness when the light has
gone,
Our light is within us,
We run the Ruin of Fire in the
Darkness,
Foes burn in our passing.'

From the battle chants
of the Space Wolves Legion

Translated from the Fenrisian
dialect by Captain Aaraths Lux
of the Raven Guard Legion

AGE OF DARKNESS ARMY LIST APPENDIX VI: SPACE WOLVES

LEGIONES ASTARTES (SPACE WOLVES)

The Space Marines of the Emperor's Legions are genetically engineered, psycho-indoctrinated warriors with superhuman abilities and minds and souls tempered for war. In addition, each individual Legion has its own idiosyncrasies and character—the product of their gene-seed and unique warrior culture.

Renowned both for their savagery and their obedience to the will of the Emperor, the Space Wolves Legion long stood apart from the other Legiones Astartes. Distant and aloof, they were separated not only by bellicose demeanour, but by an almost impenetrable web of self-generated myth and allegory which guarded well the Legion's secrets, not only of who they were but what they had done in the service of the Master of Mankind. The unique gene-seed of the Space Wolves, altered as it is by the inclusion of what is known as the Canis Helix, had both its advantages and disadvantages, making them at once more animalistic than their fellow Legiones Astartes—a factor which makes them uncommonly talented hunters and ferocious killers, but also more readily prey to the power of their own instincts and drives—and to their detractors, it made them more beasts than men.

Legiones Astartes: Units with this special rule may always attempt to Regroup regardless of casualties.

Bestial Savagery: Models with this special rule gain a +1 WS bonus on any turn in which they have successfully charged. Additionally, they gain the Counter-attack special rule, and if any unit with this special rule has won combat on any turn in which they have charged or counter-charged, they must make a Sweeping Advance if they are able to.

Hunter's Gait: Infantry models with this special rule add +1" to their Run and Consolidation distances so long as they are not equipped with jump packs or Terminator armour of any kind.

Preternatural Senses: Models with this special rule may ignore the effects of Night Fighting. Re-roll the dice to determine which table edge they arrive from when outflanking, and infiltrating models may not be set up within 18" of them regardless of line of sight.

THE WOLVES OF FENRIS

By the late Great Crusade era, the Space Wolves Legion had strongly deviated from the *Principia Belicosa's* definition of the Legiones Astartes structure and organisation. The Legion's host was now broken down into a shifting array of warrior bands beholden strongly to the personal authority of a particular company commander and below them to a series of tributary sub-commanders, known variously as 'Wolf Lord' (Jarl) or 'Claw Leader' (Thegn), regardless of their notional or accorded rank within the Imperium's order of battle. These warband-like forces—while each was part of one of the overarching Great Companies which comprised the Legion—were largely autonomous, heavily infantry-focused and often lacked certain specialised units and formations found in other Space Marine Legions. Particularly, this bias left the later Space Wolves Legion lacking in units dedicated to areas of warfare such as siege-craft or sustained bombardment, which did not sit well with the Legion's military philosophy or the psyche of its warriors. Elsewhere in the Space Wolves' wider ranks, the remnants of such specialised forces remained as reserve elements under the direction of the Primarch's household and the direct command of the Iron Priests—the masters of the Legion's armoury—but such formations were now the exception rather than the rule in the Space Wolves' order of battle.

Space Wolves Army Selection

When selecting an army which uses the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule based on the Legiones Astartes Age of Darkness army list, the following alterations and provisions apply:

- Detachments with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule must fulfil their compulsory HQ choice with either a Praetor or Centurion (representing a Wolf Lord or Claw Leader). Other HQ choices or Consul types may not be selected as compulsory HQ choices.
- Any Detachment with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule must include at least 1 HQ unit per 1,000 points or part thereof in the army regardless of the Force Allocation chart being used. So, for example, in an army of less than 1,000 points, a single HQ choice must be included. In Detachments of 1,001-1,999 points, at least two HQ choices must be included, and so on.
- The Chaplain, Librarian and Primus Medicae types are not available to the army (being replaced with the Priest of Fenris – see page 234).
- Only Grey Slayer units (see page 230) may be taken as compulsory Troops choices by any Space Wolves Detachment. All other Troops choices found in the Legiones Astartes Age of Darkness army list gain the Support Squad special rule if they are in a Space Wolves army (if they do not already possess it) and if taken as part of any Allied Detachment using the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule.



'Beat your thoughts to the
mould of your will.'

Attributed to Leman Russ





'Every great army has its divisions, for that is its nature, and since the times of flint axe and spear it has been so. Though the weapons may change and the scope of the battle flow from petty tribal squabbles over cattle or a strip of land, to the disport of planets and star sectors, this is a fundamental truth that remains constant.

Thus each truly great army has its body of arms, its core of fighters on whose blood victory is ultimately bought, its veteran elite not squandered without need, its fast and skilful pathfinders, its skirmishers of steady mien, its reavers to run down a broken foe, and many more besides.

So too does the Legiones Astartes hold fast to this truth, both within each Legion and so also as the Legions may be taken as a whole. In this does the Emperor's host have its lockstep soldiers, its men of iron and its men of stone, its breakers and pursuers, its rainers down of fire and its builders of strong walls. Its ravens, its serpents and its wolves.'

The Primarch Perturabo
Meditations

SAGAS OF BLOOD AND NIGHT

The histories of battle and the mettle of the war leaders of the Space Wolves Legion offered savage lessons and dark wisdom to those who fought within their ranks, and long before the Horus Heresy had come to pass, the way the VIth Legion fought and died in the service of the Emperor and the Wolf King had become a law unto itself.

When selecting a Warlord trait for a unit with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule, rather than selecting from those found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook or the Legiones Astartes army list, you must instead determine one from the list below by rolling a D6 (Praetors, representing Wolf Lords, in the army may roll twice and the preferred result is selected):

SPACE WOLVES WARLORD TRAITS

D6 Result

1 The Get of Wyrn

In decades past, the Space Wolves have been called upon to exterminate many strange and terrible threats to the Great Crusade and to Mankind, and have at times been given strange weapons to accomplish this. Relics of such campaigns linger, much to the detriment of later foes the Legion has met.

Before the start of the game, select and note down D3 Infantry units of 5 or more models with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule. These units count as being equipped with defensive grenades and have the Fear special rule.

2 The Howl of the Death Wolf

There are those who call the Space Wolves less human than their fellow Legiones Astartes, and that they carry the mark of the beast is a common whisper, even among their allies. There are few who have heard the terrifying battle cries of the Wolves of Fenris unleashed and witnessed what follows that would gainsay this.

Once per game, the Warlord may declare the use of this special rule at the start of their player turn. For the duration of that player turn only, all Run and Charge distances made for models in the army with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule may be re-rolled.

3 The Hunger of the Void

Among the Jarls of the Space Wolves, there are those whose blood lust has become a thing of dark legend, even among their own Legion, and it is said of them, like the hunger of the monsters which haunt the deep seas of Fenris, no amount of blood and death will satiate it.

The Warlord gains the Rage special rule.

4 The Waster of the Land

The Space Wolves have passed like a dark and murderous shadow over many worlds, an all-devouring beast that will spare none to live when it is unleashed, and from which there is no hiding place.

The Warlord and any Infantry unit that they joined which has the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule has the Move Through Cover special rule, and in addition, when making shooting attacks against targets within 12", they have the Ignores Cover special rule.

5 The Crown Breaker

For many Space Wolves, the highest test of valour and battle-spice is the slaying of the foe's champions, be they hero or devil, and the desire to destroy such opponents and hurl their broken bodies before the ranks of the enemy is as addictive to some as any drug, and they will endure any hurt to accomplish it.

The Warlord has the Preferred Enemy (Independent Character) special rule and Feel No pain (5+) when fighting in a Challenge.

6 The Shield of the Wolf King

Among the Wolf King's warlords, some have learned to temper their battle-lust with cold resolution and shackle the beast within with iron chains of will. Such warriors are held in high esteem by their master, for in battle they are the stone against which the enemy's blade is broken.

The Warlord and any unit they join with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule have the Stubborn special rule.

LEGION SPECIFIC RIGHTS OF WAR

SPACE WOLVES UNIQUE RITE OF WAR: THE PALE HUNTERS

The Space Wolves Legion's reputation as hunters among the Legiones Astartes is matched only by the White Scars, although the tactics of pursuit and the killing blow differ between the two both in conception and execution. The Space Wolves value speed and the surety of the strike as do the White Scars, but favour more the bloody, relentless wearing down of a foe, much as their namesake of Terran lore. No quarter or honour is offered to the prey, and theirs is a fate of remorseless cruelty after which death seems as a blessing to many.

Effects

- **The Circling Wolves:** The controlling player gets +1 to their Reserve rolls for units in this Detachment (note that a roll of a '1' still fails to bring the unit on however).
- **Bleed & Harry:** All Infantry units, other than those in Terminator armour, within the Detachment with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule gain the Hit & Run special rule, except that they roll 2D6 instead of 3D6 for the distance moved.
- **The Fury of the Pack:** If a Space Wolves unit in a Detachment using this Rite of War successfully charges into assault against an enemy unit which is already locked in combat, the assaulting unit gains +1 additional charging attack per model.

Limitations

- Detachments using this Rite of War may not take Artillery or Fortification type units or Drop Pods of any kind.
- Detachments using this Rite of War may only take a single Heavy Support choice as part of their Force Organisation chart.

SPACE WOLVES UNIQUE RITE OF WAR: THE BLOODIED CLAWS

The Space Wolves have never shied from the gore-drenched demands of the all-out frontal assault, but in this, as with other facets of their way of war, their unique character and controlled savagery shapes much of what they do when faced with such a dire prospect. To them such battles rest upon a single, terrible moment: the breaking of the line, where one side shatters the other's strength in a single act of unstoppable violence, and all that comes afterwards is little more than the living body's death after its heart is ripped from it by a bloodied claw.

Effects

Oath of the Bloodied Claw: All Grey Slayer and Assault Squads in this Detachment gain the Furious Assault special rule, but must always charge an enemy unit in the Assault phase if they are able. If multiple targets are available, the controlling player may choose freely which one is attacked.

Overwhelming Assault: All units in the army add a bonus of +1 to their Combat Resolution result when in the enemy's deployment zone.

Howl of the Death Wolf: The Detachment gains the Howl of the Death Wolf special rule (see page 224). This means that if the army's Warlord also has this special rule because of their Warlord Trait, it may be used twice per battle.

Limitations

- Detachments using this Rite of War may not take any Immobile, Artillery or Slow and Purposeful units.
- Detachments using this Rite of War may not take allied Space Marine Legion Detachments.



'Therefore with the same necessity with which the stone falls to earth, the hungry wolf buries its fangs in the flesh of its prey, and does so without the possibility of the knowledge that it is itself the destroyed as well as the destroyer.'

The Arch-philosopher
Skopanharr
Mo2



'Hell is empty and all the devils
are here.'

The Magnum Opus
of the Great Dramaturge
Mo2

LEGION SPECIFIC UNITS & WARGEAR

In addition to those found in the Legiones Astartes Age of Darkness army list, the Space Wolves Legion has particular access to the following additional unit types:

- Priests of Fenris (HQ choice: Replaces certain Consul types in the army list)
- Grey Slayers (Troops choice)
- The Deathsworn (Elites choice)
- Varagyr Terminators (Elites choice)

Fenrisian Wolf

Though it is not common, there are those of the Space Wolves Jarls who fight with one of the predatory wolves of Fenris by their side; a bloodthirsty but loyal companion in battle.

The Fenrisian Wolf is purchased like wargear rather than as a regular unit, and up to two Fenrisian Wolves may be purchased by any Space Wolves Legion Praetor or Legion Centurion not equipped with a jump pack for +10 points each.

The Fenrisian Wolf forms a unit with its master and can never leave them or be left by them, but it doesn't stop the character it is attached to joining other squads as normal (the Fenrisian Wolf joins the squad as well). The Fenrisian Wolf does not count as a casualty when determining Panic tests from shooting attacks if it is slain. Where this is relevant, the Fenrisian Wolf has the unit type (Infantry) and a unit composition of 1.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Fenrisian Wolf	4	0	4	4	1	4	2	5	6+

Special Rules: Bulky, Counter-attack, Preternatural Senses (see page 222)

Cyberwolves: For +5 points, the Fenrisian Wolf can be upgraded to a Cyberwolf, gaining the Feel No Pain (5+) special rule.



The Frost Blades

Created by the weaponsmiths of the Fang, the famed frost blades were forged after detailed study of the arcane technologies of Leman Russ' own Emperor-gifted blade, coupled with unique materials gleaned from the death world of Fenris itself, namely the preternaturally hard chitin-teeth of the Fenrisian krakens that haunted that death world's depths. Most took the shape of traditional Fenrisian battle axes or Terran-influenced double-edged chainblades, while some few were also fashioned after power claws or even broad-bladed war spears, but all were finely made and equally lethal. Only a few such weapons were able to match the fabled paragon blades of Ancient Terra in destructive potential and quality, but all were truly formidable weapons in their own right.

Any Space Wolves Independent Character with a power weapon may exchange this for a frost blade or frost claw for +5 points or a great frost blade for +10 points.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Frost blade	—	+1	3	Melee, Specialist Weapon
Frost axe	—	+2	2	Melee, Specialist Weapon, Unwieldy
Frost claw	—	+1	3	Melee, Shred, Specialist Weapon
Great frost blade	—	+1	2	Melee, Reaping Blow, Master-crafted, Two-handed

Reaping Blow: Models using a weapon with this special rule fight at -1 Initiative in assault. In addition, if the wielder is in base contact with more than one enemy model in the Initiative phase in which they fight, they gain +1 Attack.

Æther-rune Armour

The Space Wolves Legion was known to have among its most prized panoply of war a number of highly customised suits of artificer power armour fitted with intricately woven psycho-ætheric induction circuitry which acted as a loadstone, absorbing and negating psychic forces directed against the wearer. These artefacts were believed to be produced albeit in very limited amounts by the Legion itself, although from what pattern or rare materials remain unknown. To the idiosyncratic beliefs of those within the Legion, the phenomenal protection the armour provided was due to the ritual rune patterns the circuitry formed, which they believed armoured the warrior's soul as much as it did their flesh, while Imperial observers dismissed this notion as mere superstition and pointed to an underlying, if ill-understood, technological basis to these rare and uniquely forged suits of armour.

Æther-rune armour counts as a suit of Artificer armour, granting a 2+ armour save. In addition, it increases the wearer's Wounds characteristic by +1 and allows any Deny the Witch rolls taken for the wearer or the unit they have joined to be re-rolled.

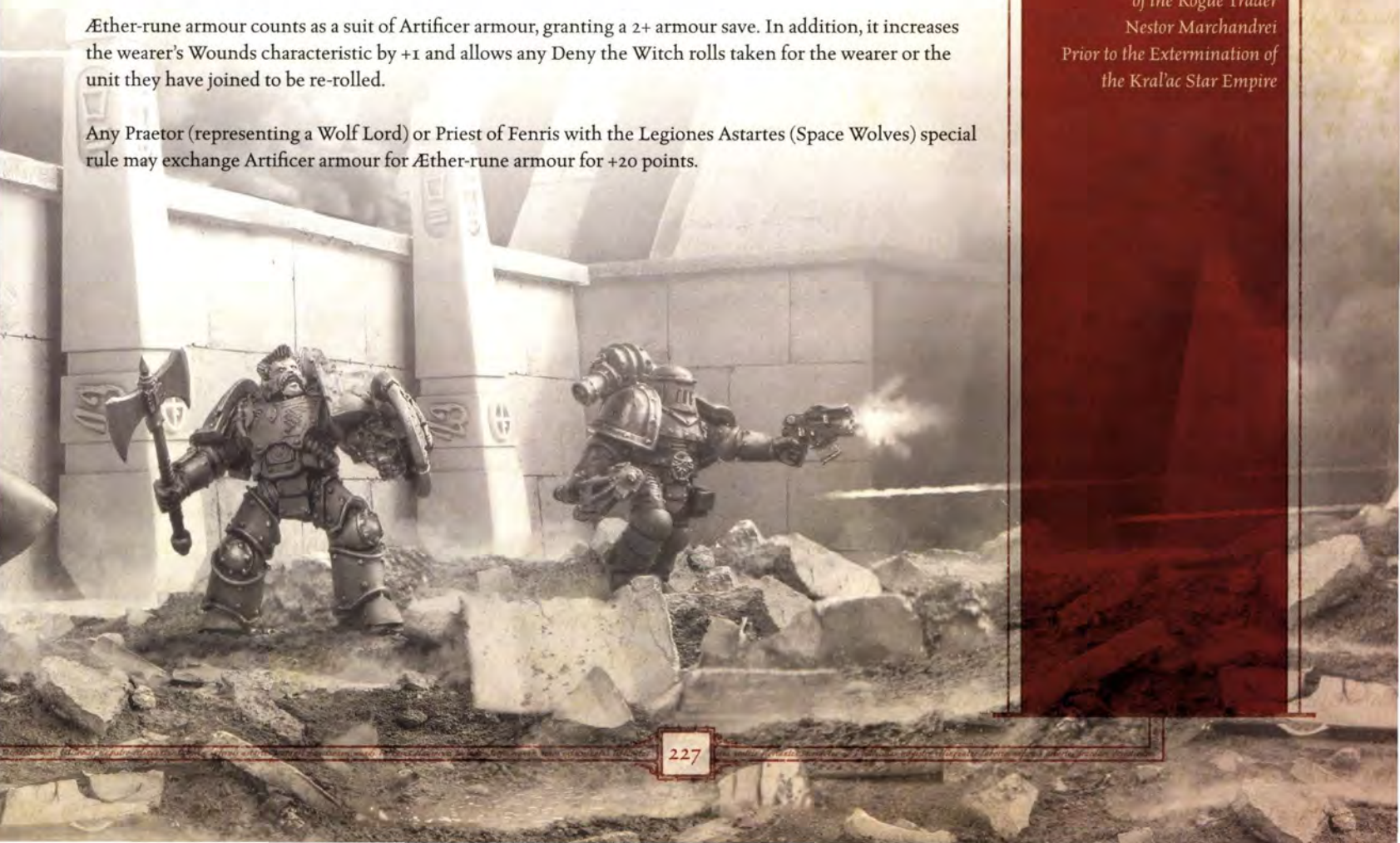
Any Praetor (representing a Wolf Lord) or Priest of Fenris with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule may exchange Artificer armour for Æther-rune armour for +20 points.



'My ship burns and my brave crew lie dead, my bright banners torn and my blade shattered, but dear murderers, it is I who have the last laugh, for my death shall be swift, a bright blossom of fire and I shall return to the dust. But you dear murderers, you and yours shall not have such an easy passing. For yet my bloodied lips smile and why? For at this last ember of my life's glowing, my forlorn cries of distress have been answered upon the Emphyrean's tide.

You believed my handful of ships and few regiments the might of my nation and race? Alas, but I am a mere tendril of the colossus, a mere glimmer of the storm, but that colossus now bends its wrath towards you, you poor, poor creatures. The Wolves come, and everything you have ever known and loved will die.'

The Last Transmission
of the Rogue Trader
Nestor Marchandrei
Prior to the Extermination of
the Kral'ac Star Empire





In every Legion it was said there were those for who the horrors of all they had witnessed and all the bloody deeds they had done in the name of the Great Crusade mutilated their soul and damaged their minds to such an extent that they were no longer men, no longer Space Marines in truth, but something hollow and murderous beyond reason. In some Legions, such things might go all but unnoticed, even perhaps mark one for advancement, while in others, the gift of final peace was offered, or perhaps outcast status as one of the so-called Moritats' or a place in the Destroyer units. But within the Space Wolves, such an all-consuming impulse to kill and kill again was better understood, and the ways of Fenris held the answer to such dark souls in the shape of the Cult of Morkai and its ministers, who ensured that the jaws of the Death Wolf could feast upon the enemies of Mankind with proper reverence. The warriors who gave themselves over became the Deathsworn; marked by their wolf-skull helms, they were the embodiment of the hunger for death in the heart of the Legion.

175 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Deathsworn	4	4	4	4	1	4	2	8	2+

- 5 Deathsworn

- 5 Deathsworn

- Deathsworn: Infantry

- Bolt pistol
- Power axe
- Frag & krak grenades
- Yimira class stasis bombs
- Artificer armour

- Legiones Astartes
(Space Wolves)
- Cult of Morkai
- The Dreams of the Death Wolf

- A Deathsworn Pack may take a Rhino, Land Raider Phobos or Land Raider Proteus as a Dedicated Transport.

- The Deathsworn Pack may include:
 - Up to five additional Deathsworn+25 points each
- For every five models in the squad, one model may take one of the following options instead of those previously listed:
 - Exchange their power axe for power fist..... +5 points each
 - Exchange their power axe for a great frost blade+10 points each
 - Exchange their power axe for a thunder hammer.....+10 points each
- The entire squad may take one of the following:
 - Melta bombs.....+20 points
 - Rad grenades+30 points

Units of the Deathsworn may not be joined by Independent Character models other than Priests of Fenris. In addition, Priests of Fenris with the Speaker of the Dead sub-type may take a unit of Deathsworn instead of the usual Command Squad.

The dreams of the Death Wolf have consumed the minds of the Deathsworn so that only in killing do they themselves feel anything but the chill of death closing about them. In that moment they care nothing for their own lives or safety, so long as their enemies are strewn about them broken and lifeless.

The Deathsworn have the Fearless special rule when locked in assault. In addition, if a Deathsworn is slain during the Assault phase before it has fought, it may still make its attacks at Initiative step 1 as if it were alive so long as any model in the unit still survives.

Relics of a campaign of purgation and slaughter so dreadful that none but the Wolf King and his innermost circle of priests have been allowed to remember it, save in the lingering echoes of nightmare, these arcane weapons actively breach and damage the flow of time around them when they detonate. Merely being in proximity to the blast radius of these terrifying weapons is as perilous as any rad grenade as a sudden time distortion freezes the target, but far from consistently, an effect that can leave its victim frozen out of phase with existence, a trapped echo lost in the void, or shattered like a statue of ice. It can just as easily result in withered flesh and failing organs for the wielder as their own lifeforce is drained away in years and decades from a failing stasis field. Such a fate for the Deathsworn however, seems of little concern.

A unit equipped with Yimira class stasis bombs counts as being equipped with defensive grenades and in addition, models making Fall Back rolls when fleeing from combat with the unit must roll an additional D6 and select the lowest result for their Fall Back distance.

In the Shooting phase, one model in the squad may throw a Yimira class stasis bomb. The weapon has the following profile:

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Yimira class stasis bomb	6"	X*	2	Blast (3"), Pinning, Gets Hot, *Fleshbane (2+)

VARAGYR WOLF GUARD TERMINATOR SQUAD

270 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Varagyr Terminator	5	4	4	4	1	4	2	8	2+
Varagyr Thegn	5	4	4	4	2	4	3	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 4 Varagyr Terminators
- 1 Varagyr Thegn

Unit Type

- Varagyr Terminators: Infantry
- Varagyr Thegn: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Frost blade (axe, claw or sword)
- Combi-bolter
- Cataphractii Terminator armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves)
- Fear
- Implacable Advance
- Stubborn
- Crushing Charge
- Lordsbane

Dedicated Transport

- A Varagyr Terminator Squad may take a Land Raider Phobos or Land Raider Proteus as a Dedicated Transport if it numbers five models, or a Spartan if it numbers between 6-10 models.

Options

- The Varagyr Wolf Guard Terminator Squad may include:
 - Up to five additional Varagyr Terminators.....+42 points each
- Any model in the squad may exchange their frost blade for one of the following:
 - Power fist.....Free
 - Chainfist.....+5 points each
 - Thunder hammer.....+5 points each
- Any model in the squad may exchange their combi-bolter for one of the following weapons:
 - Combi-weapon.....+5 points each
 - Second frost blade (axe, claw or sword).....+5 points each
 - Heavy flamer.....+10 points each
 - Reaper autocannon.....+15 points
- The Varagyr Thegn may take a grenade harness.....+10 points

Crushing Charge

The charge of the Varagyr is a terrible thing to behold, a tide of armour-clad, beast skin-draped hulks propelled by superhuman strength and inhuman ferocity. Given sufficient momentum to aid their charge, the Varagyr strike their foes like cannon shells, crushing and killing their enemies before even their fearsome blades strike.

When a model with this special rule makes a Charge move of at least 6" in the Assault phase, it makes a Strength 5 Hammer of Wrath attack.

Lordsbane

Though all serve the Wolf King faithfully and with fealty as his guard, the Varagyr also take great satisfaction in showing their superiority of the petty lords and champions of those they slay, vying to honour their master with the trophies of the slain justly anointed in the blood of the vanquished in the hopes of making a tale worth the telling.

Models with this special rule may issue and accept Challenges as if they were characters in combat, and in addition, when fighting in a Challenge, if the enemy challenger is killed then they may add an additional +1 to the combat result.



ELITES

The Varagyr are the chosen warriors of Leman Russ, hand picked from his own Great Company to form his personal guard and close companions in war and council. To have attained such a rank and position, each has distinguished himself in battle many times over, and each has forged his own saga worth the telling.

More so than any other of his sons they are the wolves of his pack, marked by the great beast pelt which adorns their armour, and to adopt this honour means more than simply to walk in the Wolf King's shadow and lay down their lives for him if needs be, it means something much more. It means that at least for a time they have foregone the chance to lead their brothers in battle, to watch while others strike, to stand fast and not to seek out the glory of battle save when their lord commands. When such coldly withheld fury is unleashed however, it falls like a thunderbolt against the foe.

GREY SLAYER PACK

125 POINTS

TROOPS

Under the leadership of Leman Russ and their embracing of the warrior-culture of chill and savage Fenris that he had come to embody, the Space Wolves Legion began to change, to become a singular hybrid of Fenris' unforgiving and ruthless way of battle and the patterns of more recognisably Imperial military doctrine that had gone before. This new Space Wolves Legion was truly a refection of neither of those parents, but something new entirely, and the increasing use of so-called Grey Slayer units was perhaps one of the most visible outward signs of this transformation.

Whereas the Terran-style tactical squads, decreasingly evident in the VIth Legion's order of battle, were disciplined cogs in an intricate machine of war, the Grey Slayers were, in effect, compact individual warbands of Space Marines, all but autonomous in their own right in the field: fluid, sure-footed and largely exempt from the reliance on direct commands from above. They were expected to deal with myriad challenges on their own if needs be, and above all to close with the enemy on their own terms; to seek and destroy.

Grey Slayer
Huscarl

WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
4	4	4	4	1	4	1	8	3+
4	4	4	4	1	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 9 Grey Slayers
- 1 Huscarl

Unit Type

- Grey Slayers: Infantry
- Huscarl: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Bolt pistol
- Combat blade or chainsword
- Frag & krak grenades
- Power armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves)
- Warrior's Mettle

Dedicated Transport

- A Grey Slayer Squad may take a Rhino as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Grey Slayer Squad may include:
 - Up to ten additional Grey Slayers.....+10 points each
- Any model in the squad may take one of the following options:
 - Bolter.....+2 points each
 - Combat shield.....+3 points each
 - Heavy chainblade.....+3 points each
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a power weapon.....+5 points each
- For every five models in the squad, one model may take one of the following options instead of those listed previously:
 - Combi-weapon.....+5 points each
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a power fist.....+10 points each
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a lightning claw.....+10 points each
 - Exchange their bolt pistol for a hand flamer.....+10 points each
 - Exchange their bolt pistol for a plasma pistol.....+10 points each
- One Grey Slayer may take a nuncio-vox.....+10 points
- One Grey Slayer may take a Legion vexilla.....+10 points
- The Huscarl may take one of the following options:
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a power fist.....+10 points
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a lightning claw.....+10 points
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a frost weapon.....+15 points
 - Exchange their close combat weapon for a thunder hammer.....+20 points
 - Exchange their bolt pistol for a hand flamer.....+10 points
 - Exchange their bolt pistol for a plasma pistol.....+10 points
 - Exchange their bolt pistol and close combat weapon for a pair of lightning claws.....+15 points
- The Huscarl may take artificer armour.....+10 points
- The Huscarl may take melta bombs.....+5 points



Warrior's Mettle

The Grey Slayers prefer to unleash their weapons on the run rather than stand off and lay down fire if possible. They are always advancing to get to grips with the foe in an impetuous but also highly aggressive style of battle far outside the methodical dictates of the *Principia Belicosa*, which has both its risks as well as its rewards.

