

WARP RIFT

THE BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC NETZINE



ISSUE 22

HORIZON

FROM THE NEXUS PUBLISHING HOUSE

Warp Rift is not endorsed, nor does it endorse, Games Workshop, and it is not an official publication of Games Workshop. Any words, phrases or images are used without permission and no challenge is intended as a result of such a usage, including the use of these words, phrases and images without the appropriate symbols of copyright. Additionally, these pages – including content, design and images – are copyright (except where copyright should infringe other such rights). Licensed names, images and logos are copyright their respective companies or authors. No part of these pages may be 'borrowed' or reproduced, and no articles or rules should be considered 'official in any way.

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS PUBLICATION.
DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY DIRECT FROM THE OFFICIAL WEB SITE, AT:

WWW.EPIC40.CO.UK/BFGMAG/

DISCUSS AND TALK ABOUT WARP RIFT AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION:
[WARP RIFT FORUM](#)

READ THE WARP RIFT BLOG FOR NEWS UPDATES AND EXTRA MATERIAL HERE:
[WARP RIFT BLOG](#)

+++ SUBMISSIONS +++

All types of article are desperately needed, to keep this publication alive. In some cases, submission includes inclusion on the web site at: www.epic40k.co.uk, or through www.tacticalwargames.net. Please include a note with your submission if you would like this clarified. Submission via e-mail implies approval for publication.

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO:

horizon@epic40k.co.uk

or

warprift@epic40k.co.uk

SEND YOUR BATTLE REPORTS TO:

Davide@epic40k.co.uk

+++ WARP RIFT PUBLICATION TEAM +++

<u>Roy (Horizon) Amkreutz</u>	<u>Void Stalker II</u>
<u>Iain (Cybershadow)</u>	<u>Watcher in the Dark</u>
<u>Ray Bell</u>	<u>Admiralty</u>
<u>Reg Steiner</u>	<u>Tyranid War Veteran</u>
<u>Davide 'Kratz' Ferrari</u>	<u>Warmaster</u>
<u>Jack Watling</u>	<u>Magician</u>

CREDITS:

<u>Cover Picture</u>	<u>Jack Watling</u>
Additional Graphics & Pictures: Dukeleto (deviantart), John 'Magelord' Reed, Kr00za, Stugmeister, BrotherOstavia (deviantart), Vaaish	

EDITORIAL

+ TO BOARD OR NOT TO BOARD +

Hi there,

Welcome to the first issue of 2009. The start of the third year with me at the reign of Warp Rift. Hopefully this year will just be as good as the previous two years. I am confident it will be with your articles. So keep them coming.

The Specialist Games website still has not returned completely. We are still missing the forum but Cybershadow and Mod-Lex have created a new website where we can already download a bunch of Fanatic Online issues which have not been transferred to the main Games Workshop website.

This issue of Warp Rift contains some great articles once again. Reg Steiner brings us some additional systems to protect our precious planets against the enemy fleets. Then he shows us some house rules regarding boarding and capturing enemy ships! Aaargh! Beware of the scum in the galaxy and repel those boarders!

We also have the first battle report under the guidance of Davide. A Chaos fleet tries to crush an Imperial planet. See how they fare in the battle report. Davide added some views afterwards.

The story takes us to a desperate struggle between the Imperial Navy and the menacing Orks. This is Dominic's second story for Warp Rift. And finally we have a cool scenario to play some serious battles, brought by Ruckdog.

Good boarding,
Horizon

+++ WARP RIFT BLOG +++

You can check out our blog at the following location:

http://www.players.tacticalwargames.net/tiki-view_blog.php?blogId=10

+++ WARP RIFT FORUM +++

Check out the Warp Rift forum at:

<http://www.tacticalwargames.net/forums/index.cgi?act=SF;f=89>

+++ WARP RIFT WARMASTER +++

“Greetings admirals out there, I am honoured for the opportunity that Roy and Warp Rift staff have given me to contribute at the expansion of this fantastic webzine. First of all, my goals for Warp Rift are to create a new Battle Report section, where you can read of adventures and wars of others in our magnificent Battlefleet Gothic Universe. Then, we are going to expand the Tactical Center with some *Masterclass* from the brave admirals out there and with deep analysis of manoeuvres. I am glad to serve in the ranks of Warp Rift, and hope that you and the Emperor (or other deity) gonna love my works. See you in Immaterium. Class Dismissed “

Davide ‘Kratz’ Ferrari

Send your battle reports at:

Davide@epic40k.co.uk

ISSUE TWENTY-TWO – CONTENTS:

ENCYCLOPEDIA GOTHICA	
Planetary Defences	4
Repel Boarders!	6

COMMAND AND CONTROL	
Chaos versus Imperial Navy	8

SHOWCASE	
Souleater	12

OFFICER'S MESS	
WAAAAAGH!	13

VOID STALKER	
Minor Engagement	29

PLANETARY DEFENSE BATTERY

BY REG STEINER

Introduction: *During some of our larger games and campaigns, we liked having objectives beyond just trashing the other guy's fleet. Taking planets, outposts, and moons can be boring pretty quick, if the only challenge is, once again, getting past the defending fleet. To spice up a game, we needed new challenges. I built this item into our list of possible defenses to give players a new threat to get past.*

These things can get scary, as more of them are 'piled on' a planet's defenses. We had to make a limit of defenses available for a planet, that wasn't a base, in our campaigns. No more than 20% of the points available for a defender's fleet can be used to buy defenses. Navy bases could have up to 30% of the points available, for defense of the base. For a "one of" game out of the book, a player only has the points listed in the base rules for that scenario.

For a really small game, of 500 or less points, a real challenge would be a fleet attacking a planet that has only planetary defenses. A mess of mines, orbital batteries, and a couple of these 'big guns' make it hard on such a raiding force! Try a couple of games with these guarding a planet.

Points Cost: 100

Structure Points: 3

Shields: 3

Turrets: 3

Armour: 6

Range: 30cm from planet edge

Attack Dice: 1D3

Using this Big Gun:

Attacking Enemy Ships: This battery hits on a D6

roll of: 5 & 6. 1D3 points of damage are subtracted from the ship's total. Critical Hits applied normally. Enemy shields have no effect. Enemy ships in 'Low Orbit' are hit on 1D6 roll of 3+ and take 1D6 of damage, with Critical Hits now on 1D6 roll of 4+. All other planet defenses remain unchanged. Use the base rules for operating these defenses.

Attacking the Gun Battery:

Lances: Lances hit on a 1D6 roll of 6+ if within 30cm of planet's edge. Longer ranges cannot hit at all. Lances fired from 'low Orbit' hit on a 1D6 roll of 4+.

Weapons Batteries: The planet's defense battery cannot be fired at, beyond 30cm, regardless of attacking weapons battery's range ability. Use the "Capital Ship - Abeam" aspect to calculate attack die, with a Blast Marker (planet's atmosphere)

column shift, when firing from between 30cm and planet's rim. When the attacking vessel is in 'Low Orbit', weapons batteries use "Capitol Ship - Moving Away" and no column shift for atmosphere.

Torpedoes: Torpedoes cannot be used against surface targets, except for 'Barrage Bombs'. Use these as described in the Armada rules book.

Attack Craft: Bombers and Assault boats are used as if against a vessel. Assault boats only achieve a successful critical hit on a D6 roll of 6+.

Critical Hits on Planetary Battery: For each hit on the battery, roll 1D6 with 6+ means a critical hit has occurred. Roll a further 1D6, and on 6+ the battery cannot fire, until a successful repair during the 'End Phase'. Multiple critical hits causing the battery to be non-operational must all be repaired before the battery can again fire! The battery repairs critical hits by rolling the number of D6 equal to the number of structure points remaining, a 5 or 6 on a D6 repairs the damage.

Reducing the defenses around a Hive City, or Major Base, can now be quite deadly work. I used the inspiration of what happened to the British and French fleets, trying to force the passage to the Black Sea, during World War One. Perhaps a ground assault (a la 40K) is a better idea?



HEAVY GUN EMPLACEMENTS

BY REG STEINER

Introduction: *The need for variety in our BFG games can take interesting forms. I designed some ground defense house rules that concentrated on a very powerful guns system, and very powerful lance system. All fine, except. The Ork players felt left out. The systems I designed were meant for Imperial, Chaos, renegade, and even Eldar players. The gang of players "ganged up" on me to even the field and add a Ork weapon system for defending Ork held planets. Once again, I took the simplest route. I adapted the heavy guns Ork-kind already use on their ships. Not to be out-done, ingenious human engineers crafted similar big guns to help defend their own planets. But at least the Orks now have a distinct weapon system for their own planets. As well as human made copies dotting the map.*

Heavy Gun Batteries Defending Bases and Planets:

The design for these heavy gun batteries is different from other designs. Normally there is a single huge emplacement housing the single, or double barreled, defense weapon. These gun batteries are housed in a fortress. The design incorporates two large turrets of two heavy guns each. Separated by another structure housing plasma furnaces and cyclotrons for electrical generation. Radar and other sensors are also housed in the center section. All structures are heavily re-enforced and armored. Normal defenses include close in weapons and anti-air weaponry, making a land attack, or air attack costly. Additionally, any city or fortress worthy of protecting is almost always

protected by three or four each of these Heavy Gun Batteries. Even small towns, or factories, or mine operations, or other permanent sites have at least two of these gun batteries for defense. Local commanders and governors, and such, have taken to adding other outlying defenses and bunkers to further discourage attempts at ground attack. The attacking fleet has its work cut out, wherever these new batteries are installed.

Range: 30cm beyond planet's edge.

Attacks: 4D6 and hit on 5s or 6s. (Planets are very stable gun platforms.)

Each hit does two points of damage, either to shields or ships. Shields do apply, but two shield points would be dropped for each hit.

Structure points: 6

Armour: 6

Shields: 3

Turrets: 4

Leadership: (random roll)

Cost: 150 points

Weapons Battery charts are not used. Attacks against ships in low orbit get one extra D6 (now 5D6).

Critical Hits are on 6s only. Barrage Bombs and Bombardment Canon cause critical hits on 5s and 6s. Each critical hit reduces gun strength by 1D6. Repairs during the end phase are on 5s and 6s (not just 6s) to restore gun strength, using the surviving structure points for how many D6 are rolled. Reduced gun strength because of crippling damage (50%+) cannot be repaired in the end phase.

Orks Only Special Attack: Cost: +25 points
Once per game, but not if crippled, each battery emplacement can attempt to grapple an enemy ship using their special force fields. To use this attack, the battery can make no gun attacks, and has no shields this turn. A successful attack is made on a D6 roll of 4-5-6.

Attack Effect: An enemy ship is pulled from high orbit to low orbit, or from low orbit to the surface (Crash!).

Any enemy ship so attacked uses its Leadership score -1 (Surprise!) to regain control of the ship and avoid a fiery fate.

Success means the attacked ship rockets out of high orbit, or from low orbit to high orbit, as a consequence of breaking free of the grapple.

Failure means that: Escorts and Light Cruisers take 1D6 points damage; All Cruiser types take 2D6 points of damage; And Battleships take 3D6 points of damage. If damage rolled did not destroy the ship, the ship returns to low orbit but is unable to fire this turn. Destroyed ships make a spectacular blast and crater, somewhere on the planet.

Other races have never been able to duplicate the Ork force fields. Put together just like an Ork example, exactly, and it still does not work.

The players in our group who use Orks, are very pleased to have a distinctly Ork gun emplacement and Ork special attack.