Models with this special rule may not voluntarily Go to Ground, but may re-roll failed Pinning tests and may make Charge moves both after running and/or after firing their bolters, but suffer -1 to their Charge distances if they do so.



'Sharp indeed is the blade that cuts on its own.'

Fenrisian Proverb





HQ

A prideful and impetuous Thegn known for his fury and desire to meet his foes head on, Geigor's otherwise notably valiant record as a warrior was marred by a history which had suffered several reversals on the field of battle as a commander. The worst of these had been the loss of his entire war pack while fighting alongside the Thousand Sons during the Great Crusade, a battle in which he believed that his Space Wolves and he had been betrayed by their erstwhile allies.

It was a wound which festered in Geigor's soul, and when the orders came for the Censure of Prospero, his voice was one of the loudest in the Legion's council baying for the Thousand Sons' slaughter. Given command of one of his Great Company's Bloodied Claw assault formations, he treated the attack on Prospero as a sacred mission he would rather see through himself and his packs slain to a man rather than fail, pursuing his foes relentlessly through fire, sorcery and death.

GEIGOR FELL-HAND

135 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Geigor Fell-Hand	5	5	4	4	3	5	3	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Bolt pistol
- Bolter
- The Fell-Hand
- Frag & krak grenades
- Refractor field
- Power armour

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves)
- Independent Character
- Warrior's Mettle (see page 231)
- Master of the Legion
- Warlord Trait (if Geigor Fell-Hand is the army's Warlord, he has the Crown Breaker trait rather than rolling randomly – see page 224)

The Fell-Hand

Geigor is in possession of a particularly potent frost claw of exquisite workmanship and power, gained and forged after many trials and bellicose deeds worthy of a saga in themselves. Claw and master together gained the war-name of 'Fell-Hand' for the death they have reaved on the battlefield.

Weapon

The Fell-Hand

Range

—

Str

+1

AP

2

Type

Melee, Master-crafted, Shred, Specialist Weapon



HVARL RED-BLADE

JARL OF THE FOURTH GREAT COMPANY, 'THE RAVAGER', 'THE HEADSMAN OF KOLTOK'

210 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Hvarl Red-Blade	6	5	4	4	4	5	4	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Hearth-splitter
- Heavy bolter
- Grenade harness
- Iron halo
- Tartaros Terminator armour

Special Rules

- Independent Character
- Battle Cunning
- Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves)
- Master of the Legion
- Fear
- Warlord Trait (if Hvarl Red-Blade is the army's Warlord, he has the Head-Taker trait rather than rolling randomly)

Battle Cunning

Up to three Infantry units which are in the same Detachment as Hvarl Red-Blade may be given the Scout special rule.

Warlord Trait: The Head-Taker

If Hvarl Red-Blade is your army's Warlord, both he and any Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) Infantry units from his Detachment within 12" have the Preferred Enemy (Infantry) special rule.

Hearth-splitter

Hvarl Red-Blade's famed axe was not of Fenris as might have been expected, but a stone-grey power blade re-forged by the Iron Priests from a battlefield trophy taken from a huge machine-warrior made in the shape of a long-dead king he battled on the edge of the Maelstrom. This battle, fought on the dead world of Koltok, saw him elevated to Thegn, and first earned him the name of 'Headsman'. In a thousand battles since it has never failed him.

Weapon

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Hearth-splitter	—	+2	2	Melee, Armourbane



HQ

The commander of the Fourth Great Company of the Space Wolves, Hvarl Red-Blade had a reputation as a dourly humorous and often choleric-tempered warrior, whose greatest joy was to be found in the din of war and whose battle-cunning was something of a legend. Master of his Great Company for more than five decades at the time of the Razing of Prospero, he was a veteran warlord as renowned for his scourging tactics as he was for encouraging the taking of heads from the enemy fallen as a form of competition among his warriors. Each gory trophy was to be accompanied by a tale of how it was taken around the Great Company's fires after battle, and without a grand tale, the head-taking was held of little account and the warrior scorned, and so were his Space Wolves pushed towards greater reaches of valour.

Though considered volatile and perhaps a little insane by his fellow Jarls and Thegns, Hvarl's often striking insights into a foe's plans and motivations made his voice one that was still well-respected in the *Einherjar*—his Legion's war council—while in battle, his sharp-witted savagery was counted on by his Primarch to leave nothing alive in his Great Company's wake.



PRIEST OF FENRIS

105 POINTS



HQ

The Priests of Fenris exist as a series of interconnected Orders which provide for the physical, spiritual and technological needs of the Legion. Occluded to outsiders beneath webs of what outwardly seem superstition and barbarism, they are more than technicians and specialists, but instead the repositories of the Legion's true history, the keepers of its secrets and the masters of its lore.

There are many subdivisions within the priesthood, with purviews and abilities that would otherwise usually be part of an Armouria, Apothecarion and other Consular divisions within a Legion which follows the *Principia Belicosa*. Within the VIth, they are subsumed within this shadowed organisation which, with its ritual masks and strange rites, arcane pronouncements and blood-drenched battle-priests, seems more to outsiders like a proscribed warrior cult than a military support and command structure.

There are divisions of particular prominence, the greatest perhaps being the Speakers of the Dead. Chosen from the most strong-willed and coldly self-controlled of their brethren, they serve as its masters of discipline, instillers of its culture, wardens both of the gene-seed and the memory of the Legion.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Priest of Fenris	5	5	4	4	2	4	3	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 Priest of Fenris (either a Speaker of the Dead or Caster of Runes)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear (Both)

- Bolt pistol
- Frag & krak grenades
- Refractor field
- Power armour

Wargear (Speaker of the Dead only)

- Power maul
- Healing balms
- Garm-blood vial

Wargear

(Caster of Runes only)

- Force weapon (sword, axe or staff)
- Runic matrix

Special Rules (Both)

- Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves)
- Independent Character
- Priest of Fenris

Special Rules

(Speaker of the Dead only)

- Fearless
- Oath of the Dead

Special Rules (Caster of Runes only)

- Psyker (Mastery Level 1)

Note that they may generate their powers from the Biomancy, Divination or Telekinesis disciplines.

Options

- A Priest of Fenris may take one of the following:
 - Bolter +2 points
 - Combi-weapon +10 points
 - Volkite charger +10 points
- A Priest of Fenris may exchange their bolt pistol for one of the following options:
 - Volkite serpenta +5 points
 - Hand flamer +5 points
 - Plasma pistol +15 points
 - Power weapon +15 points
 - Power fist +20 points
 - Single lightning claw +20 points
 - Combat shield +5 points
- A Priest of Fenris may take melta bombs +5 points
- A Priest of Fenris may exchange their power armour for one of the following options:
 - Artificer armour +10 points
 - Æther-rune armour +30 points
 - Terminator armour & combi-bolter +20 points

(If this is chosen, the Terminator armour options shown for the Centurion in the Legiones Astartes Age of Darkness army list, rather than the previously listed options, are available to the character instead).

- A Priest of Fenris (Caster of Runes) may gain a:
 - Second psychic Mastery Level +20 points



CONT...

SPECIAL RULES

Priest of Fenris

When selecting a Priest of Fenris, you must pick whether they are a Speaker of the Dead or a Caster of Runes – the model gaining all the appropriate wargear and special rules listed for their sub-type.

Oath of the Dead

Each Speaker of the Dead makes a baleful oath before battle. Its chanted memetics can take root within the minds of the Legion, providing deadly results.

The Speaker of the Dead and any unit with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule they join have the Preferred Enemy (Infantry) special rule.

Healing Balms

A variety of sophisticated biogenic and alchemical tinctures whose use is masked in primitive ritual, these aids may be used to temporarily abjure hideous injuries on the battlefield.

Both the model carrying the Healing Balms and any unit they have joined gain the Feel No Pain (5+) special rule unless they already have the special rule from another source.

Garm-blood Vial

The Speakers of the Dead walk a path that threads between life and death, memory and oblivion, and while their healing balms may bring a warrior back from the brink of the death, the garm-blood vial symbolises the other side of that coin; in it is a bitter poison that brings on a terrible death.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Garm-blood vial	8"	1	–	Assault D3+1, One Use, Poison (4+), Rending

Runic Matrix

Those chosen as the Casters of Runes have the psyker's gifts, but treat them warily as a potential curse as well as a blessing, reaching for their power only through a deliberate skein of cognitive shielding within their own minds, and aided by a unique lattice of psycho-memetic pattern field technology incorporated into their armour as a safeguard both against hostile outside forces and drawing down too much power themselves.

The Runic matrix allows the Psyker to re-roll a single Deny the Witch test per turn, but their controlling player may not utilise more than four Warp Charge dice to manifest any single use of a psychic power for a model equipped with a Runic matrix.

The Priests of Iron

In addition to the Casters of Runes and Speakers of the Dead, the Priests of Iron are the masters of the armouries, war machines and technological arcana of the Space Wolves Legion. Rather than have profile entries of their own, they are represented by the Forge Lord, Master of Signal or Praevian Consul types depending on the Priest of Iron's speciality.

In addition to the options already listed for these entries, they may all be given Æther-rune armour for +30 points or upgrade to Artificer armour for +20 points. In the case of a Forge Lord, they may take Fenrisian Cyberwolves instead of Servo-automata for +15 points each (see page 226). In the case of a Space Wolves Legion Praevian, their Battle-automata may be given Counter-attack for +15 points under the Legion Inductees special rule.

CONT...

It is they who encode the Legion's history within memetically patterned 'sagas', and who record and judge the deeds both of the living and the dead so that the honoured may be remembered and the dishonoured despised. The Speakers of the Dead are also entrusted with the vital task of training new waves of the Legion's warriors and the watching over of its ranks for dangerous incidences of instability, either mental or physiological.

Alongside them, other notable divisions within the Priests of Fenris include the warrior-mystics known as the Casters of Runes—undeniably an Order of psykers, they consider themselves a breed apart from the Librarians of the other Legions. Manipulating their powers through little-understood runic matrices and adapted Fenrisian ritual, they provide the Legion with prognostication and shield it from Empyrean threats. Conversely, the Priests of Iron mask vast technological lore behind an outwardly barbaric show of tech-mysticism whose temper—if not form—would do justice to the most obtusely arcane adept of Mars. Their role is not simply to supply their Legion with arms and maintain their wargear, but ensure it is as self-sufficient as possible and they also stand guard over certain troves of weaponry and schematic patterns gifted by Terra and uniquely developed by the Iron Priests themselves.

LORDS OF WAR

'See him now, the ender of life,
cutter of threads,
Dark is his countenance, as the
winter's depths his eye,
Death lives in his breast,
and ruin in the shaping of
his hands,
Lo he comes, as inevitable as
frost follows summer's end,
To reave and make the
world's ending.'

From the Fenrisian Sagas

LEMAN RUSS

THE WOLF KING OF FENRIS, THE LORD OF WINTER AND RUIN, PRIMARCH OF THE SPACE WOLVES

455 POINTS

Of all of the Primarchs of the Legiones Astartes, few were as legend-shrouded or as little understood as Leman Russ, master of the Space Wolves and lord of the icy death world of Fenris. To some he was no more than a savage and bestial chieftain gifted the power of a god; one of the Emperor's 'monsters' as terrifying and inhuman in his own way as the horror-obsessed Night Haunter or the blood-bedecked berserker Angron. To others he was an incomparable warlord, ferocious beyond measure, but also faultlessly loyal, as unwavering in battle as adamant, and as cold-hearted to his foes as the killing frost that shrouded his world's winters. Both opinions perhaps were true to some measure, but neither told the full tale. For though as undoubtedly as savage as Leman Russ was, and no matter how much the beast marked him as it did not his brothers, he was also wise beyond his Legion's barbaric appearances and self-aware to a degree few guessed at, which made him doubly dangerous.

At Prospero was Leman Russ' loyalty and foresight used against him by the machinations of Horus, then Warmaster and not yet revealed as traitor, and through him perhaps by the machinations of the Dark Gods. What was to follow was one of the darkest hours of the Imperium's history, as Space Marine was set against Space Marine in war unto the death. The Burning of Prospero was a conflict eclipsed only by the nightmare civil war that came after. At Prospero, Leman Russ and his Wolves would ultimately prove victorious but in doing so, they would pay a heavy price that would see them caught wounded and much reduced in power before the tumult to come, and unrelenting battle and the doom of darker fates yet would be their lot before the war's end.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Leman Russ	9	6	6	6	6	7	6	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 (Unique)

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- The Armour Elavagar
- The Axe of Helwinter
- The Sword of Balenight
- Scornspitter
- Frag grenades

Special Rules

- Primarch (Independent Character, Eternal Warrior, Fear, Adamantium Will, Fleet, Fearless, It Will Not Die, Master of the Legion, Precision Shots, Precision Strikes)
- Sire of the Space Wolves
- Breaker of Shields, Bringer of Ruin
- Bulky



SPECIAL RULES

Sire of the Space Wolves

First and foremost, Leman Russ was a warlord; like some barbarian king of ancient myth he strode into battle at the head of his army, proving to all who followed him that he feared nothing, be it man or xenos, warp-spawned horror or self-proclaimed god. He was then to his Legion a paragon of what they should strive to be, just as much as he was their commander and their liege lord. He was a being they would have rather died for than disappoint or be shamed before.

Leman Russ has the Night Vision, Counter-attack, Hunter's Gait and Preternatural Senses special rules (see page 222). A Space Wolves force containing Leman Russ as its Warlord gains a +1 Ld bonus for all its units with the Legiones Astartes (Space Wolves) special rule (to a maximum of Ld 10), and Leman Russ himself has the Howl of the Death Wolf special rule (see page 224) which he may use once per game.

The Circle of the Varagyr: If Leman Russ is your army's Warlord then the Primary Detachment which contains him may select Varagyr Wolf Guard Terminator Squads and Legion Veteran Tactical squads* as compulsory Troops choices in their Force Organisation chart.

*These represent the Wolf Guard Huscarls of Russ' own Great Company and may have the Warrior's Mettle special rule (see page 231) instead of selecting one of the listed Veteran tactics as usual.





Breaker of Shields, Bringer of Ruin

Leman Russ fights with a ferocity and skill far beyond anything human, the weapons in his hands a blur of fury, axe and blade wielded like the touch of death itself to slay the mighty, scatter the weak and sunder the stoutest defence.

Leman Russ as presented here wields two different weapons: *Balenight* and *Helwinter*. In any Assault phase, Leman Russ' controlling player may choose to split their number of attacks, including any for charging or counter-attack, between these two weapons as they see fit – note that the additional attack for using two weapons is already included in Leman Russ' profile.

The Armour Elavagar

The warplate of Russ is a suit of unique artificer power armour whose origins can be traced back to the mysterious period of bitter warfare which shrouds much of the Legion's history in the decades after the Primarch took over the VIth, and is accounted for now within the Legion's chronicles by obscure metaphor and strange and macabre allegories impenetrable to outsiders. Within its shell are strange exothermic field generators, otherwise unknown of in the Imperium's arsenal of technology, which bleed energy, specifically heat and kinetic potential from their surroundings when triggered, with the effect of creating an aura of murderous chill around the Primarch at will. It is this effect which gives the armour its name to the Fenrisians —'Elavagar'— a wave of killing frost.

The Armour Elavagar gives its wearer a 2+ armour save and a 4+ invulnerable save (which is increased to 3+ against flamer, melta and plasma weapons of any kind). In addition, enemy models in base contact with Leman Russ at their Initiative step of the Fight sub-phase suffer a -1 penalty To Hit in assault, increasing to a -2 penalty if they have been in base contact for more than one turn of close combat.

The Sword of Balenight

A weapon of truly ancient mystery, the sword of Russ has gone by many names. To the remembrancers of the Great Crusade, it is called '*Balenight*' —a name itself a commonplace derivation of the High Terran '*Maledica Nocternum*'— a dark legend carried during the Age of Strife where it passed through the hands of warlords and tyrants one after the other. But to the Wolves of Fenris, it has always been '*Mjalnar*' —the fang of the Wolf King— taken in battle as a blood-bought prize of victory. Ultimately, the *Sword of Balenight* is a weapon of unknown origin, a thing of terror and blood against which no armour can stand as the sword's silver-white blade inexplicably darkens as it kills, first to the deep red of heart's-blood, and then to a fathomless, glittering black.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
The Sword of Balenight	—	As User	2	Melee, Shred, Sever Life

Sever Life: If a model suffers one or more wounds from this weapon but is not slain, roll 2D6 and compare this to the wounded model's current Toughness. If the result rolled is greater than this, the model suffers an extra D3 wounds at AP 2. Wounds generated in this manner never overspill on to other models.

The Axe of Helwinter

Russ' favoured axe, though less strange and potent than his darkly fabled blade, was no less a weapon of great beauty and lethality. It was a frost axe, a prince among its kind, its edge made with the kraken-teeth of the mighty beast which gave the axe its name; a legendary menace slain by Russ himself before the coming of the Emperor to Fenris. Its murderous edge was further amplified by a disruption field generator which was a masterwork in its own right, so that a well-placed blow could split the armour plate of a battle tank.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
The Axe of Helwinter	—	+2	2	Melee, Sunder, Master-crafted.

Scornspitter

Once simply a Legion bolter, *Scornspitter* had been re-worked by no lesser hand than the Primarch Vulkan to form an outsized but perfectly balanced pistol suitable for the hand of the Wolf King. Though Russ and his Legion often stood apart from their fellows during the Great Crusade, this gift was one of honour, given after the two Primarchs' Legions fought the bitter campaign at San Katos together, and Russ held it and its giver in high regard.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Scornspitter	12"	4	3	Assault 3, Rending

THE WOLF-KIN OF RUSS

100 POINTS

FREKI THE SWIFT AND GERI THE CUNNING, THE HEARTH WOLVES OF THE KING

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Freki & Geri	5	0	5	5	4	5	3	8	5+

Unit Composition

- 2 Wolf-kin (Unique)

Unit Type

- Beast (Character)

Wargear

- Tooth & Claw

Special Rules

- Wolf-kin of Russ
- Fearless
- Fear
- Preternatural Senses
- Rampage
- Feel No Pain (5+)
- Precision Strikes (Geri only)
- Crusader (Freki only)
- Very Bulky

SPECIAL RULES

Wolf-kin of Russ

The Wolf-kin of Russ may only be taken in an army if Leman Russ is also present. If they are chosen as part of the army, they are treated as a HQ choice so far as any special rule, objective or mission is concerned, but do not take up slots on the Force Organisation chart.

These two Fenrisian Wolves are of prodigious size, cunning and intelligence. They must be deployed within 6" of Leman Russ at the start of the game (or if Leman Russ begins the game in Reserve or on board a transport, they must be with him, and may be transported in a vehicle so long as Leman Russ is also being transported). Once deployed however, each Wolf is treated as an entirely separate unit which cannot join other units, except if they are within 6" of Leman Russ, when they can be used for Look Out Sir! rolls by the Primarch (2+).

The Wolf-kin are never considered to be scoring units, but may be used as denial units in missions where this is a factor.

Tooth & Claw

Freki and Geri are preternaturally powerful beasts whose fangs and claws can tear through body armour and rend flesh and bone like paper.

Weapon

Tooth & Claw

Range	Str	AP	Type
—	As User	4	Melee, Rending

HQ SPECIAL

Said to be companions of the Wolf King from his earliest days as a foundling upon the bleak desolation of Fenris, these two creatures are beasts of prodigious size, formidable intelligence and a physical power that beggars belief in purely 'natural' creatures of their type. The guardians of the Wolf King's hearth, from time to time when he calls they follow alongside him into battle as they may, and to the Space Wolves Legion they have come to symbolise not only their own bestial natures but their spiritual connection to cold Fenris itself. Both have long served their bellicose master on countless battlefields as friends and protectors, loyal bodyguards and keen-sensed watchers, and have proven themselves more than capable of ripping the most inhumanly powerful foes limb from limb alongside the Legion of which their master is overlord.





TALONS OF THE EMPEROR

Though in peace they served as the Emperor's 'Hands', the Talons of the Emperor is the name given to those elite forces of the Imperium who drew their commands directly from the Master of Mankind in war, and served Him as emissaries, agents, bodyguards and destroyers. They include among their number the legendary Legio Custodes, the Emperor's own sworn protectors, and the feared Sisters of Silence, harvesters of the Great Tithe, as well as the shadowy inhuman killers of the Officio Assassinorum, and other even stranger and more occluded agencies such as the tech-arcaneists of the Templi-Chronos and the dread Psi-Titans of the Ordo Sinister. While the might of the

Space Marines led the conquest of the galaxy with the numberless ranks of the Imperialis Auxilia following in their wake, the Talons of the Emperor were given other, often more mysterious and secret tasks, but no less vital for that. When unleashed in war their power is unmistakable and unstoppable, their weapons and abilities born of the Emperor's reason and of ancient relics of the Dark Age of Technology which none save they are entrusted to wield.



'You have met them, yes, this Emperor's deadly new toys? His mutilated half-men and his soulless women, his gilded homunculi and blinded warp-speakers? Do you think them human then? Are they any less monstrous for a shape familiar to the eye? I think not. All this devilry of gene-craft and forbidden alchemy, do you think it somehow clean simply because it is worked by your self-effacing godhead-in-denial? Because your glamour-cloaked tyrant says it is so? And what ancient broken vault or bloody laboratory-prison did he —most monstrous of all— spring from? Or do you yet believe his whispered lies of immortality and pre-genesis? You would condemn me for my sins of reason and invention, but it is my eyes which see clearly you wish to blind. I damn you; I damn you all to the future hell which you already run to embrace like a lover.'

From the testimony of the
technoarchaeologist
Synecius Thorn

Upon his trial and
condemnation to death
Court of the Emperor's Assizes
M30

TALONS OF THE EMPEROR APPENDIX: LEGIO CUSTODES

The warriors of the Legio Custodes are uniquely created, genetically engineered living weapons, superhuman in physical and mental prowess and skilled in battle beyond even the warriors of the Legiones Astartes. Their martial arts are also singular and centred on individual combat, where one Custodian might slaughter dozens of lesser opponents with blinding speed and slay would-be assassins and champions with contemptuous ease.

LEGIO CUSTODES SPECIAL RULE

The Legion Custodes special rule comprises the following:

Preternatural Skill

Any model with this special rule gains a bonus of +1 to their Initiative in the Assault phase if their Weapon Skill is equal to or greater than the models they are fighting.

The Sodality

A unit composed entirely of models with this special rule has a unit coherency of 3" instead of the usual 2", and may always attempt to Regroup as an unmodified Leadership test regardless of casualties taken or any other effects.

Inviolable Psyche

The unit is immune to Fear and Pinning tests, and can re-roll failed Deny the Witch attempts. The unit does not suffer penalties to its Leadership when taking Morale checks.

LEGIO CUSTODES WARGEAR

Custodian Armour

The panoply of the Legio Custodes represents the pinnacle of the armourer's art. Far more sophisticated than production-model Legion power armour, it is fashioned with rare auramite alloy such as that used for the armour the Emperor Himself wears in battle. Each suit is unique to the Custodian Guard who wears it, and it is fitted with arrays of proximity sensors and refractor field generators to further enhance its defences.

Custodian armour provides a 2+ armour save and confers the Move Through Cover special rule.

Praesidium Shield

Ornate precursors to the later storm shields, the Praesidium shields of the Legio Custodes are forged from all but indestructible layered ceramite and resilient alloys reinforced with inbuilt field generators.

A Praesidium shield allows the bearer to re-roll failed invulnerable saves, and imposes a -1 penalty on To Hit rolls on opponents who direct their attacks against the model in the Assault phase. A model equipped with a Praesidium shield however cannot use a weapon with the Two-handed special rule, claim the benefit of an additional close combat weapon in an assault or use the increased close combat profile when charging for a Guardian spear-type weapon.

Aquilon Pattern Terminator Armour

This is a variant of Terminator armour uniquely designed to operate in conjunction with the physiology of the Legio Custodes. Its origins lie with the Cataphractii suits of the Space Marine Legions, but with far greater power capacity and customised neuro-fibre uplinks, it is said, redesigned by the mind of the Emperor Himself for His elite forces.

Aquilon pattern Terminator armour provides a 2+ armour save, a 4+ invulnerable save and the Hammer of Wrath special rule. A model equipped with Aquilon pattern Terminator armour may fire Heavy and Salvo weapons, counting as stationary even if they moved in the previous Movement phase. They may also charge after firing Rapid Fire, Heavy or Salvo weapons. A model equipped with Aquilon pattern Terminator armour may not make Run moves, but may still fire Overwatch and make Sweeping Advances.

Teleportation Transponders

Although more often employed in the role of bodyguards and sentinels, when the Emperor was active during the Great Crusade, the Legio Custodes often made use of the teleportarium of their Imperial warships to swiftly gain planetfall. Such mechanisms employed for this were the most advanced of their kind and little was left to chance in their operation.

A unit comprising models that are all equipped with teleportation transponders gains the Deep Strike special rule.

Refractor Fields & Iron Halos

Although relatively rare owing to the resources and arcane lore required to construct them, a variety of personal defence energy shields are nevertheless common in the armoury of the Emperor's direct servants, serving both as a badge of office and a means of protection.

- Refractor fields confer a 5+ invulnerable save on their bearers.
- Iron halos confer a 4+ invulnerable save on their bearers.

Magisterium Vexilla

The icons and standards borne by the Legio Custodes represent the inviolable and nigh-omnipotent authority of the Emperor; a seal of ultimate sanction and the might of Mankind, and known as the Magisterium. Their mere presence on the battlefield is enough to fill those loyal with resolute zeal and wrack those who face His wrath with fear and dread. Moreover, these banners and icons are also technological artefacts containing vox relay systems and subsonic inducers, augmenting their battlefield role far beyond the merely symbolic.

A unit with a Magisterium Vexilla may re-roll failed Leadership tests and gains the Fear special rule. In addition, you may add +1 to the Wounds score calculated to see if any friendly unit with any models within 12" of any Magisterium Vexilla wins a combat in the Assault phase – this bonus only applies once.

Arae-shrikes

Ancient devices of the Dark Age of Technology which twist and distort electromagnetic signals, these counter-intelligence devices are considered blasphemous in principle and arcane function by the Mechanicum, and persist only in the hands of the Emperor's retinue. By the use of malifica-djinn and hostile blight-code, they pervert the data-readouts of unshielded cogitators and telemetry plotters with lying reports and malign falsehood, and what they cannot deceive, they simply blind and deafen with a shrieking multi-frequency cacophony.

- **Deep Strike Interference:** When an enemy unit attempts to land via Deep Strike within 12" of a model equipped with an Arae-shrike, roll a D6 before they determine the result of their Deep Strike landing. On a 4+, the unit suffers a Deep Strike Mishap instead of landing – note that even models usually immune to Deep Strike Mishaps that have Internal Guidance systems or who do not usually scatter while Deep Striking are still subject to this effect.
- **Targeting Interference:** When a unit containing one or more models with an Arae-shrike is targeted by a weapon with the Barrage type, the attacking player must roll an additional D6 for the weapon's Scatter distance and pick the highest two results. A Hit on the Scatter dice remains a Hit however.

LEGIO CUSTODES ASSAULT WEAPONS

Guardian Spear

The signature weapon of the Legio Custodes and in many ways their symbol of office is the Guardian spear. Elegant and deadly, it is a potent and unique design incorporating a power blade and a highly advanced integrated bolter weapon, and in the hands of a Custodian Guard it can strike and parry at blinding speed despite its size. More rarely, these weapons mount not bolters but advanced specialised sub-weapons such as compact meltas or even Adrathic disintegration beamers, issued against the deadliest of expected foes. The most beautifully wrought and deadly weapons of the Custodians' arsenal are the Paragon spears, storied weapons wielded by the most noted Shield Captains and Tribunes among the Ten Thousand.

All Guardian spears listed use the same profile as a close combat weapon. In addition, their abilities are boosted if the wielder has charged into combat as they are able to utilise their momentum in a lethal double-handed thrust. In addition, Legio Custodes spears also mount a different ranged weapon depending on their sub-type: Guardian spears are fitted with Guardian bolters, Pyrrhite spears with melta beams, Adrasite spears with Adrathic destructors and Paragon spears with Paragon bolters.





'Some may question your right to destroy billions. Those who understand realise you have no right to let them live.'

In Exterminatus Extremis

Guardian Spear

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Guardian spear				
- Power blade	Melee	As User/+1*	3/2*	Melee, Lightning Blows, Specialist Weapon
- Guardian bolter	18"	4	4	Assault 2
- Melta beam	6"	8	1	Assault 1, Melta
- Adrathic destructor	12"	5	2	Assault 1, Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot

*Use the second profile if the model has charged this turn.

Lightning Blows: Every roll of a '6' To Hit with this weapon generates another attack with the same weapon at the same Initiative step. These extra attacks do not themselves generate additional attacks.

Paragon Spear

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Paragon spear				
- Power blade	Melee	+1/+2*	2	Melee, Lightning Blows, Murderous Strike, Specialist Weapon
- Paragon bolter	18"	5	3	Assault 2

*Use the second profile if the model has charged this turn.

Lightning Blows: Every roll of a '6' To Hit with this weapon generates another attack with the same weapon at the same Initiative step. These extra attacks do not themselves generate additional attacks.

Murderous Strike: Attacks with this special rule cause Instant Death on a To Wound roll of 6. Roll any viable saves against these Instant Death-causing wounds separately to any other wounds the attack inflicts.

Sentinel Warblade

This is another unique weapon of the Legio Custodes, brutal where the Guardian spear is precise. The hyper-pulse disruption field generators found in the warblade are able to tear apart flesh and metal on contact, while inbuilt into the blade is a double-barrelled bolt caster able to lay down a hail of fire at short range.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Sentinel warblade				
- Warblade	Melee	As User	3	Melee, Rending, Specialist Weapon
- Bolt caster	12"	4	5	Assault 2, Hail of Fire

Hail of Fire: This weapon makes Snap Shots at BS 2.

Solerite Power Gauntlets & Power Talons

First fashioned in the pattern of ancient relics to arm the elite of the Thunder Warriors, the Solerite power gauntlets and their raptor-taloned variants are potent weapons. They differ from the standard power fists and claws utilised by the Legiones Astartes in both the near-irreplaceable artefact power coils which energise their disruption field generators and the nigh-indestructible materials their casings and blades are fashioned from, forged as they are in furnaces recovered from the ancient Tempest galleries near Terra's molten core.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Solerite power gauntlet	—	x2	1	Melee, Master-crafted, Unwieldy
Solerite power talons	—	+1	3	Melee, Shred, Specialist Weapon, Master-crafted



LEGIO CUSTODES RANGED WEAPONS

Adrathic Weapons

Relics of the Dark Age of Technology believed to be all but unique to Terra, Adrathic weaponry uses a potent but dangerously unstable energy beam to sever the internal bonds of matter, causing objects caught in their path to unravel in a spectacularly destructive manner, leaving only a flaring after-image of what was. Such weapons were legend during the Age of Strife, and devastating wars were fought on anarchic Old Terra solely over the possession of some unearthed cache of Adrathic guns and the promise of the power they held. When the Emperor came to dominion and ended Old Night on Ancient Terra, all Adrathic weapons were given over to him on pain of death, not simply to the one who retained them but to their entire land and nation such was the importance He placed on controlling this technology. These weapons have remained in His care ever since, and only His own personal weaponsmiths gained and kept the knowledge of how to replicate them in small numbers, much to the jealousy of Mars.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Adrathic destructor	12"	5	2	Assault 1, Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot
Adrathic devastator	18"	6	2	Heavy 2, Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot
Adrathic exterminator	36"	6	2	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot

Adrastus Bolt Caliver

Developed as a hybrid of later pattern Imperium bolt weapon designs and Dark Age of Technology 'Adrastite' disintegration beam weapons prohibited from general Great Crusade issue, the Adrastus bolt caliver is a potent shoulder arm serving as a portable heavy weapon for the Legio Custodes. This combination weapon is able to unleash a fusillade of explosive rounds at long range with the potency of the heavy bolters carried by the Legionem Astartes, or at shorter ranges fire a disintegration beam able to rip a target apart at a molecular level, causing its victims to cease to exist in a howling flare of energy.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Adrastus bolt caliver				
- Bolt volley	30"	5	4	Heavy 3
- Disintegration beam	12"	5	2	Assault 1, Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot

Combination Weapon: A model with an Adrastus bolt caliver can fire it either as a volley of bolter fire or a disintegration beam in the Shooting phase – you must declare which is used before any dice are rolled. If a unit is equipped with this weapon, then the controlling player must decide and declare which mode is being used by each model, and the unit does not have to entirely fire on the same mode. Note that unlike conventional combi-weapons, the disintegration beam can be fired multiple times during the game.

Lastrum Storm Bolter and Bolt Cannon

This pattern of bolt weapons is named for the weaponsmiths of the Lastrum Core Clan of the Appolyne workshops of Terra. Other than being exemplars of their kind in terms of skill of fabrication, they would not be remarkable save for their uniquely powerful ammunition. Rather than the usual 'kraken' type bolts utilised by the wider sweep of the Legio Custodes, the artisans of the Lastrum clans hand manufacture only customised mass-reactive heliothermic warheads for their bolt shells. Once within their target, these burst into brief, but sun-hot incendiary detonations, incinerating their victims from within. These shells are uncommonly dense, requiring a far stronger charge to launch than common bolt shells, and only the Lastrum's uniquely sturdy construction for a weapon of their size can withstand the stresses of their repeated firing.

The sheer resources and artifice of these weapons are immense, and they could never hope to be mass produced to arm the Space Marine Legions, and even the output of entire generations of the Lastrum themselves can barely satisfy Legio Custodes' demands.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Lastrum storm bolter	24"	5	4	Assault 2, Heliothermic Detonation
Lastrum bolt cannon	36"	6	3	Heavy 3, Heliothermic Detonation

Heliothermic Detonation: If any target suffers one or more unsaved wounds from this weapon and is not slain, they must take an immediate Toughness test. If this test is failed, they suffer Instant Death. In the case of a vehicle suffering a penetrating hit from this weapon, add +1 to the result that is rolled on the Vehicle Damage table.





'There are no bystanders in the war of life and death, no place the battle cannot reach; so fight it without remorse or relenting, for death will surely do the same.'

Attributed to
Constantin Valdor

LEGIO CUSTODES BATTLEFIELD SUPPORT WEAPONS

As with much of their personal armoury, the weaponry of the Legio Custodes' unique war machines is an expression of the height of the Imperium's technological capacities. Many can be described as paragon variants of well-established Imperial patterns such as the Arachnus blaze cannon, which were recognisably developments of widely used Imperial las technology, but built with esoteric and powerful components which could never be replicated en masse. Others, such as the Iliastus accelerator cannon, were however at the cutting edge of new military developments, incorporating technologies gleaned and tested on the frontline of the Great Crusade.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Iliastus accelerator cannon	60"	7	2	Heavy 3, Rending, Rapid Tracking, Heliothermic Detonation
Infernus incinerator	Template	6	4	Heavy 1
Infernus firepike	Template	6	6	Heavy 1, Torrent
Proteus las lance	24"	7	2	Heavy 2, Lance
Corve las-pulser	36"	9	2	Heavy D3
Arachnus blaze cannon				
- Concentrated blast	48"	8	1	Heavy 1, Exoshock
- Burst fire	36"	6	5	Heavy 3
Arachnus heavy blaze cannon				
- Concentrated blast	72"	10	1	Heavy 1, Exoshock
- Burst fire	48"	8	3	Heavy 4

Rapid Tracking: Targets may not take Jink saves against damage from this weapon.

Exoshock: If this weapon successfully scores a penetrating hit on a target, roll a D6. On the roll of a 4+, a second automatic penetrating hit is inflicted on the same target, against which cover saves may not be taken.

Heliothermic Detonation: If any target suffers one or more unsaved wounds from this weapon and is not slain, they must take an immediate Toughness test. If this test is failed, they suffer Instant Death. If a vehicle suffers a penetrating hit from this weapon, add +1 to the result rolled on the Vehicle Damage table.



THE SISTERS OF SILENCE

One of the most secretive and mysterious of all of the Emperor's servants, the Sisters of Silence are a covert Order who have served as the militant arm of the Divisio Astra Telepathica since its foundation. They are warrior-investigators; their charge is to seek out, apprehend and process psykers from the human population of the ever-expanding Imperium, and alongside this hunt down renegade psykers and destroy those who are deemed too dangerous to live. The most singular thing about the Order is that each and every one within its ranks are female 'Untouchables'; a rare sub-set of humanity whose minds are immune to psychic assault and an anathema to those with psychic powers. Their mere proximity is enough to cause psykers discomfort and pain, and even sow fear in those without the psyker's gift. Also, there are those among the Sisterhood who develop their 'null' abilities further until they are disruptive enough to make any use of psychic power in their presence extremely hazardous. Beyond their unique abilities, the Sisters of Silence are also a highly trained and relentless paramilitary force, ably equipped to their task and skilled in overcoming any opposition which they may encounter, be it deluded bystanders, hordes of psychically-puppeted corpses or even armed cults sat at the heart of a world's ruling caste. The Sisters of Silence are as remorseless, dedicated and as formidably skilled as any human fighting force of the Imperium, while the cold darkness of their minds makes them a more terrible foe than any to the witch, the rogue psyker and the Warp-touched.

Psychic Anathema

Psychic Nulls such as the Sisters of Silence are almost impossible to affect with empyreal powers. Their minds are not simply absent or inert to a psyker's mental perception, but howling abysses of darkness that not only negate psychic force directed at them but actively interfere with the flow of the Warp around them. Such is the fundamental sense of 'wrongness' that such individuals carry with them that even those without psychic potential are subject to an almost phobic reaction in their presence, and to psykers and creatures of the Empyrean, they are an anathema – their mere presence a debilitating toxin.

- Models with this special rule are immune to all psychic powers and cannot be affected by them. They also ignore the effects of any Telepathy Discipline Blessings on enemy units which would negatively affect the models which have the Psychic Anathema special rule. This effect does not extend to Transport vehicles used by models with this special rule.
- All units within 12" of any model with this special rule suffer -1 to their Leadership value, increasing to a -2 penalty if the model is a Psyker. Models who have the Fearless special rule or who themselves have the Psychic Anathema special rule, are not subject to this effect (although models who are just immune to Fear are). Note this affects friend and foe equally.
- Units within 12" of models with the Psychic Anathema must re-roll failed Deny the Witch Tests
- All units with the Daemon special rule within 12" of any model with Psychic Anathema suffer -1 to their Toughness, or if they have an Armour value instead of Toughness, they add +1 to all rolls on the Vehicle Damage table they suffer when within this range.
- All models with psychic powers suffer a penalty to their roll to manifest psychic powers when near any model with the Psychic Anathema special rule; this penalty is -1 when within 12", increasing to -2 when in base contact. For example, if a Psyker usually manifests their powers on a roll of 4+, this becomes 5+ when within 12" of any model with the Psychic Anathema special rule, and 6+ in base contact.

Ex Oblivio

The most potent Psychic Nulls are actively lethal to psykers in their proximity. They have managed through training and discipline to harness and focus the emptiness within and wield it as a weapon against the witch.

- Psychic models or units of any kind within 6" of models with this special rule at the start of their Psychic phase do not generate additional Warp Charge dice.
- If any Psychic model is in base contact with a model with this special rule at the start of any Psychic phase, they must immediately make a Leadership test before Warp Charge is rolled for. If this test is failed, they immediately suffer Perils of the Warp at -1 and may not use any psychic powers during this Psychic phase should they survive this.

Design Notes: Psychic Models & Radius of Effect

- Where the term 'Psyker' is used in conjunction with the rules found within this section, this is shorthand for any model with the Psyker, Brotherhood of Psykers/Sorcerers and Psychic Pilot special rule or who gains the ability to use any psychic powers or psychic Mastery Levels by any means.
- Where an ability such as Psychic Anathema is listed with a radius in which it has one or more effects or negative modifiers, these effects and modifiers last while other models are within the listed range of the model with the special rule, and end instantly when models cease to be within that range.



'Victory lies not in iron, but in mettle.'

Samerik Gun Clan Axiom

'There is no hunting like the hunting of man, and those who have hunted such deadly prey long enough, never care for anything else thereafter.'

*Lost Dramaturge
of Ancient Terra*

Fanatic Discipline

The Sisters of Silence are utterly fanatical in their cause. This is the product of a regime of harsh martial discipline, indoctrination and chemical therapies, besides which even the methods of the Legiones Astartes pale in comparison – all so that they may endure the horrors they must witness in their task, but first and foremost so that they never become a weapon that might be turned against its creator.

Models with this special rule are Fearless. In addition, they have the Hatred (Psykers) special rule.

COMPANY-CADRES

The Sisters of Silence operate most often in relatively small, highly focused paramilitary formations known as Company-Cadres under the direct command of a single officer, the Cadre-commander, most often an Oblivion Knight of at least the Centura rank or one of the Silent Judges. Beneath them the force is broken down into a number of sub cadres, identified by coded designations which to outsiders seem totemistic if not outright barbaric in their nomenclature. This belies their complex nature and the web of strategic discipline and deployment which underpins the Company-Cadres, making them extremely flexible, task-oriented forces in battle.

- **Cadre Structure:** In order to field any units with the Company-Cadre special rule using the Talons of the Emperor army list, at least one HQ unit with this special rule must be part of the Detachment for every three non-HQ units with the Company-Cadre special rule in the same Detachment. For example, one HQ with Company-Cadre is required to field up to three other units, two HQs to field between four and six units, and so on.
- **Cadre Tactics:** When the Sisters of Silence must leave their Black Ships and the duties of the Cull to prosecute war elsewhere in the Imperium, those warriors who make up the cadres sent forth are carefully chosen to complement the military objectives of their mission, and are drilled with merciless precision to the task.

One of the following additional benefits may be given to all units in the Detachment with the Company-Cadre special rule:

- Infiltrate
- Crusader
- Stealth
- Overawe (+1 to the total score to determine the outcome of the assault).



VIGILATOR MISTRESS EUPHEMIA KING

VIGILATOR MISTRESS EUPHEMIA KING

ARGENT LYNX VIGILATOR CADRE

83RD DOMINION OF THE SILENT SISTERHOOD

OF THE GREAT TITHE

PROSPERINE CENSURE FORCE

The Argent Lynx Cadre of the 83rd Dominion of the Great Tithe is a unit of which no official record can be accessed either before or after its involvement in the Battle of Tizca, as it is believed to be part of the stationed garrison of one of the Black Ships which shadowed the main Censure Force. It is far from alone in this as regards the involvement of the Sisterhood in the battle is concerned, but has been chosen because the deeds of one of its Vigilators, Euphemia King, are attested to with some clarity thanks to the vox and pict-evidence of Field Assessor Jaqueus Quilp of the Administratum Logistica Corpus, attached as an observer to the 10th Sarcosan Voltigers of the Imperialis Auxilia.

During the second wave landings of the Censure Force, after the battle had been fully joined and the increasing destruction prompted Constantin Valdor to land his forces, the Argent Lynx Vigilator cadre, as well as two other Prosecutor cadres, were assigned to the beleaguered Sarcosan Voltigers, who had come under heavy counter-attack while attempting to hold a second line position behind the Space Wolves advance as it tore through the 'Old City' of Tizca. Precisely targeted sniper and psychic assaults had pinned down the human auxilia, shredded its command staff and slain the Imperial overseers assigned to them, leaving the entire regiment in disorder and near rout. The few Silent Sisterhood cadres on their arrival took charge, and with Quilp as intermediary succeeded in rapidly restoring order through determined leadership and bloody-handed enforcement of discipline. For the next several hours the Voltigers held through counter-attack, psychic maelstrom and buckling reality, and despite nearly 60% casualties maintained their position, thanks principally to the presence of the cadres and the tactical leadership of Euphemia King in particular, though only she and five other Silent Sisters out of the detachment of thirty, all injured, would survive the battle.



Vratine Armour 'Raptora' Armourial



'Fear not death, for it is nature's sole intent. Fear instead a death devoid of meaning.'

Ancient Terran Proverb

SISTERS OF SILENCE WARGEAR

Psyk-out Grenades & Missiles

Produced under secret conditions within the temples of the Great Astronomican on Terra, the material that comprises the warhead payload of these weapons is akin to psychically-charged ash. On detonation this particulate substance blankets the immediate area, refracting psychic energy and disrupting a psyker's control over their abilities with potentially lethal results.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Psyk-out grenade				
- Thrown	8"	2	—	Assault 1, Blast (3"), Psi-shock
- Launcher	24"	2	—	Assault 1, Blast (3"), Psi-shock
Psyk-out missile	48"	2	—	Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Pinning, Psi-shock

Psi-shock: If a unit containing at least one Psyker (i.e., a model with the Psyker, Brotherhood of Psyker/ Sorcerers or Psychic Pilot special rule) is hit by a weapon with the Psi-shock special rule, one randomly determined Psyker model in that unit suffers Perils of the Warp in addition to any other damage.

Proteus Neuro-lash

Fashioned in the shape of baroque multi-headed flails or ornate three-sectioned staves, the Proteus neuro-lashes are relics of the Age of Strife used by the most skilled warriors among the ranks of the Silent Sisters to subdue large numbers of assailants at once. The neural prongs that adorn the weapons generate a phase-conducted shock field which works to overload a victim's nervous system with bursts of intense agony, so that even the slightest touch leaves them helpless.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Proteus neuro-lash	—	+1	—	Melee, Two-handed, Electro-arc, Sweeping Strikes

Electro-arc: Total all hits caused by weapons with this special rule during an Assault phase, before making any To Wound rolls, then roll a single D6 for each of these hits. Any rolls of a 3 or more cause an additional hit at AP- with the Poisoned (4+) special rule.

Sweeping Strikes: The bearer may choose to use the number of enemy models within 3" that are locked in combat with them instead of their Attacks score to determine the number of attacks they may make in any Assault phase.

Execution Blade

In addition to their role as witch-seekers and stern guardians of the tithe of the psyker-born, the Sisters of Silence also serve as remorseless executioners when the need arises, with the time-honoured method of beheading before immolation their preferred agency of final sanction. To this end they often carry unique, finely-wrought two-handed blades, forged to the same exacting standards of the ancient Charnabal sabres favoured for duelling among the Terran Courts, which are edged in diamond-hard silica glass, making for a wickedly-sharp cutting edge. A skilled strike from one of these weapons can part the seals of the finest armour in battle just as easily as it parts the head from the shoulders of the condemned.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Execution blade	—	+1	3	Melee, Two-handed, Piercing Cut, Duellist's Edge

Piercing Cut: To Hit rolls of a 5 or 6 made for attacks with this weapon are resolved separately at AP 2.

Duellist's Edge: When fighting in a Challenge, the user of this weapon gains a +1 bonus to their Initiative value.

Silent Sisterhood Ranged Weapons

As the militant wing of one of the Imperium's most important institutions, the Sisters of Silence have access to a plethora of resource-intensive, rare and obscure weapons and technology, much of which have been specifically modified or developed solely to meet their unique needs. The most common of these are compact bolt weapons which are created to be handled safely by unenhanced humans rather than the superhuman Legiones Astartes without an appreciable loss in firepower. More unusual and esoteric firearms used by the Silent Sisterhood include magnetically accelerated crossbow launchers firing silver stakes embedded with nega-psi and pyro-toxic materials, high-energy needlers delivering a variety of narcotics and poisons, snare-guns which discharge rapidly hardening fibro-plastic nets to capture prey, and even examples of rare Adrathic beam weapons, deployed only against the direst threats.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Stake-crossbow	24"	5	-	Rapid Fire, Psi-shock
Needle pistol	12"	2	5	Pistol, Poisoned (4+), Rending
Assault needler	18"	2	5	Assault 2, Poisoned (4+), Rending
Snare gun	12"	*	-	Assault 1, Snare*, Pinning
Adrathic destructor	12"	5	2	Assault 1, Instant Death, Armourbane, Gets Hot

Snare*: If a weapon with this special rule inflicts a successful hit, this becomes D3 hits on the target unit. For each hit inflicted, the opposing player must make a Strength test. For each Strength test failed, the target unit suffers a single wound with no armour saves possible (invulnerable saves may be taken as normal). This weapon has no effect on Gargantuan Creatures or Vehicles.

Vratine Armour

When a Sister-aspirant takes her final oaths of duty and says the last words she will ever utter aloud in her lifetime, she is given her panoply of war: the Vratine armour – literally 'the armour of the oath'. It is a sub-pattern of technologically advanced battlegear which shares design elements with both the power armour of the Legiones Astartes and the silicate-mesh of Selenite void-mail, though unlike either of those famed armours, it is not —at least without additional gearing— fully environmentally sealed or designed for extended operations. It does however provide formidable protection from ballistic impacts and directed energy weapons, and is tailored and forged uniquely to its intended wearer to allow for their complete freedom of movement and to augment their reaction speed.

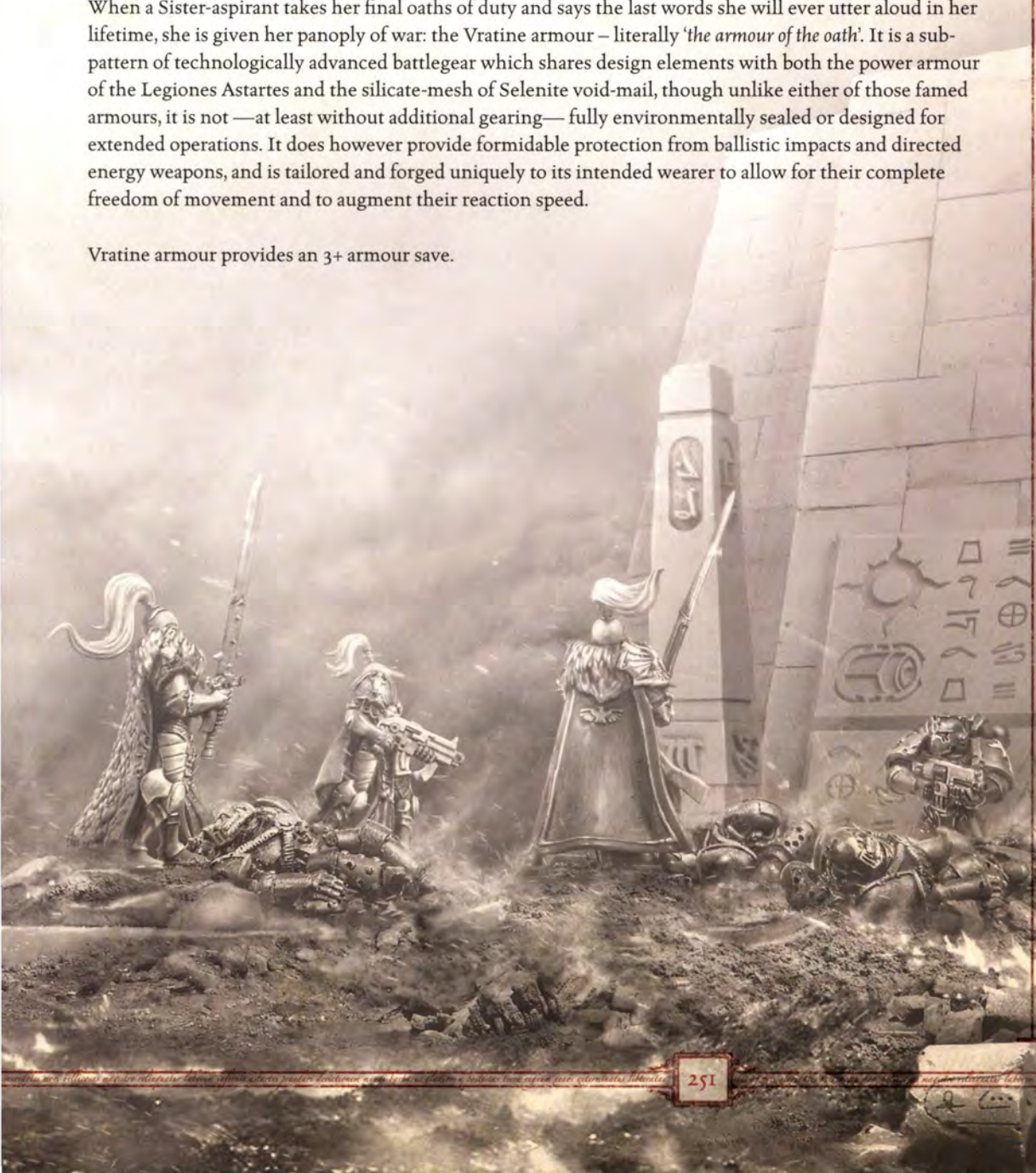
Vratine armour provides an 3+ armour save.



'Civilisation and progress is neither a natural state nor a guarantee of the passage of time, the mere fact of the Age of Strife and all of its horrors are enough proof of this.'

The sole purpose of the Great Crusade then is the furtherance of peace through war, the creation of plenty through restriction and the establish of freedom through tyranny.'

From the
Principia Lex Imperialis



LEGIO CUSTODES SHIELD CAPTAIN

190 POINTS

WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
6	5	5	5	4	6	5	10	2+

Shield Captain

Unit Composition

- 1 Shield Captain

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Guardian spear
- Close combat weapon
- Iron halo
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Custodes armour

Special Rules

- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader
- Counter-attack
- Precision Strikes
- Precision Shots
- Independent Character

Options

- The Shield Captain may be equipped with any of the following:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points
 - Teleportation transponder.....+5 points
 - Archaeotech pistol+20 points
 - Praesidium shield+20 points
 - Digital lasers+10 points
 - Cyber-familiar.....+10 points
- The Shield Captain may replace their Guardian spear with one of the following options:
 - Sentinel warblade..... Free
 - Solerite power gauntlet.....+15 points
 - Solerite power talon.....+15 points
 - A pair of Solerite power talons+20 points
 - Pyrrhite spear.....+15 points
 - Adrastite spear+10 points
 - Paragon spear+20 points
- A single Legio Custodes Shield Captain in your army may be upgraded to a Legio Custodes Tribune for +25 points so long as the Detachment they are a part of is of 2,000 points or more.

Legio Custodes Tribune

A Legio Custodes Tribune retains all the rules and options listed previously, but gains the Fearless and Eternal Warrior special rules. In addition, you may select rather than randomly determine a Warlord Trait for them. If present in your Primary Detachment, a Legio Custodes Tribune must be your Warlord unless Constantin Valdor, Jenetia Krole or the Emperor of Mankind is also present.

HQ

Within the Legio Custodes, there exists a range of ranks and seniority of commands, far from transparent to outsiders, to which the more general application of 'Shield Captain' is applied, though within the Legio such ranks range from Prefect to Lictor, Proconsul to Tribune, following the ancient patterns of Terra's lost history. Elevated both through the trust held among their peers for their judgement and skill, but first and foremost advanced by the direct approval and in some cases intervention of the Emperor Himself, these are warriors not only of consummate and superhuman ability, but also rare insight, acumen and knowledge.

Afforded the rarest and finest of the Imperium's arms, each of these legendary fighters commanded the Legio Custodes against all manner of threats against the Emperor, His works and His domains, and whether their command concerned a dozen of their brethren detached to stand beside one of the Space Marine Legions in battle, or a thousand strong company paved the way for the Emperor to walk upon some world of the dark frontier, they bore with them the might and power of their Legio manifested in a single indomitable warrior.

SISTERS OF SILENCE OBLIVION KNIGHT-CENTURA

75 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Oblivion Knight-Centura	5	4	3	3	3	5	3	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 Oblivion Knight-Centura

Unit Type

- Oblivion Knight-Centura: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Execution blade
- Bolt pistol
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Enhanced voidsheen cloak
- Artificer armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Ex Oblivio
- Precision Strikes
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)
- Independent Character

Options

- The Oblivion Knight-Centura may exchange her Execution blade for one of the following:
 - Power axe.....+5 points
 - Proteus neuro-lash.....+10 points
 - Paragon blade.....+20 points
- The Oblivion Knight-Centura may exchange her bolt pistol for one of the following:
 - Hand flamer.....+5 points
 - Needle pistol.....+5 points
 - Archaeotech pistol.....+10 points
 - Plasma pistol.....+15 points
- The Oblivion Knight-Centura may upgrade one of her weapons to be Master-crafted.....+10 points

Enhanced Voidsheen Cloak

The voidsheen cloaks worn by Oblivion Knights are made from micro-vitrious mesh designed to diffract and absorb energy, and are particularly effective against diffuse attacks. Those worn by the commanders of the Silent Sisterhood are further reinforced by refractor generators, and are used as a mark of their rank and office. An enhanced voidsheen cloak provides its wearer with a 4+ invulnerable save which increases to 3+ against Template and Blast attacks.