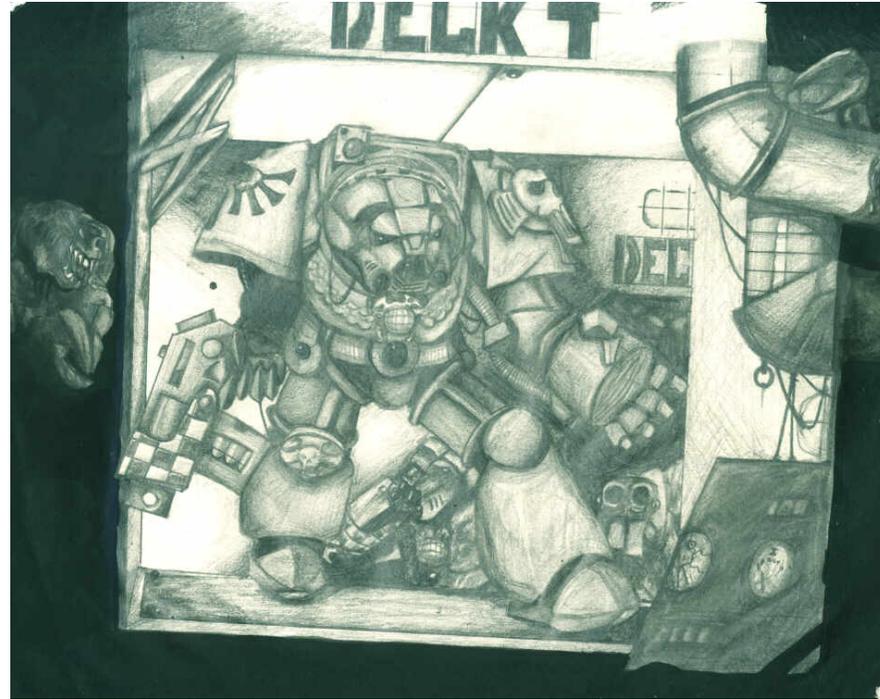
REPEL BOARDERS!

CAPTURE SHIPS USING: ASSAULT BOATS AND BOARDING TORPEDOES

BY REG STEINER

Introduction: House Rules and modifying rules can be fun for some of us, but there is a danger that the whole game will lose the 'flavor' or special traits that first attracted us. However, our group here wanted to capture enemy ships from day one of BFG playing. Have no doubt. The way "Assault Boats" were used to damage ships, rather than capture ships, left out the best use of Assault Boats (at least in our piratical group's opinion). So, I worked out some rules for taking ships away from other players. The other big change is how restricted "Hit and Run" attacks have to be. A half-a-dozen critical hits resulting from such boarding attacks weren't (aren't) very realistic anyway. Why not take over the ship, if that many boarders are running around? So that is what we do. Be sure to talk over this bit with other players. Be Warned: Everyone either loves or hates this little re-do. Depends on if you are the one using all the Assault Boats. Many of our group like the added ability to **take over** another enemy vessel. A **major** goal of many of our games, right from the beginning. So here goes.

House Rule for Boarding Actions: Boarding Actions, in the base rules, are another means of reducing a warship to zero points. Because of the Mercenary Pirates in our group, almost from the very first game played, Boarding Actions targeted enemy ship crews. Critical Hits still occur (Oops! Hit the Control Servos!) unchanged from the base rules. Only now crew points are reduced. If the winning side won by two points, having reduced



the defending ship to zero points, then two points of the captured ship now remains, except it is in enemy hands! Yes, another Boarding can be attempted, and so ships can (and did) change sides more than once. Captured ships can only use turrets for defense, and try to escape. No further combat using main weapons or ordnance is possible. Warships reduced to zero hits, with no surviving attackers or defenders, are adrift. Ripe for capture!

Re-captured vessels are likewise unable to

participate in combat, even now that they're back in original owner's possession.

House Rule for Assault Boats and Boarding Torpedoes: Assault Boats and Boarding Torpedoes are now used for Boarding Actions. Each counter (or base stand) now represents one (!) crew point. If four Assault Boats are in base contact with a warship, then four points attack, say, six points of defending cruiser. The difference now from two warships boarding and fighting, is that the attackers must win, or die! If the attacked warship is not

reduced to zero points, the attacking boarders are wiped out, the Boarding Action does not continue. (Unless the Boarding action was initiated by a warship rather than ordnance markers.) Boarding Actions can be combined with both warships and ordnance attacking, with each Assault Boat and Boarding Torpedo adding one crew point to the combat equation. In each ordinance turn, more ordnance markers **can** make contact with ships fighting a Boarding action, adding further crew points to the combat! Turrets cannot defend against these new attacks, as per the base rules, while Boarding actions are being resolved. Again, only if an attacking warship is also involved. Combat involving markers alone does **not** carry over into another turn.

A single Assault boat or Boarding Torpedo counter can elect to make a Boarding attempt for control of a warship, (such as a warship with only one point

remaining), or a single **Hit and Run** attack. This is the only time a 'Hit and Run' attack is made with ordnance. More than one ordnance marker in base contact with a ship makes a Boarding Attack, as the only option.

***All Races** can now have Assault boats included on their Ordnance lists! They all have reasons to capture enemy vessels, after all!

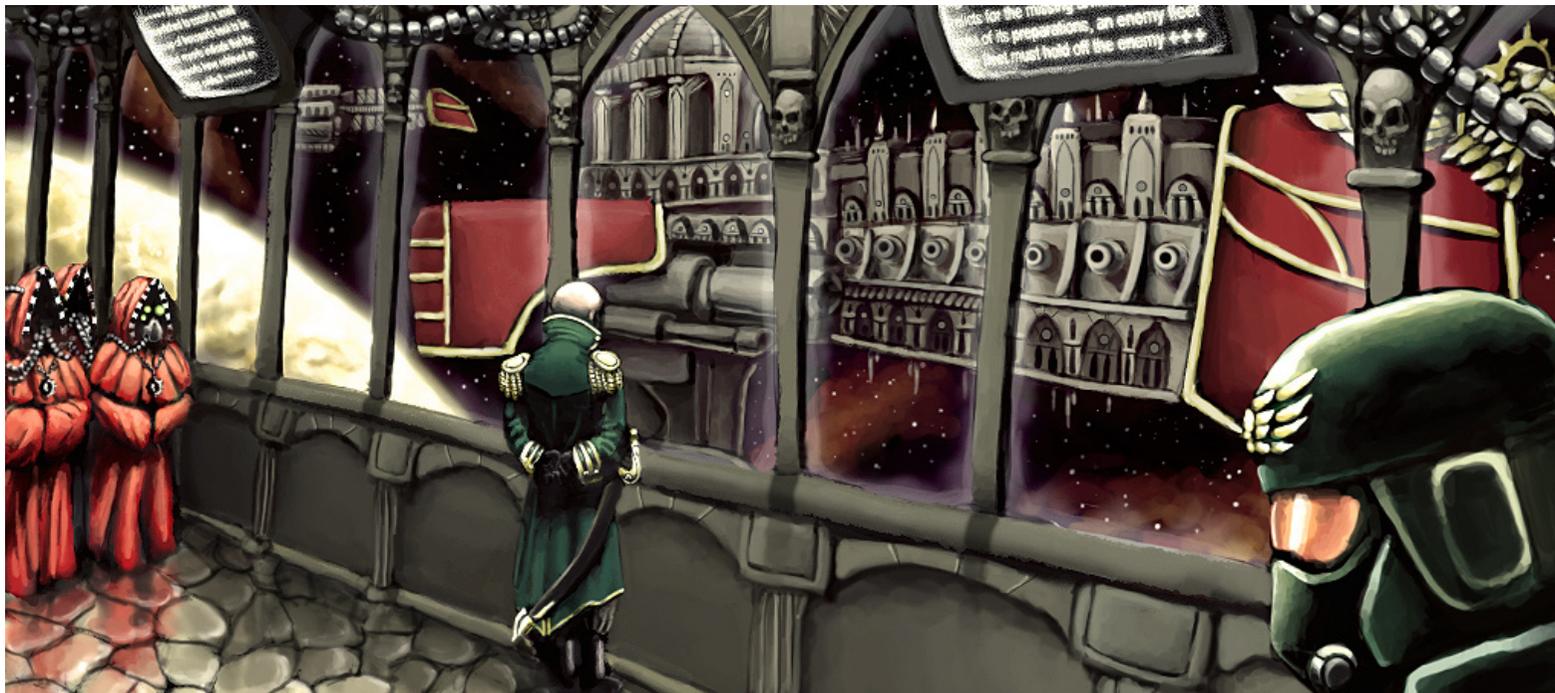
Summation:

1. A single Assault Boat or Boarding Torpedo marker can elect to make a Boarding Attack, for control of the ship (crew strength one) **or** a single **Hit and Run** attack, as per base rules.
2. Two or more Assault Boats and/or Boarding Torpedoes only make attempts at Boarding Actions. These **can** be combined with warships attempting Boarding Actions (any ordnance that

survive turret defenses in the ordinance phase). Each ordnance marker adds one crew point to the combat equation.

3. An attacked warship must be reduced to zero points to be a successful Boarding attempt. If not, the attacking ordnance crew points are wiped out, but the damage, including Critical Hits, to the defending warship is recorded first. Any surviving attacking crew points (after the warship is reduced to zero hits) becomes the new hits value the warship has remaining.
4. All other parts of Boarding actions remain as is.
5. All Races now have Assault boats at +5 points cost, per launch point.

That's all! Now try capturing ships! - Reg



IMPERIAL NAVY VS CHAOS

A PLANETARY DEFENSE - VAAISH VS CAV

BY ADMIRAL KRATZ

Battle report of game with Cav:

Imperial Navy Planetary Defense of Chaos Incursion.

We didn't think we were going to be able to get the game in this weekend, but Sunday afternoon opened up and we managed to play anyway. Since Cav got the *Planet Killer (PK)* and we'd modified and assembled it the day before, we wanted to put it in the game so we set the point value at 2000 points. Given that a PK was involved, we also set up the board with some dust clouds and asteroid fields around the medium sized planet.

Instead of a straight up brawl we came up with some rudimentary rules for him to use to destroy the planet. After arriving in orbit, at the start of his next turn he would roll a d6 on a roll of a 6+ the planet would go boom. The next turn he would have to reload his PK and could then fire again this time the planet going down on a roll of a 5+.

I brought up a BB heavy IN fleet but forgot my mars so I had to proxy an infidel I'd taken to help boost Cav's forces so my fleet was legal. Cav ended up having to take Abaddon and a few other bits and bobbles to make up the point difference. In terms of ships I had used an Obscurus list with the following:

- 1x Retribution, the Ankh Bahew
- 1x Emperor, the Akhet Djet carrying AB
- 1x Vengeance, the Ma'a Kherew

- 1x Mars, unnamed
- 2x Gothics, the Neset Wepet and the Sahret Neheh
- 3x Dauntless, torpedo variants, the Nesew Sahret, Nesew Ankh, and Nesew Hotep

Cav brought this to the table:

- 1x Planet Killer
- 2x Carnage, named I and II
- 1x Slaughter
- 1x Styx
- 9x Infidel

Cav won the roll for deployment and chose to set up second. I set up the Akhet Djet in the lower right corner of the board behind the planet protected

by the Ma'a Kherew and Ankh Bahew on the port side. They were placed parallel to the short board edge. The Neset Wepet, Sahret Neheh, and Mars mirrored the placement of the battleships but were placed in the top right corner of the board again parallel to the short board edge. The Dauntless were placed in a squadron at the prow of the battleships parallel to the long board edge.

Cav deployed most of the infidels, the two carnages, and the Styx in the lower left corner of the board facing my fleet. He put the remainder of the infidels, the slaughter, and the PK about midway up his deployment zone angled to face the planet.

We rolled again for first turn which I won. I started out by moving the Akhet Djet, Ma'a Kherew, and



Ankh Bahew 10cm forward. The Sahret Neheh, Neset Wepet and mars moved 10cm forward and turned slightly to let them pass the battleships. The Dauntless moved forward a full 25cm and turned to line up with the PK group. Assault boats were launched from the Akhet Djet and bombers from the Mars. The bombers moved toward the PK and the boats moved over the planet.

Only the nova cannon was able to hit anything so I placed the template over the Carnages so that the center hole got both. Cav elected not to brace and I rolled a hit followed by a 5 and a 6 for the damage rolls crippling one of the carnages and putting three points of damage on the other. No critical hits were scored and I ended my turn.

Cav moved Section 1 (the Styx group) forward and partly through the dust cloud with one set of Infidels moving a little ahead of the main group. The planet killer group moved closer to the planet. The Styx launched six fighters which he moved toward the planet killer group. Nothing else was in range so he rolled for blast markers, removing a few from the nova shot.