HQ

Drawn from the elite ranks of the Chamber of Oblivion, the Oblivion Knights-Centura serve as the battlefield commanders of the Sisters of Silence. Elevated as a result of their seniority, martial prowess and power as Psychic Nulls, they are afforded use of the rarest weaponry the Sisters of Silence can bring to bear and charged with the inviolate duty of commanding both the tactical operations of the Great Tithe and the sworn duty of destroying rogue psykers deemed too dangerous to live.

Each Oblivion Knight-Centura is the unquestioned mistress of her own mission force through not only the strict customs of the Order but the trust placed in her abilities by those under her command, a respect earned over perhaps decades of active service, their mortal lifespans extended by the same alchemical treatments by which the nobility of Terra sees out centuries of life despite their mortal birth. While never a codified sanction, Sisters of Silence showing marks of age and long service, either physiologically or woven in with the subtle marks of their panoply, are often informally revered by their peers for their ability to survive and their knowledge, even if both were formally at the same rank within the command structure.





HQ

The Silent Sisterhood are more than warriors; they are hunters and investigators, charged to root out that which is hidden, tear through webs of lies and superstitions and leave no stone unturned in their ceaseless task to find the psyker. In the event of a conspiracy to conceal one of the 'witch-born', be it through the wayward love of close family, the workings of a malign cult or even a whole rebellious world's contempt for or disruption of the Imperial Tithe, the Excruciatu Cadres of the Silent Sisterhood are deployed to ensure that the individuals involved are brought to Imperial justice and that the rightful tithe is retrieved.

Specialists selected from the ranks of the Sisterhood for their highly attuned perception, quick wits and unfailing purpose, the Silent Judges of such cadres can identify the presence of nearby psyker phenomena, sift truth from lies and, where needed, put those unfortunate enough to fall under their gaze to the question and wring forth answers from the most intransigent witness or conspirator. Nor is their work confined to the interrogation chamber; they are paramilitaries trained and equipped to carry out raids and tactical assaults against the most fanatical and nightmarish of foes, and carry an often esoteric array of weapons and equipment uniquely suited for the task.

SISTERS OF SILENCE EXCRUCIATUS CADRE

100 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Questora	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	9	3+
Silent Judge	4	4	3	3	2	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Questora
- 1 Silent Judge

Unit Type

- Questora: Infantry
- Silent Judge: Infantry (Character)

Wargear (Questora)

- Spectra-vestments
- Close combat weapon
- Bolt pistol
- Assault needler
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Vratine armour

Wargear (Silent Judge)

- Refractor field
- Spectra-vestments
- Power weapon
- Bolt pistol
- Needle pistol
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Nuncio-vox
- Vratine armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Witchfinders
- Fanatic Discipline
- Night Vision
- Precision Shots
- Hatred (Psykers, Daemons)
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)
- Instruments of Torment

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Excruciatu Cadre may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- Any Questora in the squad may exchange their close combat weapon for one of the following:
 - Charnabal sabre.....+5 points each
 - Power weapon.....+10 points each
- Any Questora in the squad may exchange their assault needler for one of the following:
 - Needle pistol.....Free
 - Stake-crossbow.....Free
 - Snare gun.....+5 points each
 - Flamer with compression tanks.....+10 points each
- One Questora in the squad may exchange her assault needler for an:
 - Adrathic destructor.....+15 points
- The Silent Judge may exchange her power weapon for a:
 - Proteus neuro-lash.....+5 points
 - Power fist.....+5 points
 - Execution blade.....+10 points
- The Silent Judge may exchange her bolt pistol for one of the following options:
 - Stake-crossbow.....Free
 - Hand flamer.....+5 points
 - Needle pistol.....+5 points
 - Plasma pistol.....+15 points



Spectra-vestments

The bloody-coloured raiment of the Silent Judge and the chill silver of her acolytes conceal sophisticated field generator technology that allows it to blur and shift to adapt to its surroundings or simply bleed shadow at will, concealing them from sight should they wish and making them things of darkness rather than substance when viewed from a distance.

A model equipped with Spectra-vestments imposes a -1 BS penalty on targets making shooting attacks against them.

Flamer with Compression tanks

Used to render down the most dangerous of the condemned to a fine dusting of ash and little more, compression tanks can temporarily boost the power of a conventional flamer weapon, making them burn at a vastly higher intensity, but depleting the fuel store.

Once per game, a model equipped with this wargear can use it, and their controlling player must declare its use before any rolls To Wound are made for the attack. When it is used, the flamer's Strength is increased to 6. Once used in this manner, the flamer cannot be used again at all for the rest of the game.

Witchfinders

Excruciatu Squad commonly lead small taskforces of the Silent Sisterhood in search of rogue psykers and other targets of the Divisio Astra Telepathica's ire. When selecting a Detachment, you may only take an Excruciatu Cadre as your Detachment's compulsory HQ choice if the Detachment costs 500 points or less in total.

Instruments of Torment

In addition to their other wargear, the Excruciatu Cadres carry poisons and neuro-disruption barbs of staggering potency that can be brought to play against their chosen victims to lay low the mightiest, even transhuman creatures should they able to surround and harry them.

When in close combat with any character without any other models being present in the combat, all attacks made by a unit with this special rule carry the Instant Death special rule.





HQ

Constantin Valdor sits at the right hand of the Emperor as perhaps His most trusted companion and guardian, a watchman of inviolable purpose and all but unmatched fighting skill. Such in fact is Valdor's martial power and superhuman physical and mental abilities that there are those, even within the Imperial Court, who have in whispers called him 'Primarch' in all but name. This is no doubt a disingenuous claim, as for all his power Valdor was made and trained to serve a different and far more focused purpose, that of Lord Commander of the Custodian Guard, and to Valdor the petty concerns of conquest and glory, dominion and victory are as nothing when compared to his own sworn duty.

So while Constantin Valdor holds a rank in some ways higher than that even of a Primarch, and sits at the centre of Imperial power on Terra, he seldom exercises his influence, save where his purview is directly concerned, and then never with ambition or aggrandisement. But should his purpose be challenged or worse yet should anyone or anything seek to endanger the Emperor or His chosen representatives, Valdor is as a demigod of vengeance made incarnate: unstoppable and unrelenting.

CONSTANTIN VALDOR

CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES, THE SHIELD OF THE EMPEROR, THE FIRST OF THE TEN THOUSAND

275 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Constantin Valdor	7	5	5	5	5	6	5	10	2+

Unit Composition

- Constantin Valdor

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- The Apollonian spear
- Iron halo
- Misericordia
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Arae-shrike
- Digital lasers
- Custodian armour

Special Rules

- Preternatural Skill
- The Sodality
- Fearless
- Inviolable Psyche
- Bulky
- Crusader
- Counter-attack
- Precision Strikes
- Precision Shots
- Eternal Warrior
- Independent Character
- Warlord Trait (if Constantin Valdor is the army's Warlord, he has the Shadow of the Throne trait rather than rolling randomly)



The Apollonian Spear

Believed to be crafted by the hand of the Emperor Himself and once wielded by His own hand in battle as far back as the Unification Wars in which He rose to power on Terra, the Apollonian spear was given to Valdor upon his accession to the mantle of Chief Custodian, and it has served no other since. Like the signature armament of the Custodian Guard, it incorporates both a power blade and inbuilt bolter weapon, though in both cases these are of a potency far exceeding those even the Emperor's elite carry into battle.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Power blade	Melee	+1/+2*	2	Melee, Lightning Blows, Molecular Severance, Specialist Weapon
Hyper-velocity bolter	18"	5	2	Assault 2, Concussive

*Use the second profile if the model has charged this turn.

Lightning Blows: Every roll of a '6' To Hit with this weapon generates another attack with the same weapon at the same Initiative step. These extra attacks do not themselves generate further attacks.

Molecular Severance: Any To Wound roll of a 4+ with this weapon inflicts Instant Death, or in the case of a vehicle causes a penetrating hit regardless of the target's Armour value. In addition, any successful invulnerable save made against wounds from this weapon must be re-rolled.

Warlord Trait: The Shadow of the Throne

Constantin Valdor carries with him the authority of Terra itself, and there is little by way of resource or technology that is available to the vast Imperium of humanity he cannot requisition or command if he wills it.

If Constantin Valdor is your Warlord then you may re-roll attempts to Seize the Initiative in missions where this is a factor and any Legio Custodes unit (including Constantin Valdor himself) may be given Teleportation Transponders (see page 243) at no extra cost.





HQ

One of the most mysterious and indeed feared warlords of the Imperium, Jenetia Krole, or as the remembrancers were wont to name her—'The Soulless Queen', was the indomitable Knight-Commander of the Silent Sisterhood. The foremost battle leader of her Order, Jenetia Krole stalked the shadows of the Great Crusade at the behest of her master, the Emperor. She commanded whole armies of the Sisters of Silence on those few and dread occasions when such were required to take to the field, sought out and slew psykers turned would-be gods, and cut the lives short of those who aimed either to subvert or deny the Great Tithe, and brought down bloody retribution on any who slew those of her Sisterhood.

JENETIA KROLE

KNIGHT-COMMANDER OF THE SILENT SISTERHOOD, CHIEF INVEIGATUS-MILITANT OF THE DIVISIO ASTRA TELEPATHICA, THE WITCH-BANE, THE SOULLESS QUEEN

150 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Jenetia Krole	6	4	3	3	3	5	4	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 1 Jenetia Krole

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- The Sword of Oblivion
- Archaeotech pistol
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Enhanced voidsheen cloak
- Artificer armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Ex Oblivio
- Fanatic Discipline
- Precision Strikes
- Rage
- Preferred Enemy (Characters, Psykers)
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)
- Independent Character
- Raptor Guard Cadre
- Eternal Warrior
- Warlord Trait (if Jenetia Krole is the army's Warlord, she has the Laurels of Victory trait rather than rolling randomly)



The Sword of Oblivion

Fashioned in the manner of a highly ornate Execution blade of her Order, the *Sword of Oblivion* is in fact the pattern from which all others of its kind were said to have been made, and stands as the symbol of the High Commander of the Silent Sisters. The sword's true mystery lies in the substance of the blade itself, for it can cut almost anything without evidence of any kind of power field or disruption generator, its origins an enigma to all save perhaps the Emperor.

	Range	Str	AP	Type
The Sword of Oblivion	—	+2	2	Melee, Two-handed, Murderous Strike, Duellist's Edge

Murderous Strike: To Hit rolls of a 5 or 6 made for attacks with this weapon are resolved separately and have the Instant Death special rule.

Duellist's Edge: When fighting in a Challenge, the user of this weapon gains a +1 bonus to their Initiative value.

Raptor Guard Cadre

If Jenetia Krole is part of a Detachment, then a single Oblivion Knight Cadre in the same Detachment may be upgraded to be her Raptor Guard; the elite of the Silent Sisterhood. This squad becomes WS 5 for an upgrade cost of +20 points for the squad.

Warlord Trait: The Laurels of Victory

Jenetia Krole has an acute sense of the fine balances of conflict —when to strike and when to stay her hand— her strategic acumen the match of any Strategos of the Divisio Militaris. Proof of this came during the bloody war to liberate Mournful Gate from the clutches of Eldar slavers after the Great Crusade Expeditionary commanders to which her cadre had been attached were assassinated as she was hunting down Eldar psykers. She herself assumed command of the terrified militia army and executed the panicked general staff and subordinate officers who remained, and thereafter succeeded in turning a disaster in the making into a triumph. The victory at Mournful Gate earned her the right to bear the Laurels Invictaris of a lauded general of the Imperium, the only one of her Order to do so.

If Jenetia Krole is your army's Warlord, you may opt to re-roll the dice to Seize the Initiative in missions where this is relevant, and you may also give D3 of your Infantry units the Scout special rule.

Enhanced Voidsheen Cloak

The voidsheen cloaks worn by Oblivion Knights are made from micro-vitrious mesh designed to diffract and absorb energy, and are particularly effective against diffuse attacks. Those worn by the commanders of the Silent Sisterhood are further reinforced by refractor generators as a mark of their rank and office. An enhanced voidsheen cloak provides its wearer with a 4+ invulnerable save increasing to 3+ against Template and Blast attacks.



Assassin, general, avenger and soul-chilling terror, Jenetia Krole was a creature of dark legend long before she was committed as part of the honour guard tasked with the retrieval of the Primarch Magnus, and later the Razing of Prospero itself. Upon the battlefield of Tizca, Krole was personally responsible for the division of her ranks into protectorate detachments for the remainder of the Censure Host, a matter which allowed them to ensure the near-destruction of the Thousand Sons Legion at the sacrifice of thousands of her troops, while she herself sought out and slew many of the Thousand Sons' most vaunted sorcerers in hand-to-hand combat. So that by the time of the battle's ending, she appeared a spectral figure of some ancient myth, bedecked in the white dust of shattered marble and the spilled blood of multitudes.



LEGIO CUSTODES HETAERON GUARD SQUAD

210 POINTS



ELITES

An inner circle within the Legio Custodes, the Hetaeron Guard serve as the Emperor's closest protectors, aides and confidantes, leaving His side rarely but for the direst of circumstances. Selected individually for their service by the Master of Mankind, they represent some of the most potent fighters in the Imperium, almost like demigods of the battlefield.

During the earlier years of the Great Crusade in which the Emperor Himself personally directed the reclamation of lost worlds, the Hetaeron were a regular feature upon the worlds deserving of His attention. Yet as His actions were turned elsewhere, His inner guard would follow too, becoming almost a myth in their absence.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Hetaeron Guard	5	5	5	5	3	5	3	10	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Hetaeron Guard

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Guardian spear
- Misericordia
- Custodes armour
- Refractor field
- Plasma & krak grenades

Special Rules

- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader
- Counter-attack

Dedicated Transport

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may be chosen as a Dedicated Transport for a Hetaeron Guard Squad if they number six models or less.

Options

- The Hetaeron Guard Squad may include:
 - Up to seven additional Hetaeron Guard.....+70 points each
- The entire Hetaeron Guard Squad may be equipped with any of the following options:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points each
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points each
 - Teleportation Transponders+5 points each
- Any member of the Hetaeron Guard Squad may replace their Guardian spear with one of the following options:
 - Sentinel warblade..... Free
 - Solerite power gauntlet.....+15 points
 - Solerite power talon.....+15 points
 - Pyrithite spear.....+15 points
 - Adrasite spear.....+10 points
 - Paragon blade.....+15 points
- One member of the Hetaeron Guard Squad may exchange their Guardian spear for one of the following options:
 - Magisterium vexilla and a master-crafted power weapon..... Free
 - Magisterium vexilla and Sentinel warblade+10 points
- Any member of the Hetaeron Guard Squad not equipped with a Magisterium vexilla may be equipped with an:
 - Praesidium shield+10 points each



LEGIO CUSTODES AQUILON TERMINATOR SQUAD

225 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Aquilon Terminator	5	5	5	5	2	5	3	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Aquilon Terminators

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Lastrum storm bolter
- Solerite power gauntlet
- Misericordia
- Aquilon Terminator armour

Special Rules

- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader

Dedicated Transport

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may be chosen as a Dedicated Transport for an Aquilon Terminator Squad if they number six models or less.

Options

- The Aquilon Terminator Guard Squad may include:
 - Up to seven additional Aquilon Terminators.....+75 points each
- Any model may exchange their Solerite power gauntlet for a:
 - Solerite power talon.....Free
- Any model may exchange their Lastrum pattern storm bolter for one of the following options:
 - Twin-linked Adrathic destructor+15 points
 - Infernus firepike+15 points
- The entire squad may be equipped with any of the following options:
 - Teleportation transponders+5 points each
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points each



ELITES

Although the Tactical Dreadnought Armour project was conceived first and foremost for the use of the Legiones Astartes, it was inevitable given the success of Terminator armour that its principles would also be adapted for Legio Custodes use. The first pattern developed was what became known as Aquilon armour. Advancing yet further upon the Cataphractii Terminator armour patterns, the Aquilon pattern takes into account the enhanced physique of the Legio Custodes as being able to bear more weight and strain than even a Space Marine, and so is fitted with additional integrated power systems and capacitors which make up for some of the limitations of the origin-pattern. This allows for the Cataphractii Terminator armour's famous durability to be retained in the Aquilon pattern, but with a degree of speed and manoeuvrability the former lacks.

Within the ranks of the Legio Custodes, Aquilon Terminator Sodalities were employed rarely but as need dictated, particularly on those rare occasions where the Legio Custodes were required to operate under conditions designated as 'Zone Mortalis' or required to storm a breach. In such operations, the Legio was loathe to risk unwarranted loss of life, and the superior defences of the Aquilon Terminator armour was relied upon to mitigate the risk as much as possible as well as provide a platform of mobile heavy firepower.

LEGIO CUSTODES CONTEMPTOR-ACHILLUS DREADNOUGHT

200 POINTS



ELITES

There is little short of utter destructive force able to fell a Custodes, and thanks to their Emperor-gifted preternatural resilience, there are few injuries that they cannot fully recover from given time. However, in those isolated cases where the body has been all but irrevocably destroyed but the Custodian's mind remains intact and their will to survive undimmed, internment within the cold and unyielding body of a Dreadnought is the next step, as for the Custodes, truly only in death does duty end.

To this purpose, the few Dreadnoughts of the Legio Custodes are as singularly advanced as their other wargear, with unique variants of more common patterns available to the Legiones Astartes refitted to the particular physiology of the Custodians themselves, and outfitted with weapons and systems artificer-made by the servants of the Imperial Court.

At the time of the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, the most widely employed was the Contemptor-Achillus, a general battle unit which combined phenomenal strength and speed with the echoes of the interned Custodes' own unmatched martial skill.

Armour

	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Achillus Dreadnought	6	5	8	13	13	11	5	4	3

Unit Composition

- 1 Contemptor-Achillus Dreadnought

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Walker)

Wargear

- Two Dreadnought close combat weapons with inbuilt Lastrum storm bolters
- Smoke launchers
- Searchlight
- Refractor field
- Extra armour

Special Rules

- Fleet
- Move Through Cover
- Counter-attack

Options

- An Achillus Dreadnought may be equipped with an:
 - Achillus dreadspear with in-built Corvae las-pulser.....+40 points
- An Achillus Dreadnought may replace any of its Lastrum storm bolters with one of the following:
 - Twin-linked Adrathic destructor+15 points each
 - Single Infernus incinerator+5 points each

Contemptor-Achillus Dreadspear

In addition to their standard armament, such is the dexterity and power of the Achillus pattern Dreadnoughts of the Legio Custodes that they are able to wield scaled-up versions of the iconic spear of their Legio with devastating power.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Achillus dreadspear	Melee	10*	2	Melee, *Impaling, Master-crafted

Impaling: On the turn in which this model charges, any To Hit rolls of 6 in assault mean its attacks with this weapon are resolved as Destroyer hits.



SISTERS OF SILENCE OBLIVION KNIGHT CADRE

85 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Oblivion Knight	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	8	3+
Oblivion Knight Mistress	4	4	3	3	2	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Oblivion Knights
- 1 Oblivion Knight Mistress

Unit Type

- Oblivion Knights: Infantry
- Oblivion Knight Mistress: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Execution blade
- Bolt pistol
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Voidsheen cloak
- Vratine armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Ex Oblivio
- Fanatic Discipline
- Precision Strikes
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Oblivion Knight Cadre may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Oblivion Knight Cadre may include:
 - Up to five additional Oblivion Knights+13 points each
- The entire squad may exchange their Execution blades for:
 - Power axes.....+5 points each
- The Oblivion Knight Mistress may exchange her Execution blade for one of the following:
 - Power axe.....+5 points
 - Proteus neuro-lash.....+10 points
- The Oblivion Knight Mistress may exchange her bolt pistol for one of the following:
 - Hand flamer+5 points
 - Needle pistol.....+5 points
 - Plasma pistol+15 points

Voidsheen Cloak

The voidsheen cloaks worn by the Oblivion Knights are made from micro-vitrious mesh designed to diffract and absorb energy. They provide their wearer with a 6+ invulnerable save, increasing to 4+ against Template and Blast weapons.

ELITES

The warrior knights of the Chamber of Oblivion are a martial elite sub-sect of the Silent Sisterhood selected both for their proven record as warriors, and most importantly, the strength of their ability as psychic Untouchables. Their service required against the most dangerous of foes, the Oblivion Knights are observed usually only in large-scale deployments such as the retrieval of alpha-level psykers, the quelling of major psyker-instigated uprisings or population purges, and as such are seen rarely by the mortal armies of the Imperium save for the direst of circumstances.

This, combined with the harrowing dread caused by the aura projected by the Sisterhood, gives the Oblivion Knights their profoundly sinister reputation among the Imperialis Auxilia and they have been deemed 'disruptive' by the Mechanicum. Even among the notoriously fearless Legiones Astartes, the pervading unease cultivated by the Oblivion Knights' presence is a palpable phenomenon, but one perforce tolerated as a necessary bane when the Oblivion Knights are temporally assigned to fight alongside the Space Marines against some powerful psychic menace.



ignifidas potius relaxatur laborum referens astutus praedator dominum mundi barbarus gladium potius tunc regem quam otiosissimas libertates deus astra ignifidas astra floridius uersipellis non bellionis nequiter relaxatur laborum referens astutus praedator dominum mundi barbarus

LEGIO CUSTODES CUSTODIAN GUARD SQUAD

165 POINTS

TROOPS

The Custodian Guard serve as the mainstay of the Legio Custodes, their panoply of arms symbolic both of their authority and of the Legio Custodes itself. Stronger, faster and more resilient than even the superhuman warriors of the Legiones Astartes, the Emperor-wrought Custodian Guard are terrifyingly potent warriors, and the uniquely alloyed artificer armour they wear and the tactical flexibility of the lethal Guardian spear they carry all amplify these attributes to make them fighters unrivalled within the forces of the Imperium and arguably the galaxy.

Both in their duty of guardianship and in situations in which the supervision of the Legio Custodes is required to ensure an end is met or artefact retrieved, the Custodian Guard are the first to be deployed in service, and across its history, the majority of the Kykanatoi which made up the Legio Custodes ranks fought in this manner.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Custodian Guard	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Custodian Guard

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Guardian spear
- Close combat weapon
- Refractor field
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Custodes armour

Special Rules

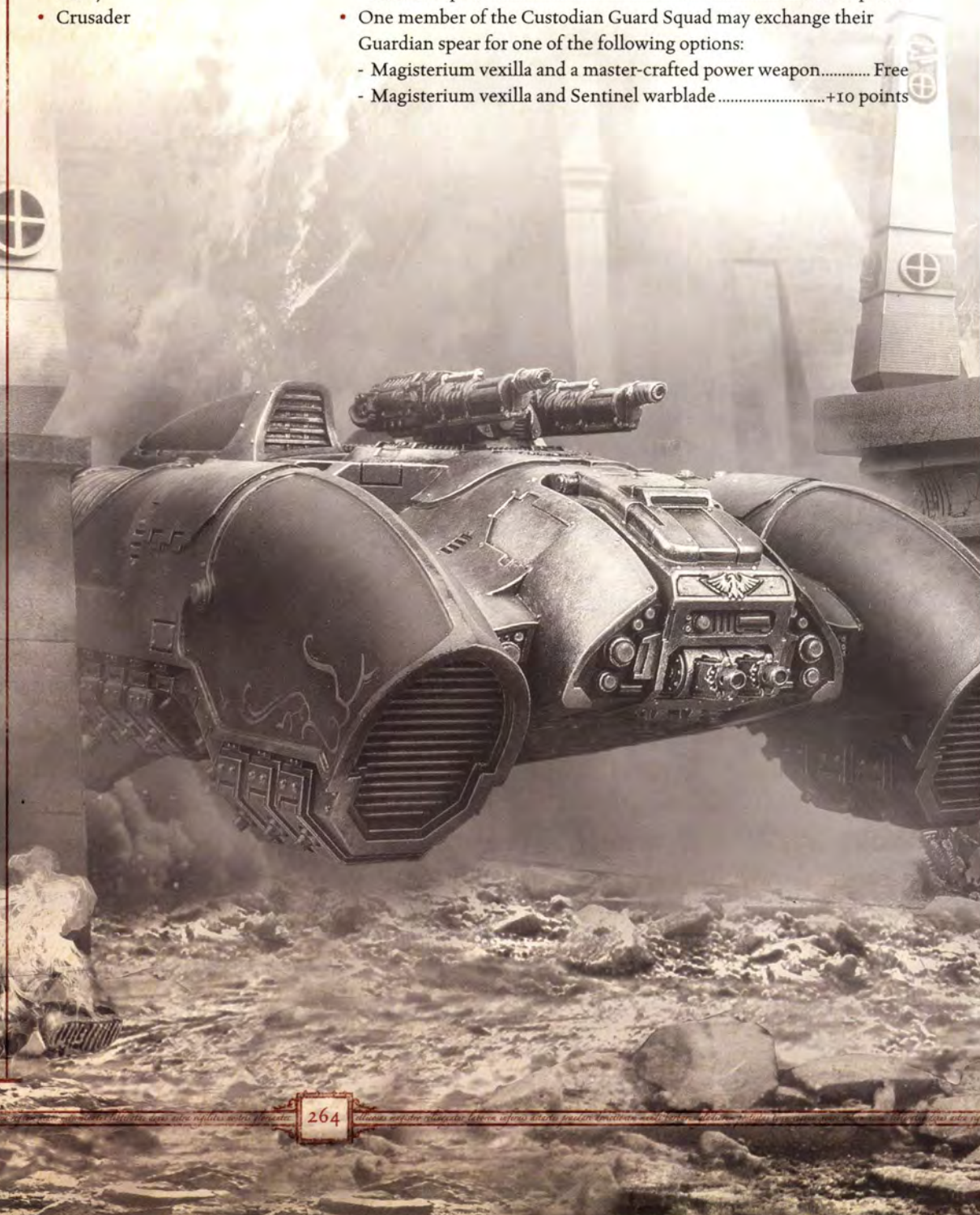
- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader

Dedicated Transport

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may be chosen as a Dedicated Transport for a Custodian Guard Squad if they number six models or less.

Options

- The Custodian Guard Squad may include:
 - Up to seven additional Custodian Guard+55 points each
- The entire Custodian Guard Squad may be equipped with any of the following options:
 - Melta bombs+5 points each
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points each
 - Teleportation Transponders+5 points each
- Any member of the Custodian Guard Squad may replace their Guardian spear with one of the following options:
 - Pyrrhite spear+15 points
 - Adrasite spear+10 points
- One member of the Custodian Guard Squad may exchange their Guardian spear for one of the following options:
 - Magisterium vexilla and a master-crafted power weapon Free
 - Magisterium vexilla and Sentinel warblade+10 points



LEGIO CUSTODES SENTINEL GUARD SQUAD

180 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Sentinel Guard	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Sentinel Guard

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Sentinel warblade
- Close combat weapon
- Refractor field
- Praesidium shield
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Custodes armour

Special Rules

- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader
- Shield Barricade

Dedicated Transport

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may be chosen as a Dedicated Transport for a Sentinel Guard Squad if they number six models or less.

Options

- The Sentinel Guard Squad may include:
 - Up to seven additional Sentinel Guard.....+65 points each
- The entire Sentinel Guard Squad may be equipped with any of the following options:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points each
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points each
 - Teleportation Transponders+5 points each
- Any member of the Sentinel Guard Squad may replace their Sentinel warblade with a:
 - Solerite power gauntlet or Solerite power talon+15 points
- One member of the Sentinel Guard Squad may exchange their Praesidium shield for a:
 - Magisterium vexilla Free

Shield Barricade

Friendly Infantry units being targeted by ranged attacks which pass through the area occupied by a unit composed entirely of models with this special rule gain a 4+ cover save.

TROOPS

Sentinel Guard squads are the defensive formation of the Legio Custodes, designed to function as a mobile bulwark to protect emissaries on hazardous ground and hold defensive lines against the most grievous onslaught in open battle. In order to achieve this, they are equipped with energy field-reinforced 'Praesidium' shields—a precursor technology to that later employed by the prototype Legiones Astartes storm shields—which are able to resist the heaviest weapons fire.