Turn two started with the Akhet Djet and mars reloading ordnance. The Akhet Djet, Ankh Bahew, and Ma'a Kherew moved forward 15cm and turned 45 degrees to port. The Nesew Wepet, Sahret Neheh, and mars forward 10cm turning to starboard slightly to bring the planet killer into the nova cannon arc since Cav's section 1 was now out of sight behind the asteroids. The Dauntless squadron move at half speed to keep within the cover of the planet and avoid being hit by the Armageddon gun or anything else the planet killer could bring to bear. The Newsew Wepet and Sahret Neheh launched torpedoes to give Cav's fighter screen something to think about besides the assault boats. The nova cannon fired and scattered over the infidels guarding the planet killer placing a blast



marker on two. The bomber wave was dropped to two by fighters in the ordnance phase and the assault boats were now in position to attack taking out a single infidel. His fighters also took out the incoming torpedoes and the remaining two took up position as cap for the planet killer.

Cav reloaded the Styx and moved the Planet Killer group closer to the planet. Section one moved forward and moved one infidel squadron into the asteroid field passing the leadership tests to navigate it. The planet killer took out the remnants of the bomber wave and that was the end of the turn.

I began turn three by reloading the Neset Wepet and Sahret Neheh. The Dauntless squadron went AAF and ended up in the rear arc of the planet killer but still in front of the slaughter and infidels. The Akhet Djet, Ankh Bahew, and Ma'a Kherew move forward 10cm and turned to port again putting them into position to unleash broadsides while the Sahret Neheh, Neset Wepet, and mars moved 10cm and made a full 45 degree turn to starboard before moving the last 10cm and bringing them almost parallel to the battleships and grand cruiser. The

mars fired the NC at the lagging infidels of the planet killer group but scattered back onto the slaughter and dropped a blast marker on the Nesew Sahret, Nesew Ankh, the planet killer, and scored a 1 on the d6 roll for the slaughter. The Dauntless squadron launched all torpedoes in a single wave, the Akhet Djet launched more assault boats and the Mars released another wave of bombers. The torpedo salvo smashes into the slaughter causing it to brace and still doing five points of damage. The remaining torpedoes destroyed the Infidel squadron and continue off toward the edge of the board. The assault boats clear the planet en route to section 1 while the bombers move out towards the planet killer group.

Cav moved the planet killer into orbit and prepared to attempt destroying the planet next turn. It fired on the mars dropping a single shield. Section 1 split and the Styx plus an infidel squadron turned to port to exact revenge on the dauntless squadron while the two carnages went on AAF to attempt to clear the asteroids and brought them to 12cm from the planets edge.

The Dauntless squadron was in range of Section

1 and braced while the torps and ordnance of the Styx and infidels smashed through them taking the Nesew Sahret to one hit.

Turn four started much the same with the Akhet Djet and Mars reloading ordnance again. The Ma'a Kherew and Ankh Bahew locked on and moved 20cm to clear the planet and bring Cav's fleet into range. The Akhet Djet moved forward 15cm allowing it to target a couple of ships as well. The Mars, Neset Wepet, and Sahret Neheh moved forward 20cm to bring the planet killer into range while the dauntless squadron licked its wounds and turned hard to port as they tried to bring the infidels and Styx into range. The Dauntless fire proved ineffective but the fire from the Ma'a Kherew crippled the slaughter and the combined fire from the Neset Wepet, Sahret Neheh, Ankh Bahew, and Akhet Djet managed to force the planet killer to brace and caused two points of damage as well as crippling the second carnage. The mars fired at the Styx not doing enough damage to force a brace. The Sahret Neheh and Neset Wepet launched their torps smashing into the slaughter crippling it but remained just out of reach of the infidel squadron. The bombers were taken out by turrets but the assault boats were able to split and put a port weapons damaged critical on a slaughter but were ineffective against his infidels.

Cav began the turn by moving the planet killer around the planet and out of sight of most of my fleet. He rolled to destroy the planet and failed. The two carnages, slaughter, and an infidel squadron pushes forward to stall my fleet and buy the planet killer another turn. Their fire is mostly ineffective, not even penetrating the shields on the battleships or grand cruiser. Against the Dauntless squadron the infidels and Styx launch torpedoes and bombers dropping a hit point from both the Nesew Ankh

and Nesew Hotep. The Nesew Sahret succumbs to the bombers of the Styx and goes out with a plasma drive overload that causes another point of damage to the remaining dauntless and takes down two infidels.

Turn five contained some of the bloodiest fighting of the game with the Dauntless squadron reloading and all other available ships locking on. One carnage died and the resulting drive overload succeeded in reducing the shields of the larger ships and killing two infidels and putting a point of damage on the Sahret Neheh. The Ankh Bahew, Ma'a Kherew, and Mars passed their target priority check and targeted the styx to keep it off the back of the Dauntless squadron and their combined fire plus a hit from the nova cannon reduced the Styx to a burning hulk. The torpedoes from the Ankh Bahew turned the remaining carnage into a hulk and killed the last infidel. The Akhet Djet launched a wave of bomber that split in half to attack the remaining slaughter hovering over the planet and dropped it to two hits remaining. The bombers from the Mars failed their roll and were destroyed by the blast marker maelstrom. The torpedo salvo from the dauntless squadron killed the remaining infidel near them.

Cav moved the planet killer farther around behind the planet and failed to roll the 5+ needed to kill the planet. The slaughter rolls for AAF and rams the Akhet Djet causing three points of damage and an engine critical reducing its speed by 10cm and taking it to 8 hits. Combined with the blast marker in contact with the ship, the Akhet Djet is dead in the water. I fail to repair the engines and can only watch as the planet killer comes into range.

Turn Six. I maneuvered using the gravity well to get the Ma'a Kherew and Ankh Bahew into range of the

planet killer before it could attempt to destroy the planet again. The dauntless squadron used a reroll to get AAF and passed the leadership check for the asteroid field bringing the rear of the planet killer into range. The Ankh Bahew and Mars reload. The dauntless squadron fires and drops two shields on the Planet Killer. The mars launched some bombers and a fighter to cover. The Akhet Djet fails to repair the engines but turns toward the planet using the gravity well.

Cav fails to kill the planet again and in retaliation the Slaughter and Planet Killer pound the Akhet Djet taking it to one hit but causing no additional criticals. The burning styx moves into an asteroid field and is destroyed. The carnage hulk moves toward the board edge.

Turn seven begins with the Ma'a Kherew and Ankh Bahew locking onto the planet killer, the Dauntless squadron and mars reloading, and the Akhet Djet seeing the end near, comes off brace and uses the last re-roll to reload its remaining launch bays. The hail of gunfire and ordnance waves reduces the planet killer to four hits crippling it and causing a dorsal and prow weapons critical. With no way to complete his mission,

Cav disengages by moving both the slaughter and planet killer off the table leaving the IN with the field and the spoils of one carnage hulk.
End results of the battle:

Imperial Navy:

9x infidel destroyed, 2x carnage, 1x styx destroyed.
1x carnage hulk on field. (1362 VP)

Chaos:

1x dauntless destroyed, 1x dauntless crippled, 1x emperor crippled. (350 VP)

Admiral Kratz Tactical Analysis

Here we go with the first Tactical analysis guys.

What we got here is a nice game that involves one of the toughest chaos vessels against a poor imperial planet.

Our good Imperial Admiral brings a pretty classic Imperial Fleet with a lot of cruisers.

As you can see, Aaron (Vaaish) is not going to play any kind of escort against his enemy, preferring a solid 6+ armoured wall and a "support cover" given by the Emperor class.

We can say that this choice will be a good one for Aaron, giving the armour that he needs against the terrible firepower of his enemy. Even if escorts are really important in an Imperial Fleet, in this scenario they're not so necessary.

In fact, the chaos player doesn't use his better velocity against his opponent.

As we can see, the Planet Killer is the main ship of this fleet, supported by two fast Carnage ships and an Infidel swarm.

The problem of this fleet is that there are too many points in one single vessel that is the opposite of the standard of a chaos fleet.

Usually the chaos fleet is faster than the imperial one but with the PK in game, this fleet 'suffers' in the movement phase.

But we will forgive him this choice as this battle was especially orchestrated to showcase the new acquired Planet Killer model.

In turn 1 (when Aaron cripples the Carnage) we can see that the imperial fleet is more compact and unite in his composition, keeping a tight "fire line" every time and shooting with everything at the same target.

Aaron's movement is really important in this battle.

He must eliminate the cruisers that support the PK keeping his own fleet alive and ready to kill the huge chaos general vessel.

On the other side, the chaos player has the PK that needs to go close to the planet to accomplish his mission while only four cruisers and a lot of infidels must hold the whole imperial army.

The chaos fleet has a Styx that gives some supports but it can do anything against an Emperor plus a Mars cruiser sending out tons of supports.

The first wave of imperial support is full of bombers and assault boats because Aaron knows that he will survive against the Styx fighters.

In turn 2 we see that Cav is forced to use his firepower to protect his fleet from bombers and assault boats, losing only one Infidel.

Here we can see the main problem of the chaos fleet: unbalanced.

As I said before, the imperial fleet is more balanced with its cruisers and support. On the other hand, the chaos fleet is built around a single huge vessel with only few cruisers that must do the rest.

As we can see throughout the game the only way that Cav needs to win this game is to bomb the planet and disengage. It's really hard to accomplish but the Chaos Admiral knows his ships and he just uses the cruisers to cover the PK.

Unfortunately, Cav gets 2 rolls to destroy the planet but he fails to do so.

The rest of the game is more or less a massacre against a chaos fleet trying to accomplish its mission. In the end the imperial fleet only suffered light damages and the chaos fleet is pretty much gone.

In the first lines of this battle report, we read that Cav wanted to play the PK at all costs. It's ok, but I don't think he will use it again in a little fleet!

What we can learn from this game is that a strong ship doesn't make a good fleet but a good fleet can destroy easily a strong ship. BFG is a game that needs a balanced force.

Keep this in mind and you will outmanoeuvre, outfire, outassault even the biggest ship in game.

Good game Cav and Vaaish!

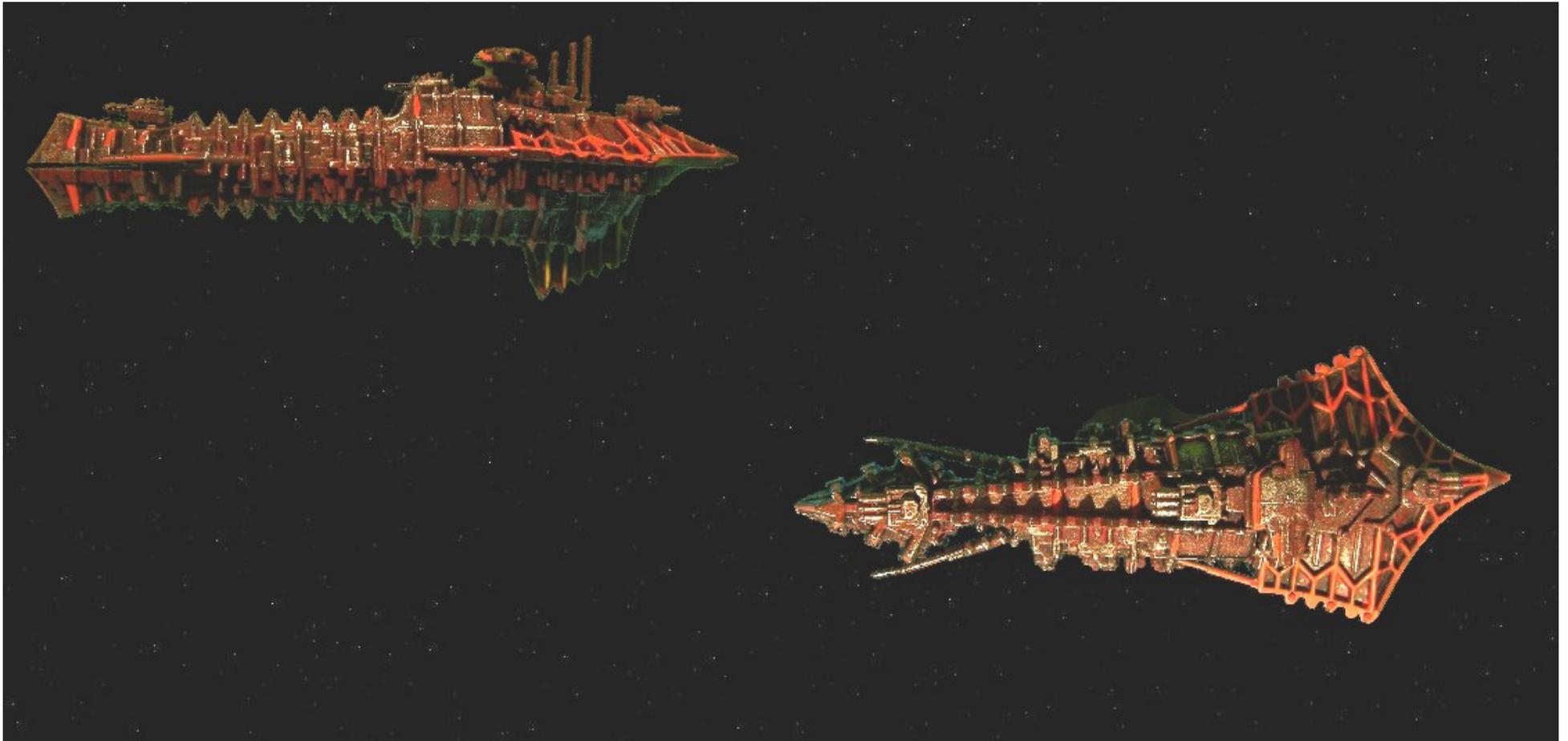


ASHES OF THE HELLFIRE

AN EXPERIMENTAL CHAOS SHIP CLASS BY SHAPESHIFTER

As my brother recently built a Hellfire Heavy Cruiser, he wondered what to do with the parts remaining from the two cruiser hulls. The result was an “inverted” Hellfire which could be used as an experimental light cruiser or character ship. We call it the Soul Eater Class:

SHOWCASE



WAAAAAGH

BY DOMINIC AMLÔT

Chapter One

Explosions hammered into the hull of the Iron Fist. First Petty Officer Williams and his crew sprinted through the ship even as it collapsed around them. Every man in Williams' squad willed to the God Emperor himself to save them, to make sure that the hull did not collapse around them, sucking them into the cold vacuum of space.

There was the reason they had run halfway across the ship and then down into the very depths of the dying vessel - the rescue deck. Turning back to the men who wheezed and coughed behind him, Williams screamed through the smoke and steam and the constant hammering against the hull, "Come on you ball-less apes! We're nearly there. COME ON!!!!"

Then at the very back of the group there was a sudden scream which was quickly silenced in the murky depths of the corridor.

"Sir, it's Jonas, I think his leg's broken," yelled Trina, the only female in the gun crew.

"Men prep one of the escape pods; if I don't come back soon... you'll know what to do,"

Carefully Williams strode over to Trina and the softly moaning figure she clutched in her arms. He stared at the whimpering figure lying in the dirt and grime of the ship's halls.

"There's nothing we can do, come on we have to go NOW!" His voice rose to a shout as he finished.

"But... your just gonna leave him here... but why, HOW COULD YOU!" She screamed right back in his face.

"Look at him, does he look like he's gonna make it?"

Tears rolling from her eyes, she slowly shook her head.

"Come on now we have to go." Williams half dragged, half pulled Trina to the escape pod. As he pulled her into the miniature ship he heard the vessel on which he had served since he was sixteen enter its final death throes. Like Trina, a tear rolled down his cheek but it was for different reasons. His crew looked at him then at Trina. Vinx, one of the shell loaders, was the first to pose the question, "Where is he," he asked in his most cold and harsh voice.

William replied with a simple shake of the head. "Fire her up."

The men went through the motions without actually thinking of what they were doing. They were all shaken by the death of Jonas, whom they had all liked, and by the sudden destruction of the vessel many of them had spent their whole lives on.

"Get us the hell out of here," said Williams

Chapter Two

"What is going on out there? I need sensors now!" yelled the space station commander at one of the unfortunate technicians repairing the damage done to their systems when a squadron of the assaulting Ork brute ships had decided that the station had looked a far more enticing prospect than the battle-cruiser they were trying to board. Suffice to say that while the boarders had been repelled, the kinetic impact damage to the station of three vessels, small as they were, travelling at well over a thousand miles a second had knocked the sensors well and truly out, at least for the time being.

"Sir, basic sensors are back online. I'm reading multiple signals, counting seventeen no... wait, nineteen signatures heading our way; possible attack craft," shouted one of the operators. "Oh, they're sending a signal for rescue. They're pods with the only survivors from the destroyer group Deadly Sword,"

"Very well. Scramble a squadron of Fury interceptors too escort them back to base."

"Aye, aye sir."

"Sir, the Orks, they're retreating. Ummm, actually on second thoughts, I think they might just be repairing. It looks like they're heading into one of the asteroid belts."

"Launch all remaining ships at them; destroy them in the God Emperor's name!"

"I can't sir, they're all gone."

"WHAT! How could this happen; we are humans, the rightful rulers of the galaxy and we were beaten by a few miserable greenskin scum," he shouted to nobody in particular.

"Actually sir, the sensors said they were outnumbered ten to one. You were told this before you sent them out." The technician tried to maintain a neutral tone and keep the accusation out of his voice.

"What exactly are you saying, corporal."

"Nothing, sir."

"Good, keep it that way."

"Oh holy crap," whispered another operator in terror not realising his microphone was on.

"Keep to combat cant you idiots, why the hell did someone say that any way? If they can't find a good reason I'm gonna rip them to shreds." It wasn't an idle boast, he'd had commissar training which taught you to keep discipline by shooting

people first and asking questions later.

"Sorry, sir it's kind of well, ummm... a, a, a spacehulk-just-dropped-out-of-warp-space." The terrified tech finally garbling out the message afraid of what the station commander would do to the bearer of bad news.

"A space hulk eh? I don't think crap explains how totally screwed we are."

All the officers present let out a nervous laugh, not knowing if it was a joke or if he was serious.

"Gentlemen, I'm going to be frank, the chances of this system and all the others under our protection surviving if this space hulk hits is small to none, so our only objective is to destroy that vessel and decimate the fleet with it. We have maybe a couple of escorts and a cruiser still operational., So, what we have to do is find out everything about these orks - that means down to the number of shots each fighter will get before we send them in."

This was met with a chorus of "Aye Sirs" from his officers, a pitiful few compared to what they should be. Constant fighting with the Heretics and the Tyranids had worn down his men and ships until he had barely enough to defend five systems let alone the twenty he was meant to cover. You would think that among those twenty systems there would be at least one planet where they would be able to not only replace his losses among ships but also among men; that meant men who were above the flint age in technology or perhaps had a language that was more than one grunt for "yes" and two grunts for "no". It is in these times, he thought, that the God Emperor tests us, and I will not let him down he promised to himself.

Chapter Three

"We have arrived in one piece. I'd say that's pretty good after what we went through," said Williams jubilantly. In turn, as they walked past, each one of the survivors gave him a dirty look. Despite the death of a comrade and the loss of not only their ship but many others - they had all craned their necks to look out the tiny viewing port and had seen other ships and their crews that were not so lucky - he was still happy.

"Glad to know you're happy that you're alive," Williams muttered under his

breath.

“All units, repeat all units, except those on watch and techs repairing the station, report to the main briefing hall on level three B section.” The speakers boomed all over the space station, repeating the message over and over.

As they strode purposefully towards the grav-lift they passed dozens of techs grumbling about how unfair it was and why did they have to do it instead of all these perfectly good Navy lifers who, after all, were just grunts. A few stares that spoke more than a thousand words could, quickly silenced them.

They were all quietly amazed at the huge open expanse of briefing hall before them. It appeared as if it could hold up to a thousand people seated. As it was quite a few had to stand, not only that but it had loud-speakers around the hall so that everyone could hear and a massive screen at the front. Arriving ahead of the main crowd they quickly found seats near the front; you never know, sometimes they said something interesting - like ‘we’re all going to die’!

The commander strode in purposefully towards the front of the hall; he turned on his heel sharply and came to a precise stop. His eyes ran over the assembled men as if waiting for one of them to make a mistake. Then as quickly as he came in, he turned and put the screen on. There was a soft moan from the assembled company as they saw the title:

The destruction of the space hulk,
And all its assets

Chapter Four

“Men, and women of the Imperial Guard and the Imperial Navy,” he paused, “We face the greatest threat these twenty systems have seen since the arrival of the Tyrannid Hive Fleet Leviathan.”

Before he could continue, men were shouting at him for answers. “Can we win?” “Is help coming?”

“I don’t think you understand. We are meant to be the big force that comes and helps the little one. I’ve sent out our fastest ships to get help but they will be slow to arrive at their destinations and probably slower getting back. We’re completely alone unless somebody knows where I can find a few hundred battleships, with

combat-ready crews.”

“What, we can’t be alone!!!”

“How are we going to stop them!?!?!?”

“WE’RE ALL GOING TO DIE!!!!!”

The commander (whose name for the record is Maugen) waited for the sudden uproar to die down. It didn’t, so in the way only commanding officers can he got out his bolt pistol and fired a whole clip just over the mass of bodies in front of him. That got their attention. There was a shocked silence – a thousand men who had been screaming and shouting a second ago were now frozen completely silent.

“Good, I need enough volunteers to crew a Sword class frigate. We don’t know where the Orks are regrouping or how many of them you’ll be facing but one thing’s for certain, if we don’t find out soon our chances of surviving are very limited indeed.

“Volunteers go out the door at the back, everyone else back to your normal duties.”

It was a meagre few that went out the back door. Perhaps surprisingly or perhaps not, they were all Navy crewmen but only those like Williams group who had lost someone in the struggle.

It takes a crew of at least two hundred and fifty to pilot a Sword vessel and fire all the spaceship’s guns quickly and efficiently. Only about 100 men went through the back door - not good!

Maugen turned slightly to one of his aides and spoke, “Load up the ship with all the sensor equipment we’ve got. And put a good commissar on board, they must complete this mission.”

“Yes, sir.”

“It’s ‘Aye sir’ you idiot,” Maugen said under his breath as his aide shuffled through the shifting mass of soldiers.

Chapter Five

“Okay, this is the plan of attack; the last recorded place of the Ork fleet was here,” one of the men briefing them pointed to a asteroid field on the star chart at the edge of the system. “What you need to do is to get nice and close, get a detailed sensor analysis and then get the hell out maximum drive, any questions?”

Several men raised their hands.

“Right, you, what is it?”

“How long will it take to do this ‘analysis’ and get out because the Orks aren’t stupid they’ll have picket ships and also there’ll be roving packs of attack craft that could easily tear us apart long before we get back?” Everyone else put their hands down and muttered agreement.

“That’s easy, because aren’t going to be any with a bit of luck.”

“But...”

“Wait a sec, I’m gonna tell you something really basic about attack craft. If you don’t have sensors actively looking for them, and quite a few Orks don’t have them, and there’s only one or two in the wave then they’re gonna get through.

“Now, what if I were to tell you that to distract the Orks we were gonna send a Shark boat or three with a load of people in them and each one of them has enough explosives to, say, destroy one of the three generators on the space hulk? To put it simply 60 Guardsmen are going to be on your ship with three Shark assault boats and as soon as you get within striking distance the assault boats will launch.”

“Oh, but... um... isn’t that a suicide mission?”

“The chances of any of those men getting back are slim but it must be done. If they can’t distract the Orks then you die and, to be frank, we value this ship and it’s mission more than those men.”

“Oh, right.”

“No more questions? Good, get to your posts on your new vessel, launch when ready. Dismissed.”

They filed out of the room into the corridor and then down through an air-lock. Finally they came to the docking hatch. Next to it there was a tiny viewing port, this gave them a clear view of not only the ship and the planet but also the massive scars on the space station, caused by repeated attacks, the worse were the result of that unfortunate incident with the brute ships. Atmosphere was still leaking out; it looked like some dark god had taken a hammer and smashed the station.