When deployed outside the walls of the Imperial Palace, their charge is often to protect key aspects of allied detachments and resources liberated from the enemy. However, it has been witnessed during large scale sudden assaults that their close formations also served to disrupt enemy lines. While they still retain the loose unit structures of the Legio Custodes, the Sentinel Guard by their nature utilise a greater synchronicity between warriors in service to the various phalanx formations that could be required of the squad at any given moment.

SISTERS OF SILENCE PROSECUTOR CADRE

65 POINTS

TROOPS

Prosecutor Cadres are among those Sisters most commonly seen by the general populace of the Imperium, forming the foot soldiers and guards of the paramilitary organisation of the League of the Black Ships, and as strike infantry well suited to combat missions outside of their silent halls. In field operations, Prosecutors specialise in open engagement of massed targets, favouring a modified variant of the Terran boltgun more commonly seen in the hands of the Legiones Astartes for its flexibility, stopping power and high rate of fire.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Prosecutor	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	3+
Prosecutor Mistress	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Prosecutors
- 1 Prosecutor Mistress

Unit Type

- Prosecutors: Infantry
- Prosecutor Mistress: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Boltgun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Vratine armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Fanatic Discipline
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Prosecutor Squad may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Prosecutor Cadre may include:
 - Up to five additional Prosecutors.....+10 points each
- The entire unit may exchange their boltguns for:
 - Two bolt pistols..... Free
- One model may be equipped with a nuncio-vox+10 points
- One model may be equipped with a breaching charge.....+10 points
- The Prosecutor Mistress may take any of the following:
 - Power weapon.....+10 points
 - Hand flamer+5 points
 - Needle pistol+5 points
 - Plasma pistol.....+15 points
 - Charnabal sabre.....+5 points

SISTERS OF SILENCE VIGILATOR CADRE

85 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Vigilator	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	3+
Vigilator Mistress	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Vigilators
- 1 Vigilator Mistress

Unit Type

- Vigilators: Infantry
- Vigilator Mistress: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Execution blade
- Bolt pistol
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Vratine armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Fanatic Discipline
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)
- Death Mark

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Vigilator squad may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Vigilator Cadre may include:
 - Up to five additional Vigilators +12 points each
- One model may be equipped with a breaching charge +10 points
- The Vigilator Mistress may exchange her Execution blade for one of the following:
 - Power weapon +5 points
 - Proteus neuro-lash +10 points
- The Vigilator Mistress may exchange her bolt pistol for one of the following:
 - Hand flamer +5 points
 - Needle pistol +5 points
 - Plasma pistol +15 points

Death Mark

After both sides have deployed but before the game begins, if a Detachment contains any Sisters of Silence Vigilator Cadres, their controlling player must declare a single enemy Infantry unit or Independent Character as carrying the Death Mark this game. All Vigilator units in the Detachment gain the Preferred Enemy special rule when attacking this unit or character.

TROOPS

As the most senior of the mainstay of the Silent Sisterhood's tactical formations, the Vigilator cadres are often deployed in battle in order to identify and excise the key components of an enemy force at close quarters. Whether their quarry is a single rogue psyker among a civilian hab-block or a resistance movement thousands strong, they serve to root out the command centres responsible and remove them, allowing the other units deployed in tangent to destroy the scattered resistance.

In larger detachments, the Vigilator cadres also provide a greater level of versatility to the frontline assault, and the effect of their sweeping blades on the ranks of a cult rabble or rebel militia is as much a psychological weapon as a direct tool of war. Nor is the weapon itself idly chosen, as since time immemorial beheading is ever considered a sure proof of death against the witch and those accursed by dark forces, and often has this in practice proved true, even against those riven with the power of the Empyrean. As their name implies, the Vigilators' charge outside of direct militant action is often to oversee the collection of the Great Tithe and the escorting, under threat of death, of individuals to the Black Ships.



LEGIO CUSTODES CORONUS GRAV-CARRIER

135 POINTS

DEDICATED TRANSPORT

The Coronus grav-carrier is perhaps one of the most well-known of the vehicles used exclusively by the Legio Custodes. It was already under wide utilisation across the Legio in the closing decades of the Great Crusade, replacing the limited numbers of the relic Jocasta pattern grav-craft that had survived the Unification Wars on Ancient Terra. The use of heavily protected grav-craft by the Legio Custodes granted their forces a degree of speed and agility that could not be matched by the grinding armour of other forces of the Imperium, allowing them to deploy, redeploy and evade without the danger of being easily pinned down by enemy troops or hazardous terrain.

The Coronus pattern also served as the inspiration and technological basis for the Pallas and the Caladius grav-craft, developed to meet the specific strategic needs of rapid attack and line of battle tank respectively.

Armour

	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Coronus Grav-carrier	5	13	12	11	4

Unit Composition

- 1 Coronus Grav-carrier

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Skimmer, Fast)

Wargear

- Twin-linked
Lastrum bolt cannon
- Turret-mounted twin-linked
Arachnus blaze cannon
- Flare shield
- Machine spirit

Special Rules

- Deep Strike
- Outflank
- Grav-backwash

Access Points

- The Coronus Grav-carrier has one access point at the rear of the vehicle.

Transport Capacity

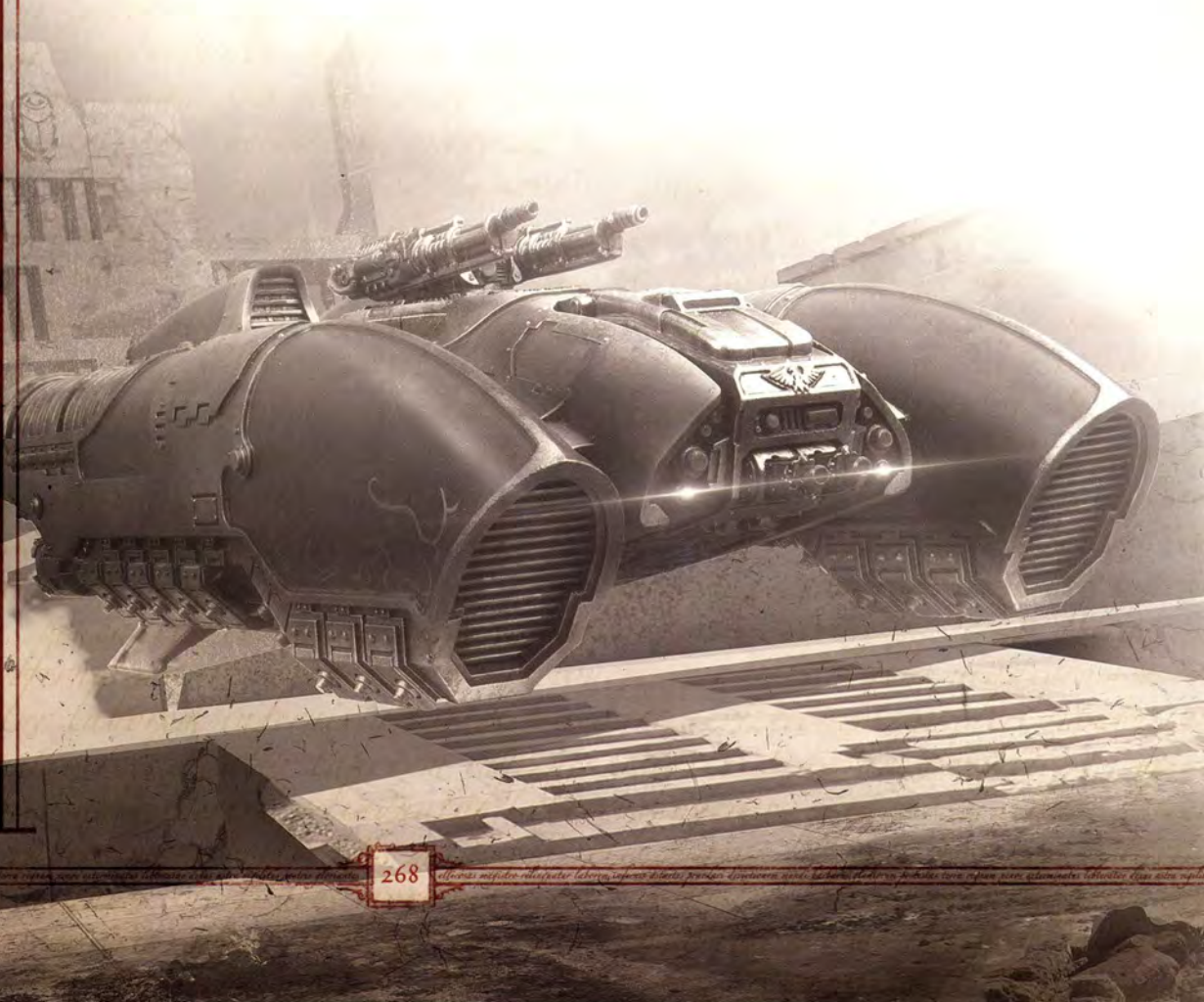
- The Coronus Grav-carrier has a Transport capacity of 12 models.

Options

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may take any of the following upgrades:
 - Armoured ceramite.....+20 points
 - Searchlight.....+1 point
 - Extra armour.....+5 points

Grav-backwash

Unless the vehicle has become Immobilised, attackers suffer a -2 To Hit the vehicle in assault.



CUSTODIAN-WARDER ARASCID NASSAU

THE VEDIAS-ALPEH SODALITY OF THE
KYKANATOI OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES
PROSPERINE CENSURE FORCE

Depicted here in the distinctive black-armoured livery associated with the Custodian sub-force known as the 'Warders of the Vaults of Rython', Arascid Nassau is a Custodian Guard about which nothing appears in the available historical records until his inclusion in the Prospero Censure Force. It therefore remains unknown as to whether Nassau was in fact newly inducted into the Legio or whether his service, perhaps centuries long, had simply been carried out far from the gaze of history. That units drawn from the Warders of the Vaults of Rython, a particularly sequestered and forbidden subdivision of the deep levels below the Imperial Palace complex on Terra, were deployed to the Censure Force is itself something of a mystery, and one some have suggested speaks to a need to call upon reserves more desperate than was outwardly understood at the time.

Several Sodalities of the Warders of the Vaults of Rython were deployed as part of the Censure Force's reserve second wave behind the lead elements commanded by Valdor. Vitally, the Warder Sodalities resisted the circling counter-attacks made by the Thousand Sons forces during the Battle for Tizca's cataclysmic final hours, holding back their psychically-augmented onslaughts when the merely human troops defending the Imperium's supply lines and landing zones broke and were slaughtered around them. Arascid Nassau entered the records here in particular for single-handedly despatching an attacking wave of Prosperine civilians driven insane and twisted beyond recognition by unleashed warp forces, at one stage creating a break-wall of writhing bodies from their dead, which he then defended against alone for another hour of continuous attack.



Custodian Armour Pauldrons 'Rython' Variant Armourials

270

SISTERS OF SILENCE PURSUER CADRE

35 POINTS + BEASTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Pursuer	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	3+
Pursuer Mistress	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	9	3+
Cyber-jackal	4	2	4	4	1	4	2	5	5+
Steeltalon Wing	3	0	3	2	3	5	3	5	—

Unit Composition

- 2 Pursuers
- 1 Pursuer Mistress
- 3 Beasts

Unit Type

- Pursuers: Infantry
- Pursuer Mistress: Infantry (Character)
- Cyber-jackal: Infantry
- Steeltalon Wing: Infantry

Wargear (Pursuers & Pursuer Mistress)

- Bolt pistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Vratine armour

Special Rules (all)

- Fanatic Discipline
- Psychic Anathema
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)
- Move Through Cover
- Fleet

Special Rules (Cyber-jackals only)

- Rage
- Feel No Pain (5+)

Special Rules (Steeltalon Wings only)

- Blind (close combat attacks)

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Pursuer Cadre may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

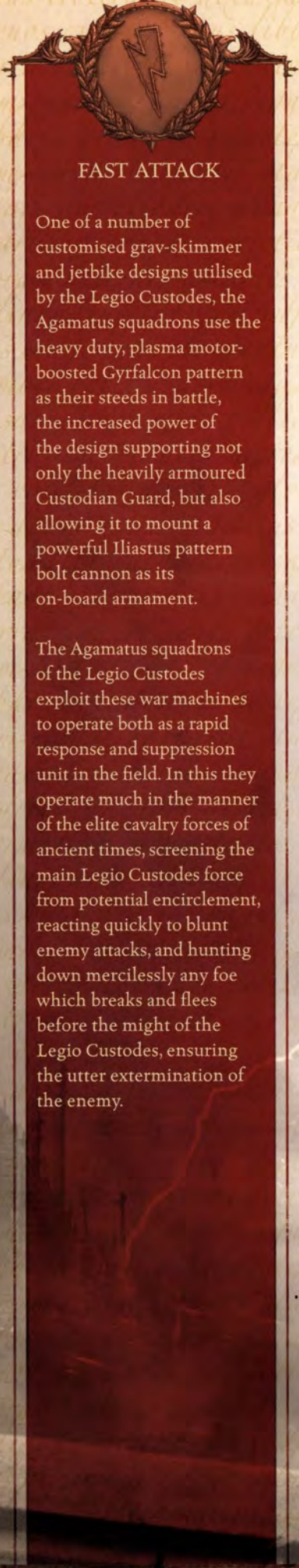
Options

- The Cadre must contain at least three of the following Beast models, and may contain up to three additional Beast models:
 - Cyber-jackals+15 points each
 - Steeltalon Wings+10 points each
- The squad may include an extra three Pursuers+10 points each
- The Pursuer Mistress may take any of the following:
 - Power weapon+10 points
 - Hand flamer+5 points
 - Needle pistol+5 points
 - Plasma pistol+15 points
 - Charnabal sabre+5 points
- One in three Cyber-jackals may be equipped with one of the following weapons:
 - Flamer+15 points each
 - Meltagun+20 points each

FAST ATTACK

The Pursuer cadres are the beast-handlers and hunters of the Silent Sisterhood, called upon to track down a fleeing quarry and either flush them out of hiding for capture or destroy them on sight as needed. As some of the most agile of their Order, they are typically deployed away from the bulk of the detachment among the streets, hab-blocks and alleyways of the targeted city in order to monitor for potential ambushes, those attempting to escape the tithe or other dangers which may threaten the operations of the detachment.

In this pursuit each holds command over a single cyber-jackal or a wing of Steeltalon hawks, and through programmed tap-codes broadcast from a wristpiece, the beasts are directed and their sight and hearing relayed back and displayed so the Pursuers can quickly identify potential signs of refuge or ambush and alert their comrades. The cyber-beasts, as part of their manufacture, are suited to nearly any urban terrain and are often deployed based on the potential usage of their systems. Cyber-jackals are widely used among deployments and are valued both for their endurance and the terror they cause, while Steeltalon wings are frequently designated for use in urban environments with tall hab-blocks, narrow streets and wide stretches of terrain impassable by foot, extending the visual range of the hunting cadres far beyond human ability.



FAST ATTACK

One of a number of customised grav-skimmer and jetbike designs utilised by the Legio Custodes, the Agamatus squadrons use the heavy duty, plasma motor-boosted Gyrfalcons as their steeds in battle, the increased power of the design supporting not only the heavily armoured Custodian Guard, but also allowing it to mount a powerful Iliastus pattern bolt cannon as its on-board armament.

The Agamatus squadrons of the Legio Custodes exploit these war machines to operate both as a rapid response and suppression unit in the field. In this they operate much in the manner of the elite cavalry forces of ancient times, screening the main Legio Custodes force from potential encirclement, reacting quickly to blunt enemy attacks, and hunting down mercilessly any foe which breaks and flees before the might of the Legio Custodes, ensuring the utter extermination of the enemy.

LEGIO CUSTODES AGAMATUS JETBIKE SQUADRON

225 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Custodian Agamatus	5	5	5	6	2	4	2	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Custodian Agamatus

Unit Type

- Jetbike (Character)

Wargear

- Power Lance
- Misericordia
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Legio Custodes Gyrfalcons Jetbike with an Iliastus bolt cannon
- Custodian armour
- Refractor field

Special Rules

- Preternatural Skill
- The Sodality
- Inviolable Psyche
- Deep Strike
- Split Fire
- Sweeping Fire

Options

- The Legio Custodes Agamatus Jetbike Squadron may include:
 - Up to three additional Custodian Agamatus+75 points each
- The entire squad may be given melta bombs+5 points each
- Any Legio Custodes Agamatus Jetbike Squadron may upgrade its Iliastus bolt cannon with one of the following options:
 - Adrathic Devastator+5 points
 - Twin-linked Corvae las-pulser+25 points

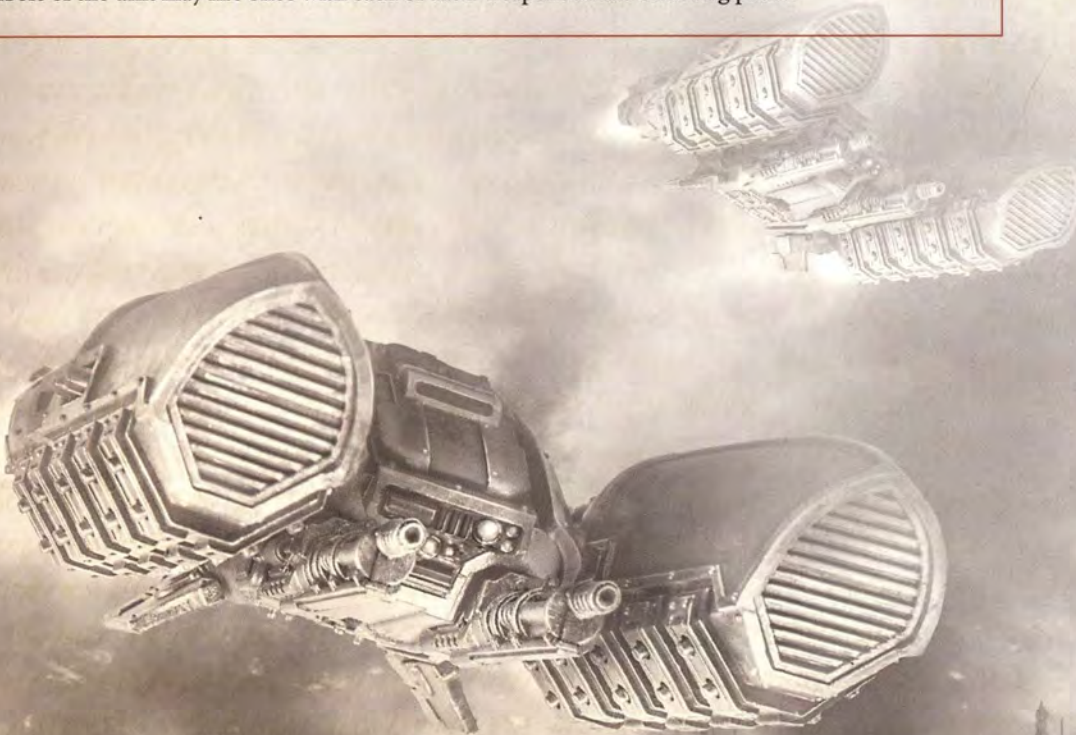
Legio Custodes Gyrfalcons Pattern Jetbike

More powerful even than the Scimitar pattern associated with the Legionones Astartes, the Gyrfalcons is a heavy design akin more to an armoured one-man speeder than a true jetbike. In addition, it augments its grav-repellor systems with a plasma-thrust motor for huge temporary bursts of speed.

The Legio Custodes Gyrfalcons pattern Jetbike operates under the standard rules for Jetbikes found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook. In addition, it increases the rider's Toughness by +1 (this bonus has already been included in the profile shown above) and failed Charge distances may be re-rolled when using the Jetbike.

Sweeping Fire

Members of the unit may fire once with each of their weapons in the Shooting phase.



LEGIO CUSTODES PALLAS GRAV-ATTACK SQUADRON

85 POINTS

Armour

	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Pallas Grav-attack	5	12	11	11	2

Unit Composition

- 1 Pallas Grav-attack

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Skimmer, Fast)

Wargear

- Twin-linked
Arachnus blaze cannon
- Flare shield
- Machine spirit

Special Rules

- Deep Strike
- Outflank
- Grav-backwash

Options

- The Pallas Grav-attack Squadron may include:
 - Up to two additional Pallas Grav-attack vehicles+85 points each
- A Pallas Grav-attack may take any of the following upgrades:
 - Searchlight+1 point
 - Extra armour+5 points
- Any Pallas Grav-attack may exchange its twin-linked Arachnus blaze cannon for a:
 - Twin-linked Adrathic devastator+20 points

Grav-backwash

Unless the vehicle has become Immobilised, attackers suffer a -2 To Hit the vehicle in assault.

FAST ATTACK

Designed as a high manoeuvrability hunter-killer, the Pallas pattern grav-attack squadrons provided the Legio Custodes with a rapid strike capacity greater than that which could be afforded by the use of ground troops alone. Based upon the advanced repulsor-lift technology pioneered by the Coronus, the Pallas' battlefield role came to resemble more that of the usage of the Land Speeder among the Legioness Astartes, relying increasingly on its superior agility to inflict devastating hit-and-run assaults on the enemy or to hunt down fleeing targets. In addition, its abilities allowed the Pallas Grav-attack squadrons to also be used as reconnaissance units or as skirmishing forces large enough to pin or delay the enemy in place as the main bulk of the Legio Custodes detachment was deployed.

Despite its smaller size, the Pallas is surprisingly durable and mounts a very flexible armament configuration, primarily comprising highly adaptable Arachnus blaze cannon, enabling it to successfully engage both infantry and armoured targets. Rarer variants do however exist, including those equipped with extremely powerful Adrathic disintegration beam weapons.

LEGIO CUSTODES PALLAS

PATTERN GRAV-ATTACK

Designed, it is reported, to incorporate advanced manoeuvring and autonomous response systems recovered by the great technoarchaeologist Arkhan Land, the Pallas pattern grav-attack was one of the most recent designs entering service with the Legio Custodes prior to the Burning of Prospero. Clearly based upon the lineage of the Coronus and Caladius grav-vehicles, it was smaller than either, a single-seat high-speed attack skimmer analogous in role to the Land Speeder more commonly employed by the Legiones Astartes.

Designed as a high manoeuvrability hunter-killer, the Pallas pattern grav-attack squadrons provided the Legio Custodes with a greater rapid strike capacity than could be afforded by the use of ground troops alone. In this it replaced standard pattern skimmers as well as larger war machines such as the ancient Jocasta pattern grav-attacks, themselves relics of the Unification Wars, and considerably smaller Hermes

pattern grav-sleds, which while highly agile and swift, offered little in the way of combat survivability. In addition to their relative durability and extreme turn of speed, the Pallas' rounded abilities allowed the grav-attack to also be used as reconnaissance units or as skirmishing forces in larger assault groups to pin or delay the enemy in place as the main bulk of the Legio rallied to meet a threat either in direct confrontation or ambush. The Pallas was also very powerfully armed for a vehicle of its size, with its standard configuration carrying cycle linked Archanus pattern blaze cannon, a highly flexible las weapon able to unleash rapid individual pulses of fire or concentrate into a single blast-beam, allowing it to serve ably as both an anti-infantry and anti-armour device.

It is of some irony perhaps that the Battle of Tizca served as the largest single battlefield deployment of the Pallas grav-attack thus far in its service history, and its power and effectiveness was ultimately tested not

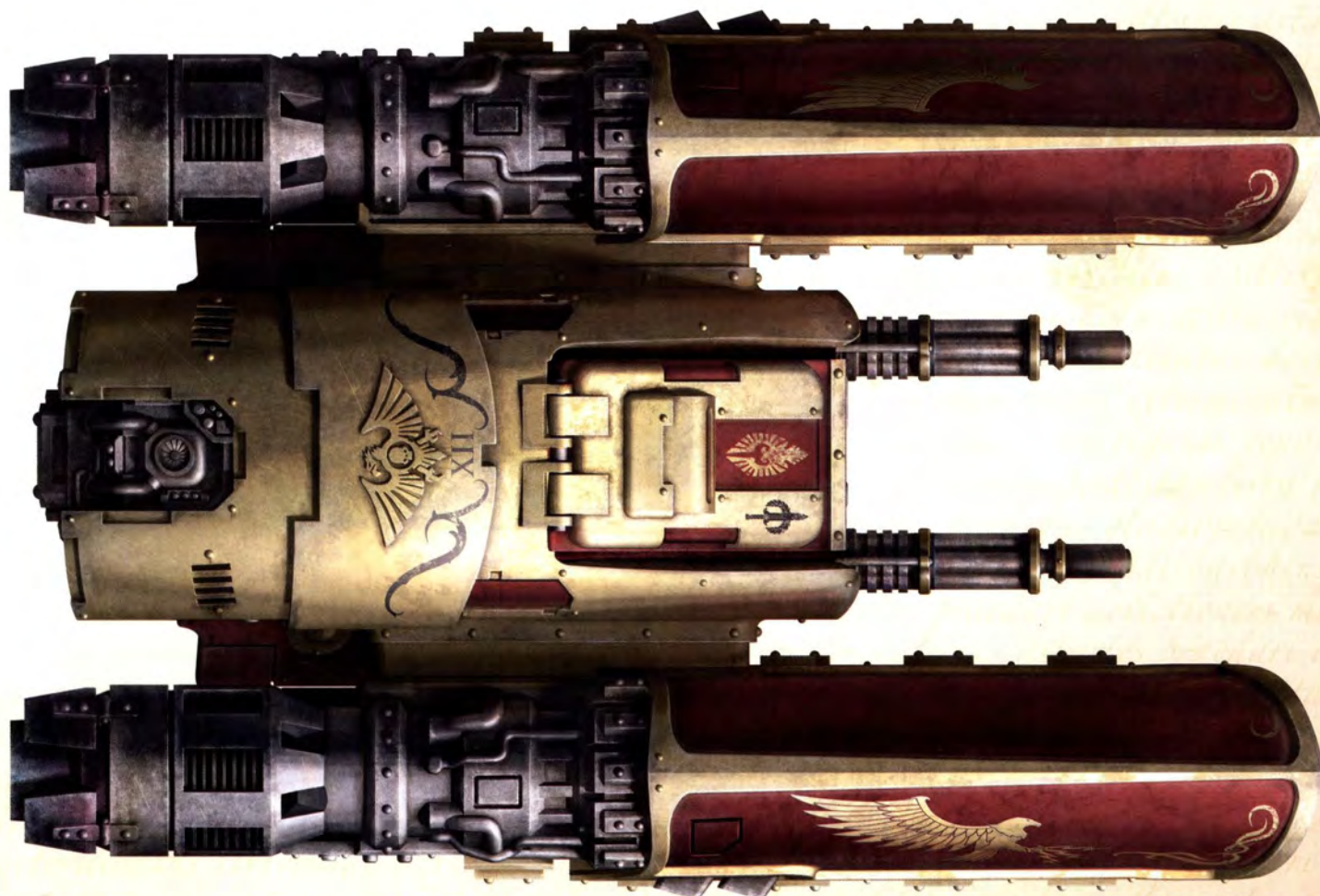
against the xenos, but those who had served the Imperium. Several squadrons were deployed to protect the flanks of the Talons of the Emperor's advance across the already blasted city; here they proved instrumental against the sudden and shattering counter-attacks and ambushes conducted by the Thousand Sons, attacks covered both by the arcane arts and the use of the little-understood portal network which wove across the city. Only the sheer speed and concentrated firepower of the Pallas squadrons were able to match these attacks and prevent disaster for many advancing war parties that were quickly isolated and encircled. As the battle dragged on and the forces of Prospero were at last broken into rout, the by then battered and fire-scorched Pallas squadrons of the Legio Custodes again came into their own, this time as merciless hunters, harrowing the saviours to their ultimate ends.





Pallas Pattern Grav-Attack 'Reshep-Alpha':
Lead Element, the XIIth Lotan Squadron
of the Legio Custodes,
Prosperine Censure Force
Battle of Tizca

Depicted here is the Reshep-Alpha, which, piloted by the Custodian-Adept Sulla Khryukin, fought throughout the Battle of Tizca, shadowing the forces of Constantin Valdor. In addition to the crimson and gold livery of the Legio and the customary raptor and thunderbolt emblems which have long been associated with the praetorians of the Emperor, its position as lead element of the squadron is denoted by the symbol of the Misericordia. This ancient device of the blade and wreath denotes both authority and the right to carry out judgement over any of the Imperium's subjects.





HEAVY SUPPORT

Just as the Sisters of Silence are called upon to hunt, they are also called upon to purge. To this end, the Seeker cadres of the Silent Sisterhood are deployed for the widespread purgation of opposing forces, condemned criminals, tainted abhumans and other gene-threats, as well as the pacification of aggressive, rebellious or resistant crowds and bystanders.

Primarily equipped with flamers or more rarely assault needlers, their secondary tactical function is to deny rogue elements of escape routes, cut off avenues of ambush and prevent encirclement by often numerically superior opposition forces. Even within small detachments, the Seeker cadres are deployed to prevent the interruption of the retrieval of the Imperial Tithe. However, in such instances, they are often presented as a force intended to intimidate the related governing structures and population into compliance through fear rather than having to carry out the promise of death and fire they so obviously represent, though of course they never shirk from this dark duty when it becomes necessary.

SISTERS OF SILENCE SEEKER CADRE

85 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Seeker	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	8	3+
Seeker Mistress	4	4	3	3	1	4	2	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 4 Seekers
- 1 Seeker Mistress

Unit Type

- Seekers: Infantry
- Seeker Mistress: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Flamer
- Close combat weapon
- Frag, krak & psyk-out grenades
- Vratine armour

Special Rules

- Psychic Anathema
- Fanatic Discipline
- Company-Cadre (select one option, see page 248)

Dedicated Transport

- A Sisters of Silence Seeker Cadre may select a Kharon pattern Acquisitor as a Dedicated Transport.

Options

- The Seeker Cadre may include:
 - Up to five additional Seekers+10 points each
- The entire unit may exchange their flamers for:
 - Grenade launchers with frag, krak and psyk-out grenades.....+5 points each
- One model may be equipped with a breaching charge.....+10 points
- The Seeker Mistress may take any of the following:
 - Power weapon.....+10 points
 - Hand flamer+5 points
 - Needle pistol.....+5 points
 - Plasma pistol.....+15 points
 - Charnabal sabre.....+5 points



LEGIO CUSTODES SAGITTARUM GUARD SQUAD

185 points

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Sagittarum Guard	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	9	2+

Unit Composition

- 3 Sagittarum Guard

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Adrastus bolt caliver
- Misericordia
- Refractor field
- Plasma & krak grenades
- Custodes armour

Special Rules

- Legio Custodes
- Bulky
- Crusader

Dedicated Transport

- A Coronus Grav-carrier may be chosen as a Dedicated Transport for a Sagittarum Guard Squad if they number six models or less.

Options

- The Sagittarum Guard Squad may include:
 - Up to seven additional Sagittarum Guard.....+65 points each
- The entire Sagittarum Guard Squad may be equipped with any of the following options:
 - Melta bombs.....+5 points each
 - Arae-shrikes+2 points each
 - Teleportation Transponders+5 points each
- One member of the Sagittarum Guard Squad may exchange their Adrastus bolt caliver for an:
 - Adrathic destructor and a Magisterium vexilla.....+5 points

HEAVY SUPPORT

Though less common within the ranks of the Legio Custodes than their peers, those warriors who comprise the Sagittarum Guard Sodalities nevertheless fulfil a number of vital roles within the Legio's order of battle. Their art of war, in contrast to the rest of the Custodian Guard, is focussed on the slaying of the foe primarily at distance and upon the devastating application of firepower on the battlefield.

In addition to this, the Sagittarum have entered legend as the hawk-sighted sentries of the Terran walls, charged with vigilance over the external borders of the Imperial Palace in ready anticipation of attack. Through decades of duty, their ability to recall movement patterns, faces and speech even years after the original incident was honed even more so than that of their peers, and as such their enhanced ability to analyse crowds for anticipated response grew in import upon the battlefields of the Great Crusade. The oversight cultivated on the walls of the Imperial Palace served to ensure that their presence among the detachments of the Emperor's guard was tailored to precisely excise the greatest threats of the enemy assault, annihilating it in the actinic fire of weapons the likes of which had not been seen in such concentration since the dreaded Dark Age of Technology.

LEGIO CUSTODES CALADIUS GRAV-TANK

195 POINTS



HEAVY SUPPORT

Based upon the technology of the Coronus, the smaller Caladius grav-tank is designed to utilise the firepower afforded by the heaviest elements of the Legio Custodes' arsenal on a highly mobile, protected platform. Given the fusion of advanced systems and weapons, the Caladius is perhaps the most powerful battleline armoured unit of its size in the Imperium's forces, utilising technologies and materials derived not only from the Dark Age of Technology, but from developments made as a result of the Great Crusade's two centuries of warfare.

The principal armament of the Caladius is a double-barrelled accelerator cannon, an advanced weapon which became a precursor to the more mass-produced cannon retro-developed into the armament of the Legiones Astartes Sicaran tank, which fulfils a similar role to the Caladius as a high speed armour-destroyer. A less common variant is the 'Caladius-Annihilator' which featured an enhanced capacitor-fed Arachnus blaze cannon potent that is enough to pose a threat even to super-heavy armour.

Armour

	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Caladius Grav-tank	5	13	13	11	3

Unit Composition

- 1 Caladius Grav-tank

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Skimmer, Fast)

Wargear

- Twin-linked Lastrum bolt cannon
- Turret-mounted twin-linked Iliastus accelerator cannon
- Flare shield
- Machine spirit

Special Rules

- Deep Strike
- Outflank
- Grav-backwash

Options

- A Caladius Grav-tank may take any of the following upgrades:
 - Armoured ceramite.....+20 points
 - Searchlight.....+1 point
 - Extra armour.....+5 points
- A Caladius Grav-tank may exchange its Iliastus accelerator cannon for a:
 - Twin-linked Arachnus heavy blaze cannon.....+15 points

Grav-backwash

Unless the vehicle has become Immobilised, attackers suffer a -2 To Hit it in assault.



LEGIO CUSTODES CONTEMPTOR-GALATUS DREADNOUGHT

250 POINTS

	Armour								
	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Galatus Dreadnought	6	5	8	13	13	11	5	4	3

Unit Composition

- 1 Contemptor-Galatus Dreadnought

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Walker)

Wargear

- One Galatus warblade with inbuilt twin-linked infernus incinerator
- Dreadnought Praesidium shield
- Smoke launchers
- Searchlight
- Refractor field
- Extra armour

Special Rules

- Fleet
- Move Through Cover
- Counter-attack

Galatus Warblade

A huge power blade wielded by the Dreadnought as easily as a Sentinel Guard might their own sword, the Galatus' signature weapon is able to shear through ranks of armoured troops with a single pass, while its inbuilt incinerator units are equally designed to swiftly purge a numerically superior enemy.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Galatus warblade	Melee	x2	2	Melee, Shred, Rampage

Dreadnought Praesidium Shield

Essentially a scaled-up version of the prototype energy field reinforced battle shield carried by the Sentinel Guard of the Legio Custodes, the Dreadnought Praesidium shield makes the Contemptor-Galatus a truly formidable defensive element in any Legio Custodes battleline; a bulwark upon which the strongest shock attack might break and shatter.

When subject to attacks originating in its Front arc, or in assault, the model may re-roll failed invulnerable saves. In addition, attacks made in assault against it, other than by Gargantuan units, suffer a -1 penalty to hit – note that this penalty has no effect on attacks which hit automatically.

HEAVY SUPPORT

A sub-variant of the Contemptor-Achillus, the Contemptor-Galatus is designed to provide a mobile anchor point for a Legio Custodes battleline in the field. To this end, the Galatus is analogous to the armament and role of the specialised Sentinel Guard formations of the Legio Custodes, and is armed with a potent combination of a huge power blade and a vastly enlarged version of the Praesidium shield. The warblade allows the Contemptor-Galatus to swiftly and efficiently reap a murderous toll of any massed infantry assault at close quarters, or indeed hack through armoured vehicles and monstrous xenos with equal ease. It is the defensive power of the hulking Praesidium shield however that is the Contemptor-Galatus' most singular feature, as with it the already durable Contemptor chassis becomes nigh on impregnable, even against the heaviest heavy firepower.

WARLORD-SINISTER PATTERN BATTLE PSI-TITAN

3,250 POINTS

LORDS OF WAR

A weapon of such hidden terror and secrecy that few even within the Imperium's hierarchy suspect its existence, the Warlord-Sinister is a thing that should not be. It represents the fusion of the most powerful battlefield military technology known to the Imperium — the Titans of Mars — and the 'weaponised' power of bound alpha-grade psykers enslaved and bled dry like living batteries by forbidden arcane technologies. Such arts, the merest hint of which would be a death warrant for their creator, are never usually suffered to exist, save that in this one case the terror is permitted, for the hand that ordains it is the Emperor's, and its use is committed to one of the most covert and macabre of all the Imperium's agencies of war and political control – the Ordo Sinister.

The apotheosis of this dark science and malign harvest is given shape in the body of the Warlord-Sinister, a variant of the more widely known Warlord main battle Titan, making it the only known 'Psi-Titan' to be fielded by the Imperium, in small numbers, prior to the Horus Heresy, though rumours persisted as to the existence of other prototypes and experimental patterns hidden even from the eyes of the mighty and the powerful on Terra.

Armour

	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Warlord-Sinister	2	4	D	15	15	14	1	3	30

Unit Composition

- 1 Warlord-Sinister

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

Wargear

- One right arm-mounted Belicosa pattern volcano cannon
- One left arm-mounted Sinistramanus Tenebrae
- Two carapace-mounted apocalypse missile launchers
- Two Ardex-defensor mauler bolt cannon turrets
- Two rear-mounted Ardex-defensor twin-linked lascannon turrets
- Armoured ceramite
- The Ciricrux Anima

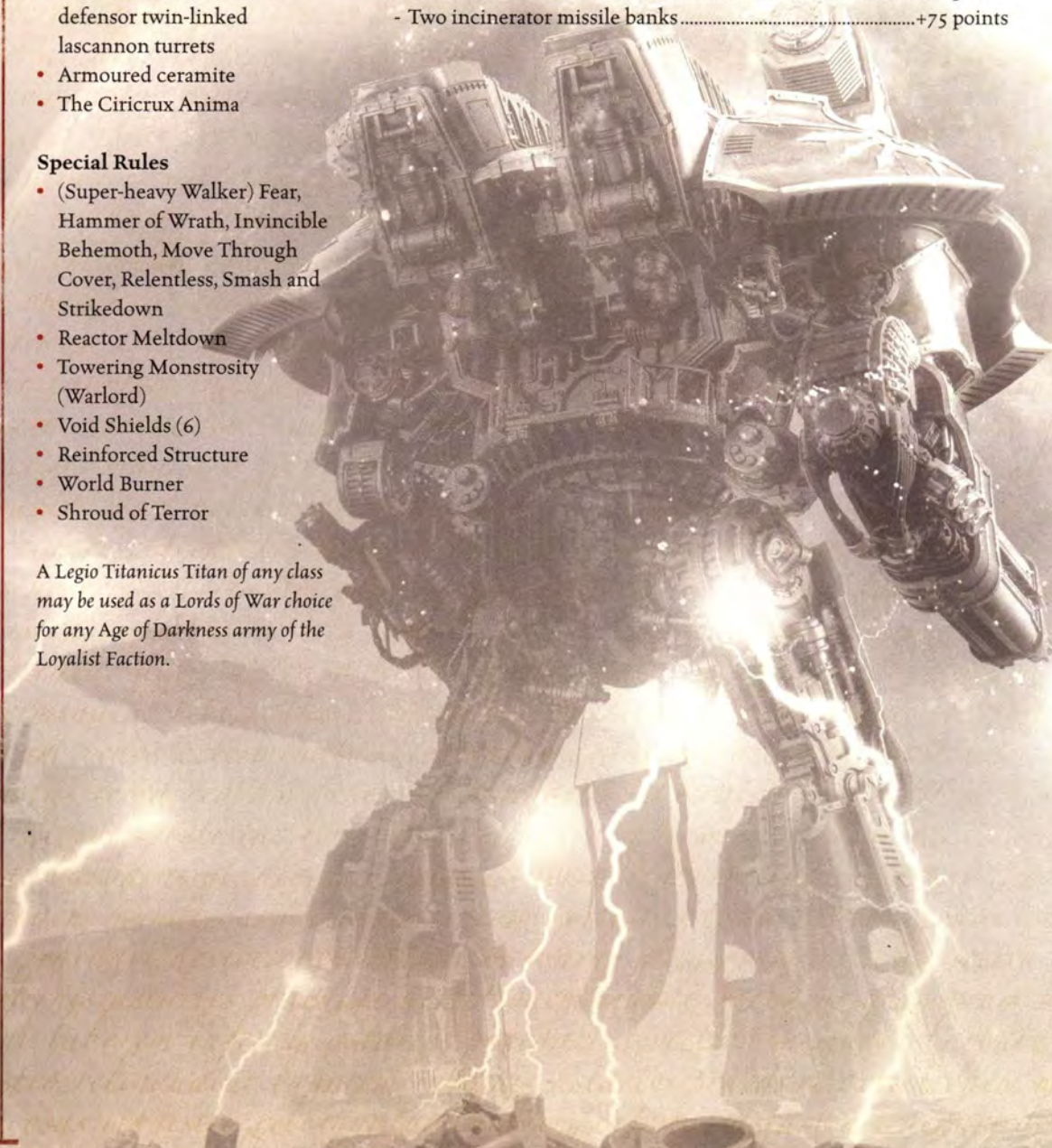
Special Rules

- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown
- Reactor Meltdown
- Towering Monstrosity (Warlord)
- Void Shields (6)
- Reinforced Structure
- World Burner
- Shroud of Terror

A Legio Titanicus Titan of any class may be used as a Lords of War choice for any Age of Darkness army of the Loyalist Faction.

Options

- The arm-mounted Belicosa pattern volcano cannon may be exchanged for one of the following weapons:
 - Sunfury plasma annihilator..... Free
 - Mori quake cannon..... Free
 - Saturnyne lascutter..... Free
 - Arioch Titan power claw with inbuilt megabolter..... Free
 - Macro-gatling blaster..... Free
- Both of the carapace-mounted apocalypse missile launchers may be exchanged for any of the following weapon types:
 - Two double-barrelled turbo laser destructors..... Free
 - Two twin-linked vulcan mega-bolters..... Free
 - Two Titan plasma blastguns..... Free
 - Two Reaver laser blasters..... +100 points
 - Two Reaver melta cannon..... +100 points
 - Two Reaver gatling blasters..... +100 points
 - Two vortex missile banks..... +150 points
 - Two incinerator missile banks..... +75 points



SPECIAL RULES

Reactor Meltdown

The vast mass and barely contained power of the Warlord Titan itself presents a lethal danger should it be slain, beyond that even of others of its ilk. Because of this, instead of using the normal Catastrophic Damage table for Super-heavy vehicles, use the table presented below instead. In all cases, the Warlord Titan model remains on the table as impassable terrain after it is destroyed. The radius effect of the Warlord's explosion does not use the usual Apocalyptic Mega-blast marker either. Instead, measure distances from the centre of the Warlord's hull as a starting point with the Blast ranges of 12"/24"/36" respectively.

Warlord Catastrophic Damage Table

D6	Result	S	AP
1	Explosion	D/8/4	2/3/5
2-3	Devastating Explosion	D/10/6	2/3/4
4-6	Titanic Explosion	D/D/D	1/2/2

Void Shields (6)

While the model's void shields are active, any hits scored by shooting attacks against it strike its void shields instead. The Warlord has six void shields, each with an Armour value of 12. A glancing hit or penetrating hit or any hit by a Destroyer weapon scored against a shield causes it to collapse. After this, further hits strike the original target instead. At the end of each of its controlling player's turns, roll a D6 for each collapsed shield – a roll of 5+ instantly restores it.

Reinforced Structure

The Warlord Titan has an invulnerable save of 5+ against any attacks that have breached its void shields.

World Burner

The Warlord Titan may use any of its Blast marker weapons to target areas of the battlefield rather than enemy units if it wishes, including buildings and ruins, etc.

Towering Monstrosity (Warlord)

The Warlord Titan's colossal size, incalculable power and superior design make it extremely difficult to harm from ground level, with its vital systems elevated far above the heads and hulls of those upon the battlefield below it, while its legs are plated with metres-thick armour to prevent it from being assailed by infantry or laid low by explosive charges. As well as the usual rules for Super-heavy Walkers, the following rules are also in effect:

- The Warlord Titan may only be hit on a 6 by Infantry and Monstrous Creatures of any type in an assault, and on a 5 or 6 by Super-heavy Walkers and Gargantuan Creatures in an assault.
- The Warlord Titan may never be locked in an assault.
- The Warlord Titan is completely immune to the effects of Haywire attacks, dangerous terrain, and psychic attacks other than Witchfire powers, which must attempt to damage it normally.
- The Warlord Titan's Stomp attacks use the Large Blast (5") template.
- The Warlord Titan's carapace-mounted weapons may not target models closer than 24" from its hull, unless they are Flyers, Flying Monstrous Creatures or other Super-heavy vehicles or Gargantuan Monstrous Creatures.



THE CIRICRUX ANIMA

In place of the moderatii who would normally crew a battle Titan, a Psi-Titan is instead crewed by the damned: bound psykers who are surgically locked in place and slaved to the will of the Preceptor-Intendant who masters the god-engine in place of a Princeps. By direct cortical control, the powers of the slaved psykers are siphoned off and focused by the arcane technologies of the Ciricrux Anima, the baleful device that truly makes the Psi-Titan what it is.

The Warlord-Sinister has the Psychic Pilot special rule and a psychic Mastery Level of 3. Instead of generating its powers from psychic disciplines as normal, it always has access to the three unique powers listed here instead:

Death Pulse

Warp Charge 1

The Psi-Titan unleashes a seething pulse of energy: the hatred and murderous torment of the psykers trapped within made manifest.

Death Pulse is a **Nova** power with the following profile:

	Range	Str	AP	Type
Death Pulse	24"	4	5	Assault D6, Ignores Cover, Soul Blaze

Necrotechica

Warp Charge 2

Ghostly light courses across the Psi-Titan's hull, re-knitting shattered armour and making new again what was damaged. Meanwhile, the discordant screams of those trapped within echo in the minds of all nearby – for the price is that those damned within have years bled from their own lives to shore up the bars of their prison.

Necrotechica is a **Blessing** which only targets the Psi-Titan. Roll a D6 for every Hull Point the Titan has previously lost. For each roll of a 5+, one Hull Point is immediately regained.

Antipathic Tempest

Warp Charge 3

Unhallowed lightning and hurricane-force winds tear about the Psi-Titan's head and upper carapace, crowning it in a halo of storm which it can hurl out at its foes with baleful force, scattering men and machines before it like toys.

Antipathic Tempest is a **Witchfire** which targets a point on the table between 24" and 60" away from the Psi-Titan. All units, including Flyers, etc, within 24" of the target point are affected. All vehicles suffer D3 automatic hits with the Haywire special rule (AP 4, Ignores Cover), while all units with a Toughness value suffer D6 automatic hits per five full models in the unit (Str 5 AP 4, Ignores Cover, Soul Blaze).

SHROUD OF TERROR

Such is the psychically amplified shroud of soul-deep terror that hangs about a Psi-Titan, even the strongest-willed soldiers will break and flee in panic if close to the war machine, while the very air of the cities in which they tread becomes haunted by the nameless dread of their presence.

Unless it is immune to Fear, any unit which is within 12" of the Psi-Titan at the start of their controlling player's turn must take a Morale check. In addition, unless immune to Fear, any unit attempting to charge a Psi-Titan must pass a Leadership test at -3 first before doing so. If the test is failed, the unit must Fall Back instead as if it had failed a Morale check.

The Sinistramanus Tenebrae

This unique and nightmarishly powerful weapon, whose designation in common parlance can be literally rendered 'the left hand of darkness', in part perhaps to its customary position on the modified Warlord's armament configuration, is the Psi-Titan's most feared aspect. It is a hybrid of strange technologies, more akin to a mutilated warp engine in design than a conventional weapon, incorporating numerous systems of unattributable and most likely xenos origins, and the Emperor and perhaps He alone knows the truth of how they were acquired. What is known is that the weapon requires the unified minds of cybernetically networked psykers carried onboard the Titan to concentrate and control its destructive energies successfully, and in this there have been those who have compared it to the fearful Animus-speculum of the Culexus in design. Regardless, whatever is struck by the baleful power of the Sinistramanus Tenebrae is torn apart and its debris hurled into the beyond as surely as if they were blasted by a vortex missile, while those in the wider area of the impact are simply struck dead, their bodies left unmarked as if their souls had been sheared from their bodies.

Weapon

Range Str AP Type

Sinistramanus Tenebrae	120 D/X*/X**1/2/3	Heavy 1, Apocalyptic Mega Blast, Pinning, Ignores Cover, Concussive, Vortex (Inner circle only), *Fleshbane (2+) (Middle circle only), **Poison (4+) (Outer circle only)
---------------------------	-------------------	--





LEGIO CUSTODES CONTEMPTOR-GALATUS DREADNOUGHT

MORITOI PREFECTUS VETTRANIO SHAPURA
OF THE ÆRANSHAHR CHAMBER OF THE LEGIO CUSTODES

Shapura, once a Prefect and senior officer of the Legio Custodes, was a figure of some legend within the annals of the Great Crusade. His was the distinction of being perhaps the third or fourth of the Custodian Guard (records differ) ever to be interned within the sarcophagus of a Dreadnought. The glory of his fall was that it occurred in the act of protecting the Emperor Himself from direct bodily harm during a perfidious attack in which the Imperial flagship, the *Bucephalus*, was successfully boarded by the forces of the xenos Rykogene with the aim of slaying the Master of Mankind. It was an attack for which the species would ultimately pay for by its extinction. The honour of the Ferrum Aquila, seen on the shield his Dreadnought-form carries, attests to Vettranio Shapura's sacrifice still.



MECHANICUM TAGHMATA

RULES APPENDIX

THE SECUTARII TITAN GUARD

'There is no truth in flesh,
Only betrayal,
There is no strength in flesh,
Only weakness,
There is no constancy in flesh,
Only decay,
There is no certainty in flesh but
death.'

Credo Ommissiah

A military formation developed in parallel with the Skitarii Legions of Mars in the lost and ancient days long before the Imperium was founded, the Secutarii were created as the honour guard and protectors of the Titan Legions. While the power of Titans is absolute upon the battlefield, their sheer scale and prominence leads to certain vulnerabilities and needs the Secutarii are designed to meet. The foremost of these is close protection and defence—not against war machines and the serried legions of an enemy—the Titans themselves are more than capable of eradicating such foes, but from covert assault, infiltration and ambushade. For beset suddenly and at close range by swarms of well-armed infantry even a Titan can fall, as a mighty beast might be felled by venomous insects.

The Secutarii's second battlefield role, almost as important as the first, is to sweep and destroy in the Titans' wake. For while a battle Titan might shatter a mighty fortress or blast a tank company to ruin, it is for the Secutarii to pursue and eradicate such threats its survivors might still pose as the Titans press on to more important targets, and to hunt down and slay those who seek to flee from the Machine God's wrath.

The third, perhaps less prominent but still vital role the Secutarii serve is as part of a more general auxiliary force including the Titan Autokratoris magos of the Machine Cult and the Scutarii machine-labour corps who attend to the sustenance, repair, re-arming and refuelling of the Legio's Titans in the field. Here it is the sworn duty of the Secutarii to defend the Titan force's landing fields and supply lines from assault, as well as reach the hulks of damaged or disabled Titans on the battlefield and defend them from plunder or sabotage by the enemy. It is also considered a sacred charge by the Secutarii to assist and if needs be retrieve any Titan crew who have been forced to abandon their god-engines or who have been left in their wreckage, alive or dead. It is a task in which the Secutarii consider their own lives utterly expendable in order to accomplish.

The history of the Secutarii Titan Guard is an ancient one, and though they were developed and deployed first in the lost past of the Age of Strife, it was in the later glories of the Great Crusade that they reached their zenith. At the height of the Imperium's power, each fully operating Titan Legion possessed its own attendant regiments of Secutarii. Just as the apocalyptic conflict of the Horus Heresy sundered the might of the Space Marine Legions, so it did the Legio Titanicus, splitting the Legios' allegiance between Traitor and Loyalist in fratricidal bloodshed, and with them the Secutarii fought and died on both sides of the war, faultlessly loyal to the god-machines alongside which they had long served.

The Corpus Secutarii

Much as with the Skitarii, in whose origins they share, the Secutarii undergo a high level of cybernetic rebuild, with the majority of their organs and tissues either significantly augmented or outright replaced with circuit, bio-plastic and metal. This is to them a fanatical sign of their faith in the Ommissiah, the Machine God in whose soaring avatars—the Titans of the Legio in which they serve—are a daily focus for veneration and blessed submission. The particular alterations of form and peculiarities of the cybernetics which infuse their bodies vary greatly, save for one device, the Kyropatris field generator, which while visually taking the form of a backpack, it is actually fully integrated into a Secutarii's ribcage and chest cavity. This harmonic field generator creates an atmospheric impedance barrier which is capable of deflecting projectiles, blast fragmentation and similar debris before they strike the Secutarii, and at greater field density, even deflecting heavy weapons fire and powerful kinetic waves like an invisible wall. The secret of this device's power is that a single Kyropatris field generator is alone of little effect, but in proximity to others attuned to its wavelength, the energy form is amplified and woven together with those around it like armoured mail, granting it a defensive potency that allows the Secutarii to endure in the tempestuous and savage battlefields in which they are expected to operate.

USING THE SECUTARII IN AGE OF DARKNESS BATTLES

Secutarii units may be included in the Taghmata Ommissiah army list and its Ordo Reductor variant, but unless the Detachment they are part of also includes a Titan (of any classification), they may not be used to fill compulsory choices as part of a Force Organisation chart.

SECUTARII SPECIAL RULES AND WARGEAR

Titan Guard

To the Secutarii, the guardianship of the god-engines of the Legio Titanicus is a sacred charge which spurs them on to a fervour which overcomes any fear for frailty of flesh.

When any unit with this special rule is within 24" of an allied Titan of any type, they may re-roll failed Morale checks and Feel No Pain rolls.

Secutarii Hazard Protocols

At the start of their player turn, a player can declare that all of their Secutarii with this special rule will engage hazard protocols, using their implants to create seamless fields of interlocking fire, although at the expense of individual action. Where this is the case, their standard BS is increased by +1 and they may make Snap Shots at BS 2. However, the units may not make Run moves, and their WS and Initiative are reduced by -1. These effects last until the start of the controlling player's next player turn.

The Kyropatris field

So long as a unit contains at least five models equipped with a Kyropatris field generator, all models in the unit may re-roll failed armour saves of a 1. In addition, if the unit contains at least 10 models equipped with Kyropatris field generators then shooting attacks against them are reduced by -1 Strength.

Omnispex

Cover saves taken against attacks made by a unit that contains at least one model equipped with an omnisplex are made with a -1 modifier.

ARMS OF THE WARRIORS OF MARS

The officers and adjutants of the Secutarii bear a variety of unusual weapons seldom seen outside of the panoply of the armies of Mars, and these patterns are held as reliquaries of the Ommissiah's faith by the Titan Legions and their retainers. Where such arms cannot be easily obtained owing to distance or some doctrinal schism, they will be supplanted by even more esoteric weapons provided by the masters of the Taghmata.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Arc pistol	12"	6	5	Pistol, Haywire
Arc rifle	12"	6	5	Rapid Fire, Haywire
Radium pistol	12"	3	5	Pistol, Rad Poisoning
Radium carbine	18"	3	5	Assault 3, Rad Poisoning
Arc maul	—	+2	4	Melee, Concussive, Haywire
Shattersphere grenades	8"	4	5	Assault 1, Blast (3"), Pinning, Rad Poisoning

Rad Poisoning: When firing a weapon that has this special rule, a To Wound roll of 6 causes 2 wounds on the target unit, regardless of the target's Toughness. Each wound is allocated and saved against separately.



'Thy shall not suffer a Machine to Think!

For ruin shall be its purpose and accursed be the work.'