“Come on, I don’t think those Commissars would be happy about us being late.”

There was a short and feeble laugh to this comment. Even so they started to shuffle towards the ship. Each one of them knew that the chances of surviving were very slim, but that’s the Imperial Navy for you.

“Oi you, hurry up, you’re late,” said one of the Guard. Vinx gave him a withering stare that silenced him before he could say something else. Guard and Navy don’t mix, or so the saying goes. They quickly moved onto the ship just in case a commissar was watching, you never know.

Chapter Six

They stared out of the viewing port for what was going to be the last time for some. On the station men crowded the corridors watching them go. Williams sighed. It was going to be a long day. The journey to the asteroid field took only a few hours. In that time only a few small Ork attack craft were spotted and easily dealt with.

Half an hour from their destination the Shark assault boats were released, carrying their deadly payload of men and explosives. This is too easy thought Williams. He had expected at least one escort to be guarding the Orks but, no, there weren’t any. Then it became clear why.

“Multiple heat signatures in the asteroid field, the asteroids are moving on an intercept with us.” As senior member on watch, Williams shouted at the comms gear and keyed it to the engine room. “Multiple contacts, approaching at speed give me full power.” Once confirmation had been received, he keyed the guns, “All guns, if it moves, kill it.”

“We have incoming eighty three missiles, count rising, three Ork bomber waves incoming; they number two hundred planes per wave.” As the toneless voice of this servitor finished, the one plugged into the sensors searching for the hulk started speaking, “Sensor analysis fifty per cent complete, space hulk located, feeding location to assault boat pilots.”

“Helm, get us out of here now.”

The servitor scanning the attack orks counted down, “Missile impact imminent, impact in 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... 0... impact.”

“BRACE!”

The ship shuddered under the impacts. The shields strained to hold and then in an explosion of pure light they failed. By some fluke, the ship was not destroyed but it was crippled, dead in space.”

With startling clarity, Williams remembered the frantic charge down the corridors of his last ship, the Iron Fist, leaping over fallen steel and moaning bodies in the headlong rush to get to relative safety, or as safe as you can be in a tiny pod in the blackness of space, barely big enough for eight let alone the twelve that he'd crammed in. It looked like he'd have to do it all over again less than 24 hours later.

“Main propulsion systems down; weapons offline, reactor shutting down to prevent overload, switching to emergency power.” Even though its doom was upon it, the servitor remained completely toneless.

“This is Williams. Abandon ship, repeat, abandon ship.”

The servitor manning the sensors spoke, “Massive energy surge near the centre of the asteroid field, reading it as the space hulk.”

“Relay all the information we have then overload the core.”

“Order confirmed relaying data.”

Williams stared out at the distant vista of the hulk as it came towards the frigate, then with a last look he sprinted from the bridge down to the escape deck. As he got to the escape desk the few intact viewpoints that hadn't automatically closed

as a result of hull breaches provided him with an image of the space hulk and its surrounding ships. Soon he saw escape pods leaving the frigate, only to be destroyed by the hulk's turrets. That was when he realised the only way any of them would survive was to get on that hulk and take out its turrets, that meant the generators. As he reached the last passageway he nearly fell over a body. He looked down, it was just a servitor that had been caught in the blast from one of the exposed circuit boards. He finally got into the escape pod and was surprised to find Trina and Vinx. He smiled and stumbled the last few paces inside. “Thanks for waiting.”

“Don't worry it wasn't anything personal,” rasped Vinx.

Williams let out a smirk, “Guys we have to get on that space hulk.”

“WHAT!?!?!?” Trina yelled, “We didn't go and save your life so you could go kill yourself and us.”

“Don't you understand? That hulk has enough guns to blow us up before we even cleared the docking bay.” He spoke softly, “We HAVE to wait for them to get close than board them and somehow get back to the Station before we all die.”

“Oh... so you are mad; thought so.” Vinx said amused, “But he's right, Trina and you know that. Well, now we play the waiting game to see if they blow us up before the hulk gets close enough for us to board.”

Chapter Seven

“Sir, we just lost contact with the frigate.”

“Did the servitor finish the data stream?”

“Umm... No sir it was cut off midway.”

“Damn!”

“Sir, we've just received confirmation from our patrolling fighter squadrons, the Orks are massing for an attack. Sir, if they come here in full force there would be nothing we could do about it. They outnumber us about fifty to one now, and that's with the space station.”

“Launch all our attack craft, we need to slow them down, and start evacuating this is facility.”

“We can’t sir, they’re blockading the system. Even if we sent all our ships at their weakest point they’d still outnumber us... sir.”

“In that case fill all of our ships with every explosive that you can find. When you’ve done that put them in the debris field; when the Orks get close enough detonate them, that should give them something to think about.”

“Aye, sir.”

Maugen stood up from his chair and strode down to his quarters, it wasn’t always like this he thought, once the Imperium had been the greatest power in the galaxy but now a rag-tag bunch of greenskins was going to overthrow this system and the next, and then the next. If they did this then they would have a clear route to the soft underbelly of the Imperium. There were enough Orks to easily do it - once a world was infested with Orks it was almost impossible to exterminate their taint. This battle could decide the fate of not only this system but possibly the entire sector. The thought made him laugh at the pure insanity of it all.

An explosion ripped open a gash in the space station. Apparently all the Orks in the first attack hadn’t been wiped out. Technicians ran down to the damage in an attempt to fix it only to be gunned down by Orks that had infested the lower decks, spreading like a contagion racing through the station, killing as they went. Maugen felt the blast, it knocked him off his feet, slamming his head against the steel corridor wall. He was momentarily disorientated. As blood poured from his head, he had a moment of clarity and shouted down into a vox caster, “All units, we have been boarded! To arms! Repeat, we have been boarded! To arms!” The pain in his head felt like someone was hammering a nail into his scalp.

Brio heard the call to arms and leapt up from the bunk where he had been trying to get some rest. The message was on a loop. As it repeated itself for the fifth time, he had got up and was by his locker pulling out an autogun and a couple of magazines. After he had pulled on his flak jacket and strapped on his ammo someone had changed the speakers to blare out a hymn on killing the Emperor’s foes. He joined a group of Guard and Navy with a mix of shotguns and lasguns. They strode into the lift. As it moved down, there was a smash on the roof and then the power cut out.

“What’s happening?” whimpered a voice.

Brio felt alone in the dark and was about to reply with “How should we know?” when the roof, the entire roof was ripped off and an Ork jumped into the lift compartment with them, it smelt putrid, like it hadn’t washed for its entire life. Brio would have died in the first stroke of the Ork’s blade if something had not told him to duck. The blade whistled over his head missing him by an inch. He fell to his knees, un-slung his gun and fired ten rounds into the beast’s heart. It screamed once then fell. He picked himself up, he was the only man left alive in the lift. He looked up and saw to his horror Orks, at least fifty climbing the lift-shaft to get to the top of the station. No wonder that one had come from the top of the lift.

He knelt on one knee, took aim, and as he started firing he sang any and every prayer he knew. As the Orks climbed they were sitting ducks - if they let go with just one hand they’d fall and if they didn’t fall they’d be shot. But Brio hadn’t considered how much weight the carriage he was standing on could take because as each Ork fell more weight was added. As he got to the last couple, the steel hawsers and beams began to strain. It became terribly clear to him what would happen if he shot down those last few. He opened fire.

Chapter Eight

“Here it comes. Wait for it... now launch!”

“Launching... impact in five-four-three-two-one... Owwww.”

“I’m okay, not that you care,” said Williams.

“Time for a boarding action do you think?”

“Yep I think we should.”

“Don’t forget the guns.”

“Trina do you even know how to fire a lasgun? I don’t want to be killing Orks and then be shot in the back by someone on my side.”

"Shut-up I actually trained on one of these."

"Yeah... we believe you."

"Stop fighting children. Let's go play with some Orks instead, oh, and bring those explosives."

"Aye, sir," Vinx muttered sarcastically.

As the three squeezed through into the Ork ship, one by one they all chucked up their guts... and then a bit more. The stench emanating from the hulk itself was almost unbearable.

And that wasn't including what they thought was just rancid food but was actually Gretchin 'biological matter' or crap depending on how you look at it. They heard something and leapt behind a corner just as a Gretchin sentry wandered past, completely unaware that three very angry humans armed to the teeth were standing just a foot away.

Williams signalled to Vinx to take it out silently. Drawing a knife, Vinx crept up to it. Just as the Gretchin turned and was about to squeal in fear, Vinx ran him through, the blade slid onto the creature and stuck there. Vinx ripped the knife out of the body making an awfully loud squelching sound, then the body thumped to the ground.

Williams glared at Vinx. He hissed, "I said silently you whore face!"

"You're welcome," Vinx hissed back equally angry.

"Come on, let's get out of here before more of those things show up." Trina spoke softly trying to calm them down.

Williams nodded. "Let's head for the engines. I think I can hear one of the reactors quite close."

"Uh-huh, I hear it too, let's go," whispered Vinx, his anger forgotten for the moment.

They moved swiftly through the corridors, stopping every few minutes to check if they were being followed. As they approached a larger corridor, the sound of the

reactor got louder and the gut-wrenching stink was overpowered by the smell of grease. Trina, who'd been on point, signalled for them to stop; she crept forward, keeping to the shadows, moving like a breath of smoke, almost completely invisible. She looked round the corner and ducked back in suddenly, landing heavily on her back.

All was silent except for the whine of the reactor motors but then there were shouts and a heavily muscled Ork leapt round the corner covered only in a couple of oily rags holding a spanner that was at least three feet long and weighed at least 30kg. He spotted the three 'umie's' but before he could shout Vinx's knife thudded into his eye making the beast collapse to the ground where it smashed to the floor leaving a massive dent. That wasn't the worst part either as in his death throes he threw the spanner away which bounced down the corridor alerting the ten Orks and fifty or so Gretchin in the room to the fact that one of their number was dead. They grabbed a assortment of weapons ranging from the lead pipe to the screw driver and everything in between. As they sprinted round the corner they saw the dead Ork now propped up against a wall. What they didn't see were the five grenades that were hidden behind the Ork's body.

Williams, Trina and Vinx sprinted away, not caring to make noise anymore, just to get away. Then the grenades went off. Because of the small corridors the blast was highly concentrated. Almost as soon as the three had picked themselves up, they were sprinting back down the corridor to finish off the survivors. They didn't need to. Before them was a steaming pool of blood with odd bits of Ork floating around in it. The grisly scene was lit only by a single lamp that cast a dim yellow glow on the sickening picture.

"Come on, something must have heard that. We've got to blow that generator and be long gone before they get here," said Williams, already picking his way through the mass of bodies to get to the room beyond. Sighing, the other two followed him across.

"Just another day in the glorious Imperial Navy," muttered Trina as she sloshed through the sea of blood to get to the end of the corridor.

Vinx chuckled at this remark, signalling his agreement. As they entered the generator room it became incredibly quiet even the hum of the machine had gone. Williams popped up from a hatch, "Alright I've turned the thing off, Vinx give me some of those melta-charges and I'll plant them in the core itself then I'll turn it back on and we get to run like hell. Let's move. Trina keep watch, this is gonna be a long day."

Chapter Nine

Brio woke up. He felt like every part of his body was being compressed into a tiny ball. The pressure on his chest was so great it felt like all his ribs were going to be smashed.

Slowly he opened his eyes, taking in all the details of the Ork bodies pressing him down into yet more Ork bodies below. It was in fact the bodies that had saved him, acting as giant shock absorbers; thanks to them he had remained relatively unharmed.

He eased out of the stinking mass of bodies, dragging his gun with him. As he tried to stand up the agony was unbearable so he fell to his knees shouting in pain. A few seconds later there was an answering shriek. It wasn't human, and whoever or whatever had made it was close. Pain coursing through his veins Brio crawled out of the elevator shaft, this motion sent pain lashing out against his spine, burning with pain and anger and fear. Adrenaline was all that was keeping him alive at the moment. Seeing a service elevator shaft he pulled himself towards it, then out of nowhere a Ork came racing out of the tunnel behind him, boots smashing against the floor, Brio rolled over and fired five bullets at point blank range into the beast's head. Even as it fell four more Orks raced round the corner. Seeing the demise of their leader, they opted for shooting at Brio, firing blindly from around the corner. This made their guns even less accurate but it was only a short amount of time until one of them hit him, and then they could finish him with blades. Knowing they would torture him first, this thought helped Brio quicken his crawl - the only way to life was through those elevator doors. Then one Ork braver than the others (or just stupider) decided it was time to charge their victim.

Yelling an unknowable war cry it threw itself around the corner but a single well placed bullet from Brio's gun stopped it in its tracks. It fell without a sound, well that is as long as you don't count the noise of a 20 stone beast covered in metal smashing down onto a metal deck then yes, it didn't make a sound.

Finally Brio reached the doors. Using his gun barrel like a crowbar he levered the door open and just managed to fall into the lift and push the button before the last three Orks caught up with him. Brio slumped to the floor of the lift drained and in so much pain he still could barely believe that he was still alive. Soon, he would be up in the decks still controlled by man and would be taken care of, he hoped.

"Sir, Orks have just breached level four and the officer there says they won't be able to survive much longer unless backup is sent." The man reporting was too wounded to fight and had been drafted in to damage control.

"Tell them to fall back to..." Maugen studied the map in front of him, "...junction six and send down one of our guns servitors."

"Yes, sir."

"How is the defence of the reactor going?"

"Well sir, they just finished repelling the last Ork attack and there were only seven casualties and four of those will be able to fight on."

"Good, good."

"Also sir, they reported hearing gunfire on there level. They believe it was from an auto gun sir."

"We don't have any units down there."

"Perhaps he's a survivor from that lift that was destroyed, maybe he was the one that stopped that Ork attack in its tracks, he could've survived the fall?"

"Impossible, it was over three hundred feet."

A second tech responded, "Actually sir, one of the Tech teams on level 10 green section Shaft B picked up a survivor in there, a man, he's wounded but they think he'll live."

"Patch him up and send him to the front. Even if he can't fight he'll be a good figurehead and might inspire the men."

"Yes sir."

Chapter Ten

"Okay, on my mark run," said Williams. As he finished wiring the bombs he

screamed at the top of his voice, "Go go go, let's get the hell out of here."

"I hate running, it didn't say anything about it on the recruitment poster," yelled Trina over the roar of a reactor that was going to blow.

"Oh stop your moaning, we have to get to the other side of the ship in five minutes and if you can think about a better way to do it other than running be my guest and enlighten me."

"Up yours, sir."

"Thank you private, now run!"

"Aye, sir"

They barely made it halfway before they ran into the Ork patrol, literally.

Williams was on point and just as he stepped round the corner he tripped and went head first into a Ork knocking it off its feet. Williams was the first to react plunging his bayonet into the Ork's heart spraying him with blood. The other Orks were slow to react and the first one was just pulling his gun free when Trina leapt round the corner landed in a fighting stance, and opened up, spraying the Orks with bolts of pure energy from her lasgun.

Then Vinx came round the corner and also started shooting, spending a whole clip of forty bullets, blowing huge chunks of flesh off with his autogun. As soon as it had started it was over. Six Orks lay dead at the three humans' feet. Williams pulled himself up, dusted himself down and then in a calm tone of voice that was completely wrong in the situation said, "Problems? Anyway let's get the hell out of here. It seems all I do is dash around ships waiting for things to blow up."

The other two chuckled at this, then as one they ran away into the depths of the space hulk.

About thirty seconds later an explosion ripped through the corridors leaving an ugly gash on the side of the hulk - not that you would have time to admire the view as only a millisecond later a bigger secondary explosion rippled outwards rocking the hulk back and forth, damaging it badly. However, it still continued onwards towards the space station. It was now almost certain that it would reach the station but in what condition? Well that was up to three humans trapped on

the hulk with Orks hunting them, life was certainly not fair.

Gasping for breath, William wheezed, "Nearly there now, as soon as we get to the bowels of the ship we can rest."

"Yeah the 'bowels' of the ship as you call it seem to stretch down into hell, and then a bit further, say to the demons' holiday home," said Trina.

Vinx tried to laugh but it came out as a strangled yelp. Too tired to speak anymore Williams signalled them to keep running. Despite Trina's prediction it didn't take them long to reach the ladder to the next deck but there was a problem. Vinx, who was on point, motioned them back then, using the sign language they were all taught in basic training, told them that there were fourteen Orks guarding the ladder but they all seemed to be stopping things come up rather than down.

Then the heavy clatter of Ork boots sounded on the corridor deck behind them. Williams realised that they were surrounded. What to do? Go back the way they had come or to face whatever horrors the Orks themselves seemed to be afraid of. He quickly signalled to Vinx and Trina his intent then threw a frag grenade around the corner and gave the Orks a short burst of fire. Seconds later the grenade exploded showering the Orks with razor sharp pieces of metal. There were screams and bellows of pain and then the trio moved forward spraying any Ork that moved with bullets.

Vinx kept watch while Trina and Williams pulled open the hatch, beads of sweat dripped down their faces while they grunted in effort. Then, with one last heave, they shunted the great door open and not a moment to soon. Vinx leapt down the hole grapping onto the ladder, pulling himself down he shouted, "Orks, they're here," and then he disappeared into the gloom. A spray of bullets dented the wall inches from Trina's head. She and Williams leapt down through the hatch, using their momentum to pull it shut behind them.

"Vinx, are you there?" whispered Williams afraid to break the deathly quiet that had settled over them.

"I'm here you oaf," said a very close voice. There was a clanking noise and then the amp attached to Vinx's gun lit up the cavern. They were in half blinded by the sudden light. Williams raised a hand to shield his eyes only to lose his grip on the ladder and clatter the last few feet to the ground, landing with an almighty crash. Trina barely suppressed a snigger at Williams' misfortune. As he dusted himself

down Williams glared at her, his eyes narrowed. Trina jumped the few feet that William had fallen landing lightly on her feet giving him a meaningful look.

Vinx watched this exchange with interest, "If you two are quite done then I suggest you light your lamps too, I think I can see something reflecting my light back in the distance. Since it's the only landmark we can see it makes sense to go towards it."

"You're right let's go," said Williams.

Far above them, unseen in the darkness, were a pair of eyes that were pitch black, that could stare into your soul and feel your deepest desires and worst fears. Their owner swooped down towards the trio waiting for his chance to strike.

Chapter Eleven

Brio screamed, the pain in his back was unbearable. The doctor working on him seemed to him to have trained as an engineer, he wasn't sympathetic either. And then, suddenly all the pain was gone, like it had never been.

"That's one hell of a painkiller you have there,"

"That isn't a pain killer, you just dislocated your right hip and your left arm, I've reset them."

"Oh, thanks."

"Don't mention it, now get the hell out of here, the front line's that way, NEXT," the doctor bellowed the last word at the top of his lungs making everyone cringe.

Brio left the medical bay in a hurry not wanting to be near a doctor that could double up as a drill sergeant, Emperor did he hate drill sergeants. He quickly walked to the armoury. As he arrived he heard gunfire, screaming and Ork roaring.

He turned to the armoury supervisor, "How close are they exactly?"

"That's a damned good question; they could be just metres away for all I know, and people still wouldn't tell me anything was wrong."

Brio pulled a face but laughed none the less. Smiling the soldier handed over a M1 lasgun with a couple of clips plus a few frag grenades for when, as he had said, "Things start to get dirty dirty." Brio strode off. The corridors were dented and broken, splattered with what looked like blood mixed with something like tar. As he moved further along the station he started to hear the sounds of battle, bouncing along the walls leaving eerie echoes in their wake. Quite scared now, Brio still walked on, as he was about to cross the last bend to what he thought sounded like the front when a human flew round the corner, literally. Brio narrowly avoided being slammed into by the flying corpse, and said to the already dead man, "Little late to be having flying lessons don't you think?"

Shrugging his shoulders he looked carefully round the corner to see what had happened, that's when it slammed into him. Massive, even for an Ork, it was thick and brutish and not just in the head. The Ork let out a tremendous belch; it hit Brio like a knuckle duster in the jaw. The putrid reek momentarily filled his every sense giving the Ork the time to clamber to its feet and draw a bent and notched axe from its belt, fresh blood still dripping from the tip of the blade. The massive beast raised the weapon, intent solely on the destruction of this one foe, that perhaps was why a squat and rather fat guardsman was able to run (or waddle very fast) and run through the nine foot giant. Shaken but unharmed, Brio leapt up and grabbed his fallen weapon.

"Got to keep an eye to the front my friend, my name's Jack, I'm a squat. I'm quite famous round here. Maybe you've heard of my adventures - La'ncel'yn, it was a foul demon, huh," said the unlikely-looking Guardsman, growing confident that the guy he had just saved would know and praise him for his 'mightiness'.

"Um-uh, right, yeah I've heard all about you... yeah," Brio stumbled across the sentence unsure how to put it softly that he had never heard of this little runt before.

Nevertheless Jack smiled, "Well then you'll know all about my famous last stands then, I'm hoping to add another one to the records today."

"Aren't the point of last stands to be 'last'?" Brio muttered under his breath.

Jack turned and gave him a questioning glance, before he once again moved his head like an owl searching for a mouse in a field, keeping his eyes upon the corridor ready for any more surprises. "Ahh and here we are again."

In front of them there was a flimsy barricade held together by duck tape and a lot of prayers. An Ork leapt over a shattered piece of what once could have been a storage crate. It was dead before its feet touched the ground again. Jack, despite his size, had put a energy round into the centre of an Ork skull at fifty meters, not bad. Brio turned and let loose a volley of shots into the nearest enemy. He calmly moved forward as if he had dealt with brutes like this his whole life. When he finally got close enough to pick out details among the defence he started to notice things; such as that when the barricade had a breach it was quickly sealed by the body of a dead Ork or human and that, although this was helping, squishy bodies weren't the best thing to hide behind when getting shot at - as a few helpless soldiers soon found out to their misfortune.

Seeing the dire predicament of the defence and knowing just as before that if someone didn't take control and do something they were all screwed, he quickly jogged to the nearest soldier. He was covered head to foot in sweat, blood and tears.

"Who the hell is in command here?" roared Brio over the tidal wave of sound, his voice nearly lost in the screams and roars of the living and soon to be departed to the Emperor's throne.

"We had a colonel at one point but I think he's now helping us in other ways!" A female soldier yelled back, indicating a body in the wall.

"Oh crap."

"HELL YEAH!" cried out (Brio had finally seen the name and rank) Sergeant Heller 4th division 3rd platoon. Seeing the sergeant was otherwise occupied he decided on evening the score with some of his old Ork 'mates'. He lobbed one of his grenades into the seething mass of Orks, following it up with several controlled bursts of las-bolts that riddled the Ork bodies with holes.

Chapter Twelve

Williams gasped in another lungful of air. It felt as it was freezing his blood.

"You okay sir?" asked Trina concern etched on her face.

"It's just something in the air, I'll be okay."

"Alright," her voice still sounded very worried.

"The air's getting thinner down here, and there are unusual amounts of carbon and nitrogen in the air. If we stay long it might give us permanent lung and brain damage, too much longer and we'll be dead," spoke out Vinx, looking down at the handheld scanner he was using.

"Great," muttered Williams.

Despite the awful conditions, the three kept on trudging along. After several hours had dragged past at an awfully slow rate, they saw something in the distance, it was a light. It looked like it was just reflecting off something. As they got closer they were able to make out more and more details until they could see the exit but a terrible stink started to creep across the landscape. It was the sickening smell of half eaten half rotting flesh that had been left to fester for weeks.

As they moved into the circle of light surrounding the doorway all three, as if a switch had been thrown, chucked up their guts. Surrounding them were corpses, lots and lots of them, some were only hours old, others looked like they'd been here for years. That's when they realised the true nature of this place. It was just one big pit that dead Orks and those that had angered those bigger than them were thrown into. What really scared them though was the many of the bodies had unnaturally large teeth marks in them. As they picked their way to the door they soon realised that many of the corpses were in-fact human in origin.

"Those bodies over there, they look a hell of a like the Guardsmen that went on this mission," said Vinx as he gesticulated at the bodies.

"Guess were not going to get much help from them," replied Williams.

"Of course not you idiot, although if their Shark assault boats are intact we can still get out of here," Trina said patronisingly

"We'll never make it, they have almost no fuel, and even if they did we'd be destroyed before we made it through the flak."

"Actually," spoke Vinx thoughtfully, "as we draw closer to the planet and the space station not to mention the moon, their gravity will distort the Orks' radar, which will also stop them detecting small fast moving objects - say, for instance,

a Shark assault boat.”

“Technical bastard,” muttered Williams just loud enough for Vinx to hear.

He grimaced, making William smile, that’s when they heard a soft whooshing sound that quickly turned into a scream as wings travelling at almost 150 miles an hour travelled down on them. It covered the distance between them like lighting. Shouting in pure fear Trina opened fire blasting at the demon beast before her. Despite the terrible wounds that she caused it the beast came on. Now, as if answering the scream, with a high cry that cutting through the air like a knife through butter. They all felt like their heads were going to explode.

Through the constant pain and paralysing fear Vinx managed to say, his body shuddering with the effort, “Run!” The simple word somehow broke the spell holding them in place, setting them free. They sprinted towards the open hatch knowing it was their last chance to stay alive. Trina got through first, then Williams. However, as Vinx pulled himself through the door something incredibly strong grabbed his legs and waist pulling him back towards darkness, that was until William jammed the nozzle of his gun into what he thought were the creature’s eyes and let loose a volley that hammered into the beast’s body making it shudder and writhe.

Vinx having grabbed his combat-knife, started hacking away at the tentacles holding him till he managed to pull himself out with a unexpected popping sound.

“Let’s get out of here,” Vinx said shaking.

“I’m with you on that one, let’s go,” spoke Trina.

Moving as fast as their tired legs could carry them they stumbled off from the oppressive darkness of the cavern filled with winged monsters with tentacles into the light of the Ork ship filled with hundreds of Orks looking to kill them.

Chapter Thirteen

“Fall back,” screamed Brio.

“Hell yeah,” shouted a passing Navy trooper.

Two hours into the fighting the Orks had somehow managed to get a Killa-Kan up to this level without using the elevator (this was quite an impressive feat since it was taller and wider than all the access tubes that they would have had to use to get it up). It had hacked and ripped; using its under-slung flamer to clear the barricades. Men and women screaming in agony littered the floor, some missing limbs others completely covered in burns, flesh still melting. The smell was gut-wrenching, however, it didn’t dissuade the Orks from pouring through to get at the now-terrified humans.

Brio had sounded the retreat, commissar or no commissar. Another gout of flame came forth from the Ork line burning half a dozen men with flesh falling from blackened bone. Screaming in pure terror the last survivors of that massacre fled towards the relative safety of the blast door. Brio leapt through the hatch just in time. Slower and wounded soldiers were blown to pieces by an Ork grenade.

Brio put a las-bolt between the slaving beast’s eyes dropping the creature which had thrown the grenade with a single shot. Two people just managed to get to the hatch when the Killa-Kan arrived. Its spinning blades ripped apart one of them, momentarily opening up her guts before burning her alive. The last person in, he recognised as Sergeant Heller. Brio slammed the bulkhead door shut with a thud.

“Thanks for waiting. I didn’t think I’d make it,” said Heller.

“No problem, is there any way to vent the oxygen on the other side of this hatch by the way?”

“Uh...yeah, we just need to get the control room to suck the air out and seal that section, but the radio’s out so we’ll have to get up five levels and as far as I can tell this place is completely overrun with Orks.”

“Mm...I see, well we need to go now then, there’s no time to lose. If the Orks break through and command don’t know they’re coming, if that happens... then we’re all dead.”

“Lets’ go then!”

Chapter Fourteen

“Look there they are,” whispered Trina.

“Uh-huh,” Vinx nodded.

“Look how many Orks are guarding them, we’ll never get through,” Williams said sceptically.

They sat on a balcony of sorts, overlooking what appeared to be a docking bay. There were about forty Orks guarding it. At the very end next to the doors to space and freedom sat all the Sharks.

“We’ve got a problem ladies and gentlemen, The only way to open those doors looks like from the tower over there,” William pointed to a tower with a assortment of scanner arrays attached to it by various means. “This means that the entire bay will be open to space when those doors open so we’ll have to already be in the Shark, someone’s gonna have to stay behind and open those doors cos’ the Orks sure aren’t gonna open them for us.”

“Your right, I’ll do it,” Vinx spoke the words quietly, his body shuddering. Although there was no tremor in his voice you could tell he was terrified.

“You don’t have to do this, the Orks might have some form of space suit,” Trina said feebly.

Williams said nothing, then nodded, “May you forever sit on the Emperor’s right hand.”

“It was an honour, sir.”

They split up, Trina and Williams headed towards the sharks while Vinx swiftly sped towards the tower.

Vinx was scared - why had he said he would do it? Was he trying to prove something to the other two, who he could just see racing towards the assault boats in the distance? This is the end he thought, I wonder how death feels.

“We shouldn’t have let Vinx go,” muttered Tina rhetorically.

“It was our only hope and quite frankly if any one can get those doors open and then find a way to survive and make me owe him a beer at the end - it’s Vinx.”

“Okay,” Trina said meekly, more trying to convince herself than anyone else.

“Good now let’s hurry up cos’ I really don’t want to run into one of those Ork patrols by accident,” Williams said, trying to brighten her mood.

Trina just sighed in response. Williams shrugged and set off at a run. It was at that moment, as if some higher deity didn’t want them to succeed, that an alarm started blaring out of the speakers with brain-bursting intensity. It felt like someone was screaming in the middle of their brains. Trina and Williams fell to the floor clutching their heads and then, as if it had never been, the noise was gone. They felt their way forward, shaken from the experience when another ear-splitting wail came across the speakers. They prepared themselves for this ordeal when they realised that it was in fact the warning that the bay doors were going to open.

“Oh crap, we must have been out for ages,” muttered Williams.

Trina nodded her agreement. They both felt the hiss of air as the bay doors opened a crack.

“We need to go now, we’ve wasted enough time as it is,” Williams ran, closely followed by Trina.

Then out of nowhere a grot appeared scampering across the ground, clutching a spanner to its filthy and unwashed chest. It was about to shout a warning when Trina put a las- bolt in its guts. It started squealing like a stuck pig as it tried to pull its guts back in.

William moved quickly and finished it off with a knife. But too late - every Ork squad in the area had been alerted to their presence and had started running towards the noise growling in their guttural tongue.

“Why us lord?” said William towards the roof sarcastically.

They were only a couple of feet away from the Sharks. All they had to do was get inside and seal the outer and inner doors plus the airlock then disconnect the assault ramp and get out before the Orks arrived with cutting tools, not much then...

They scrambled up to the nearest boat. Trina lobbed a few grenades behind her as she ran onto the assault ramp, answering screams met this.

Williams shouted in surprise as he saw another figure climbing up the mound. "How the hell did you get here," he asked as the figure of Vinx appeared.

"To cut a long story short, I'm bloody amazing, oh and um... you know that alarm. I think that was me sounding the general call to arms in this sector, in other words we need to go now."

"I'm with you on that one," Trina said as she hastily started the rear thrusters in an attempt to disengage the Shark from the space hulk.

"Let's go. We need to get to the space station."

"That could be bad. I was looking at the sensors and it says that there are over three hundred Ork boarding craft in the space station plus three Brute ships buried nose deep in what I think was the main missile storage depot."

"Damn it, get me a secure link to the base, we need to talk!"

Chapter Fifteen

Brio and Sergeant Heller rounded the final corner, nearly slamming into a bulkhead.

"Whaaat?"

"Shit, this has been burned through, looks like Orks."

"Well who else!"

"Very funny," Brio muttered.

As he poked his head through one of the holes in the bulkhead he nearly chucked up his guts and when Sergeant Heller looked through she did throw up. Inside was a scene of utter chaos the walls were covered in blood. Mangled Ork and human bodies littered the floor. The Orks had beaten them there. It looked like

the command staff had fought to the end.

"Oh, God Emperor," muttered Heller.

Brio only finally noticed how tired and blood-shot her eyes were.

The sound of heavy echoing footsteps emanated up from the deck, they came from Ork hobnailed boots. Then Brio noticed a flashing panel lit dimly by a flashing beacon. He stepped over the broken bodies, careful not to touch them. Wiping blood away from it he realised that it was the self destruct sequence and it had been initiated. Looking down he realised that all there was left to do was press a senior officer's thumb into the sensor panel to start it. And in fact there were several officers around here. He started to drag one of the bodies over to the illuminated panel.

"Crap, we've got Orks, lots of them," with that Heller started pumping out bullets from a shotgun she had 'liberated' from a dead Guardsman.

Slowly too slowly, Brio thought. Thanks to the blood the body slipped around on the floor speeding the process up as he dragged it but not by enough. He heard the explosion of a frag grenade going off in the tight confines of the corridor. He was only dimly aware of it though as if in a dream, as Sergeant Heller's decapitated head slammed into him, making him slide over on the blood slick floor. He managed to get up and keep pulling the officer's body when through his pain-fuddled mind he realised he could just cut the thumb off. He drew his combat blade and started sawing at the right thumb. It came loose with a popping sound. He stumbled and fell but luckily he managed to slide towards the control panel. He slammed the finger down onto the sensor and selected the self destruct option. He drew his gun and let loose with a burst of withering fire, knocking several Orks of their feet.

Sliding and slipping across the floor he scrambled towards what looked like a access hatch to the lower levels, at that exact moment alarms started to sound all across the space station as the self destruct option announced itself.

"Self destruct in five minutes and counting," the mechanical voice said over the intercom with flat machine precision. Something thudded into his back making him scream in pain. A black-numbness started to creep across his legs but still he crawled on chucking several grenades behind him. The explosions lifted him off the ground throwing him towards the door and his only chance of survival.

Screaming in agony he blasted through the door that was slightly ajar. The fall would have killed any normal person but, as he fell, Brio felt a strange strength course through his veins as if the God Emperor himself was infusing him with his strength.

Crying out in pure terror he pulled himself onto the ladder dislocating an arm in the process. Screaming again, he pulled himself up to the exit hatch. Breathing hard from the exertion he crawled through into the hall beyond. There was console there and it was flashing with the noise of an incoming message alert. Pain coursing through every muscle, he pulled himself over to the console and pushed the accept message button. A bedraggled face looked at him from the console but it twisted into a question as he saw the face looking back at him.

“What’s happening? We’ve been trying to get through for at least nine minutes?”

“That doesn’t matter, the station’s lost, it’s going to blow in,” he checked his watch, “about three minutes, where are you?”

“We are the only survivors from the battle group that was sent to spy on the Orkss. Right now we’re in a Shark assault boat headed to the guard post on the Corana V moon”

“I see there should be a asteroid belt station there. Go get a transport and get out of this place. Take as much of the garrison as you can. You’ll need all the help you can get if you’re boarded.”

“I see and what about you?” There was genuine concern in the pilot’s face and Brio nearly smiled.

“I died the second I set the self destruct sequence to initiate. I’m downloading all the current sensor data to your computer. That should help you avoid any roaming Ork bands.”

“Thank you, May HE accept you at his right hand side.”

“Yes, now hurry. The station will catch most of the Ork battle group in its blast radius. That should buy you some time, oh and when you arrive at the base send a signal to all the other systems for them to relay, tell them... tell them that the Orks are here and that we cannot stop them, we have failed.”

“I will brother.”

With that Brio cut the connection. He heard the sound of running hobnailed boots. Several Orks ran round the corner. The last thing any of them saw was a screaming blood-drenched madman running at them clutching a armful of grenades.

Chapter Sixteen

“We’re nearly out of fuel, directional thrusters are down to 2% and main engines are at 1.5% fuel; if we don’t land soon we’ll just be another drifting wreck,” said Trina.

“Will it last us to the asteroid belt?”

“It should, but if we even adjust our course by half a degree we’re finished.”

“We’ve got five blips headed our way; they’re too big to be fighters. They look like commercial transports. They’re headed towards the jump beacon,” Vinx reported.

“Where’s the space hulk?”

“As far as we can tell it’s... Oh no!”

“What, what is it now?”

“The space station just went, it looks like it took out a lot Ork ships but... the blast wave is so big that if it hits us we’ll be destroyed too.”

“How far away are those transports?”

“Um...75, 000 clicks give or take,” said Vinx doing themath in his head.

“Can we make it?”

“Well, yes but we wouldn’t have enough fuel left to dock with any of them.”

“This boat was designed to board enemy vessels travelling several thousand clicks

an hour through flak fire, I think we can get onboard a civilian transport if we have to.”

“That might actually work, but they wouldn’t be to pleased about the hole we would make.”

“That doesn’t matter, we just need to get out of here and get the news of the Ork Waaaagh back to anyone who cares.”

“Hmm...”

“Increase speed to maximum we need to be on one of those ships before the blast wave hits.”

“Aye Sir.”

Their engines lit up as they sped away towards their only hope of survival. As the engines burned up their fuel and the directional thrusters fired to keep the course steady, the three crew who had been through so much together were each trapped in there own thoughts. A warning light lit up and a ‘brace for impact’ alarm sounded. As one they all strapped into their chairs hoping that they wouldn’t hit somewhere vital. There had been enough bloodshed this day.

An explosion ripped into the unprotected transport and for a few seconds it vented atmosphere before the vessel that had hit it clamped on, sealing the gap between them.

Then the Shark assault boat hit. On the other side of the vessel the Ork attack boat disgorged its passengers, the Shark assault boat went through the same procedure and moments later, as if the entire scene had been rehearsed, the transport jumped in to the Empyrean.



MINOR ENGAGEMENT

BY ANDY "RUCKDOG" RUCKER

While the history of the galaxy is filled with enormous battles fought by massive fleets, for every one of these events there are dozens of smaller engagements fought between much smaller forces that go un-sung in the bloody history of the galaxy.

Forces:

Both fleets are picked to an equal points value of 1,500 points or less. There are no further restrictions on the types or costs of ships that are taken.

Battlezone:

This scenario is appropriate for tables ranging between 4'x4' (120cm x 120cm) to 4'x6' (120cm x 180cm). Phenomena can be generated in any mutually agreed to fashion, but this method is recommended: Divide the table into 2'x2' squares. For each square, roll a D6, and apply the result to the table below. The precise arrangement of the terrain within each square is at the player's discretion!

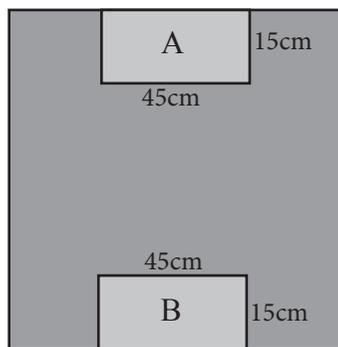
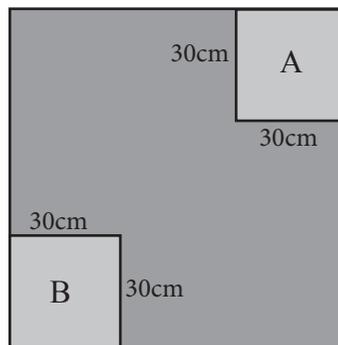
D6 Roll Phenomena:

1	None
2-3	Gas/Dust Cloud
4-5	Asteroid Field
6	Planet (Note: Only 1 allowed.)

Set-Up/First Turn:

Both players roll a D6 for initiative. The person with the higher roll has the choice of setting up first and getting first turn, or setting up second and having second turn. This way, a player can have the choice of having the tactical initiative or having a strategically more effective deployment. The player that sets up

first picks one of the two deployment zones below, and places their entire fleet into it. The second player then does the same in their zone.



Game Length:

The game last until one fleet disengages or is destroyed.

Victory Conditions:

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total wins.

Scenario Notes:

This scenario is really just putting down on paper the kinds of one-off pick-up games I seem to play most often. In that way, this scenario has been play tested quite a bit over the last year and a half. The idea here is a simple scenario that avoids too many special rules and conditions that can often lead to an unbalanced game, while still including enough elements to be interesting. At its core, this scenario is nothing more complicated than a bare-knuckled brawl between opposing fleets! As such, this scenario is a bit of a natural out-growth of Cruiser Clash from the rule book. However, unlike that scenario, the limitations on ship choice have been lifted, terrain has been included from the outset, and the inclusion of other elements such as sub-plots is also an option.

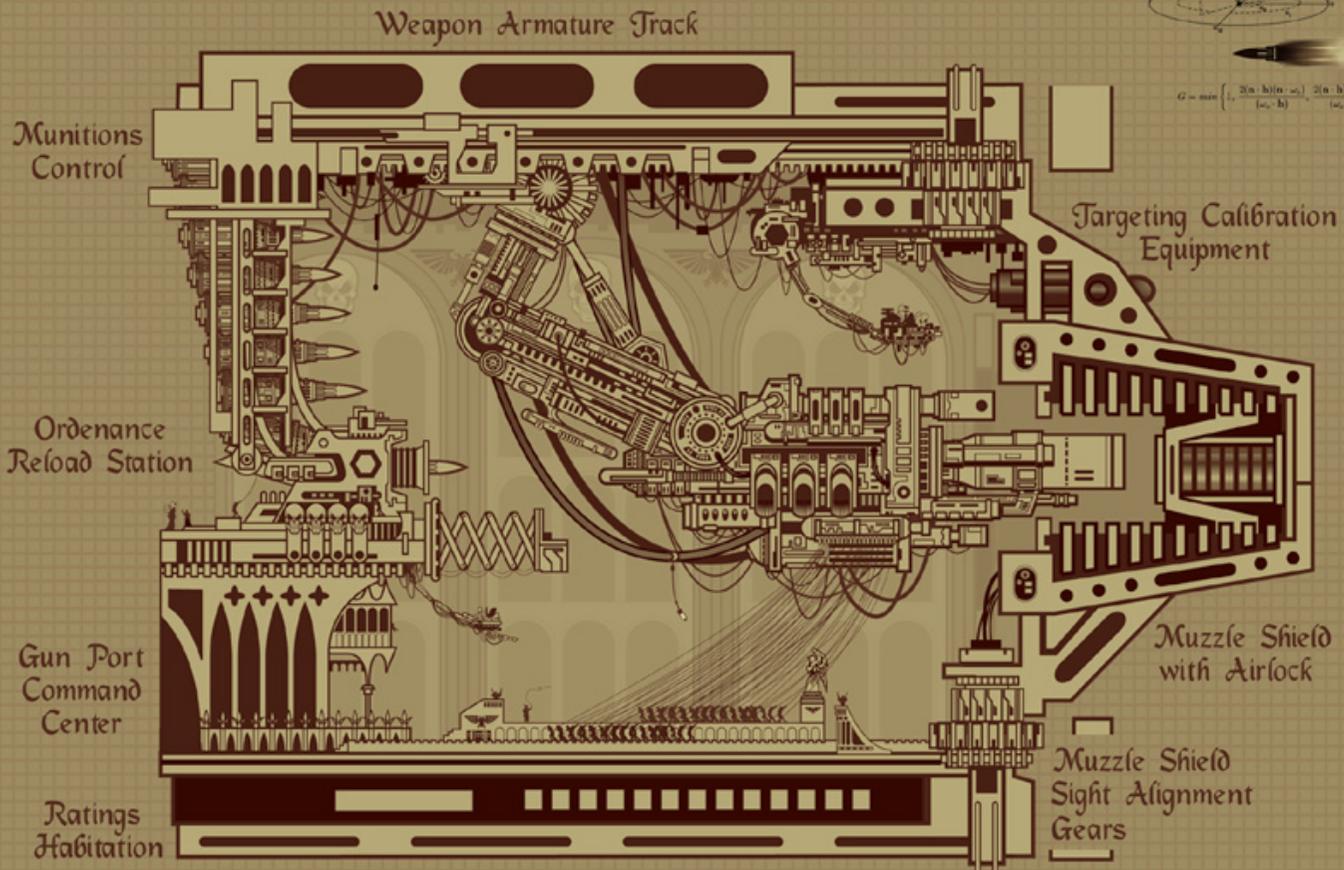
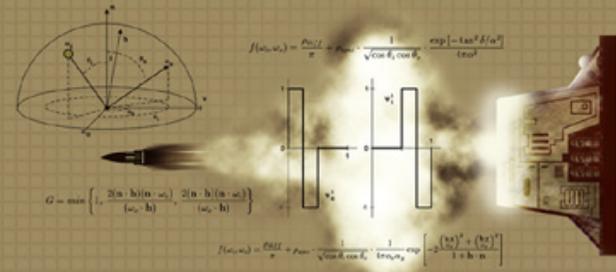
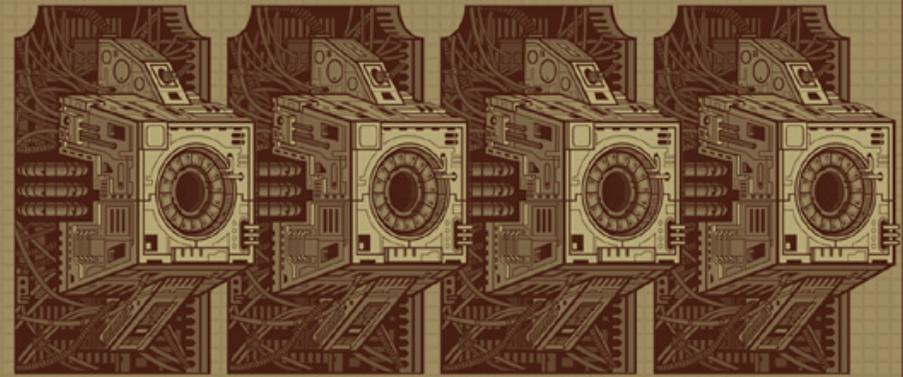
The set-up and first turn process may seem a bit esoteric, but it has worked well for me and my regular opponents. Overall, the goal is to provide for a quick and convenient pre-game phase so that players can get into the battle proper with less time spent on preliminaries. The terrain set-up method discussed above provides a rapid way to get terrain on the table while maintaining a little bit of randomness to it, while the first turn/first set up approach speeds up the deployment of ships. As an added bonus, this method also allows for some interesting experimentation with fleet formations as all of a player's ships are placed on the board at one time.

Well, there you have it! I hope this scenario proves to be as fun for you as it has for me.

MACRO CANNON

WEAPONS BATTERY CONFIGURATION

MACRO CANNONS FORM THE MAIN LONG RANGE WEAPON SYSTEM FOR MOST IMPERIAL CAPITAL SHIPS. MACRO-CANNONS ON IMPERIAL LINE CRUISERS OR BATTLESHIPS CAN BE UPWARDS OF 500 METERS LONG AND USING ELECTRO-MAGNETIC PROPULSION CAN ACCELERATE THEIR PROJECTILES TO THOUSANDS OF KILOMETRES PER SECOND. RELATIVE TO ENERGY WEAPONS, PARTICULARLY LASERS, THIS IS AGONISINGLY SLOW, A MACRO-CANNON SHOT MAY BE IN TRANSIT FOR HALF AN HOUR OR MORE BEFORE STRIKING THEIR TARGET. HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS MACRO-CANNONS REMAIN POWERFUL AND PRACTICAL WEAPONS, THIS IS PRIMARILY DUE TO THEIR VARIABLE PAYLOAD. MACRO-CANNONS RELY ON TWO PRIMARY IMPERIAL TECHNOLOGIES IN ORDER TO BE VIABLE SHIPBOARD WEAPONS, FIRSTLY ARE THE INERTIAL DAMPENERS THAT PREVENT THE SHIP FROM BEING PROPELLED IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION EACH TIME THE BATTERY FIRES. THE OTHER IS THE CONTRA-GRAV FIELD GENERATORS THAT REDUCE THE APPARENT WEIGHT OF THE PROJECTILE ALLOWING PROJECTILES OF GREATER MASS TO BE IMPARTED WITH GREATER VELOCITY AS THEY EXIT THE MACRO-CANNON BARREL.



STANDARD TEMPLATE CONSTRUCT