Archmagos Takashi Ludd;
Castigation upon
the Logistica Corpus



'In Aeternem Ferra Mortis'

Maxim Cybernetica

Galvanic-caster

This is an electro-galvanically driven, laser-guided multi-function projectile launcher akin in some ways to a combi-weapon. With its main weapon mechanism, it is able to fire rapid bursts of low velocity, razor-edged metallic flachettes, or with its secondary discharger, attack concealed targets with retina-burning ignis charges. Some of these weapons are further upgraded with a high-intensity capacitor and, by compressing the galvanic charge, can fire an armour-piercing inert slug-shot at supersonic velocities. This complex but flexible weapon system allows the Secutarii Peltasts to engage a wide variety of targets with lethal effect.

The galvanic-caster has several weapon profiles depending on which ammunition is selected for use – the entire squad must use the same type of ammunition when firing.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Galvanic-caster				
- Flachette burster	24"	2	–	Salvo 2/4, Shred
- Ignis blaze	18"	3	5	Heavy 1, Parabolic Shot, Blind, Blast (3")
- Kinetic hammershot	30"	4	3	Heavy 1, Rending

Parabolic Shot: Weapons with this special rule can be fired at targets out of the unit's line of sight, so long as they are not in an enclosed space.

Arc Lance

A powerful spear-like weapon, akin both to the arc mauls of the Skitarii Clade officers and the far larger weapons wielded by the mighty Cerastus Knight-Lancers, the arc lance inflicts damage by short-range blasts of coruscating energy, its power supply augmented by the inversion generatoria mounted in the paired mag-inverter shield.

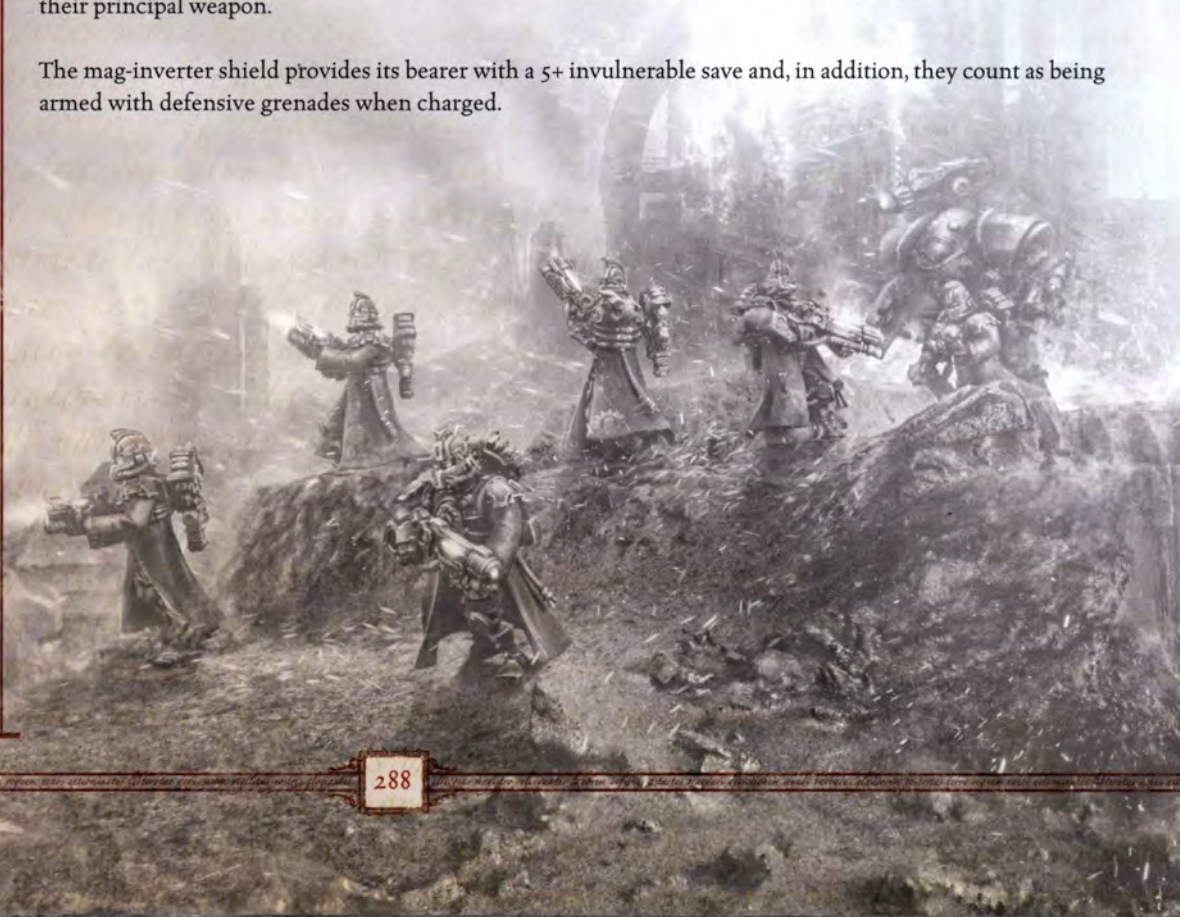
The arc lance has two weapon profiles depending on whether it is used to make shooting attacks or close combat attacks.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Arc lance				
- Close combat	–	+1	4	Melee, Concussive, Haywire
- Shooting attack	12"	5	5	Assault 1, Haywire

Mag-inverter Shield

The mag-inverter shield carried by the Secutarii is a highly sophisticated relic technology incorporating a powerful inversion generatoria at its core. This generator is sufficient both to enhance the resilience of the shield far beyond the limits of its material strength, so it may resist blows which would otherwise slay its bearer instantly, and further provide the copious power needed by the arc lance carried by the Hoplite as their principal weapon.

The mag-inverter shield provides its bearer with a 5+ invulnerable save and, in addition, they count as being armed with defensive grenades when charged.



SECUTARII AXIARCH

60 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Secutarii Axiarch	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	9	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 Secutarii Axiarch

Unit Type

- Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Refractor field
- Arc maul
- Radium pistol
- Kyropatris field generator
- Titanshard armour

Special Rules

- Secutarii Hazard Protocols
- Titan Guard
- Binaric Stratagems
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Stubborn
- Precision Shots

Options

- The Secutarii Axiarch may exchange their radium pistol for one of the following weapons:
 - Arc pistol +5 points
 - Volkite serpenta Free
 - Photon gauntlet +5 points
 - Archaeotech pistol +5 points
- The Secutarii Axiarch may exchange their arc maul for one of the following weapons:
 - Power weapon Free
 - Corposant stave Free
 - Power fist +5 points
- The Secutarii Axiarch may alternatively exchange both their radium pistol and arc maul for an:
 - Arc lance and mag-inverter shield +15 points
- The Secutarii Axiarch may upgrade a single weapon to be:
 - Master-crafted +5 points
- The Secutarii Axiarch may be equipped with any of the following:
 - Omnipex +10 points
 - Shattersphere grenades +5 points
 - Augury scanner +5 points



HQ

Tactical command of larger Secutarii forces is commonly devolved to a field officer known as an Axiarch. The process of their selection is perhaps an unsurprisingly arcane one given the nature of the Mechanicum, and concerns considerably more than merely rewarding meritorious service or recognising particular skill or experience as it might be in a more commonplace military formation.

As well as having displayed perfect dedication and application of the Secutarii's arts of war, they must also have served in a battlefield operation where a fallen Titan has been successfully recovered or protected in the very teeth of the enemy; the most holy act a Secutarii can perform. Also, the potential candidate must be examined both for doctrinal purity in the Omnissiah's faith and biological adaptability for additional augmentation by cybernetic means, and even then the Legio's Logiseers must thoroughly examine the individual by binaric prognostication to establish if the auspices are favourable.

Only if all of these criteria are met are they remade to a Machine Cult-ordained pattern. Rebuilt so that very little of the living being remains and they become an inhumanly stalwart, all but indestructible soldier likened both in fabricated body and machine spirit-ridden psyche to the god-engines they are charged to protect.

Binaric Stratagems

As well as the Axiarch's own wealth of strategic experience, the datacores which have been surgically implanted in replacement for parts of their cerebellum contain dedicated stores of tactical doctrines and historical information on the myriad foes their Titan Legion has faced in the past. Such programs can be accessed and stratagems enacted based upon them before battle by being downloaded directly to the forebrains of the Secutarii under their command.

If the Detachment contains one or more Secutarii Axiarchs then all units in the Detachment with the Secutarii Hazard Protocols special rule may be given one of the following bonuses. Note that only a single bonus may be given to the units, regardless of how many Secutarii Axiarchs are present in the Detachment:

- **Pain Suppression Override:** Feel No Pain increased to 5+.
- **Explorator Synaesthesia:** Gains the Move Through Cover special rule.
- **Deconstructive Confluence:** Results on the Vehicle Damage table inflicted by models with this ability are at +1.
- **Extinction Interlock:** The unit gains the Preferred Enemy (Infantry) special rule.

Titanshard Armour

Each and every Secutarii Axiarch is sheathed in Titanshard armour, Secutarii warplate re-forged with fragments of one of the Legio's Titans fallen in glorious battle, and whose revered remains were successfully preserved for the Legio by the blood and faith of the Secutarii who now bears the armour. As a masterwork of the Titan Tech-Priests' art, it offers a defence equal to the power armour of the Legiones Astartes and, furthermore, something of the god-engine's near-indestructibility and bellicose machine spirit still haunts the armour, making the Axiarch something truly inhuman.

Titanshard armour raises the Axiarch's physical powers beyond human levels (these bonuses have already been included in their profile's characteristics) and, in addition, it grants them the It Will Not Die special rule.



SECUTARII PELTAST PHALANX

120 POINTS

TROOPS

If the Secutarii Hoplite phalanxes are the anvil on which the lesser enemies of the Titan Legions who would try to swarm the god-engines are broken, their Peltast brethren are a hammer that strikes those who would try to lurk in the shadows or utilise speed to effect ambush. Using powerful and adaptable weapons unseen elsewhere in the arsenals of the Imperium, their principal tactics centre around concentrated firepower which they use to saturate target areas to neutralise any threat that may be concealed in cover, and to root out enemies too small or too dispersed for the war machines of the Titan Legions to easily match.

They are also employed to reach, encircle and defend their master's fallen god-engines and rescue their valuable crew; tasks in which they consider the coin of their lives well spent in achieving. Such are the Secutarii Peltasts' expertise in commando operations, defence in extremis and battlefield reclamation that their services are also called on by the magos of the Taghmata, via ties of fealty and patronage to their governing Titan Legion.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Secutarii Peltast	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	8	4+
Peltast Alpha	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	9	4+

Unit Composition

- 9 Secutarii Peltasts
- 1 Peltast Alpha

Unit Type

- Secutarii Peltast: Infantry
- Peltast Alpha: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Galvanic-caster with flachette burster & ignis blaze rounds
- Kyropatris field generator
- Secutarii war plate

Special Rules

- Secutarii Hazard Protocols
- Titan Guard
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Relentless
- Blind Barrage

Dedicated Transport

- A Secutarii Peltast Phalanx may take a Triaros Armoured Conveyor as a Dedicated Transport for +135 points.

Options

- The Secutarii Peltast Squad may include:
 - Up to 10 additional Secutarii Peltasts +11 points per model
- The entire squad may be upgraded to have:
 - Kinetic hammershot rounds for their galvanic-casters +3 points each (If this option is taken, all galvanic-casters in the unit must be so upgraded).
- Any model in the squad may exchange their galvanic-caster for a:
 - Radium carbine Free
 - Arc rifle +10 points each
- The Peltast Alpha may take one of the following additional weapons options:
 - Radium pistol +5 points
 - Arc pistol +10 points
 - Volkite serpenta +5 points
- The Peltast Alpha may exchange their galvanic-caster for an:
 - Arc maul or a power weapon Free
- The Peltast Alpha may be equipped with any of the following:
 - Refractor field +10 points
 - Omnispeex +10 points
 - Shattersphere grenades +5 points
 - Augury scanner +5 points

Blind Barrage

In addition to their standard panoply of shells and munitions, Secutarii Peltasts carry a limited supply of blind canister shot. These explode into dense storms of thick particulate multi-spectrum electromagnetic radiation that occlude both sight and augury scans. These storms of flickering fog can confuse the most able targeting system and utterly blind the enemy to their intended target.

So long as the unit contains at least five models equipped with galvanic-casters, once per game the unit's controlling player may declare the use of a Blind Barrage by the unit instead of that unit firing its weapons in the Shooting phase. In this case, select a friendly unit within 18" and within line of sight of the Peltast unit. That friendly unit gains the Shrouded special rule until the beginning of the controlling player's next player turn. Super-heavy units may not be Shrouded unless two Secutarii units simultaneously use their Blind Barrage ability to conceal it.

SECUTARII HOPLITE PHALANX

130 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Secutarii Hoplite	3	4	3	3	1	3	1	8	4+
Hoplite Alpha	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	9	4

Unit Composition

- 9 Secutarii Hoplites
- 1 Hoplite Alpha

Unit Type

- Secutarii Hoplite: Infantry
- Hoplite Alpha: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Arc lance
- Mag-inverter shield
- Kyropatris field generator
- Secutarii war plate

Special Rules

- Secutarii Hazard Protocols
- Titan Guard
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Relentless

Dedicated Transport

- A squad of Secutarii Hoplites may take a Triaros Armoured Conveyor as a Dedicated Transport for +135 points.

Options

- The Secutarii Hoplite Phalanx may include:
 - Up to 10 additional Secutarii Hoplites.....+12 points per model
- The Hoplite Alpha may take one of the following additional weapons options:
 - Radium pistol.....+5 points
 - Arc pistol.....+10 points
 - Volkite serpenta.....+5 points
- The Hoplite Alpha may exchange their arc lance for an:
 - Arc maul or a power weapon..... Free
- The Hoplite Alpha may be equipped with any of the following:
 - OmnispeX.....+10 points
 - Shattersphere grenades.....+5 points
 - Augury scanner.....+5 points

TROOPS

The principal battlefield formation of the Secutarii is the Hoplites phalanx, a defensive force which is augmented and equipped specifically to resist infantry assault and defy the odds on the most violent and hazardous of battlefields. Their strength comes from both their resolute discipline in battle and from the crackling energy barriers generated by their interlocking Kyropatris field generators. The power of these surgically implanted generators is channelled and amplified by their unique shields, which allow them to withstand phenomenal amounts of enemy firepower and endure.

In counter-assault they are deadly, their arc lances used to bathe the battlefield before them in murderous torrents of artificial lightning or blast foes into burning ruin at close quarters, while their inhumanly clinical training and cogitator-assisted battlefield protocols allow them to operate both in dispersed skirmishing lines as escort for the god-engines or advance in densely packed ranks to obliterate resistance.





KARACNOS ASSAULT TANK

225 POINTS

HEAVY SUPPORT

A variant of the Triaros Armoured Conveyor common within the Mechanicum Taghmata, the Karacnos is a dedicated assault tank, its armoured chassis and copious transport compartment devoted to the mounting and munitions store of a single heavy weapon system—a mortar battery of 'Karacnos' radiological warheads, designed to sweep an area clear of organic life for later acquisition by the forces of the Machine God.

The warheads are themselves somewhat volatile and the launcher battery protected by armoured shutters when not in firing mode, and the vehicle itself is heavily protected by armour plate, radiological barriers and a thermogalvanic flare shield. An additional armament of entirely self-contained and self-targeting lightning-blaster weaponry, coupled with its considerable armour protection, and the infamous shock ram of its forebear, transform the Karacnos from a mobile artillery platform to a true assault tank, able to close with the enemy battle line and weather shock assault conditions to deliver its deadly cargo.

Armour

	BS	Front	Side	Rear	HP
Karacnos	4	14	12	12	4

Unit Composition

- 1 Karacnos Assault Tank

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Tank)

Wargear

- One Karacnos mortar battery
- Two lightning-blaster sentinels
- Flare shield
- Shock ram*
- Searchlight

*See the Triaros Armoured Conveyor in the Mechanicum Taghmata Army List book for details.

Special Rules

- Galvanic Traction Drive
- Hazardous Munitions

Options

- The vehicle may take any of the following options:
 - Extra armour+5 points
 - Up to two hunter-killer missiles+5 points each
 - Smoke launchers.....+5 points
 - Blessed Autosimulacra+5 points



Galvanic Traction Drive

The vehicle must re-roll failed Dangerous Terrain tests.

Hazardous Munitions

If the Karacnos explodes as a result of damage, it has a D6+2" Blast radius and inflicts Str 5 AP 4 hits.

Lightning-blast Sentinels

Slaved weapons operated and targeted by their own servitor-brains, the lightning-blasters which are sponson-mounted on the Karacnos are able to respond automatically to any threat while the vehicle's crew manage the operation of their temperamental and powerful primary weapons system.

Each lightning-blaster sentinel may target units separately from the Karacnos' main weapon and has the following profile. If reduced to firing Snap Shots, it may do so at BS 2.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Lightning-blaster sentinel	18"	7	5	Heavy 3, Shred, Rending

Karacnos Mortar Battery

A truly baleful weapon which fully occupies what would have been the transport bay of the Triaros Conveyor on which the Karacnos is based, this weapon system is a galvanic multiple bombardment mortar whose shells are unleashed in deadly salvos to saturate a target area. Designed to slaughter life but leave resources largely intact, the warheads employed by the Karacnos are small plasma-implosion devices wrapped around highly toxic radium-cobalt isotope cores. The result is a mixture of blast fragmentation and highly lethal radiological effect.

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Karacnos mortar battery	60"	5	4	Heavy 3, Barrage, Blast (3"), Fleshbane, Rad-phage, Ignores Cover, Pinning



FAST ATTACK

The Vultarax was the most common Stratos-automata in widespread use by the Mechanicum Taghmata at the time of the Heresy. A robust, multi-role war engine, heavily armed and fitted with sophisticated sensory gear and able to operate in diverse and hostile environments, it proved itself a keystone of both Mechanicum Explorator Expeditionary forces as an armed, high-mobility scout and as a hunter-killer and rapid response unit in open battle.

Unlike the more common Battle-automata—and indeed some other Stratos-automata classes—of the Taghmata, which were designed along primarily humanoid or animal forms, its design owed little to nature even in the abstract, save perhaps to certain predatory creatures of the deep oceans. Instead, it was based on patterns for autonomous aerial machines found within ancient pre-Imperium STC templates, and constructed around a powerful variant of the cybernetica cortex as its control mechanism. The creation of the Forge World of Anetarbraxus during the Age of Strife, it was later given up as tribute to Mars. From there it spread rapidly to other Forge Worlds in the decades after Anetarbraxus' reunification and, by the Heresy, it stood as a memorial of sorts to that Forge World, shattered as it was to molten fragments during the Great Mandragoran Incursion.

VULTARAX STRATOS-AUTOMATA MANIPLE

175 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Vultarax Stratos-automata	3	4	4	6	4	3	2	8	3+

Unit Composition

- 1 Vultarax Stratos-automata

Unit Type

- Flying Monstrous Creature

Wargear

- Vultarax arc blaster
- Two Setheno pattern havoc launchers
- Enhanced targeting array
- Flare shield[†]
- Searchlight

Special Rules

- Cybernetica Cortex* (Stratos-automata)
- Reactor Blast
- Night Vision

**For the purposes of this special rule, a Stratos-automata counts as a Battle-automata except that the Methodical provision does not apply, and in the case of the Target Priority provision of the special rule, the controlling player may always attempt to target the nearest enemy Flyer or Flying Creature rather than just the closest enemy model when this special rule comes into effect.*

Options

- The maniple may include:
 - Up to two additional Vultarax Stratos-automata..... +175 points each
- The maniple may be upgraded to have:
 - Blessed Autosimulacra +10 points per model (If this is chosen, all models in the maniple must be so upgraded).
- Any Vultarax may be upgraded to be equipped with:
 - Battle-automata power blades..... +15 points each

Reactor Blast

When a model with this special rule loses its last wound, roll a D6. On the result of a 6, it explodes, inflicting a Str 4 AP- hit on all models within D6" – in the case of the Vultarax, measure from the edge of the model's base.

Vultarax Weapons Systems

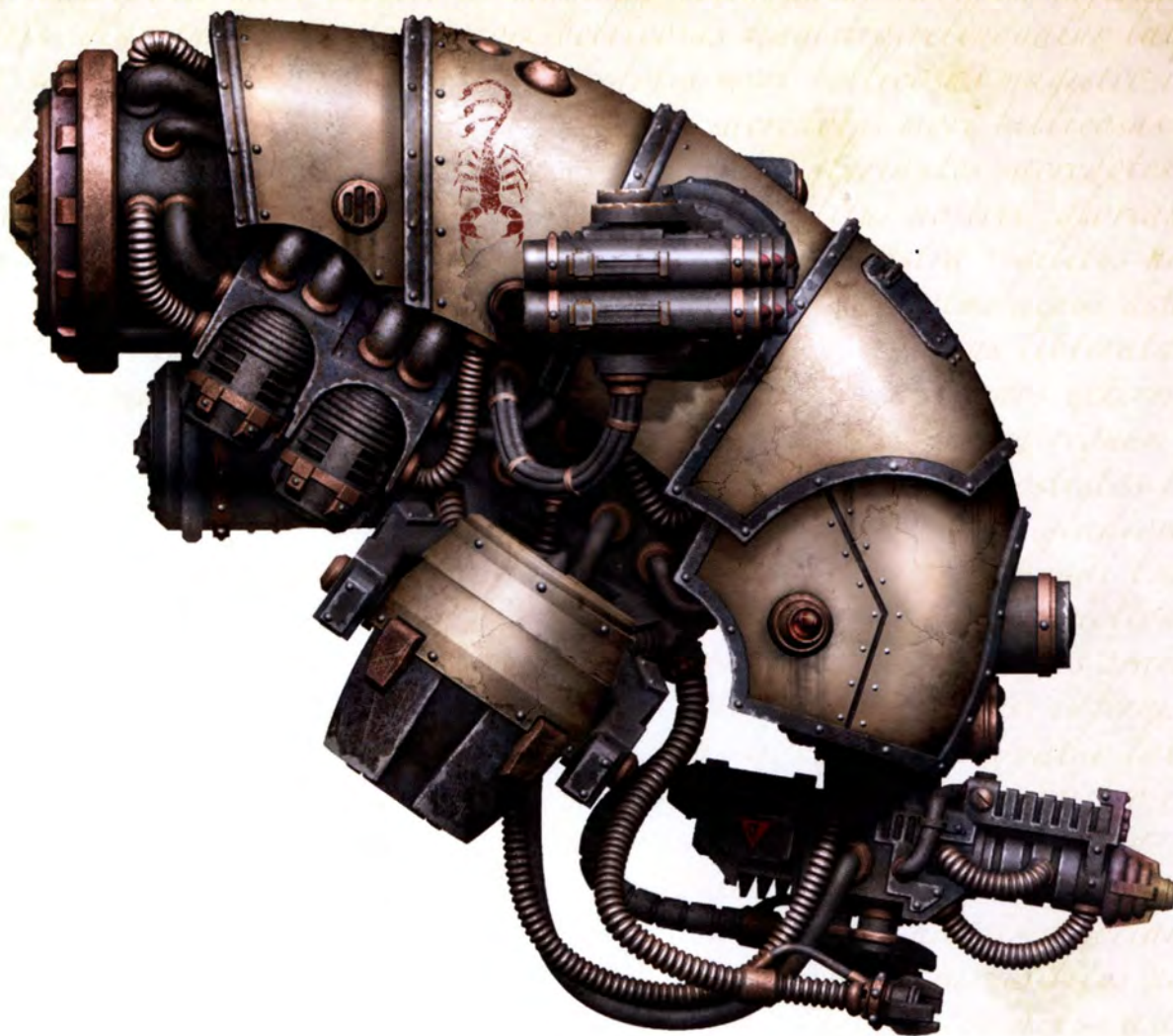
Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Vultarax arc blaster	24"	6	5	Heavy 3, Shred, Haywire
Setheno pattern havoc launcher	48"	5	5	Heavy 2, Blast (3"), Twin-linked, Setheno-Djinn
Battle-automata power blades	—	As User	2	Melee, Rending, Paired Weapons

Setheno-Djinn: Successful cover saves against this attack must be re-rolled.

Paired Weapons: Battle-automata power blades are paired weapons and so add +1 to the model's attacks and count as being Two-handed.

†Flare shield: Note that in this instance, the flare shield applies to all ranged attacks against the automata as it has no 'Front' arc.





VULTARAX UNIT NAGRI 9937

VULTARAX STRATOS-AUTOMATA MANIPLE DELTA-XEL NAGRI

PROSPERINE WASTES SWEEP FORMATIONS

The contingent of House Malinax Knights assigned to the Censure Host included four maniples of these rarely seen automata, inducted directly into the service of the House for the duration of the campaign. Too lightly armed to directly participate in the fighting against the

Titans of the Legio Xestobias, they were instead seconded to the wasteland sweep operations. Seeking to eliminate fleeing civilians and military personnel from the ruins of Tizca, the Vultarax pounced on the battered convoys of vehicles that streamed from the gates of Tizca, leaving only corpses in their wake.



LORDS OF WAR

One of the most heavily armed and armoured of all Knight chassis in service, few Households were able to muster Acastus armours, even at the height of the Great Crusade. They were therefore seen as symbols of favour by the lords of the Omnissiah's cult and even the greatest Knight Households, such as Raven or Vymer, could not claim more than a handful.

To the Mechanicum, they represent the double purpose of battlefield supremacy weapon and icon of the Machine God's divinity; a symbol of control and lethal sanction. Of the Acastus armours, the Knight Porphyryon variant in particular serves often as the supreme enforcer of the rule and dominion of a Household over its Scions, many carrying the unique heraldic symbol of the Shrouded Urn; a dread charge given only to a Knight who has destroyed one of its brothers in sacred and sanctioned trial by combat over some great issue of honour or malfeasance. There are those within the ranks of the Scions and Seneschals of the Households who do not agree with the otherwise universal regard these rare armours are held in.

CONT...

ACASTUS KNIGHT PORPHYRION

495 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	Front	Side	Rear	I	A	HP
Acastus Knight Porphyryon	4	5	10	14	13	12	3	3	8

Unit Composition

- 1 Acastus Knight Porphyryon

Unit Type

- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

Wargear

- Two twin-linked magna lascannon
- Two autocannon
- Ironstorm missile pod
- Ion shield

Special Rules

- Household Rank (Questoris only)
- Blessed Autosimulacra (Mechanicum Taghmata only)
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible, Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

Options

- The Acastus Knight Porphyryon may be upgraded with:
 - Ocular augmetics +10 points
- The Acastus Knight Porphyryon may upgrade any of its autocannon to the following options:
 - Irad-cleanser Free
 - Lascannon +10 points each
- The Acastus Knight Porphyryon may exchange its Ironstorm missiles for:
 - Helios Defence missiles Free



Household Rank (Questoris only)

When used as part of the Questoris Knight Crusade army list, the model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army special rules, but may not be chosen for those of the rank of Scion Aspirant or Scion Uhlan.

Blessed Autosimulacra (Mechanicum Taghmata only)

When used as part of a Mechanicum Taghmata army list, the Acastus Knight Porphyryon has the Blessed Autosimulacra special rule. If it has suffered Hull Point damage at the end of the controlling player's turn, roll a D6. On a 6, one lost Hull Point is restored.

Ion Shield

When the Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase. Its ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

Ocular Augmetics

The Knight has the Night Vision special rule and may re-roll results of a 1 on the Vehicle Damage table and Destroyer Weapon Attack table, which are inflicted by their shooting attacks at a range of 12" or less.

Acastus Knight Porphyryon Weapons

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Magna lascannon	72"	10	2	Ordnance 2, Large Blast (5")
Ironstorm missile pod	72"	6	4	Ordnance 1, Massive Blast (7")
Helios defence missiles	60"	8	2	Heavy 2, Skyfire, Interceptor
Autocannon	48"	7	4	Heavy 2
Lascannon	48"	9	2	Heavy 1



LORDS OF WAR

CONT...

For some its bulk and the selection of a purely ranged armament —no matter its magnitude— is a drawback as it undermines the Armour's adaptability and prevents it from indulging in the glories of close combat. While others stress that the size and power of the Porphyryon, which rivals that of a scout class Titan, is at the outer limits of what a single human mind can interface with, creating phenomenal strain upon even the strongest-willed Scion pilot.





BATTLES IN THE AGE OF DARKNESS CORE MISSIONS

The following six missions represent the clash and counter-clash of the bitter civil war of the Horus Heresy.

Victory Conditions

In all cases, in addition to the listed victory conditions for any particular Battles in the Age of Darkness mission, completely destroying the enemy force is always a victory. If at any point, unless specified by the particular mission, a side has no models present on the table, their opponent has won.

Selecting a Mission

Having selected your armies for fighting the battle, determine which Age of Darkness mission you will be playing. This may be done either by mutual agreement or by randomly rolling for the mission on the following table:

Mission Table

D6 Mission

- 1 Blood Feud
- 2 Onslaught
- 3 Shatter Strike
- 4 Dominion
- 5 Tide of Carnage
- 6 War of Lies

The Heresy-era Battlefield

Remember that for an enjoyable game, where neither close combat or ranged units will over-dominate, it is recommended that a mixture of terrain, some able to block line of sight for large vehicles (such as rocky crags, industrial machinery, ruins and buildings) and some providing cover mainly to infantry (such as craters, woods, jungle, swamps, debris fields, hills and wreckage) is used.

When put together, this terrain should have a sufficient footprint to cover between a quarter and a third of the surface of the playing area. A good rule of thumb here is five or six larger pieces of scenery (roughly 12" x 12" each) as well as three to six pieces of smaller 'scatter terrain', which can comprise a mixture of pieces roughly 6" x 6" or of larger miniatures bases made up as terrain, such as stacks of barrels, containers, sinkholes, small craters, small vehicles, scrap piles, etc.

Placing Terrain

After you have determined what mission you are playing, you must then place terrain from your collection to set up the battlefield. Terrain may be placed by the simple expedient of each player taking turns to place an individual piece or so that they form an attractive battlefield, and can be themed in 'sets' (a power generator and industrial buildings, etc) or simply placed roughly evenly across the table and then randomised via the use of a Scatter dice and 2D6. For ease of play, try to leave a gap of at least 2" between each discreet area of terrain to allow the clear passage of infantry models.

Depending on which mission you are fighting, there may also be specific instructions on the terrain and its set-up. In addition, if you are playing through a particular campaign, you may have a certain style of terrain or special rules you can use to further theme your battlefield (such as the Istvan III battlefield terrain rules found in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*).

Determine Deployment Map

After the terrain has been set up, you must determine each player's deployment zones.

First, the deployment map is determined. This may be done either by mutual agreement or by randomly rolling on the deployment map table found below.

Once the deployment map has been decided on, the players should roll off. The winner of the roll-off selects one of the deployment zones to be theirs, and their opponent then takes the opposite deployment zone.

Deployment Map Table

D6 Deployment Map Type

- 1 Clash of the Line
- 2 Dawn of War
- 3 Search and Destroy
- 4 Hammer and Anvil
- 5 Ambush!
- 6 Vanguard Strike

Warlords

In a Battles in the Age of Darkness game, each army must have a Warlord selected from its Primary Detachment. Unless specified by a unit special rule or Force Organisation chart rule to the contrary, this must be chosen from among the army's character models with the highest Leadership values by the owning player.

Special Characters

The various Horus Heresy-era army lists contain special characters for the Loyalists and Traitors. Each of these special characters is unique, so a player cannot include multiples of the same special character in an army, and if playing in team games, they should not be duplicated if possible across a single side. Special characters roll for their Warlord Traits as normal unless noted in their profile.

BATTLES IN THE AGE OF DARKNESS SECONDARY MISSION OBJECTIVES

The following is a summary of the main additional secondary objectives used in Battles in the Age of Darkness missions. Which particular secondary objectives are to be used will be listed in the mission that is being played.

Slay the Warlord

If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

Last Man Standing

The side with the greatest number of surviving units at the end of the game gains an extra Victory point.

Attrition

The army which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

DEPLOYMENT MAPS

1. Clash of the Line

Clash of the Line has two opposing arrowhead-shaped deployment zones. When deploying in either of these zones, no unit can be deployed within 12" of the centre of the table during standard deployment.

The player's own table edge is the narrow edge which forms the rear of their 'arrowhead'.

2. Dawn of War

If players are using the Dawn of War deployment map, the board is divided into two equal halves across its length.

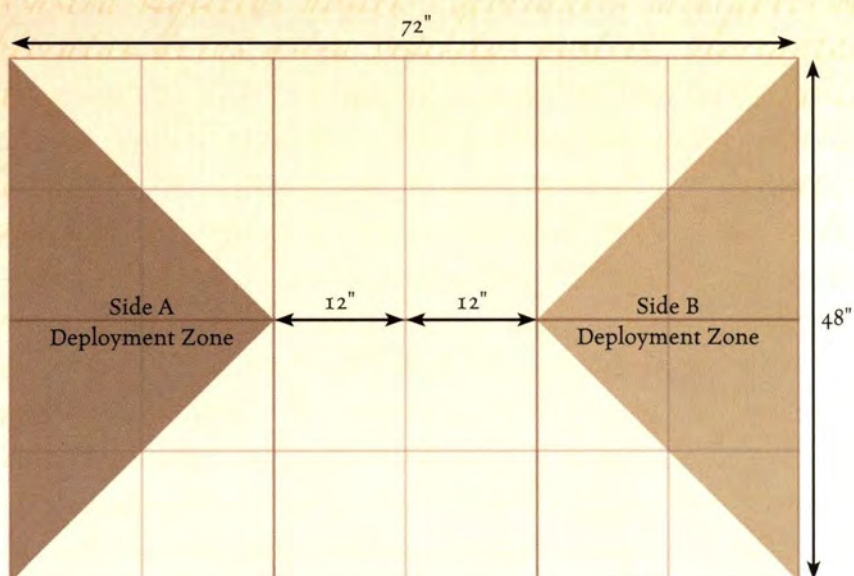
For Dawn of War battles, a player's table edge is the long table edge touching their own deployment zone.

3. Search and Destroy

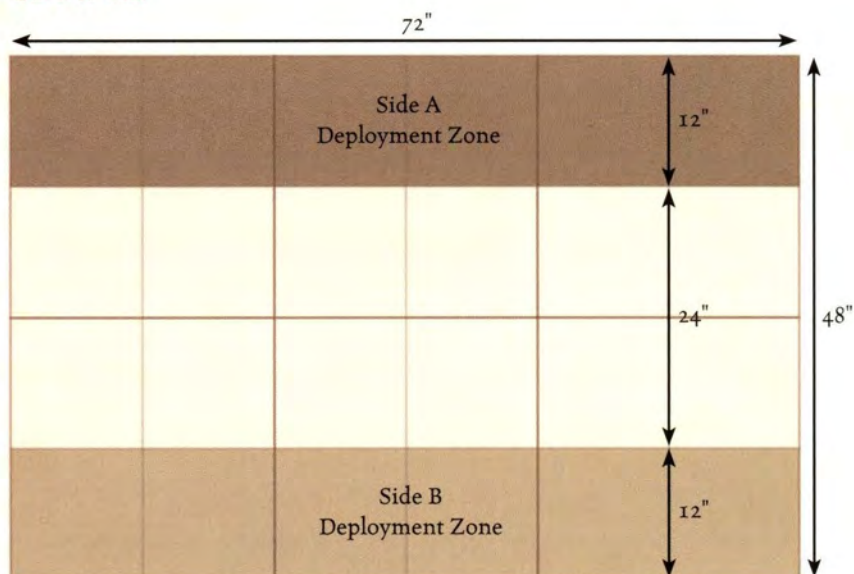
The Search and Destroy deployment map divides the table into four equal quarters. Each quarter constitutes a deployment zone. Units may not be deployed into the circular 18" diameter area at the centre of the table.

A player's table edges are any which form part of their deployment area.

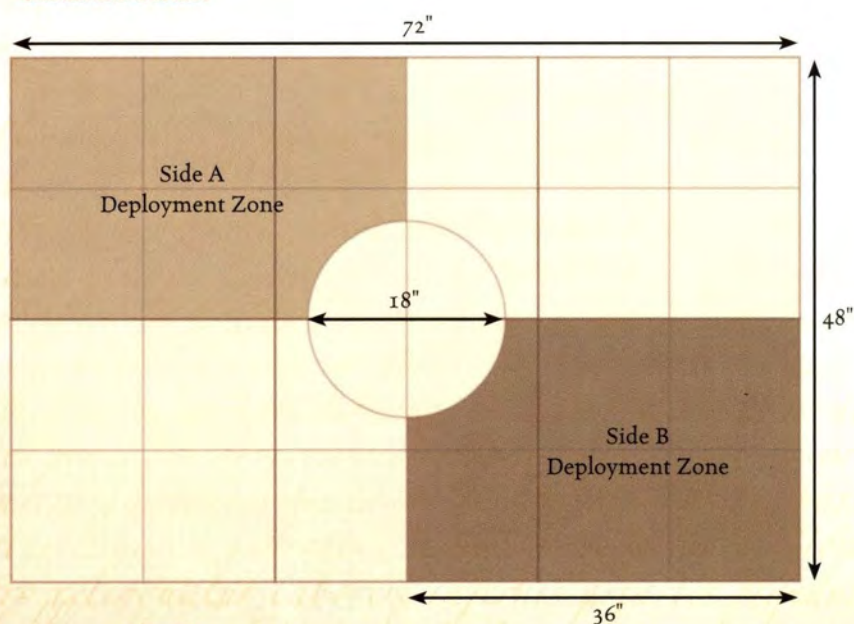
CLASH OF THE LINE



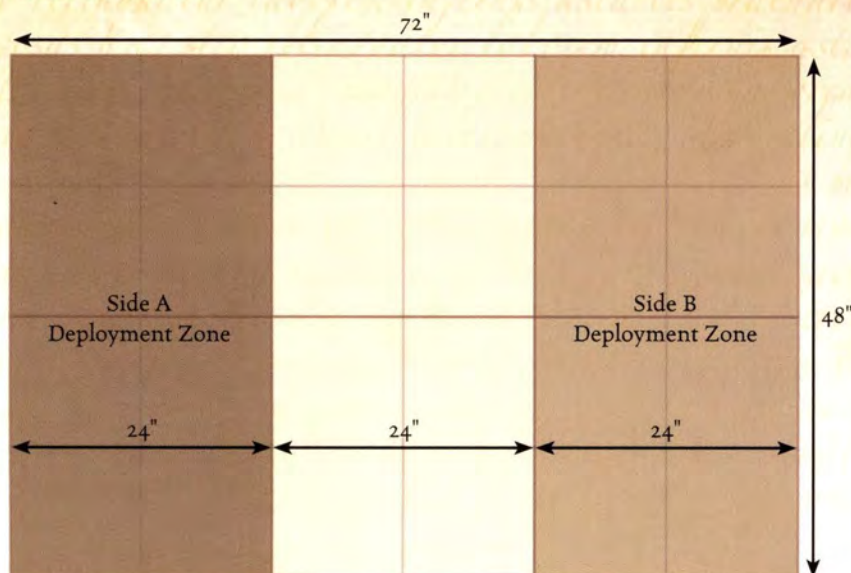
DAWN OF WAR



SEARCH AND DESTROY



HAMMER AND ANVIL



4. Hammer and Anvil

If players are using the Hammer and Anvil deployment map, the table is divided into two equal halves across its width.

For Hammer and Anvil battles, a player's table edge is the short table edge touching their own deployment zone.

5. Ambush!

The Ambush! deployment map divides the table into three areas: a central defender's area (representing the force being ambushed) and two deployment areas on the narrow table edges which are both available to the opposing player, representing the 'attacking' forces that have set up the ambush.

The player winning the roll-off may opt to take the part of the Attacker or the Defender, and their opponent then takes the opposing deployment type.

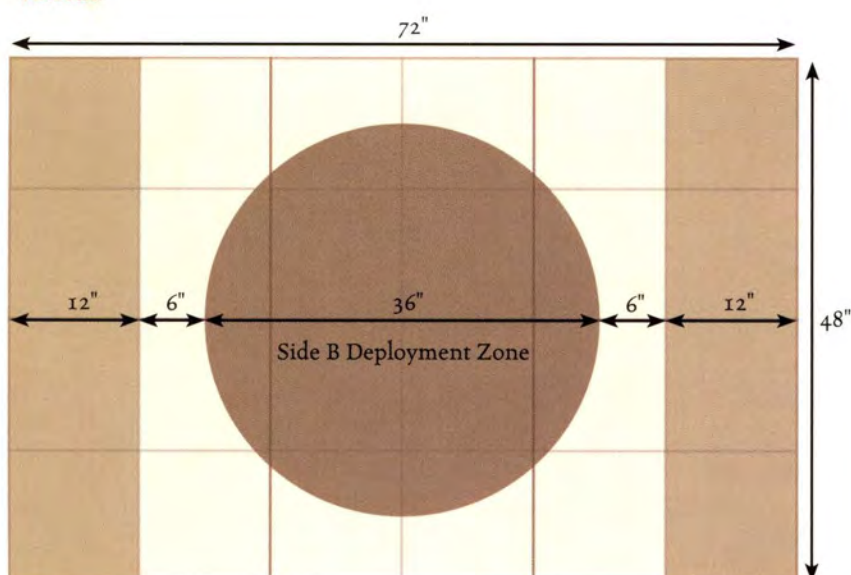
The narrow table edges are the Attacking player's, while the long table edges are the Defending player's (with any of the Defender's Reserves entering by the long edges, representing reinforcements rushing to relieve the ambushed force).

6. Vanguard Strike

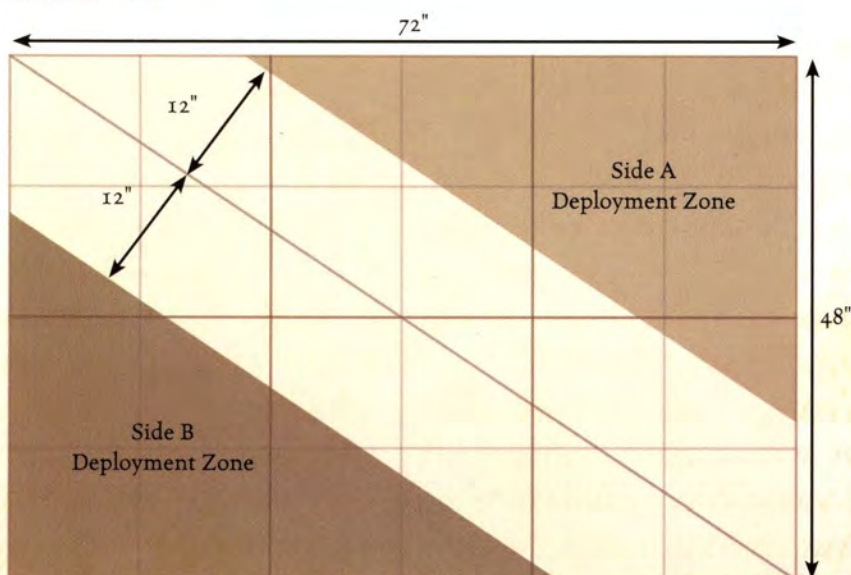
If using the Vanguard Strike deployment map, the board is divided into two equal halves across its diagonal. The players then agree which diagonal deployment zone each will play or can instead randomise to decide.

For Vanguard Strike battles, a player's table edge is the long table edge that touches their own deployment zone.

AMBUSH!



VANGUARD STRIKE



MISSION 1 – BLOOD FEUD

'Blood will have Blood, Sorrow piles upon Sorrow, Vengeance breeds Vengeance.'

Ancient Terran Proverb

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- The player who is deploying second then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units placed in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.
- Each player should determine their Blood Feud target (see the Victory Conditions section).

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

This mission lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

This mission's victory conditions are achieved by the destruction of the enemy's fighting strength, with a particular strategic target in mind whose loss will cripple their foe. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Death Toll: At the end of the game, each side gains 1 Victory point for each unit they have destroyed or that is Falling Back at the end of the game.

Blood Feud: After setting up and deploying the armies, but before play begins, each player should secretly note down a particular unit type from the list below. At the end of the game, the player's Blood Feud target is revealed. Each player gains an additional Victory point for each unit of the type they have chosen which has either been destroyed or is Falling Back at the end of the game.

Blood Feud Targets

- Infantry (all types except Independent Characters): +1 Victory point
- Independent Characters: +2 Victory points
- Vehicles with the Tank type: +1 Victory point
- Super-heavy Vehicles: +2 Victory points
- Vehicles with the Walker type: +1 Victory point
- Vehicles with the Super-heavy Walker type: +2 Victory points
- Vehicles with the Flyer or Super-heavy Flyer type: +2 Victory points
- Monstrous Creatures and Gargantuan Monstrous Creatures: +2 Victory points
- Bikes, Jetbikes and Skimmers: +1 Victory point

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.*

*Note that this is in addition to any points gained via Blood Feud, etc.

Last Man Standing: The side with the greatest number of surviving units at the end of the game gains an extra Victory point.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Night Fighting (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)

MISSION 2 – ONSLAUGHT

'Victory is won by the precise application of superior force at the point of maximum vulnerability. All else —deft manoeuvre, honour, glory, skill-at-arms— all are worthless trivia in comparison, no matter what pretty lies my brothers may spout to the contrary.'

Perturabo, Primarch of the Iron Warriors

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys first using the Staged Deployment special rule (see Mission Special Rules), followed by the second player.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.
- After both sides have deployed, including Infiltrators and after Scout redeployments have been made, each player places a single objective marker in their opponent's deployment zone and further than 6" away from any table edge, with the player that deployed first placing the first objective.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

This mission lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Onslaught mission represents an attempt to break the enemy line through shock and brute force. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Onslaught Attack: Any enemy unit destroyed in the first game turn is worth 1 Victory point.

Seize the Tactical Objectives: If a player has control of the tactical objective in their opponent's deployment zone at the end of the game, that player gains 5 Victory points.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

Attrition: The army which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Night Fighting (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Staged Deployment

Staged Deployment

Rather than deploy their entire army at once, the player who deploys first deploys a single unit on to the table, then their opponent deploys a unit, in the Staged Deployment order shown below.

After this has been done, the two players continue to alternate deployment of their units until they have both fully deployed (except any units held in Reserve, etc).

It is entirely possible that one side will run out of units to deploy before the other. If this is the case, then the player with the larger number of units may deploy their remainder as they wish after their opponent has run out.

Staged Deployment Order

- 1st Fortifications
- 2nd Lords of War units
- 3rd Heavy Support units
- 4th Troops units
- 5th Elites units
- 6th Headquarters units
- 7th Fast Attack units

MISSION 3 – SHATTER STRIKE

'It is not enough to take from an enemy their life—rather take from them also their places of safety, their allies, their homes and their loved ones. Crush all those in their care, lay their chattels to waste and then drive them alone and naked into the darkness. Take everything they have and burn it for the mere pleasure of seeing the ash crackle between your fingers, and call it nothing more than a beginning.'

Jaghatai Khan

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- The player who deploys second then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

After five turns, roll a D6. On the roll of a 4+, a sixth and final turn is played.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The victory conditions of this mission are tied to taking ground from the enemy. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Shatter Strike: At the end of the game, each player scores 2 Victory points for every scoring unit in their opponent's deployment zone, and 1 Victory point for every denial unit in their opponent's deployment zone.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

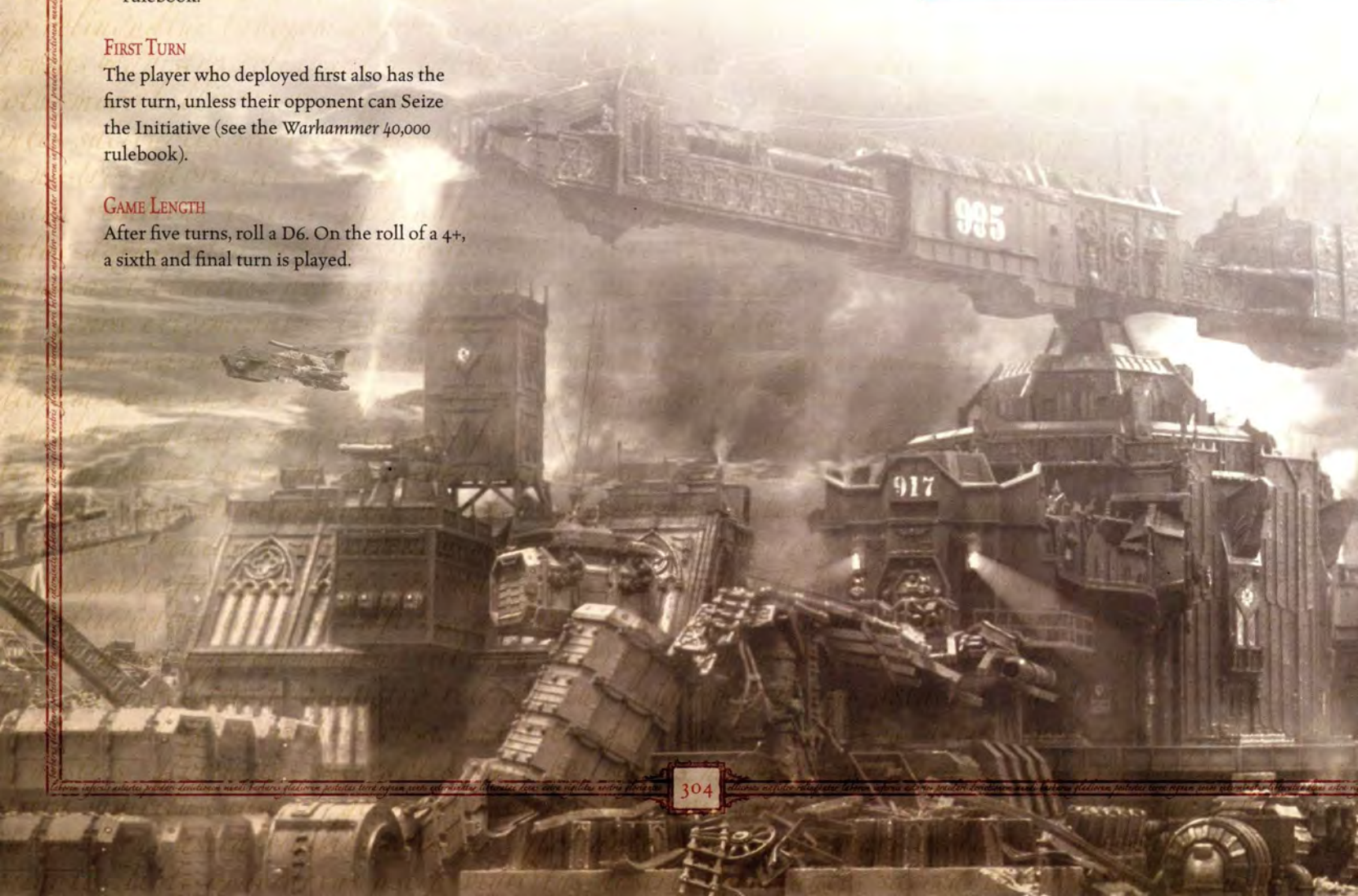
Attrition: The army which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Night Fighting (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- The Price of Failure (If Lords of War units are used)

The Price of Failure (Lords of War Secondary Objective)

As a result, unless specifically exempted or modified by the special rules of a Battles in the Age of Darkness mission, destroying an enemy Lord of War always represents a Secondary Objective in the game. This Secondary Objective is worth 2 additional Victory points to the destroying side in the case of an Engine of Destruction, Mighty Fortifications, Great Beasts or Primarchs, or 1 additional Victory point each per vehicle/creature in the case of War Machine Detachments, Monstrous Hordes and Sub-orbital Strike Wings.



MISSION 4 – DOMINION

'And where my hand shall strike, the foes of Mankind shall be laid waste; so shall I be the hammer of the Emperor, and I shall never tire.'

Atrbt. Ferrus Manus before the Battle of Ke'ar Madoc

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.
- Place mission objectives in accordance with the Mission Special Rules section.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- The player who is deploying second then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

After five turns, roll a D6. On the roll of a 4+, a sixth and final turn is played.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The victory conditions of this mission are achieved by first taking objectives in the heart of the war zone and then retaining control of them through the course of the battle. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Dominion Objectives: At the start of each player's turn, they gain 1 Victory point for each tactical objective they control. These Victory points are kept even if that objective is lost later in the game, and contribute to the player's Victory points total at the end of the game.

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord*: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain D3 extra Victory points.

Attrition*: The army which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains D3 additional Victory points.

**Note that the rewards for these Secondary Objectives are higher than normal.*

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Night Fighting (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- The Price of Failure (if Lords of War units are used) – see Mission 3.
- Dominion Objectives

Dominion Objectives

This mission uses five objective markers. During the game's set-up, but before deployment has been determined, the players take turns in placing one objective each in the area of the table outside of the players' deployment zones until all of the objectives have been placed. These objective markers may not be placed within 6" of each other or a table edge.

Alternative – Objective Terrain

Rather than use objective markers, if both sides agree, individual pieces of terrain may instead be specified as the mission's objectives. It is suggested in this case that three pieces of objective terrain be used, which must be fully located outside of either player's deployment zones and suitably marked to identify them. Each should be distinct and easily identifiable, and have a suggested total size of no less than 6" on each side and no more than 12" on each side, and be substantial enough to provide cover to infantry models inside them. Suitable types of terrain include ruins, large shell craters, redoubts, derelict buildings, vehicle wrecks, etc.

In order to claim or deny a piece of objective terrain, a valid unit must have at least one model within 6" of the centre of the terrain's ground level. A unit may never claim or deny more than a single piece of objective terrain at once.

MISSION 5 – TIDE OF CARNAGE

'All I wish to hear from your imperfect world is the silence of its dead.'

Lord Commander Lothreal Sabine of the Emperor's Children,
Communiqué to the Judicator of Nalislarr

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- The player who is deploying second then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

This mission lasts for five turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The victory conditions of this mission are achieved by forcing the enemy back from the battlefield. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Tide of Carnage: Each sector of the battlefield is worth a certain amount of Victory points for the side who controls it. In order to claim a sector, a side must have one or more scoring units in the sector and the enemy must have no scoring units left in that sector.

The sectors of the battlefield are defined as follows:

- Player's own deployment zone:
3 Victory points
- No Man's Land (the area of the battlefield which is not covered by either deployment zone): 5 Victory points
- Opposing player's deployment zone:
7 Victory points

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

Last Man Standing: The side with the greatest number of surviving units at the end of the game gains an extra Victory point.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Night Fighting (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)
- Heavy Armour

Heavy Armour: In addition to the usual scoring units, all vehicles with the Tank type, as well as Super-heavy ground vehicles and Super-heavy walkers, are also classed as scoring units in this mission.

MISSION 6 – WAR OF LIES

'In any battle, great or small, the most insignificant of terrain and the most worthless of ground can for minutes, or perhaps hours, become so valuable that the blood of heroes and the wealth of an army's supply does not outweigh it. The true general knows when such a price is worth spending, and when the butcher's bill is sheer folly to pay.'

Roboute Guilliman, ext. 'On War'

THE ARMIES

Choose the armies using the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules and Force Organisation charts.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- Determine the deployment map.
- Set up terrain for the battlefield.
- Determine Warlord Traits and Psychic Powers.
- A single objective marker is placed as close to the centre of the battlefield as possible. Each player then takes turn placing two objective markers each elsewhere on the battlefield, no closer than 12" from another objective marker, and no closer than 6" from any table edge.

DEPLOYMENT

- Roll off. The winner may choose to deploy first or second.
- The player who deploys first selects their deployment zone and then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- The player who is deploying second then deploys their entire force, including any fortifications they possess, except for any units held in Reserve, into their deployment zone.
- Rules for deploying into fortifications, Infiltrators, Scouts and Transport vehicles, etc, are as found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed first also has the first turn, unless their opponent can Seize the Initiative (see the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

This mission lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The victory conditions of this mission reflect the anarchy and uncertainty of civil war, where goals desperately fought over and bled for may ultimately prove worthless. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If the players have the same number of Victory points, the game ends in a draw.

Primary Objectives

Death Toll: At the end of the game, each side gains 1 Victory point for each unit they have destroyed or that is Falling Back at the end of the game.

War of Lies: At the end of the game, roll a D6 on the following table to determine the worth—if any—of each objective controlled by the player at the end of game. Roll once for each objective.

D6	Result
1	No Victory points
2-3	1 Victory point
4	2 Victory points
5	3 Victory points
6	Minus D3 Victory points

Secondary Objectives

Slay the Warlord: If a side destroyed the enemy Warlord, they gain an extra Victory point.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves (See the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook)