

DEATHWATCH

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS™



PERILOUS MISSIONS OF
DUTY AND HONOUR

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

DEATHWATCH™

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4¹ST MILLENNIUM

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THE EMPEROR PROTECTS

"I've never seen anything like Space Marines in action. Anyone who sees them knows in his soul they are the God-Emperor's creations. More than that, you know that through them He is still watching over us."

—Corporal Drayle after a Kill-team rescue on Baraban

Welcome to **The Emperor Protects**, a three-part adventure supplement for the **DEATHWATCH** Roleplaying Game. These events take a Deathwatch Kill-Team on a desperate mission that will lead the Battle-Brothers throughout the Jericho Reach and pit them against the unspeakable forces of Chaos. The adventures herein take the Kill-Team across the Reach in an attempt to stop a Chaos Sorcerer from enacting his plans for total domination of the region; by destroying the warp gate used to supply the ongoing Achilus Crusade. In order for the Kill-Team to prevent this from coming to pass they will confront horrifying xenos, canny agents of Chaos, and even face their traitorous brethren from the Alpha Legion.

GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS takes the form of three adventures, each linked together by a common story arc. The adventures can be played through sequentially (the conclusion of one leading straight into the opening of the next), or the action can be broken up and rearranged in any manner desired.

The adventures are set in the Jericho Reach, a war-torn region of space on the Eastern Fringe of the galaxy.

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS also explores a range of subjects and play styles, from extreme action to diplomacy, and exploration to epic combat. As befits the Battle-Brothers' role and position as Space Marines of the Deathwatch, each of these challenges must be overcome if they are to survive and triumph in the face of adversity.

At the beginning of each of the three adventures, Game Masters will find advice on how to use each adventure on its own, and how they can integrate the events into their own campaign.

BACKGROUND

The events of **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** begin with the Chaos Sorcerer Dahzak—a man who is consumed by ambition and has a lust for power. His quest for knowledge brought him to the Cellebos Warzone along with so many other splinters of the various Traitor Legions. Gleaning dark secrets in the ruins of the Charon Stars, he conceived a plan to twist the Jericho Reach's mysterious warp gate to his own ends.

Dahzak's plans begin with an arcane piece of technology called a thaumagramm diode. The diodes are devices that can be used to manipulate space-time to open a breach into the Immaterium. Dahzak came across the plans for these warp-altering devices in his unending quest for forbidden lore. As he came to understand what the diodes were capable of, he saw his opportunity. He also saw that he would never be capable of constructing and attuning the diodes on his own. To that end, he sought out allies skilled not just in technology, but used to integrating it with warp energies.

He found that ally in a group called the Vinculum Proselytes. This order of corrupt Magi on Samech has delved into the forbidden mysteries of tech-heresy for centuries, and the "improvements" Chaos can bring to it.

Within their Forge, Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes began to construct the thaumagramm diodes. It quickly became apparent that their understanding of special manipulation was insufficient for the task. They rectified this problem by seeking the aid of the Alpha Legion. With their subtle and well-planned tactics, they have helped the Irradial Forge acquire many important inputs to the diodes.

Dahzak and the Irradial Forge have another obstacle aside from the difficulty of constructing the diodes. Even if a ship could penetrate the Iron Collar and reach the warp gate in the Well of Night, it would still have a patrolling Adeptus Mechanicus cruiser to deal with. A scout ship, which would be ideal for sneaking past the blockade, would not be able to stand up to the punishment that can be meted out by one of these vessels.

Thus, the group must find some way to get a larger ship to the warp gate without being destroyed in the process of trying to penetrate the Iron Collar. To that end, Magos Vayze, leader of the Vinculum Proselytes, has hit upon the solution: Antisonate plating. This special and unique plating is typically used to cloak some of the best stealth craft in the Reach. However, in addition to being rare and costly, it is ineffective on large vessels. To allow the plating to maintain its stealth properties over a larger surface area, Vayze has combined the Antisonate with rare Decavane crystals. The Vinculum Proselytes have gone to great lengths to establish a secret mining operation on an out of the way planet, where they slowly accumulate the necessary quantities of Decavane. At the Irradial Forge, construction of their stealth warship, the *Ruin Bringer*, is nearly complete; and Vayze and Dahzak have almost perfected the thaumagramm diodes.

Dahzak however, has no army, as he operates with only his apprentice, Sethahar, to aid him. His plans for the warp gate are too grand a scheme to carry out without additional support and Dahzak knows that his sorcerous knowledge will not be enough. To bolster his numbers and execute the many infiltrations required, Dahzak has allied with a cell of Alpha Legion operating in the Jericho Reach, led by Lamdus Rize.

Combined with the corrupt techno-magi of the Proselytes, what terrible ambition could bring these three forces together? Dahzak has spun a vision of the gate transformed into an open breach to the warp, both cutting off further support for the Achilus Crusade and flooding the reach with the creatures of Chaos. Should they manage to succeed, the entire Jericho Reach may be turned over to the flood of Chaos.

SYNOPSIS

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS is a multi-adventure supplement that is broken down into three distinct, and linked, adventures. As stated previously, these adventures can be run in the sequence they are presented in, or they can be run in whatever order the GM deems appropriate.

Below are brief synopses of each adventure within this supplement. The beginning of each adventure provides information on how to run it, and additional information the GM needs should he wish to adjust each adventure to fit into his group's play styles and campaign events.

Adventure One: The Price of Hubris

The Price of Hubris begins with a Rogue Trader by the name of Diaz Lan bringing the Crusade's request for aid with the world of Aurum, to the Deathwatch's attention. Assigned to assist the Crusade with helping to bring the world into the fold of the Imperium, the Rogue Trader transports the Kill-Team on his ship, the *Horizon's Pride*.

Once they arrive at Aurum, the Battle-Brothers must determine if the world not only harbours the taint of the xenos, but also win over the fierce natives. However, in the course of their duties, the Kill-Team discovers that Aurum harbours a most deadly secret that the natives have been trying to keep: Genestealers.

Adventure Two: A Stony Sleep

In the adventure, A Stony Sleep, the Kill-Team is sent to the world of Karlack in order to discover what happened to an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor by the name of Vincent. Contacted by his colleague, Inquisitor Quist, the Battle-Brothers soon find themselves within the grips of a trap devised by the Traitor Legion of Space Marines called the Alpha Legion.

Masquerading as Space Marines from the Black Templars Chapter, the Alpha Legion managed to gather up the secrets of the planet's long-dead xenos inhabitants from the missing Inquisitor. As the Battle-Brothers follow their own investigation, they encounter members of a xenos-cult called the Reborn. The trail eventually leads them to the city of Kar'thir where they discover a terrible threat looming within the xenos ruins sunken beneath the oceans.

Tracking their foes to an island chain, the Kill-Team discovers that the Chaos Space Marines they have been following have initiated a series of events that could lead to the rise of an alien war host within the very heart of the Crusade's conquered territory. If the valiant Deathwatch cannot find a way to stop the Alpha Legion's efforts, then Karlack will find itself overwhelmed under a tide of alien ruin.

Adventure Three: Sword of Vigilance

When the adventure Sword of Vigilance begins, the Deathwatch has deciphered the meanings of their findings on Karlack and Aurum, and realises that there is an unholy alliance on Samech. It appears they mean to target the Warp Gate. The Battle-Brothers bring this threat before the Chamber of Vigilance.

There, the Kill-Team is charged with entering the corrupt mechanical heart of Samech, and halting the heretics' scheme before it launches.

Arriving on Samech, the Battle-Brothers encounter the triumvirate's ultimate triumph, the stealth-warship *Ruin Bringer*. Soliciting the aid of several potential allies, the Kill-Team fights a desperate battle to destroy the monstrosity created by corrupted minds, and from there are able to penetrate the Irradial Forge. From here, the Kill-Team discovers the thaumagramm diodes and will finally meet their arch-enemies that have plagued them across the whole of the Jericho Reach.

RUNNING THE EMPEROR PROTECTS

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS reflects the culmination of a plot measured in decades. The GM is welcome to run additional Missions between the adventures provided herein. As the plots are put together in the third adventure, the order of the first two Missions is interchangeable—although the escalation plays out better if run in order.

In the order presented, the Kill-Team first determines the fate of a planet, then a Salient, and then the entire Crusade. This book also builds the story by accumulating information over multiple Missions. The effectiveness of this technique can be enhanced by ensuring good notes are taken by the GM and/or the players. The Missions also offer options for a less player-driven approach to initiation if this is a problem for your group. However, letting the players move the story forward is a more engaging experience for them. The GM can help with retention by re-iterating the key plot points discovered so far at the beginning of every game session.

The enemy profiles and numbers in the Missions assume a Kill-Team of 5 Battle-Brothers between Ranks 1 through 4. The difficulty can easily be scaled by changing the number of adversaries in any encounter. In a few instances other facets must be scaled, and those are noted in the individual Missions. Additionally, the adventures within **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** are not recommended for beginning Battle-Brothers. At a minimum, members of the Kill-Team should have at least an additional 1,000 experience points (XPs) on top of the amount already given to them during character creation. Thus, all Battle-Brothers participating in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** should have at least 14,000 XPs. The Game Master is welcome to adjust this amount as he sees fit.

MISSION CONSEQUENCES

Space Marines make important decisions; their presence can tip the scales of power. Sometimes they may not even realise the profound effect they have on the events around them until later. As the Kill-Team progresses through the first two adventures, many choices come before them. Several of these have ramifications in **THE SWORD OF VIGILANCE**, which is the climax Mission. **THE SWORD OF VIGILANCE** opens with a summary of what those choices and consequences are. It's strongly recommended that the GM track what the Kill-Team decides for each choice throughout **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**.

OPTIONAL AND CONDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Every group has their own preferences for pacing and the percentage of time spent in combat. Some of the encounters in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** are labelled as Optional. The narrative is cohesive with or without these incidents, and the GM can choose which ones he wants to include to set the appropriate pace for his group. The third Mission also uses Conditional encounters. These are simply extensions of the Mission Consequences. Each conditional encounter opens with the circumstances that trigger its occurrence. As always, both the Conditions and the entire Consequences concept are suggestions, not mandates. You can opt to include or exclude whatever fits best in your campaign and play style.

ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES

A number of the encounters in this book have special circumstances governing the relevant challenge. Quick reference handouts are provided in the Appendix to make these encounters easier for the GM to run and the players to play. The handouts deliberately place the statistical effect as the last column. This allows the GM to decide whether he wants the players to know the exact rules governing the situation, or to cut off the last column and convey things only in narrative terms.

If the GM is a beginner, he may want to ignore all the situational modifiers until he is more comfortable with the overall rules. The GM should also consider the experience level of his players when introducing this supplement to his group.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Below are the central antagonists of the overall plot. Their profiles can be found in the Missions where they are first encountered.

Dahzak

Dahzak is a powerful sorcerer, and especially gifted in seeing the future. This ability has served him well in his quest to improve his knowledge and power. In Dahzak's many years he has commanded armies, and he has roamed dead stars alone. Recently, until needing the Vinculum Proselytes, he had but a single apprentice. Dahzak's charisma comes from his certainty. His claims that he knows every possibility are quite compelling. They are also quite false. Dahzak is certainly an exceptional diviner, but that art is fickle even for the best master. He overplays his confidence in predictions (and sometimes fabricates them entirely) when it serves his purpose.

Lamdus Rize

Lamdus has been the head of his Alpha Legion cell for decades. Like many such cells, the bonds of loyalty between the Traitor Space Marines within it are strong. The same can hardly be said for how they view their allies. Lamdus is well aware that he and his men are simply tools of convenience to Dahzak and the Irradial Forge. However, his best opportunity to sabotage the warp gate is to play along, for now.

Magos Vayze

Magos Vayze is the senior tech-priest of the Vinculum Proselytes. While the thaumagramm diodes are fascinating and cutting off the Crusade can only be positive for Samech, these apostate Mechanicus do nothing without a price. In Dahzak's case, the Proselytes demanded the sorcerer free them from the constraints of the flesh so that they could be truly one with the machine. The results were not exactly as expected, leaving all of the Magi dependent upon sorcery to sustain them. Still, it was satisfactory to buy the services of the Irradial Forge. Vayze is not eager to see Dahzak's plans enacted, as it leaves the Proselytes without a counterbalance to their dependence on the sorcerer's powers.

Sethahar

Sethahar is Dahzak's apprentice. While his master favours divination, Sethahar excels in destructive magic. He is quiet and brooding individual, whose temper can lash out unexpectedly and with all the destructive force of his sorcery. Dahzak entrusts him with many important tasks, secure that they both know if his apprentice was to scheme against him, the diviner would see it coming.

TREACHERY BEGETS TREACHERY

The tenuous alliance of these wretched powers only stands to prove why such unions are seldom successful. In reality, all three forces have their own designs for the warp gate. Dahzak believes the gate can be used to breach the Eldar webways, and grant him the elusive goal of entrance to the Black Library. While the diodes can enslave and defile a machine spirit, directing their purpose still requires the talents of a psyker. Herein lays Dahzak's opportunity to take control. The Alpha Legion desires to cut off the Crusade's supply of troops and resources, an opportunity that appeals to them greatly. These Chaos Space Marines secretly plan to sabotage the tech sorcery and destroy the warp gate instead of corrupting it. Meanwhile, the Vinculum Proselytes support the stated plan, to twist and corrupt the Warp Gate to create a breach into the empyrean and flood the region with the energies of the warp.



PRICE OF
HUBRIS

NOWHERE ELSE TO
TURN

•

THE GOLDEN
PLANET

•

THE DIVESTED
HUNT

•

THE TAINTED CITY

•

THE HEROES'
RETURN



+++TO: LORD GENERAL CASTUS IACTON+++
+++FROM: KEYBOR TAYNE, PRIMARY LEXOGRAPHER+++
+++SUBJECT: CONTACT HISTORY WITH AURUM+++

As requested, I have compiled a chronological account of our attempts to establish relations with the natives of the planet designated: Aurum. The following shows a repeated pattern of rejecting diplomats, supporting your assessment that military envoys may be better received.

787.M41: First contact made by naval survey team. Reception is neutral. Post-contact analysis reveals extreme resource value of planet. Aurum is made high priority for re-indoctrination.

789.M41: Larger contact envoy sent to Aurum, including Adeptus Ministorum and Adeptus Administratum representation. Negotiations quickly deteriorate, although adepts confirm Imperial cultural roots before being forced to leave planet.

791.M41: Captain Laurel Mattheos of Imperial Navy and squad of armed crewmen force contact. Contingent is unexpectedly well-received. Reach agreement to allow Imperial presence in capital city: Haistand.

798.M41: Captain Mattheos killed in action, negotiations resumed by Rogue Trader Díaz Lan. Reach agreement to allow small military outpost for protection of growing non-combatant population in Haistand. Construction begins on "The Aspiration."

802.M41: Rogue Trader Díaz Lan repeats contact. Negotiations fail to allow Imperial presence to extend beyond Haistand.

809.M41: Rogue Trader Díaz Lan re-opens negotiation on previous topic. Attempts to win support by participating in local combat games. Departs planet in critical condition from reptile bites.

816.M41: Rogue Trader Díaz Lan repeats contact. Aurans rebuff Lan and refuse to honour future negotiations with him on grounds he is "not a man."

+++The Emperor Protects+++

This world is critical to the Crusade. If these primitives only respect strength, we will send them the Deathwatch.

One way or the other, Aurum will be brought into compliance.

—Inquisitor Quist



THE PRICE OF HUBRIS

"We shall not capitulate to the demands of these grasping xenos, brothers. This ground holds one of our own, a hero whose bravery we shall not betray with defeat. We will defend his honour; we will defend our Chapter's honour, to the last drop of our blood."

—from Marneus Calgar's address at the Battle of the Sepulchre

In the face of war, murderous xenos, the vengeful agents of Chaos, and the many other threats of the Jericho Reach, the true purpose of the Achilus Crusade is sometimes lost. The Crusade is first and foremost an attempt to bring the Reach back under Imperial control. At present, the Crusade is far from self-sustaining. Troops, rations, ammunition, and virtually every other component of the trident assault must flow through the Warp gate, secretly siphoned from Segmentum Obscurus. The Crusade's masters recognise that sooner or later either the resources or the secrecy that sustains their lifeline will give out, so establishing more fortresses and agricultural centres like the agri-world of Karlack is an important goal.

For this reason, the Crusade's leaders have been eying the feral world of Aurum for decades. The exceptionally fertile planet would make a fine addition to the Crusade's woefully small portfolio of pacified worlds. Because the Crusade is already fighting on many fronts, the Imperium would much rather incorporate it peacefully than turn Aurum into one more war zone.

The Crusade has tried tactic after tactic to negotiate with the stubborn and prideful feral worlders, but the natives' reception has been lukewarm at best. Despite Aurum's precarious position between the oncoming Hive Dagon and the turbulent Cellebos Warzone, the planet's leader, Caele Rylus Darkscourge, refuses to cede his world to outsider authority peacefully. Recently, relations have suddenly grown even more strained, as the bodies of both natives and Imperial missionaries have been found picked clean of flesh with an efficiency far surpassing any native predator. Auran authorities have refused to cooperate with the Imperials on-planet in investigating the killings, and many Imperials have begun to wonder if their lack of cooperation masks something more sinister than stubborn pride. Recently, tensions reached the boiling point when an Adeptus Sororitas sister was found dead under mysterious circumstances.

The Crusade has called upon the Battle-Brothers not only to determine if Aurum harbours an alien foe, but also to represent the best of humanity to a warrior culture. If anyone stands a chance of winning over the fierce Aurans, it is the Emperor's finest.

OVERVIEW

Diaz Lan is a Rogue Trader and liaison between the Deathwatch and the Achilus Crusade. He comes to Erioch requesting the Battle-Brothers' aid with the uncooperative Aurans. If the Space Marines cannot convince the natives to trust the Imperium, they can at least seek out and purge whatever foe the planet hides. Lan transports the Kill-team on his ship, where they may contend with secrets and sabotage before reaching the planet.

Rylus Darkscourge is the Caele of Aurum; his title commands loyalty from the planet's many tribes and nascent cities. He rules from the cliff-top settlement of Haistand, where the Battle-Brothers arrive, and which the Caele's laws confine them to. The Battle-Brothers can choose to investigate matters in the city and meet with Rylus, who offers them a chance to win answers diplomatically through a proving called the Divested Hunt. At the opposite end of this spectrum, they may ignore the Aurans' dictates entirely and follow their investigation into the wilds of Aurum—although this brings the planet to the brink of war.

Whether they spark hostilities or soothe them, the Kill-team eventually learns what the Aurans are trying so hard to hide. The canyon settlement of Grensvayl is infected with Genestealers, and the Aurans' pride will not let them ask for help even as they slowly lose the battle to keep the aliens contained. The Battle-Brothers enter the ruined city to do what the Aurans could not.



However, the Broodlord, the fearsome master of the Genestealer brood, has already escaped its prison. The Adeptus Astartes must summon all their battle prowess to keep this xenos horror from decimating both friend and foe—and from escaping Aurum to infect another unsuspecting world.

CHOICE, CONSEQUENCE, AND HUBRIS

The overarching theme of this Mission is pride. The Aurans have spurned many Imperial offers of help with their problems because they consider themselves better than the Imperium. Their stubborn arrogance reflects what an Adeptus Astartes who falls prey to hubris might become. Fittingly, the Battle-Brothers may find themselves receiving a good deal less respect than they are used to, and as a result the Battle-Brothers' own pride could jeopardise their mission as surely as the Caele's could doom his planet.

Although they are proud, the Aurans have many virtues such as courage, honesty, and strength at arms. They should be portrayed in a balanced manner, as the Mission has more impact if the Kill-team feels some connection to these warrior people. The Auran leader, Rylus, is a noble figure who the Space Marines hopefully view as a rival worthy of making peace with. That is certainly how he perceives them at the Mission's beginning.

Since the situation on Aurum is very politically charged, the Battle-Brothers' choices will drastically affect the way The Price of Hubris plays out. They have the opportunity to win a great prize for the Imperium and be lauded as the heroes of a planet. However, they could also spark a bloody war that costs many lives. Every GM knows that you can never predict what your players will do. This adventure presents the encounters most likely to happen if the Battle-Brothers achieve all their objectives, and provides guidance on what may occur if they decide to bring war instead of peace to Aurum.

The Mission comprises a set of components, which may occur in a variety of orders, or may need to be skipped or altered depending on the Kill-team's choices. The key to running a componentised adventure is to balance the effects of the players' choices with telling an interesting story. When plausible, take the opportunity to use some form of the given encounters to extend conflicts and create an engaging story. However, don't force encounters on your players if they worked to anticipate or avoid them, lest they feel herded into one outcome regardless of their actions. Use the following guide posts for how events unfold:

- Rylus does not assent to the Space Marines going to Grensvayl without a Proving, no matter how compelling their argument. They may go anyway, either through stealth or open defiance.
- Rylus is driven by tradition. He celebrates the purge of Grensvayl even if the Kill-team did not gain his approval and even if they refuse to attend the celebration, as long as they are not at war from openly defying him.

- If war breaks out, the focus of the story may shift to that conflict for a time, but the Battle-Brothers can still achieve the Objective of purging the xenos even in the midst of war. They also have numerous opportunities to pull the planet back from war if they choose to do so.

In this adventure, the Primary Objectives are clear from the onset of the Mission, and it is important to make sure the players are clear on what they are, and remember them. This adventure will take most gaming groups multiple sessions; it is a good idea to review the Primary Objectives at the beginning of each session.



USING THE PRICE OF HUBRIS AS A STANDALONE MISSION

If you wish to run this Mission alone, rather than as a part of **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** trilogy, remove the thaumagramm diode schematic and the radial of Chaos from the apostate magi's compound in the caves. Samech's corrupt Machine Cult hardly needs an ambitious assault plan to covet Decavane crystals for the potent energy cores they can create.

NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN

The Battle-Brothers' introduction to Aurum begins with a visit from Diaz Lan. The Kill-team's Watch Captain has already accepted the Mission at the time he sends the Battle-Brothers to hear Lan's request, although he has not yet informed Lan of his decision. (Depending on his nature, he may suggest the Kill-team withhold this fact from Lan until the end of the briefing, as it is important that the Crusade never take the aid of the Deathwatch for granted). The Deathwatch has arranged for Lan's audience on a platform overlooking one of the Watch Station's numerous practice ranges. This one is for arctic training, and the sound of live-fire exercises billows up with the frigid air. (If the GM has established any other Kill-teams stationed on Erioch, he may wish to personalise the background events with their practice.)

Lan is waiting (and appears to have been waiting for some time) when the Battle-Brothers reach the riveted metal platform. He is swathed in a cruxermine fur cloak, which he is holding tight around his trim frame. Ice particles cling to his short silver hair. Behind him, an artificial wind whips the frozen range into a field of white, where harsh icy shapes occasionally appear in the brief interludes of calm. Scattered bursts of distant bolter fire evidence that the range is in use. Any Battle-Brothers not in power armour feel a slight chill, but their mucranoid organ largely protects them from the bitter cold. Read aloud or paraphrase the following as they enter:

The Rogue Trader straightens as you enter, pulling his fur-lined cloak tighter around him. "Thank you for seeing me. I would offer you a seat or a draft of amasec, but I find myself a bit ah – short-staffed at the moment. Not to question your hospitality of course." A salvo of exploding melta charges booms behind him, momentarily illuminating the snow field.

The pause in the conversation creates an opportunity for the Battle-Brothers to comment or ask questions. When the topic turns back to the Mission, Lan proceeds while pacing back and forth:

"My humblest apologies if you have already heard something of our plight. I will be frank with you. The Lord Militant believes that some kind of alien creature has descended upon Aurum. I'm sure venerable warriors such as yourselves will be more than a match for it. However, the truth that the Crusade needs your help in another matter on that planet—possibly one that only you can address. Aurum is a valuable world, and its people did not turn to dark powers during the Age of Shadow."

"However, they have proved remarkably resistant to negotiation. Their leader, a devil of a warrior who calls himself Rylus Darkscurge, won't permit any sizeable Imperial detachments to land, nor will he allow our people to stray beyond their capital city. Some over-zealous prospectors tried to stray beyond these edicts once, and their deaths nearly shattered our fragile peace. The Aurans are a proud people, and the truth is I think they're not impressed by us. We could pacify the world, but the last thing we need is one more population held by force instead of faith." Behind him, the black outlines of the drilling Kill-team appear like shadows in the man-made blizzard. He watches their perfectly coordinated movements for a moment before turning back. "You may find this ironic, but the Adeptus Astartes might be our last chance for peace on Aurum."

Lan answers their questions to the best of his ability. If the Battle-Brothers ask about why the world is so important, Lan explains the presence of the Decavane crystals, as well as the extraordinary agricultural opportunities it presents. He also provides what information he has on the recent deaths. Since 783.M41, the Imperium has had a presence in Haistand, which passes for Aurum's capital city. Small groups of diplomats and missionaries have resolutely persisted in their efforts to forge a lasting alliance with the natives. Both the previous and current Caele allowed Imperials to land, but not to venture beyond Haistand. Over the last few years, the missionaries have observed an unusual number of disappearances; these events are doubly suspicious because the populace, and the Caele in particular, meet inquiries with stony silence. The situation came to a head when Sister Rachayel, a Sister Hospitaller accompanying the Ecclesiarchy, was found dead. As Lan describes it:

"Her body was found in the Mission, with her own dagger through her chest. The locals were eager to call it a suicide due to a weak spirit. She may not have been a Sister of Battle, but no loyal member of her order would throw away her life. And there have been other deaths. Perhaps just a few, perhaps many. It's hard to say as the Aurans seem to be concealing them from us. The few bodies we've seen were meticulously stripped of everything: flesh, skin, blood. Some had deep grooves in the ribcage and arms, as though something had cleaved through to the bone itself."

"Since the Imperium has been unable to survey beyond Haistand, some sort of xenos could easily occupy other regions of the planet. Perhaps the Aurans even know. I shudder to think that they may even be thrall to some alien presence we know nothing about. It could be why they are so insistent not to let us go beyond the single city. Whatever is behind this, I'd say there is more than the Imperium bargained for on Aurum."

Because of the Caele's restrictions on travel, planetary data on Aurum is limited. Sensorium scans from orbit suggest a dry climate, fertile despite its low rainfall. The terrain is mainly vegetation-rich mesas and sweeping, uncultivated expanses of grassland. Wildlife tends towards reptilian creatures, and the population is fairly evenly dispersed in small settlements across the main continents.

Lan is accustomed to having to persuade the Deathwatch to perform deeds slightly outside their mandate. He answers the Battle-Brothers' questions with infinite patience, continuing to emphasise the need for better relations with the Aurans. When the Kill-team communicates their assent (in as short or long a time period as they desire), he thanks them graciously. The Crusade has tasked him with transporting them, and he informs them that his ship, the *Horizon's Pride*, awaits their departure.

ARMING, OBJECTIVES, AND OATH-TAKING

Most of this Mission's Primary Objectives are clear from the beginning. The Watch Captain covers these (below) explicitly with the Kill-team, and you should do the same with your players. Other Objectives do not become clear until the Kill-team arrives and discovers what the Aurans have tried so hard to hide; the complete list of objectives can be found at the end of the adventure. The Mission has a suggested Requisition rating of 55 (rounded up from 51), based on the following assumptions:

- **Primary Objective:** Discover what is committing the murders on Aurum (Novice Objective, 16 Requisition)
- **Primary Objective:** Eliminate the threat on Aurum (Skilled Objective, 17 Requisition)
- **Primary Objective:** Convince the Aurans to re-assimilate into the Imperium (Veteran Objective, 18 Requisition)

The GM may wish to modify the Rating based on how pessimistic the Kill-team's Watch Captain is about the threat they face, or how he views the peace-keeping request of the Crusade.

THE HORIZON'S PRIDE

The *Horizon's Pride* is a glimmering light cruiser. Over the centuries, the Lan dynasty covered its many battle scars with copper laurels. The burnished leaves now virtually encrust the ship; the metal garden testifies to the ship's endurance. The *Horizon's* interior is equally elaborate, although its ornamentation has not fared as well in the weathering effects of a shipboard atmosphere recycled for centuries. The Lan family crest—a rapier and a broken quill—features prominently in the engravings. The crew wear uniforms strongly reminiscent of the Imperial Navy, and move with an uncanny symmetry that can almost be explained by long hours of formation drilling.

The grand scale of the vaulted corridors and ceilings easily accommodates armoured Battle-Brothers. Lan offers each Battle-Brother a lavishly appointed state room for the duration of the journey. If they inquire about something less luxuriant, Lan replies that the barracks are all occupied by his crew, and that while more grandiose accommodations are available, the only remaining quarters are cells in the brig.

PROMINENT LOCATIONS

The *Horizon's Pride* is a massive vessel with a crew numbering tens of thousands. Some of the locations most likely to be of interest to the Battle-Brothers are detailed below.

Staterooms

Each Battle-Brother is offered a stateroom befitting the dignitaries and high-ranking military personnel the ship often transports. More gleaming copper laurels trim the rooms of the decadent suites, and each one is carpeted with unique and exotic weaves. Most of the furniture is too dainty for a Space Marine, but the ostentatiously large canopy beds can accommodate even a Battle-Brother if he chooses to sink into the thick velvet covers.

Command Bridge

The Command Bridge is without a doubt the most elaborately bedecked vista on the *Horizon's Pride*. Sturdy glass panels depicting stellar bodies alternate with ancient cogitators and sensorium reporters. Every luminator is held aloft by a lifelike statue, and the eye can travel no more than a few centimetres without encountering some surface inlaid with precious stone or metal. The command throne sits recessed in the rear wall with an arch of cherubs carved above it.

Lan's Study

Lan's study is mercifully free of excess decoration. Its panels of strange amber wood emit a soft glow that bathes the room. Across from his desk is the room's centrepiece: a bas relief in marbled metal depicting a swirl of geometric shapes.

Adjoining the study is his library, full of rare tomes towering to the ceiling and even rarer alien artefacts in glass cases. The items on display in the library are harmless, the type of novelties tolerated in the hands of those who can afford them: a Jokaero digital laser, a wraithbone pendant, an ork tooth, and other similar trophies.

The Brig

If any of the Battle-Brothers opts for more austere accommodations, Lan is as good as his word. Upon request, he makes available several unlocked cells in the prison block. These tiny, unadorned rooms are not dissimilar from the Battle-Brothers' personal quarters on Watch Fortress Erioch. However, while their cells are solid and private, there are less comfortable holdings deeper in the brig. There, greasy runoff from the engine rooms above drips through stacked cages where less illustrious prisoners languish. One such prisoner is Kohl Bennex (see below), who pleads with the Battle-Brothers to hear his tale if they ever enter the block.

DIAZ LAN

Diaz Lan is a member of the Lan Rogue Trader Dynasty, which sent many vessels through with the Achilus Crusade. A far better diplomat than the Crusade's busy Lord Militant, Diaz Lan was nominated to the position of Crusade liaison, and is often the voice of requests from the Crusade and Lord Militant Tetrarchus himself. If any of the Battle-Brothers have served long terms in the Deathwatch, they will probably have had prior encounters with Lan.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

The bulk of the *Horizon's* crew step around the Kill-team and politely avoid eye contact with the practiced ease of the serf classes. However, certain crew and passengers are more noteworthy.

Veyoris Akioh

Lan's Seneschal handles the ship's most important matters of commerce and information brokering. Most of the senior command circle seems accustomed to the presence of Adeptus Astartes—not surprising given Lan's appointment as the Deathwatch liaison. Akioh is the exception. He consistently finds excuses to avoid their path, to leave any location they arrive in, and to interact with them as little as possible.

In truth, Akioh is an unsanctioned psyker. His skill in telepathy makes him exceptional at his job aboard the *Horizon's Pride*, and so Lan fastidiously does not question his Seneschal's prescient flashes of insight into people and events. A deeply religious man, Akioh is not certain that the Emperor's holy warriors aren't able to see straight through to the warp taint in his soul. He thus minimises contact whenever Deathwatch representatives are on board, particularly if they include a Librarian.

If cornered into conversation, he is polite but obviously nervous. He attempts to stick to simple topics of mutual interest, such as war tactics or the progress on the Crusade salients. Should Akioh's secret be realised, he penitently submits himself to judgment, vowing that no one aboard the ship knew his secret.

Althea Ciberis

Althea Ciberis would not be picked out of a crew line-up as Lan's First Officer, but it is her role nonetheless. This withered old woman possesses a fierce determination and even fiercer tongue. She began as an auspex operator on the *Horizon* when it was still captained by Diaz's great-uncle on the far side of the warp gate. She has survived and served three generations of the Lan family, which she idolises.

Althea is thoroughly hardened by her long years in the void as well as the last four decades of the Crusade. She has little patience and no fear—of Space Marines or anyone else. Virtually the only person she shows any respect to is the captain. If she suspects (or sees) that the Battle-Brothers are causing any sort of inconvenience for Lan, she does not hesitate to seek them out for a reprimand.

Archibal Heth

Brigadier Archibal Heth is not a part of the *Horizon's* crew. He is also a passenger bound for Aurum and bears a purpose similar to the Battle-Brothers. Heth recently inherited the unenviable post of Ambassador-Militant to Aurum. This tasks him with both commanding the tiny force of Imperial troops permitted in Haistand and—the reason for sending a senior officer—continuing negotiations with the natives.

Heth is greatly relieved that the Deathwatch agreed to involve themselves on the planet. As a veteran of the Acheros salient, he has seen the might of the Adeptus Astartes firsthand. The Brigadier's face is lined from the strain of the war with Chaos, and he wears a monocle. His personal effects contain a great variety of weapons, but on the ship he makes do with a standard laspistol.

While he has never been to Aurum, Heth has detailed intelligence from the Crusade's long history with the planet. He is more than willing to tell the Battle-Brothers everything he knows about the politics, prominent people, and geography of Haistand.

Kohl Bennex

Kohl Bennex's term of service aboard Lan's ship was short-lived. He stands accused of slaying an Enginseer in the servitor bay. While Lan would be well within his rights to execute Bennex, he opted to hold him until he could rendezvous with representatives of the Adeptus Mechanicus and turn the criminal over.

Bennex has good reason to fear the Machine Cult's justice, and takes any opportunity to convince the Battle-Brothers to plead his case. According to Bennex, he did kill Enginseer Kreth, but it was in self defence. The young crewman encountered a scullion servitor behaving erratically and repeating nonsense phrases. He brought it to the Enginseer for examination. When he explained the situation, Kreth suddenly attempted to impale him with his utility mechadrendite. Bennex managed to dodge the strike, and in a panic, knocked the tech-adept into an open vat of caustic engine waste.

If the Battle-Brothers meet and believe Bennex, they could react in numerous ways. Lan did not look deeply into the matter, too worried about a potential Machine Cult reprisal for the death of one of their own. However, he places great weight on the opinions of the Battle-Brothers, and heeds any reasonable advice they give. Should the Kill-team choose to investigate the servitors, the defiled automatons erupt into violence, launching the corrupted servitors encounter (see page 14).



THE SECRET LIFE OF DIAZ LAN

Serving as the Crusade's errand boy is far from ambitious Diaz Lan's first choice of occupation. An explorer by heart, he has had to content that wanderlust for many decades by gathering the second-hand tales and trophies of others. The small museum in his library is but the tip of an iceberg. He has secreted away dozens of artefacts, weapons, and documents that would raise many eyebrows if they came to light. While Lan's status as a Rogue Trader affords him a great deal of leeway in his possessions and interests, the Crusade's forces contain enough steadfast puritans that discretion is in his best interests.

Lan is a scholar and collector, not a sympathiser with the alien's cause. Even if he could power his Helix Gauntlet, he has no more intention of wielding it than he does of converting to the Tau Empire. The Battle-Brothers present an enticing risk for Lan. They might be pragmatic individuals with whom he could finally share enlightened conversation. Or they could condemn him as a xenos sympathiser and trader of forbidden items. If any of the Battle-Brothers make a good impression on the Rogue Trader, he may launch an exploratory philosophical conversation about alien lore to see how much it is safe to reveal. Should any of the characters win Lan's trust, he proves to be a highly knowledgeable resource about the secrets of the Jericho Reach. A few of his hidden possessions include:

- **Journal of Balastus Irem:** This text, detailing the mentalities, commerce, and trade etiquette of several alien races was banned by the Ordo Xenos when they purged the entire Irem family line in the Koronus Expanse.
- **Helix Gauntlet:** Detailed twin spirals wrap this sleek and perfectly seamless silver gauntlet. A loose power socket near the wrist suggests that the glove might serve as a weapon if powered, but Lan has never found a compatible energy source. This item is locked in a chest in the Rogue Trader's private quarters.
- **Sarcophagus of the Honoured Dead:** The relief in Lan's study is actually the lid of one of the coveted artefacts rumoured to contain the Honoured Dead. These ornate coffins trade for fabulous prices in the Jericho Reach. A switch underneath Lan's desk dislodges the sarcophagus from the wall.

Captain Diaz Lan

Lan generally gives the Kill-team space, although he makes a point to cross their paths a few times during the journey to enquire about previous Missions. He may invite them for a social dinner as an excuse to sate his ever-curious mind, or hold a casual discussion aboard the bridge. However, he avoids bringing them into his study and library if at all possible. If they seek him out there, a successful Scrutiny Test detects an undercurrent of nervousness in his gracious demeanour. If pressed, he professes to be worried about the safety of his many rare artefacts, as his display areas were not sized for giants. In truth, it is not the items on display that worry him, but those he has secreted away.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: CORRUPTED SERVITORS

If the group is one that enjoys action, some players might be ready to deal a little of the Emperor's vengeance before their journey on the Horizon is over. Kohl Bennex's story is indeed true. Enginseer Kreth was an infiltrator from Samech, sent to sabotage the next intervention on Aurum to give the apostate magi more time for their endeavours. Kreth spent several months working dark rituals and incorporating tainted circuitry into any servitor he could get hold of. The subtle tech-sorcery sleeps inert until activated, which allowed Kreth to infect a great number without detection. He had planned to unleash them on the delegation mid-journey. Even though the saboteur is dead, the malicious programs he wrote will not lie dormant much longer. If Battle-Brothers do not discover the servitors first, the creatures wake and attack on their own.

If the GM decides to use this encounter, he can drop hints of the impending danger in addition to the plight of Bennex. While describing general activity on the ship, mention that the

servitors seem in poor repair. Their movement is twitchy; their flesh is marred by un-sutured wounds; they may occasionally wander the corridors to no apparent purpose as though their command programming has become corrupt.

Unless the Battle-Brothers have pressed the matter to an early conclusion, the servitor attack comes when the Kill-team is separated, such as when they rest. A pair of the deranged automatons attacks each Battle-Brother. It is immediately obvious that something is very wrong with the creatures the instant they come into view. Their dead pores seep a brackish, foul-smelling liquid, and a faint orange glow shines in their eye sockets. The servitors mutter a constant stream of blasphemous syllables (which continues for some minutes even after they are put down unless all vocal capability is destroyed). Equally disturbing is the mutated state of their limbs. Whether their appendages previously ended in hands or tools, each one is now a deadly spray of razor-like metal fragments. These jagged bouquets dance with baleful energy.

Brigadier Heth has his stateroom in the same area as those offered to the Kill-team. Anyone nearby may hear the sounds of las fire coming from his room, and realise that he too is under attack.

As the combat winds down, Diaz Lan comes barreling down the corridor, silk robe spattered with blood and lubricant and his fine bolt pistols smoking. "Never a dull moment with the Deathwatch!" Lan exclaims, surveying the area for any lingering monstrosities. Satisfied, he starts to make his habitual gesture of holstering his pistols, only to realise that he is hardly dressed for the occasion. He sighs in disgust at his ruined robe. "Well, I suppose I'd better have the rest of the servitor pool checked. I'm sure you gentlemen can take care of yourselves. Pardon me."

The crew spend the duration of the voyage herding servitors in for detailed diagnostics by the ship's most senior and trusted tech-priests.

THE GOLDEN PLANET

*"Behind every smile, there hides treachery.
Beneath every pillow, there lies a dagger.
Within every flowing cup, there waits poison."*

—from the Psalms of Suspicion

The trip to Aurum takes close to a month. Even as charted by a Navigator, the route from Erioch to Aurum requires detours and frequent re-calculations because of the presence of the Hadex Anomaly. When the ship at last makes its final translation into real space, Lan sees Brigadier Heth and the Battle-Brothers off. He does not accompany them in the lander to the surface. As he explains it:

"I fear I've worn out my welcome with the Aurans. You know that particular sour look your Watch Captain gets whenever I darken your threshold? That expectation that his patience is about to be tried? It's rather the same look Caele Darkscourge gets when he sees me. Your Mission will go better without my aid, rest assured."

As the lander descends, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

THE WARP MOST PERILOUS

Plotting a course through warp space is a difficult task under the best of conditions. Even with their genetic gifts, Navigators must train for years to guide ships safely through the Empyrean. Even then, they would be lost without the guiding light of the Astronomican. The Hadex Anomaly—a cancerous rift in realspace where the warp and reality mingle—fester in the centre of the Jericho Reach. The warp in and around the vortex is the domain of some of Chaos's most dreadful minions, and so blighted is the region that the Astronomican is often obscured. For both these reasons, all but the most desperate and insane void-farers give the Hadex Anomaly a wide berth even if avoiding it means they must take a more indirect route.

Aurum is true to its namesake. The atmosphere is a soft gold as you descend through it. The shuttle speeds over sandy plateaus wrapped in leafy vines before Haistand comes into view. The tribal capital towers on the border between the planet's canyon savannahs and its fertile mesas. Haistand rests on the flat top of a great cliff, where time has tightly packed more stone and wood structures into the same space. A wide road winds up the cliff-side to accommodate a steady stream of natives from the outlying lands.

From the Journal of Balastus Irem

598412M41

A Strategic Withdrawal

I have seen a great many terrors during my years in the shadows of the Expanse. I daresay some I wilfully sought out. Yet never did I think to face the mythic nightmares upon which the Imperium's history is founded. In my last entry of the promising sites here in the Unbeholden Reaches, I detailed uninhabited Anomaly 47-M. It may have no denizens, but it is far from free of competition. I took a dozen of my best men into those dead halls. When we began to notice other footprints in the dust, we assumed it must be our old competitors for the Expanse's treasures: the Disciples of Thule.

How wrong we were.

How can words describe the soul-freezing dread of suddenly stumbling upon a horror you only half believed in? I know now that corrupted Adeptus Astartes really do exist, and they are more terrible than imagination could ever conjure. They effortlessly slaughtered my men with their weapons roaring like ravenous beasts. It was only through the sacrifice of dutiful Vega that I managed to flee back to the ship in time for us to escape. I have few doubts that if those warriors of damnation had breached our hull, they could have slaughtered us to a man.

From whence did they come? I have never heard so much as a rumour of their kind in the Koronus Expanse before now. They seemed to be searching for something upon the Anomaly. Let them have it. Emperor preserve anyone who hopes to prevent them from taking it.



The shuttle sets down in a wide circle where the rich brown soil is exposed. This primitive landing pad at the edge of town is the only accommodation made for off-worlders. Two other crafts with Imperial markings also sit here, empty. Above them, the bustling city awaits.

THE CITY OF HAISTAND

Haistand was founded far back in the planet's history as a place for trade between the nomadic tribes of the savannah and the tribes living permanently in the green canyons. As the tribes began to unite into larger groups, Haistand turned into a centre of trade and politics. Millennia later, Aurans still look every inch the part of a warrior people. They stand taller than average humans by nearly a head, and their bronze-skinned bodies are lean and fit. They mastered agriculture several centuries ago, but combat prowess is still essential for survival and is a skill that their culture values highly.

Similarly, their goods and clothing still follow the traditions of their predatory ancestors. Common Auran garments are cut from skins and hides, while interlaced reptile scales form the common basis for armour; their implements of crafting and war are largely bone. Most of the planet's fauna is reptilian, including the unusual saurian strain dubbed midasaur. These creatures have incredibly resilient scales that glitter with streaks of gold in Aurum's sunlight. The primary herd animal is the argrax, a slightly less temperamental strain of grox whose larger relatives remain wild on the plains, and are often hunted for food. The primary mount and beast of burden is a sleek bipedal lizard called a theratryx.



The Auran reaction to the Space Marines varies. Here their iconic power armour is not a legendary profile, but a point of curiosity. Natives of all ages and genders show an obvious interest in this new breed of off-worlder, but no fear. Haistand's buildings are mostly of primitive but sturdy masonry, and their ceilings are high enough to accommodate most Space Marines because of the natives' natural height. Residences and shops crowd each other and the busy streets, which throng with carts, livestock, and pedestrians.

THE SNAKING ASCENT

The road hewn into the cliff that Haistand rests atop is wider than any street to be found in the city. It sees a steady flow of traffic from sunrise to sunset, and must accommodate caravans of traders and argrax herds being driven to and from market. It takes approximately 30 minutes to climb the zigzagging path to the city hundreds of metres above. Two ancient columns mark the entrance to Haistand, taller than any structure in the city. These remnants of the planet's lost ancestry each bear a single eagle. It is here that Brigadier Heth parts ways with the Battle-Brothers, telling them he can be found at the Aspirance, the local Imperial Guard barracks.

Optional Encounter: Spooking the Herd

To say that argrax are less temperamental than grox is like saying that Ork Mekboyz are smarter than standard Boyz: it may be true, but it is still relative. Many rangers drive their argrax herds up the winding road to Haistand for trade. While these beasts are more accustomed to one another than their cousins, they are still difficult to keep under control under the best circumstances. Side by side with giants in imposing power armour is not the best circumstances.

Midway through the climb, the Battle-Brothers pass a slow-moving group of argrax. A middle-aged Auran prods them along with a whip and spear, sending the lash in the direction of any reptile that stops moving or makes aggressive motions. As the Space Marines go by, one of the creatures raises its snout and sniffs the air. Something about the scent of these metal-clad men and the hum of their power units offends the beast. It lets out a shrieking roar. The ranger's whip cracks mightily against the scaled hide, but it is too late. The other reptiles pick up the cry. The herd erupts into violence.

Most of the creatures attack the source of their provocation: the Battle-Brothers. However, a few others leap on the general populace, turning the winding road into pandemonium. The Aurans are a warrior society and by and large can defend themselves from angry livestock. The GM may just describe the natives' skirmishes as scenery to the Kill-team's own fight, or he may wish to offer the Battle-Brothers opportunities for heroism amidst the chaos such as:

- A small child with a beast bearing down on it.
- A brave Auran warrior surrounded by a ring of the creatures.
- An agrax charging into a crowd or wagon near the path's edge—almost certain to topple someone off the edge through sheer velocity and body weight.

PLANETARY DATAFAX: AURUM

Population: Estimated 2 Billion

Tithe Grade: Exactus Non

Special Notation: Undergoing integration into the Imperium vis the Achilus Crusade

Geography/Demography: Hot/Temperate, abiding planetary climate is tropical with a low degree of precipitation and storm activity. The planet has two main continental landmasses. Each are dominated by arid plains and rain forest zones surrounding a chain of large mountain ranges. The equatorial regions are made up of bands of deserts. The planet also possesses relatively small polar oceans.

Governmental Type: Indigenous Monarchy (reigning ruler is known as "The Caele")

Planetary Governor: Not yet determined

Adept Presence: Initial/Low; the Ecclesiarchy and Imperial Guard have small stations set up on the planet's main continent.

Military: The Aurum tribes have a primitive force of infantry and cavalry (roughly two regiments of each), nominally commanded by the Caele.

Trade/Economy/Addendum: Aurum is rich in promethium deposits and the rare decavane crystals (see below). In addition to its abundant natural resources, the planet is strategically well-suited to the needs of the Crusade and the Aurum tribes themselves are a fierce warrior culture that is nearly ideal for integration into the Imperial Guard.

THE GOLDEN BLESSING

Aurum derives its name from the golden glow that suffuses its atmosphere. If it contained so mundane a resource as actual gold ore, it would be of interest only to reckless Rogue Traders willing to risk the untamed Jericho Reach to exploit it. However, Aurum is rich in a far rarer and more immediately useful resource than metal. The unique amber colour suffusing the sky and tinting the planet originates from its rare Decavane crystals. Decavane crystals can hold an exponentially larger charge than standard crystal batteries, making them highly valued for alternate weapon patterns and other military equipment.

The relationship between the crystals and Aurum's environment, if any, is unclear, but it is obvious the planet is exceptionally resource-rich and fertile. Nearly every form of flora prospers when introduced to the rich soil, and herd animals mature quickly and free of illness. Even the native population has grown strong and able on this unusually healthy planet, although the native predators are equally flourishing and the Aurans must strive constantly to perfect their martial skills to keep pace with them.) Some have theorised that the Decavane crystals emit a subtle, beneficial energy field, while others propose that they are the effect and not the cause of some undiscovered property of the planet. Until the natives allow the Adeptus Mechanicus to perform detailed research, scholars can only conjecture.

IMPERIAL ROOTS

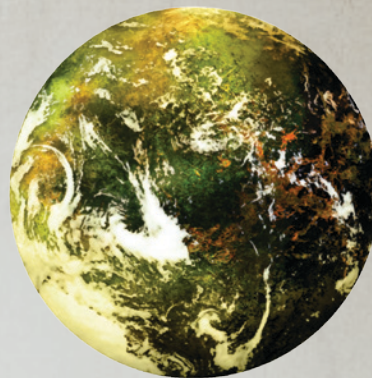
For their part, the Aurans attribute their planet's benevolence to the "Soul of Aurum," a male personification of the planet's will. This Soul actually has striking similarities to the God-Emperor—from his creation of 20 sons and their armies to a betrayal by his most beloved child. Their religious parables likewise show roots in the Imperial Creed. The original date of human habitation can only be guessed at, but the low gothic dialect and various cultural artefacts clearly indicate an Imperial history.

CULTURE

Combat is an Auran way of life, encompassing all ages and genders. In the planet's past, scattered tribes warred for dominance. The tribes have been united for several centuries, but the planet's predators ensure that martial prowess remains a necessity. As a result, while the Aurans do farm the fertile land and raise herd animals, traditional hunts remains a staple of their culture. The society has not yet developed currency; they rely on a barter system.

The traditional Auran greeting is to touch one's weapon's hilt to the other party's shoulder. Non-lethal martial challenges are used to solve nearly any disagreement, from domestic quarrels to trade disputes. If a matter escalates to a serious grudge, the natives have a tradition called "splitting the rock of grievance." (See page 27 for more details on this combat ritual).

Aurum's plains make wood an uncommon commodity, and it is unclear if metal ore even exists on the planet. The natives show a relatively advanced understanding of farming and medicine, but their implements tend to be made of rock and bone.



THE OVERLOOK

The buildings closest to the city entrance are residences, stacked two or even a perilous three stories high. The buildings along the outer perimeter are riddled with windows—some open and some curtained by animal hides. This section of Haistand is home to many of the city's tradesmen and guards, as well as providing temporary lodging for local travellers.

THE WORD OF FAITH

The Word of Faith is the first and only Imperial mission on Aurum. The dead Sister Rachael served here, protecting its chief missionary, Father Marius. The building is not much to look at: a converted single story residence with a meticulously maintained Aquila painted above the door. Should the Battle-Brothers venture in sight of the mission, they witness firsthand the difficult task the Ecclesiarchy has before them. Father Marius stands on the steps, doing his best to minister to the disdainful populace. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A gaunt, balding man in worn Ecclesiarchy robes stands outside the mission. He holds a worn copy of the Imperial Creed in one hand as three Aurans tower over him wearing mocking expressions. One of the young men makes a half-hearted grab for the book. "Why would a real god need his stories saved in your see-speak?" The missionary narrowly avoids the first Auran but almost backs into another. The second one leans in "Why does he use frail old men to spread his name? If your Emperor is so mighty, why don't real warriors follow him?"

It is at that moment the missionary catches sight of you. His eyes alight with hope, as though the Emperor himself has just answered his prayers. He straightens his posture and points defiantly towards you. "Here, here is your answer! I have told your disbelieving ears that the Emperor protects, and the proof stands before you. These men are his holy champions, and the mightiest warriors in the galaxy."

The sudden appearance of such imposing off-worlders combined with Father Marius's speech is enough to startle even the bold natives into a lapse of silence. The Battle-Brothers are free to try to help Marius correct the Aurans' views with the appropriate Interaction Tests, or ignore them altogether. (In the latter case, they quickly leave.)

Marius has been in Haistand for many years, and can offer a great deal of insight into the city, the people, and their leader—Rylus Darkscourge. He can also relate the details of Sister Rachael's death. He was the one who found the sister's body here in the Word of Faith, by an altar to Saint Dominica. The body has since been returned to her order for final rites. Rachael bore great suspicion towards the faithless of Aurum. Towards the end of her life, she had begun to suspect that they were hiding a dark secret. She confided to Father Marius that she sometimes saw flames dancing on the western horizon and small convoys of men setting out from Haistand through its back gates in the dead of night—always heading north.

AURAN ARMS AND ARMOUR

Aurum is abundant in many resources, but metal ore is not among them. Even such rudimentary metals as bronze and iron were unknown to them until the Crusade's arrival. The Aurans' saurian scale armour and bone weapons certainly fit the definition of primitive weapons. However, the evolution of the planet's wild life makes many of its derivative materials stronger than the analogue on most primitive worlds. Midasaur scale armour is so strong that it confers the same protection as standard flak armour. The prevalent bone weapons hold a better edge than most feral blades, but still have difficulty penetrating strong materials. Since that includes midasaur scale armour, the finest local weapons are crafted from razor sharp talons or fangs instead.

The Battle-Brothers may also notice an unusual weapon carried by many of the planet's warriors. The gyrbade is a set of two crescent-shaped cutting edges at a 120 degree angle from one another. Their axis is a jointed handle which allows the wielder to quickly vary their attack angle. Skilled specialists in the weapon are also capable of rotating the blades in a constant circular motion, creating a deadly zone of lacerating motion around the axis. They are used singly and in pairs. Profiles for gyrbades and other common Auran tools of war can be found on page 28.

Rachael thought the recent deaths were the work of a daemon, and spent many nights searching for it. Marius is not sure whether he believes her assertion or not, but he cannot deny that she must have encountered something dreadful during the midnight hunts. He does not believe she would have been so cowardly as to kill herself, even in the face of a daemon. Marius knows she ranged at least to the cliffs beneath Haistand and the surrounding lands, but says she was sometimes gone days at a time, so her search may have extended further. The last time he saw her alive, she had been planning to follow the next suspicious train of wagons north.

THE OLD RELIGION

Not far from the Word of Faith stands a much older site of worship. This nameless temple is a stark contrast to the struggling mission. It dates back to Haistand's founding, representing the native religion. If the Auran's command of low gothic was not evidence enough that they must once have been under the Imperium's banner, the tribal altar erases any doubt. The frieze above the entrance features a weathered line of carved warriors. The spacing suggests that once the figures numbered twenty, although two of them have been defaced into only vague outlines. The warriors bear such distinctive features as a cyclopean eye on one and wings on another.

If the Battle-Brothers enter the temple, they see a dozen or so Aurans in quiet prayer, with no apparent priest. One wall displays a well-maintained mural of a golden hero wrestling a four-headed dragon.

WAR GROUNDS

The war grounds were constructed to rally vast numbers of troops from the planet's diverse tribes in wartime. The establishments of Haistand's most renowned armourers ring the district. At present the grounds are an expanse of open ground in the packed city. The city protectorate who practice here occupy only a minute fraction of the total area, and patches of grass have crept onto the cleared earth with no feet to trample it.

The sparring warriors give the Battle-Brothers curious glances before quickly and deliberately ignoring them, avoiding eye contact as best one can with a Space Marine helmet. If the Battle-Brothers approach, the Aurans do not acknowledge them until directly or addressed. When this happens, Shieldmaster Zayr takes over the discussion. He steps to the front of the group and replies to the Kill-team with curt responses and a hostile gaze. His answers are uniformly unhelpful, obviously meant to discourage further conversation. In particular if the topic of Sister Rachayel or the other killings comes up, Zayr resolutely maintains that the Imperial regime is simply over-reacting to the planet's violent predators. His words and attitude convey a sense that the Imperium is not mentally equipped to deal with the danger of life on Aurum.

The Aspirance

The dozen Imperial Guardsmen tolerated on Haistand have dubbed the two-story structure afforded them for barracks and administration the Aspirance. The stone building sits on a corner of the war grounds, where their members are permitted to drill (usually openly scrutinized by the natives). The Aspirance is Brigadier Heth's headquarters. If the Battle-Brothers seek him out, they find him settling in behind a cramped desk on the first floor, sorting through the records left by his predecessor. According the guardsmen's accounts, the previous assignee to the post slighted one of the nearby native warriors with a careless remark. He compounded the mistake by accepting the resulting challenge to battle—with lethal results.

Heth offers to help the Battle-Brothers however he can. Some of his men have been stationed on Aurum for decades; they freely describe their experiences and answer questions. While the militia at the war grounds has never been friendly with the occupants of the Aspirance, mutual respect was burgeoning until mutilated bodies began appearing. Since then, the relationship has been curt and guarded. If asked about the Caele, one of the guardsmen says the following:

"I've seen Caele Darkscourge up close a few times. He used to come to the Aspirance to talk to the Brigadier—the old one. When you meet him, you'll certainly see why they follow the man. You just know he's sure he's doing the right thing—or I guess that's what the Aurans think, I mean. He doesn't look at us like the rest of 'em do though. Most of them just seem to be laughing on the inside. But when he looks at us, you can tell he's searching for something, and seeing something the others aren't. I think I like it better when they laugh."

DECAVANE CRYSTALS

Decavane crystals are more myth than science. Reported only in the Jericho Reach, usually they are found in small clutches, often already excavated from tightly guarded locations. The crystals are most valued as concentrated energy sources for various armaments, although rumours abound that they have more miraculous properties such as healing old wounds and purging illness.

No authoritative story exists as to the origin of the crystals. The most prevalent theory connects them to Eldar terraforming. Others point to their exclusivity in the Jericho Reach as evidence that they must have been developed by the civilisation that once dominated the Jericho Sector before it fell to shadow. More sinister whispers also exist, tales that the crystals are the ill-begotten product of dark pacts made long ago.

APPLICATIONS

Decavane Crystals can be fashioned to replace or augment the power sources of many standard weapons. This requires sufficient time, tools, and a successful Tech-Use Test. If the would-be Artificer succeeds, this grants the following benefits to a las or plasma ranged weapon, or a Powered melee weapon: Increase Damage by +1; the weapon gains the equivalent of the Razor Sharp Quality. Alternatively, the power source of any piece of equipment may be modified, increasing any time limits on its operation by a factor of x10.

They have also witnessed the same strange occurrences that Sister Rachayel reported. One of the soldiers speaks of winds from north sometimes carrying an odour that he cannot quite identify, but associates with industry and hive worlds. Many of the guardsmen have sometimes seen an odd glow in the western sky at night, when all should be dark.

THE HALL OF VICTORIES

The Hall is the largest building in Haistand, and one of the few made entirely of wood. The polished structure is well-maintained, but currently empty. It is only used for the Caele's ceremonies. In previous generations, this meant celebrations before or after battle. However, as the tribes of the planet have made peace, its purpose has evolved to hosting holiday celebrations and feasts for visiting tribal leaders. An empty stone amphitheatre stands immediately adjacent to the hall.

COMMERCE AISLES

These haphazard rows of carts and baskets are the heart of Haistand. The city evolved as a place for the barter society to meet and trade. The goods exchanging hands are representative of the feral worlder's day-to-day life. Baskets of produce and grain from the agricultural mesas crowd the narrow walkways. Bladed weapons are displayed plentifully beside ornaments of bone and glittering gold crystal. Perhaps the most interesting sight is the hanging carcasses of giant, predatory lizards several times the size of a man. The skins

and freshly butchered meat of various midasaur strains fills the nearby air with the scent of blood.

One particular merchant, a relatively short man by the name of Beyrr, takes an extreme interest in the Kill-team's power armour if he catches sight of this off-world technology marvel. He waves his hands excitedly to flag them over, and if that fails goes as far as to chase after them through the streets. He pleads and bargains for them to trade him their "fabulous thinstone armour" (naturally completely ignorant of the personal bond between an Adeptus Astartes and his armour and their lack of interest in material goods). He offers such exchanges as a herd of the local lizard livestock, his own personal residence in the overlook, and axes edged with the diamond-hard fangs of a Diablon.

When all else fails, he makes a more desperate bid. He surreptitiously produces a wrapped object from under his vest. Within the leather folds is a very unusual knife. Its handle is common carved stone, but the blade is a large, curving talon of sleek charcoal black chitin. A successful **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** identifies it as Tyrandid in origin. The merchant swears the blade is extremely rare and can cut through anything. He promises four in exchange for one of their suits of armour.

If questioned, he is not immediately forthcoming to the source of the weapons. Successful Interaction Tests or roleplayed persuasion may convince him to reveal that a man named Heydal traded the set of talons to him. However, this was many months ago and Heydal does not live in Haistand. He has presumably moved on.

OTHER RESIDENCES

While homes can be found on nearly every street of Haistand, they are most concentrated at the Overlook near the city's entrance, and at the far side. The opposite end of the city contains many smaller dwellings of the farmers who own or work the local lands. They live within the city for convenience and protection, and make the trek down a small network of trails on the cliff's other side that lead to the fertile farming canyons.

THE CAELE'S HOMESTEAD

The Caele's residence sprawls along one of the cliff edges. The main structure is three stories high and ancient, dating beyond the memory of any living Auran. It has a flat roof and striking granite columns at the entrance. Time and the elements have eroded the columns, but large swathes of their original inscriptions remain visible. They portray overlapping ellipses, angles, and vectors. An **Ordinary (+10) Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) or Navigation (Stellar) Test** recognises the images as star charts of the systems closest to Holy Terra.

Smaller stone annexes connect to the large house by gravel paths. The complex includes a small pen for theratryx mounts, and a large garden of hanging plants. A few warriors come and go from the main building, but they seem to be on errands more than patrol.

ZAYR

Zayr is the Shieldmaster of Haistand, tasked with maintaining a standing body of warriors to defend the city. The Aurans have few laws. Most disputes are settled between individuals (often violently) with the Caele's word superseding all. In times of peace, their daily duties mainly entail protecting the Caele and carrying out his orders. However, Zayr and his men occasionally intervene to deal with truly dangerous or deviant individuals. In recent years a new punishment for Aurum's criminals has been devised—a secret labour necessary for the planet's survival.

Zayr knows the truth behind the killings, and believes acutely that the shame belongs to the Auran people. He also knows that Rylus wishes to keep the matter quiet. Therefore, both his orders and his conscience both incline him to block the newcomers from learning the shame of Grensvayl, and to resent them for prying.

ALKEDRE FIRESTALKER

Alkedre is Rylus's Sinsar, his second in command. While Auran leadership does not have a formal line of succession, the role of Sinsar assures that the combat trials used to choose a new Caele can at least be postponed if the current leader dies in wartime. Alkedre comes from a distant tribe in the foothills, where Rylus recruited her. She carries a giant two-handed sword and wears bright red armour; more of the same creature's scales hang in her blond hair.

Unlike Rylus, Alkedre would welcome an alliance with the Imperium. She sees it as an opportunity to improve Auran technology while allowing her people to see other stars and learn the battle techniques of other cultures. She voices this opinion quite frequently. However, the Sinsar has great respect for Rylus and while she has no qualms arguing about his decision whenever the opportunity presents itself, she accepts his leadership without bitterness.

KARTHAS

Karthas served for many years as one of Grensvayl's perimeter guards. Two years ago, he suffered a serious bite wound from a Malissector, and still bears the scars on his shoulder. He returned home to Haistand to heal. After he recovered, instead of going back, he took up responsibility for the labour camp that supplies promethium to the quarantined town. The guards use it to maintain a great perimeter of fire around the tainted valley. He and Zayr are co-conspirators. Zayr is in charge of judging and detaining true criminals, while Karthas transports them and safeguards the secrecy of their location.

The true situation is more dire than even Caele Rylus can imagine. Karthas was infected by the Genestealer's Kiss in Grensvayl. His play for oversight of the well was quite deliberate. Over time he persuaded Rylus to let him lead a sortie into the town to attempt cleansing it. This slaughter was nothing but a ruse. He led his entire party into an ambush, and used the confusion to help the Broodlord and several of

Caele Rylus Darkscourge

Rylus Darkscourge has been the Caele of Aurum since it was discovered by the Crusade nearly three decades ago. He is tall and powerfully built even for an Auran—standing almost as tall as a Space Marine. His long black hair contains several small braids, but is unadorned except for the polished bone circlet on his brow. Like all of Aurum's leaders, his right to rule did not come through birth, but through victory in combat. Rylus is a charismatic speaker and a strong warrior.

At the Imperium's first contact, he realised his people's way of life would never be the same, by the mere fact that they were no longer alone. Since that time he has meticulously gathered lore and stories of the planets and politics beyond his world, making him far savvier about the Imperium than most of his people.

He drew quite a grim conclusion from the stories of traders and from reading between the lines of history books. He is certain that if the Crusade was allowed to absorb Aurum, the Imperium would ruthlessly exploit both its people and its resources, leaving Aurum far less than it was. This was not an easy decision for Rylus to reach. As he learned of the galaxy, he came to understand its many threats and knows that the Imperium may be man's best defence. The message of the watching Emperor of Mankind and a humanity united rings true with him. However, he is the proud king of a proud people. Submitting the golden planet to rule by a cruel and unworthy dictator is a shame he cannot allow.

To him, the Battle-Brothers present a unique opportunity. Rylus has heard legends of the honour and valour of the Adeptus Astartes. Because their Chapters exist outside the normal confines of the Imperium, they might be able to provide him an unbiased warrior's view on how to deal with the Imperium's hunger for his world. They are also the first members of the Imperium he believes might be able to win respect in the eyes of his people. If they could prove themselves the equal of Auran warriors, he would finally have an off-world ally to help him understand and purge the Malissectors.

its kin escape. The black depths of the labour camp provide an ideal place for the brood to breed and grow. So in the wells built to keep the Malissectors contained, their numbers grow. Karthas uses the Infected Auran Warrior Profile on page 50.

Rylus keeps Karthas close since he is one of the few privy to the secret of the Malissectors. When he is not at the well, Karthas is frequently at the Caele's homestead. He is among the handful of warriors selected to guard and council the Auran leader.

MEETING THE CAELE

If the Adeptus Astartes request to meet with the Caele, they are almost immediately ushered into the homestead complex for an audience. In fact if they do not seek him out, sooner or later he requests a visit from them. Rylus Darkscourge meets the Battle-Brothers in a large, circular chamber of the main building. The room has a sand floor and no furniture. It has no external windows and instead several wall sconces provide torchlight and give off a faint herbal smoke. Between the torches hang tapestries so faded that their weaves are nothing but mottled gray outlines of men and beasts now. Read aloud or paraphrase the following when Rylus joins them:

Caele Rylus Darkscourge enters from the door opposite the one you came through. He strides towards you with confident grace. As he comes closer you realise that his height is level with most of your brothers. He nods a greeting but does not smile; his dark eyes are serious. "Welcome, Adeptus Astartes. I heard that your tribe had come to Aurum. All that I have read of your kind says that you would not be here without purpose. What is it?"

Presumably the Battle-Brothers broach the subject of the suspected xenos presence, and possibly the Imperium's attempts to return Aurum to humanity's fold. Rylus is dismissive of the Crusade's overtures of alliance, saying that the Imperium has yet to prove they have either the capacity or the worth to govern the Auran people. If the Kill-team brings up the promethium pits (see the Black Depths encounter below) he becomes defensive. "Does its crude nature offend you? We cannot all have your technological marvels." Any remarks about the volume of promethium being drawn in comparison to the small amount seen in Haistand only earns a reply like:

"We are quite new to the practices of draining the blood of our land. I supposed we are simply not as efficient at it as your people."

When the topic of the unexplained deaths comes up, Rylus at least does them the courtesy of not blaming local predators. Instead, he asks them what they think is the cause.

No matter the theory they present—even if they paint the vivid possibility of a planet overrun with Genestealers or devoured by the following Hive Fleet—Rylus remains firm in his edict that outsiders may not venture beyond Haistand. He makes it clear that if they attempt to defy this interdiction, he will respond with force—an incident that could quickly escalate to war and unfortunate consequences for the Imperials presently in Haistand.

"Even if I wished to grant you an exception to the laws which have governed your emissaries for decades, my people would never accept it. Honoured warriors though you may be in your own Imperium, you are unproven here. No Auran has a voice in our councils until they are initiated through our rituals. I am told your Brotherhood has similar traditions of choosing, so surely you understand their importance." His expression, while still grim, betrays a spark of hope. "I will offer you an opportunity I have presented no others: undergo a Trial of Proving. Do this, and not only will you advance your Imperium in the eyes of my people, but I will then be free to grant you whatever freedoms and answers you need in pursuit of the threat which brought you here."

This is the best Rylus can offer. No amount of debate can persuade him to give more, and he continues to press the Kill-team to accept his offer if initially refused.

FERAL WORLDS

In keeping with the Administratum's need to document and quantify, standard terminology has evolved to broadly classify the many types of worlds encountered in the Imperium. The designation feral world indicates a planet with a primitive technology base. While other traits are common with such cultures, such as physiques evolved for survival and savage traditions, these are not universal (or unique) to feral worlds. Even the measure of technology can be subjective, as Imperial-controlled feral worlds may often have acquired tools and weapons through trade. However, their understanding and treatment of such items would make most tech-priests shudder to witness. (Hence the lifespan of a machine spirit on a feral world tends to be as short as that of the planet's inhabitants.)

THE MALISSECTORS

The mutilated corpses are actually the work of Genestealers: a deadly four-armed strain of Tyranid capable of turning other species into their dominated minions, and hosts for hideous offspring. In many cases the dead were simply victims of a Genestealer's ingrained drive to kill. However, others—like Sister Rachayel—forced the creatures into confrontation by actively seeking them out.

The Genestealer infestation centres in the settlement of Grensvayl, about 200 kilometres from Haistand in the canyon farmlands. The first infection was over a decade ago, giving the brood time to spread through the town's population. For most of this period, Haistand remained ignorant of the infection. However, as Grensvayl fell out of contact, Rylus finally sent a war party to determine the cause. The result was disastrous.

While Rylus does not know the Imperium's name for these xenos predators, he has seen them teeming in the infected settlement. He and those within the circle of knowledge have dubbed the creatures Malissectors. They understand that the monsters infect, and worse yet enslave, his people. In Auran culture this is a sign of impurity in the victims: that their bodies and minds could not resist domination. Rylus and his people see the infestation as their own failing. The Caele has worked hard to conceal the Malissectors from the offworlders so as not to show weakness to an enemy.

THE BLACK DEPTHS

Man knows the places he was never meant to go. The fear he feels when looking within those forbidden depths is the Emperor's blessing to humanity. It is a sacred whisper to turn back before your soul is lost. If only men would listen.

—Inquisitor Zayel: *Admonitions Against the Warp*

The Battle-Brothers may or may not choose to follow up on the descriptions of strange activities to the north (being careful to avoid detection unless they wish to start an incident by leaving the city). If they stand on the northern edge of Haistand, a successful **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test** allows the acute olfactory senses of the Neuroglottis to recognise the tang of promethium in the air. Once scented, if the Battle-Brothers wish to follow it to its source, they may do so with a **Challenging (+0) Tracking Test**.

Alternatively, they may wait to see if any of the strange night-time convoys depart northward. Should they make such an attempt, long after sunset two carts drawn by theratryx make a slow journey down the smaller paths on the rear slopes of Haistand. Assuming the Adeptus Astartes have their helmets' autosenses available, they can easily see that each cart contains four men bound with sturdy rope. A **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** recognises one of the drivers as being one of Zayr's men from the war grounds. (The other is Karthas.) Following this procession without detection requires little in the way of stealth, between the dark, the rattle of the carts, and the cries of the theratryx.

Either method leads the Kill-team no more than a dozen kilometres north of the city. The scent of promethium grows unmistakable, and then overpowering. When the Battle-Brothers see their destination, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The land has been sloping steadily downwards for the last several kilometres. Finally, it drops into a lowland of black, bubbling rents in the earth. The crude promethium wells up into large pools. Men with black-stained limbs scoop the promethium into buckets, and carry it across the shaky wooden planks that connect one uneven piece of solid ground to another.

Unfortunately the Battle-Brothers have a more immediate concern that investigating this unsophisticated promethium well. A wheeling, shrieking ring of reptilian predators surrounds the pits. The heat and fumes from the raw promethium keeps them from coming too close to the labouring men, but they dive at the incoming carts with sharp beaks and talons. Only the bows of Zayr's men keep them from being torn to shreds as they pass through the perimeter, and even then one of the shackled prisoners is dragged from the carts and quickly devoured.

ADEPTUS ASTARTES HONOUR

The Divested Hunt encounter (see page 27) assumes the Battle-Brothers accept Rylus's challenge to prove their worth. What if they see such games as beneath them and refuse to undergo his proving? If that happens, then the Aurans show them the same disdain (and impose on them the same restrictions) that they have for the rest of the Imperium.

Rylus is not the only person who knows about the infection at Grensvayl. The Kill-team can eventually learn of the settlement's plight and location elsewhere in Haistand or at the promethium pits. Alternatively, while the *Horizon's Pride* originally read the fire perimeter around Grensvayl as volcanic activity, Lan's crew may eventually realise that something far more unusual sits at that location. However, the Caele's animosity means that the Kill-team must either circumvent or openly defy the interdiction to leave the city. The latter brings an assault from a Horde of Auran warriors (see At War with the Golden People).

If the Battle-Brothers still want to attempt relations with the Aurans after dealing with Grensvayl on their own terms, it becomes a far more difficult task. However, their deeds in the settlement (and perhaps even their fight with the Auran warriors) could also be used to garner respect by a clever negotiator.

If the Kill-team plans to get any closer to the large operation in the pits, they are going to have to pass through the circle of sky reavers. The creatures emit raucous cries as they circle the wells, so their sounds of death are unlikely to be of much concern to the Aurans. But bolter fire, the growl of chainblades, or the glow of power swords is sure to attract attention. Unless they devise a clever plan to avoid the winged predators, assume the Battle-Brothers are attacked by approximately twice their number of the creatures (see page 50 for their profiles). The sky reavers should be relatively easy to dispatch, but each time someone uses a loud or bright weapon (the GM has final say on what these are), Karthas should make a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** to detect the intrusion. If he succeeds, he and the seven Auran guards attack the Kill-team. Karthas has everything to lose if the Battle-Brothers leave alive. Two masters—the Broodlord and Rylus—have tasked him with safeguarding this secret location. If he thinks it is exposed, violence is his first solution to hide it again.

This primitive attempt to draw promethium is a laborious and dangerous effort for the Aurans. It may not be immediately clear that the men being unloaded from the carts are criminals, but it is evident they don't want to be here. All of the men drawing and hauling the black sludge notably lack weapons. Only Karthas and his men are armed; the sky reavers make effective sentries for anyone who cannot defend himself, as several outlying piles of picked bones attest.

THE CRUDE PITS

The black, bubbling wells of promethium swelter in random pools between the rocks. Sulphur, methane, and other heady gases waft invisibly into the air, although between their power armour and their multi-lungs the Battle-Brothers should have no trouble with the air. However, if they wish to progress further into the lowland, they need to navigate the pitted terrain. The Aurans seem to move from one dry rock bed to the next via improvised bridges of wooden planks. It is obvious to the eye that these bridges are too fragile to hold a Space Marine, much less one in power armour. Some options for getting through include:

- Make the appropriate Strength or Acrobatics Tests to Leap (see page 207 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook) across the gaps. The widest distance is 12 metres.
- The distances can easily be bridged with a **Routine (+20) Piloting: Personal Test** by anyone equipped with a jump pack.
- The pools vary widely in temperature, ranging from simply warm to scalding lakes that can cook a man alive. A **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** with an auspex or equivalent augurs can determine which pools are safe to wade through in power armour and which ones would cook them like the blast of a meltagun.

Falling into or erroneously entering a harmful promethium pit causes 1d10+4 points of Damage, ignoring armour but not Toughness. Additionally, roll 1d10-4 on the Power Armour Critical Effects Table (on page 163 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook) to see if the extreme conditions damage the Battle-Brother's power armour. These effects continue each Round one is in the pool, although most of them are small and shallow enough that a Battle-Brother should be able to wade out in a single Round.

PENAL BARRACKS

This large structure—in the very centre of the area—is no more than treated hides stretched over a framework of bone. The heat from the pits means nothing else is needed to stay warm, and the over-sized tent exists mainly to ward off the weather. Here, the Auran criminals sleep on piles of furs and take their meals. They are just waking as light enters the golden sky, retrieving dried meat and fruit from nearby storage boxes for the morning. Should the Kill-team venture too close or fail an important Silent Move Test and be noticed by the prisoners, they do not raise an alarm. Many of them stare; a few may even try to approach, but they have nothing to gain from starting a combat or alerting Karthas.

Conversing with the Convicts

If the Battle-Brothers choose to converse with (or follow up later with) the Aurans put to work in the promethium wells, they may learn some additional facts about their situation. A term of service in a labour camps is a common Auran method for dealing with those who break one of their few laws. Murderers and other highly dangerous men are put to death. Most of those here are guilty of a lesser crime such as theft or cowardice in battle. Although the labour of drawing the promethium is unpleasant, the prisoners are given ample food and time to rest. Some Space Marines may see this as humane, while others might see it as unforgivably weak. Most feudal serfs across the Imperium have worse living conditions, and Imperial criminal punishments include conscription to a short life of bloody combat in the Imperial Guard Penal Legions, usually on a hellish Death World.

FLOODED CAVES

Submerged caves border some of the open promethium pools, rock chambers that are mostly flooded by the black crude and have only a few feet of clearance between the black liquid and the stone ceiling. The new brood of Genestealers lurk here and grow their numbers, doubly cautious after their brush with exposure from the Adepta Sororitas's investigation. The creatures only stay in the caverns with promethium lakes of tolerable temperatures, providing an easy place to hide for short periods. The Genestealers are smart enough not to reveal themselves to an armoured Deathwatch Kill-team, at least not yet, when they have nothing to gain from battle. If the Battle-Brothers take an interest in exploring any of the submerged caves, the xenos hide in the black depths of the promethium lakes. While it would take a **Hellish (-60) Awareness Test** to confirm that something is lurking in the thick, fluctuating liquid, the Battle-Brothers may still get an uneasy sense that something is watching them.



THE FATE OF SISTER RACHAYEL

The Battle-Brothers are not the first servants of the Emperor to make it to the Black Depths. Sister Rachayel came this way before them. It was here that she found the secret the Aurans strove so hard to bury—not promethium siphoning or criminal labour, but something far worse. She uncovered what the Caele himself still does not know: since being infected by the brood, Karthas has turned the secret promethium pits into a breeding ground for more monstrosities.

Some caverns are so flooded with crude promethium that they are unsafe to drain, filled almost to the ceiling with black liquid and noxious fumes. It is here that the infected warriors and Genestealers hide, venturing out at night to hunt and multiply. Sister Rachayel discovered this xenos den. Unfortunately the xenos also discovered her. They did not kill her, but rather attempted to implant her with their corrupted seed. Refusing to become an instrument of the unclean, Sister Rachayel fell upon her own sword. Knowing that her disappearance would cause questions, Karthas brought her body back to Haistand and hoped it would be dismissed as a suicide.

Monsters in the Deep

What if—through luck or persistence—the Kill-team uncovers the Genestealers here at the Black Depths? This may change their understanding of the stakes, but it doesn't change Rylus's mind about the proving. He is honour-bound not to let the Space Marines near Grensvayl until they have shown respect for Auran tradition, and will fight to the death to keep them from doing otherwise. Additionally, the Broodlord does not reside with the rest of his offspring in the promethium wells. While the Kill-team may reduce the number of free alien predators, they cannot cut off the head of the beast here and now.

POINT OF DEPARTURE

On the edge of the perimeter roughly opposite where the convoy entered, more carts sit unattended. A few large clay jars filled with promethium occupy a small portion of their beds. There is also a stand of bows and arrows used to clear the sky when these vehicles are ready to begin their journey. However, the lack of activity (or beasts of burden) here, and the large amount of empty space to be filled in the carts suggests they won't be setting out any time soon.

The Battle-Brothers have several options at this point. Day is dawning, which makes it harder to hide their trespass against the edict to remain in Haistand. It is possible to follow the trail the promethium-filled carts have made on previous journeys with a **Challenging (+0) Tracking Test**, although there is no telling how far the path may lead. Should the Battle-Brothers decide to undertake this journey, they also quickly find it is nearly impossible to do so in secret. See the Go Set a Watchman Encounter below.

GO SET A WATCHMAN

While the path from Haistand to the crude pits is unguarded, the long route from the pits to the promethium's destination is carefully watched. Caele Rylus has taken great pains to ensure that the secret of Grensvayl's taint stays concealed from outsiders. The carts run a flat, open trail through the grasslands, with few places to hide. Furthermore, a **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** spots the first of many watch posts along the route.

Unless the Battle-Brothers are all equipped with masking screens or some other means of crossing the open plains without notice, they are almost certainly spotted before reaching the distant settlement of Grensvayl. Because of the Kill-team's unusual status in the political situation, as well as the Caele's interest in them, the news of their trespass is delivered swiftly and directly to the Caele. Rylus himself rides up at the head of a small war host approximately 3 hours after the Battle-Brothers are first spotted heading west. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The approaching party of Aurans raises a small cloud of dust, crossing the open terrain surprisingly silently on their fleet-footed reptilian mounts. The group consists of several dozen warriors, with the Caele's tall figure in their vanguard.

Give your players a chance to react to the oncoming group. Assume the Battle-Brothers sight them at a distance of about 60 metres, which gives them 2 Rounds before the Caele reaches them. (You may wish to increase this if the Battle-Brothers make Awareness Tests). Assuming they don't preempt the approach, continue:

The Caele, Rylus Darkscourge, signals his warriors to hold a few metres back, and only he rides up to you on his green and bronze theratryx. He speaks quietly but with authority. "You have broken the laws of Aurum. My laws. Your Imperium has claimed to come in peace. If this is so, do not push us to war. I too believe we can benefit one another, but this is not the way"

Rylus urges the Kill-team to return to the capital. His own laws forbid off-worlders from leaving Haistand, and he would be dishonoured if he knowingly allowed them to violate his edict. As mentioned in his description on page 21, the Caele believes that the Space Marines might be the answer to his conundrum of the stand-off with the Imperials, but it is not a route he can explore if they openly defy him. He emphasises his belief that they can find a peaceful solution if they return with him to Haistand, but makes it clear he is willing to enforce his laws by whatever means necessary if they do not comply.

If the Kill-team agrees to return with the war party, modify the Meeting the Caele encounter (assuming they have not spoken with him yet). After reconvening in the audience chamber, begin with his explanation of why it is imperative that they keep with Auran law and traditions if they are truly to do any good on the planet. If the Kill-team refuses to return, and tries to continue following the cart tracks, the Aurans do attack them.

GM GUIDANCE: CLARITY AND CONSEQUENCE

One of the great joys of roleplaying is the players' ability to make any choice they can imagine, with the Game Master able to ensure that the world reacts in appropriate and compelling way. The GM should never forbid them from choosing a certain path, but he also has a responsibility to make sure the players understand their situation with the same clarity as their characters would. The Kill-team has the very real possibility of failing a Primary Objective, causing the death of dozens of Imperial citizens and starting a war. If this is the Kill-team's choice, let them make it. However, it can be easy for players to forget all the details of an adventure, particularly if a Mission is broken up over several weeks of real time. If the players seem about to make a detrimental choice, a generous GM will at least make sure they remember that one of their Primary Objectives is to settle the matter of Aurum peacefully. If they are clear on this fact, then anything goes!

Rylus leads a formidable number of Auran warriors against the Battle-Brothers on the open plain. The war party rode after the Kill-team on theratryx, and thus the majority of the warriors are mounted. Use the Mounted Combatants rules and the warrior and theratryx profiles in the appendix to represent a Horde of mounted Auran warriors at a Magnitude of 45. Rylus (who counts as an Elite enemy and should not be combined with his soldiers) fights on foot. If the Battle-Brothers win the fight, nothing is stopping them from finishing the remaining 150 kilometres of the trek to Grensvayl. The settlement's sentries do not receive them well, but should be easily dispatched by Space Marines (see The Tainted City).

Attacking the Caele is an act of war with far more serious implications than the skirmish on the plains. Rylus has the Touched by Fates Trait, so in all likelihood he survives the battle to return to Haistand. (Even if he did not, Alkedre is still there to succeed him.) See At War with the Golden People.

A POOR NEGOTIATING STANCE

Should the Battle-Brothers fight and lose to the Auran warriors on the way to Grensvayl, they wake up, minus a Fate Point, apparently underwater. When they get their bearings it becomes clear they lie at the bottom of a deep stone well. The water is about 2 metres high, and the sheer sides of the pit extend up some 15 metres. Their visible weapons have been taken, although they are still in their power armour.

They are in fact in the well outside the Caele's homestead, as he has nowhere else to keep such mighty prisoners. A few moments after they wake, the Caele appears over the rim of the well for one last attempt at reason. His attitude towards the Battle-Brothers is not nearly as open as it otherwise would have been, and he is deeply troubled by any deaths that occurred. However, his objective remains unchanged: see the Battle-Brothers prove themselves so that they can purge Grensvayl without offending Auran honour. On the brink of war, his tactics are less than diplomatic. He warns the Battle-Brothers that if they do not agree to redeem themselves before his people by undergoing a Proving, he will take their actions as overtures of war—and he is as good as his word.

If rebuffed again, Rylus launches an attack on the Imperial NPC's in Haistand. He leaves the Battle-Brothers in the pit, telling them he wants them to see the bloody results of their stubbornness before they die. The Kill-team can probably devise a clever way to climb or break out of their makeshift holding cell. If they can't, the surviving Imperial NPC's have good reason to want to extract them as quickly as possible.

AT WAR WITH THE GOLDEN PEOPLE

The Aurans strike the Imperium where it is the most vulnerable: by attacking the civilians and isolated representatives inside the capital. Auran warriors quickly cut down the handful of Missionaries, scribes, and traders in Haistand as soon as the word of war is given. The Battle-Brothers encounter their bloody corpses on the streets and in the Overlook when they re-enter the city. Archibal Heth and his handful of guardsmen prove more difficult, barricading themselves inside the Aspirance and raining las fire down any foe that gets close to

DUTY UNTO DEATH

No matter what happens with the local populace, Aurum is still a planet that the Imperium wants to claim, and it still has a xenos infestation. The Battle-Brothers are unlikely to let personal conflicts keep them from seeking out and destroying the threat before calling the Mission complete. Should anger make them forgetful, Lan is sure to ask them about that Objective before breaking orbit and, if necessary, he reminds them of their duty to the Crusade and their Watch Captain.

the building. The Kill-team's first indication that violence has erupted in the city may be a vox broadcast from Heth himself, reporting the situation.

At this point, the Kill-team is free to address the situation as they wish: aid Heth and his guardsmen, bring the fight back to the Caele's homestead, or proceed towards their objective at the end of the trail to the west.

Assuming the Battle-Brothers do cleanse Grensvayl despite the enmity of the Aurans, they have an opportunity to end the hostilities—if they so choose. By this point much bitterness and blood has probably built up between the two factions. However, destroying the Genestealers proves much about the Adeptus Astartes, even if it shames the Aurans to admit it. If the Battle-Brothers use this deed as the basis of a truce, the Caele grudgingly accepts. How much Rylus (or his successor) is willing to actually forgive is another matter entirely. Good roleplaying (or exceptional Charm Tests) are required to progress beyond anything more than the same stalemate the planet was in when the Kill-team arrived. Depending on how well or poorly any such attempt to change the Caele's attitude go, the Victory Feast could still end up being in their honour, or it might be to memorialise fictional Auran heroes taking post-mortem credit for the Kill-team's deeds.

MOUNTED COMBATANTS

The Aurans ride theratryx into battle (and an enterprising Battle-Brother may wish to try his hand at this as well). A character who is mounted suffers a –20 penalty on Dodge Tests and uses the mount's movement rate instead of his own. In melee combat, the mount may make one standard attack in addition to any attacks of the rider. If the rider has the Wrangling Skill, the mount may use a Wrangling Skill Test instead of a Weapon Skill Test to hit with its melee attack. One of the rider's hands must be used to control the reins of his mount. Hits against a mounted character in ranged combat must roll an additional 1d5. On a result of 1–3, the mount is hit. Any other result indicates that the rider is hit instead.

Here are some guidelines for the GM if the Battle-brothers end up fighting the Auruan cavalry as a Horde: use the mount's movement rate and Toughness for the Horde, and add an additional 10 magnitude.

THE DIVESTED HUNT

"Steel is only as good as the man who wields it. Words are only as good as the man who gives them. You stand here today to be judged not by your tribe's name or your possessions, but by your skill and courage."

—from the Opening Rituals of the Storm Wardens' Trials of Aspiration

If the Battle-Brothers accept Rylus's proposal, Alkedre takes responsibility for preparing the Battle-Brothers. She explains that the nature of a warrior's proving varies with the standing he is vying for in society. The Battle-Brothers are to undergo the trial of the most honoured Aurans: the Divested Hunt. This ritual sends warriors to the Reaving Canyons, where some of the planet's most fearsome predators dwell. Using only their skill and the ritual Auran weapons that are a part of the ceremony, they must slay a Diablodon, the king of the planet's midasaur strains.

The trial requires that the Kill-team leave behind all their blessed power armour and weapons. (Techmarines are required to detach any servo-arms or servo-harnesses. The Aurans assume any such appendages must be a kind of weapon. In fact, if any of the Battle-Brothers have obvious permanent augmetics, they may have difficulty convincing the Aurans that they do not come off). The Caele offers to personally guard the Kill-team's possessions if their well-being is of concern to the Battle-Brothers. (They have several other options for safe-keeping as well, such as contacting Lan or Heth.) Alkedre supplies any Battle-Brother who needs garments with leather coverings.

The Sinsir believes that the Imperium could improve life on Aurum, and thus strongly wants the Battle-Brothers to succeed in winning over Rylus and the populace. She does her best to prepare them for the Hunt, and answers any additional questions they have about the trial or the canyons. The rules of the Hunt are simple and immutable. Bring nothing with them into the Canyons. Take no aid from anyone but themselves. Return with a trophy—at least the head—from an adult Diablodon, and swear an oath that they took its life. She also describes their quarry:

"It is the largest of the Reaving Canyon's denizens. It stalks on two legs, and favours the inferno of the Deadlands." She sketches a distinctively uneven four-toed print in the dirt "That is the shape of its track." Then she draws their attention to her brilliant red armour. "But most-over, you will know it by the colour of its scales. Its hide is patterned like the blazes of hell itself."

If the Battle-Brothers ask her about the history of her armour, she confirms that it is from a slain Diablodon. Furthermore, each of the scales hanging in her hair is from a different one of the creatures slain by her hand.



THE REAVING CANYONS

When the Battle-Brothers are ready, Rylus, Alkedre, and scores of curious Aurans make the trek through the winding farmland to the Reaving Canyons. The entrance fissure is clearly marked by talismans of protection and splayed human skeletons that warn of the danger. The onlookers are silent to a man when the Battle-Brothers cross into the Canyons. Rylus solemnly wishes them luck.

Just past the threshold stands a weathered stone plinth with a selection of worn but reliable Auran weapons: the implements of the hunt. Assume at least three of each weapon type is available in the primitive arsenal. The profiles for the implements are given in Table 1–1 on page 28.

The terraced path is narrow as the Battle-Brothers enter the network of canyons. Aurum's lauded virility is obvious as they proceed. Grasses grow on sheer slabs of stone; climbing plants flourish as they cling to the rocky walls. A canopy of trees lining canyons' summit mostly blocks the amber sky. Within that shade the vegetation is not tall but dense, and it rustles constantly with the movement of unseen creatures through it. Not long after the entrance disappears, muffled reptilian shrieks begin to echo through the lush maze, the calls of its many inhabitants. Even as the passage widens, it is still only wide enough to accommodate two Battle-Brothers at a time.

THERATRIX NESTING GROUNDS

The first area where the terrain differs is an open pit of high golden grasses. It is immediately evident that the area has residents. Wild theratrix nest here. Clutches of eggs peek out of pebbled mounds at the centre and around the circumference of the uneven ring. The bright, scaly shoulders and heads of the parents are visible as they prowl through the grass. The path branches to the east and west on the other side of the nesting ground.

If the Battle-Brothers attempt to go undetected by the theratrix, it requires a **Challenging (+0) Silent Move Test**. (Assume the Test is made when the characters are midway through the field, closest to the greatest concentration of theratrix and therefore most likely to be detected.) The Test becomes Ordinary (+10) if they reduce their profile by crossing the field one at a time. However, this leaves anyone caught by the protective animals further from the support of his squad. The diameter of the crossing is roughly 100 metres.

If anyone is detected or the Battle-Brothers choose to fight their way through, the theratrix form a Horde of Magnitude 30. (Use their profile on page 50 to form a Horde.)

REAVERS OF THE SKY

The western passage climbs upwards to an open plateau where the sky teems with winged reptiles. Their screeching cries increase as they scent the Kill-team, but they are scavengers who prey on weak, single targets. They will not attack a large group unless provoked. The opposite side of the plateau overlooks the broiling red Deadlands hundreds of metres below. The cliff side is steep but has ample handholds, requiring an **Ordinary (+10) Climb Test** to ascend or descend.

GNARLED TUNNEL

The eastern path leads into a damp, dim tunnel through the earth. Over time the trees on the cliffs above have worked their roots through the rock and soil here, and centuries of dripping water and slow growth hollowed out a misshapen cavern between the tangled roots. The passage is forty metres long. It is short enough that light enters dimly from both sides of the passage, but long and dark enough to make the Battle-Brothers keenly aware of the absence of their helmets and their autosenses.

SPACE MARINE TRIALS

The idea of proving oneself worthy should hardly be foreign to most Space Marines. It is standard practice for Chapters to have some way to select promising youths to receive the Space Marine implants. These tests are varied but always gruelling, ranging from the Blood Angels' contests at Angel's Fall to the aspirant rituals of Fenris which culminate in the Test of Morkai. Compared to what many of the Battle-Brothers had to endure to earn the place they hold as a Space Marine, the Divested Hunt may not seem unreasonable.

As the Battle-Brothers work their way through the tightly packed roots, they occasionally have to push or cut one aside. Approximately thirty metres in, they push through a particularly large cluster of the wooden tendrils, and thin trails of dirt begin to stream from the ceiling. Roots begin dropping and swaying as the tunnel destabilises. Have each character make a **Challenging (+0) Climb, Contortionist or Survival Test** to force their way through the remaining woody stems before the passage collapses around them. Anyone who fails the Test takes 1d10+6 Impact Damage as they are caught in the cave-in; their comrades must also dig them out.

The tunnel leads out of a cliff face at the edge of the Deadlands. (The collapse may happen on the way in or out of the canyons. If the Battle-Brothers collapse the tunnel on their way in, they need to exit via the sky plateau.)

THE DEADLANDS

This red gorge stands out on the golden-green surface of Aurum like an inflamed wound. Mantle plumes bring magma close to the planet's surface, scorching the ground and regularly venting hot gases. The poisoned air and shocks of high temperature keeps anything from growing in this fissure, earning it and the surrounding plain their attribution in the Auran language.

Soon after the Kill-team enters the Deadlands, the effects of the harsh, acidic air become apparent. Any character who does not pass a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test** (modified by the Oolitic Kidney and Multi-lung) suffers a level of Fatigue. This Test increases to Hard (-20) if the character does not possess a functioning Mucranoid to protect them from the

TABLE 1-1: IMPLEMENTS OF THE HUNT

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg
Fang-Tipped Spear	Melee	—	—	1d10+1 R	2	—	N/A	—	2
Auran Gyrblade	Melee	—	—	1d10 R	0	—	N/A	Primitive, Special*	3
Talon Blade	Melee	—	—	1d10 R	0	—	N/A	—	1
Bone Sword	Melee	—	—	1d10+1 R	0	—	N/A	Primitive, Balanced	2
Bow & Arrows	Basic	15m	S/-/-	1d10+2 R	1	1	1/2	Primitive	4

*A gyrblade does an additional point of Damage per degree of success on the Attack roll. When a character is equipped with a pair of gyrblades, they instead do 2 additional points of Damage per degree of success.

oppressive heat. This Fatigue cannot be removed from a character until he is out of the punishing environment.

As the Battle-Brothers venture deeper into the broken ground, they can hear the sounds and see the silhouettes of midasaurs moving through the thick fumes. The sulphuric stench becomes punctuated by the even more stomach-churning scent of rotting flesh. It issues from a broken shelf of rock. An **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test** spots several of the tracks Alkedre drew on the incline leading up to the shelf. They have found the Diablodon's lair.

THE DEVIL'S BONES

A **Routine (+0) Tracking Test** can decipher that the tracks are the comings and goings of one creature, not a pack. How the encounter with the enormous creature goes depends greatly on the strategy the Kill-team employs. They may lie in wait for it outside the lair and plan an ambush, or they may proceed directly in to confront it.

The source of the stench is obvious as they draw closer to the Diablodon's lair. The ledge is an exhibit of bones and freshly stripped carcasses, and tattered remains of kills in every stage of decomposition in between. Some picked bones are human while many others are from the same smaller predators the Kill-team passed in the Canyon. The ledge is 20 metres up, with a wide ramp of jagged stone leading to it. When the Battle-Brothers reach the apex, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A fine powder of crushed bone coats the uneven floor of the Diablodon's lair. The recessed ledge is the ruddy colour of a charnel house, painted in dried blood and heaped with skeletons. A gas vent deeper beneath the overhang spews an acrid yellow cloud from the cavity. Like a daemon stalking through the smoke of hell, an obscured red creature prowls the lair. It noses at a scrap-coated ribcage. A sharp cracking sound follows as it tears a rib free to devour the marrow.

If the Battle-Brothers do not lure it out or charge in, the Diablodon eventually scents them. Its head shoots up as it scents new prey. When the Battle-Brothers get their first look at the creature, read or paraphrase the following:

This scarlet monster is the pinnacle predator on a planet teeming with deadly midasaurs. It has a distinctive sagittal crest that seems to blaze in the sunlight, and stands taller than a Dreadnought. Its giant yellowed claws alone are the size of power swords, each one permanently stained crimson by the blood of the dead—along with its overlapping needle fangs.

When it spots the Battle-Brothers, it charges with a roar as loud as a Valkyrie's engines. See page 48 for the Diablodon's profile.

EXPANDING THE CANYONS

This section assumes the Kill-team moves through the Reaving Canyons at a relatively brisk pace. However, if your group is eager for more action, takes longer in game play hours to traverse the area (or simply seems to be enjoying this part of the adventure and you want to expand on it), below are some options to expand on the Reaving Canyons.

LAND OF THE MIDASAURS

As the name suggests, vicious reptilian predators lurk in every corner of this region. You may wish to add additional fights if the pacing calls for it. Any dangerous lizard makes a thematically appropriate encounter. Many varieties are presented in this adventure, or you can invent your own.

A QUEST FOR SURVIVAL

As presented here, the Battle-Brothers should have relatively little trouble locating a Diablodon and returning to Haistand in the course of a day. However, if the size of the canyons grows, so does the difficulty and duration of the task. The Hunt can easily expand into a quest of days, requiring the Battle-Brothers to rely on their skills and implants to help them survive without their power armour. Tracking Tests may be needed to follow their quarry over vast distances before they can finally slay it.

PROVEN WARRIORS

When the Battle-Brothers emerge from the Canyons, a pair of Auran youths sit outside the threshold, waiting for them. They leap up when they see the Kill-team. At first they stare, and then they grin. One of them races to a tethered theratryx and then rides off in the direction of Haistand to announce the news. The other leads the Battle-Brothers back to Haistand.

By the time they reach the city, word has obviously spread. The Divested Hunt is a rare occurrence, and the locals pay a great deal more attention to the Battle-Brothers when they return than when they arrived (particularly if they are displaying the head or similar trophy of a Diablodon). That is not to say that the reception is warm; the Aurans still keep their distance, and seem generally undecided whether they should attack or cheer.

Rylus awaits them at his homestead. He welcomes them back with sincere praise and congratulations. He indicates that they now have serious matters to discuss, once they are recovered and re-armed.

THE TAINTED CITY

Barren and blighted was the land. Even as I stood upon the parched soil, I could feel corruption seeding my lungs with every breath of dry air. The days of pride and plenty have been consumed by the flames of vanity.

—From the Corpse of Corulsiem

Once the Space Marines have retrieved their equipment and taken whatever rest they desire, Rylus meets them on the roof terrace atop the main house. The rectangular terrace has little ornamentation or appointments, but it does provide a perfect view of the green stepped farmlands below and the sprawling grasslands bathed in the light of the planet's golden sky. The tile beneath their feet shows a worn geographical etching of the surrounding land, with Haistand in the centre. Rylus awaits them on the roof. He addresses them in a sincere but reserved tone:

"Well done, my friends. Truly you live up to your legends. Thank you for undertaking the Trial. It will mean much to my people. It is only proper that we celebrate your great accomplishment as we would any warrior's. However, I suspect that first you would like to speak of the lurking, scythed death that has infected Aurum."

Rylus at last lays bare all that he knows of the Malisectors. He tells the Kill-team how Grensvayl withdrew further from contact and became more isolationist year after year. At the last harvest, they sent no crops at all, where once the Commerce Aisles had spilled over with red pears and handfruit from their orchards. Rylus sent a war party to the settlement to see what had happened. Only a handful of his warriors returned, and those who did had barely escaped with their lives. They spoke of Aurans enslaved to a six-limbed race of monstrosities, and of horrible cross-breeds between human and beast.

Rylus has kept the city quarantined ever since and ensured that no one—Auran or off-worlder—visits the blighted city. He admits that some of his motivation was pride; he was ashamed to acknowledge that the bodies and spirits of his people had become so impure. However, he had other motivations for his constant denial of the Imperium; sooner or later either he or the Battle-Brothers broach the topic of Tyranids or Genestealers. When this happens, read aloud or paraphrase his commentary:

"Your Crusade has talked of these devouring mantises that bear down on all of us from the edge of what is known. If I did not believe them once I certainly cannot deny it now. In truth, it was never a matter of disbelief. Aurum is a world of many beauties and many dangers. Why should the galaxy be any different? The real choice before me has always been one of the lesser enemy. I have learned all that I can of your Imperium. Are they truly a kinder master to their slaves than the Malisectors?" He shakes his head. "But do not let my musings distract you from your duty. Whatever I may think of the other men of the Eagle, you are undoubtedly worthy. I grant you leave to go where you will on Aurum. These Malisectors, these Gene Stealers, are a plague on all of us. Is there any aid you require in purging them?"

Rylus provides them with directions to the settlement, which is about 150 kilometres west from Haistand. If they make any other requests, he grants them to the best of his ability. He is reluctant—but not unwilling—to send Auran warriors if they request it, for he knows any he sends are unlikely to return.

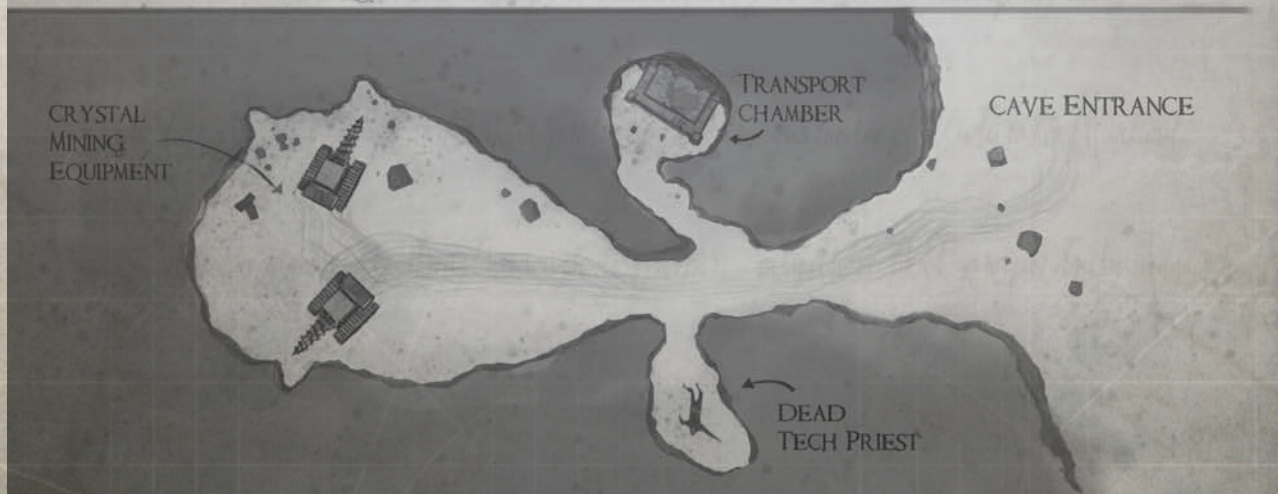
GRENSVAYL

Grensvayl was once no different from the hundreds of other agricultural settlements that dot Aurum's fertile mesas. The town was built where the Espri River splits into 3 branches, providing natural irrigation to a large orchard on the eastern edge of the town. Then the Magi of Samech came to plunder Aurum's Decavane Crystals. The apostate Mechanicus of the Jericho Reach's most infamous Forge World have a fascination with xenos specimens. They brought several Genestealers with them as tools of misdirection and destruction.

Their plan had both a short term and a long term goal. For the first few years of the heretical machine cult's occupation, the Genestealers did what they were born to do: destabilise and thin the enemy ranks. Their nightly depredations created such an atmosphere of paranoia that a few strange noises or lights from the cliffs seemed just another eerie mystery. Certainly with rumours of lurking monsters, the inhabitants felt little desire to poke around in dark caves. In the long run, the apostate Mechanicus hoped that the infection would spread, leading the Hive Fleet to Aurum and denying this prize world to the Imperium. This fate could still come to pass.

Their scheme went smoothly—at first. The Magi did not count on the Caele being so quick to react to the odd behaviour of Grensvayl's population. After several unsuccessful attempts to cleanse the settlement, Rylus instituted the fiery quarantine which has stood to this day. While not their ideal outcome, this served the Magi well enough, as it allowed them to continue their mining unhindered. However, as the years marched on, the number of purestrain Genestealers increased and the supply of other living beings diminished. Like most Tyranids, Genestealers can subsist on nearly any form of biomatter, but their instincts drive them to hunt animal prey first. The creatures grew ever more predatory and clever as they grew more desperate. Eventually they found a way into the mining caverns, putting a bloody and premature end to the Decavane crystal collection.

MAP OF GRENSVAYL AND ENVIRONS



I: THE PRICE OF HUBRIS

THE RING OF FIRE

The location of Grensvayl is visible from many kilometres away. It is marked by a column of smoke by day and a blaze of fire by night. The town lies in a deep, dead-ended ravine. The former gap in the cliffs that afforded entrance to the town is buried in a wall of broken stone hundreds of metres high. Topping this barricade, and continuing in an uneven circle around the entire cliff circumference, is an eternally roaring blaze. Even as the Battle-Brothers approach, several dozen men guard the fiery perimeter with the finest weapons Auran craftsmen can produce. Sweat shines on their tanned skin as they vigilantly watch for any creatures attempting to break through. It is obvious some xenos have in the past, as a few of the men carry Genestealer talons as trophies. Read aloud or paraphrase the following as the Kill-team approaches:

The settlement finally ceases to be a flicker of balefire on the horizon and materialises into a blazing inferno. The tainted settlement of Grensvayl has been completely sealed into a circle of cliffs by manmade avalanches. Dozens of Auran sentries keep watch from above, and drip a steady coat of unrefined promethium down the cliff edges to keep the blazing wall of fire fuelled. Barely visible through the flames is the scorched, desolate town. Its river is close to dry; its buildings are burnt and blackened; its famed orchards are withered. Yet, something moves in the dead town: hunched, hideous shapes weaving between the flickering shadows.

HEYDAL

Heydal has command of the fire perimeter. He is lanky and (like most of the men here) streaked with soot. It is difficult to tell whether his braided hair was always black or has just permanently taken on the colour. Heydal meets the Battle-Brothers if they have any requests or questions for the perimeter guard. He is laconic and grim from years of this hellish duty, but he is also extremely receptive to the possibility the Kill-team presents of finally seeing this matter concluded. Note that Heydal is the man who sold Beyrr the Genestealer claw during his last visit to Haistand; the Battle-Brothers may wish to follow up with him on this subject (see page 20).

The Battle-Brothers can enter Grensvayl from any point they choose. Options include:

- A stealth drop via Deathwatch Thunderhawk into the middle of town. (A less discreet drop via drop pod is also possible, but it draws a Horde of Genestealers from the orchard).
- Using melta torches or similarly powerful implements to unseal the recent cavern breach. However, this does present the possibility of enemies sneaking out behind the Adeptus Astartes if they are not careful.
- A heavy coat of flame-retardant allows an armoured Battle-Brother to remain safely in the promethium-fuelled fire for approximately two minutes, long enough to climb down the flaming part of the cliff.

A Tireless Foe

The recent bid for freedom was far from the first by Grensvayl's cursed population. Below are some of the most prominent escape attempts. Heydal may mention these events if asked; he has been present since the beginning of the quarantine.

- 806.M41: Only a few months after the Caele sealed off the ravine, a group of infected warriors found an opening where the river used to flow out through underground channels. Fortunately a perimeter sentry spotted the infected warriors as they started to cross the plains. The sentries were able to put the hideous beings down, but at a great loss of life. They promptly sealed the egress points of all three river forks as well.
- 810.M41: The first sizeable generation of purestrain Genestealers matured in this period. One night they made a coordinated push through the fire perimeter. Though badly injured, the creatures still nearly overwhelmed the sentries. Only a few Auran warriors survived the bloody night.
- 815.M41: One of the xenos, possibly the original specimen, had grown in power and cunning over the years. It manifested psychic powers and managed to mesmerise one of the sentries into letting it pass through the barrier. Fortunately other warriors witnessed its escape and managed to bring it down.
- 817.M41: Karthas persuades Rylus to try wiping out the Malisectors one last time. He leads a war party into Grensvayl with disastrous results.

AND INTO THE FIRE

The blockage at the entrance to Grensvayl mostly redirects the Espri River, but enough water seeps through that a stream still flows through the town's former riverbed. Most of the town is covered in soot from years under the perimeter fire. Several wooden buildings have burnt down from heat and sparks, and even the stone structures show disrepair. The ambient noise in Grensvayl is a contrasting blend of the roaring flame above, and the trickling flow of water.

Optional: Rain of Fire

If the GM wants to emphasise the effects of the perpetual fire perimeter above, he may occasionally call for characters to make **Ordinary (+10) Dodge Tests** to avoid the flaming globules of pitch that drip off the cliff sides and fall upon the town. Any Space Marine hit by the fire suffers 2d10 E Damage to his Body location. (Be sure to check to see if any of the characters are carrying a Charm, as this is precisely the sort of random misfortune such talismans ward against.)

THE BRIDGE

This stone bridge once arched over the fork in the Espri River, serving as a landmark and meeting place. Now it soars uselessly high above the diminished water flow.

Optional Encounter: Ambush

A pair of Genestealers lurks in the shadows under the bridge supports. If the Battle-Brothers cross over or under the bridge, they should make an Opposed Awareness Test against the Genestealers' Concealment. Those who fail the Test are surprised as the creatures attack with their scything claws. If the Battle-Brothers stay in the concealment of the bridge's shadows, add 1 to the Arrival Counter.

Be it here or elsewhere, read aloud or paraphrase the following when the Kill-team faces the first Genestealers:

The hideous creatures emerging from the shadows are archetypes of alien evil. Their twisted scarlet bodies hunch forward, but even so the Genestealers are your equal in height. Thick black carapace protects their six-limbed bodies, and each deadly appendage is tipped with the discoloured claws so infamous for shredding Terminator armour. They rush from their hiding places, like a serrated tide in the colours of blood and night.

THE ORCHARD

The fact that the orchard's orderly rows of trees have continued to grow proves the hardiness of all life under Aurum's golden sky. The fruit-bearing trees have become only slightly stunted despite the smoke obscuring the sun and choking the air. As one of the few remaining sources of easily ingested bio-matter (even if it is far from the preferred choice for a Genestealer's bloody palate), the orchard is teeming with Genestealers. The Arrival Counter in the orchard always begins at 1, and the nimble Genestealers also gain +10 to all Concealment and Silent Move checks from the tree cover.

If the Kill-team sets fire to the orchard, intentionally or not, it removes the Genestealers' bonuses to stealth. However, it immediately sets the Arrival Counter to 0 (if it was not there already) and forces all men and creatures in the area to make an Agility Test each Round to avoid catching fire.

THE WEAPON SMITH

This building is slightly larger than many of the others in town. Its door has been ripped from the frame, leaving the remains of the workshop exposed to the elements. The interior has suffered much of the same blackening as the rest of the settlement. Underneath the grime, this establishment once created the primitive blades, bows, and spears that the Aurans wield. Now only a few crafting tools remain. The large supply of weapons—and anything that might remotely serve as one—was stripped long ago.

ARGRAX STALLS

This large sauriary is one of the few wooden structures remaining in Grensvayl, and it has certainly seen better days. Large patches of the walls have completely burned away, and other ragged holes show where beasts clawed their way in, or out. It appears that some food supply survived until recently here, because glittering Auran forage flies are still buzzing over the carcasses of dead livestock.

ORBITAL BOMBARDMENT

The Battle-Brothers may propose having the *Horizon's Pride* raze Grensvayl from orbit. This is possible, although Lan advises against it. The settlement's depth in the ravine makes it unlikely that the ship could get a clean shot. Some of the notoriously resilient Genestealers would almost certainly manage to survive in the nearby caves and resultant rubble. The Kill-team would still have to clear the town, and they would lose the elements of surprise and most of the number-mitigating terrain.

Still, if the Battle-Brothers insist, Lan agrees to a targeted lance strike. This changes the nature of the encounters in Grensvayl considerably. All of the exterior locations become smoking ash and rubble. Several of the infected warriors in the storehouses survive in the cellar levels. Move a suitable number of Genestealers into the apostate caverns, and modify the Exterminate! set up as follows: The Arrival Counter starts at 1 instead of 2 because of the lack of obscuring cover. The Kill-Team starts with 50 Kill Markers.

DETONATION IMMINENT

If the Battle-Brothers pursue other large-scale tactics, they may be able to obtain and modify a torpedo from the Rogue Trader's vessel to create a bomb they can plant in the town. The payload has sufficient destructive power to level the settlement, but they need to find a way to prevent the Genestealers from deactivating (or prematurely detonating!) the torpedo while the Battle-Brothers move to a safe distance, and they must still clear and seal the caverns and the storehouse cellar lest the xenos shelter there.

STOREHOUSES

In more peaceful times, these large buildings stored fruit and other crops harvested from the surrounding farmlands. Now, they are vast, dark caverns to shelter Grensvayl's twisted denizens from the inferno above. The primary residents of the storehouses are Infected Warriors, who form a Horde of Magnitude 25 when the Kill-team encounters them. The battle may take place in the dark open expanse of barren holds, in the subterranean cellars, or both. The thick stone walls provide good insulation not only from the unpleasant environment outside, but also for sound. Unless the GM deems that the Kill-team is making an excessive volume of noise, the Arrival Counter does not apply here.



EXTERMINATE!

The Kill-team's Objective in Grensvayl is straight forward: eliminate the xenos. The Genestealers can be considered purged when the Battle-Brothers accumulate 100 Kill Markers. Genestealers count as 2 Kill-Markers, while a Genestealer Horde counts for 3 Kill-Markers per point of Magnitude. Some recommended locations for encounters are included below, but the GM should feel free to place enemies in any place at any time within the town. The Infected Warriors do not yield any Kill Markers, but that doesn't mean they can be ignored.

THE THREAT OF NUMBERS

Individual Genestealers are fearsome enough in close combat—even to a Space Marine. However, they become truly deadly in large numbers. Much of this encounter focuses on the tactical need to engage the creatures in small groups rather than draw the entire population on the Kill-team's heads at once. The GM should be sure the players understand (as much as their characters should, at any rate) the magnitude of threat presented by a full Horde of Genestealers.

KEEPING A SENSE OF DANGER

Every outdoor combat in Grensvayl has higher stakes than just the battle at hand. The noise, blood, and activity of a fight draws Genestealers towards the fray. The longer a fight drags on and the more explosions emanate from it, the greater the risk. Use the rules below to add to the sense of urgency:

Arrival Counter: The Kill-team begins each encounter with 2 Rounds before Genestealers notice their presence. Therefore, every combat starts with the Arrival Counter set to 2 Rounds.

Silent Death: As long as the Arrival Counter is not at 0, at the end of each Round in which no one fires a bolter or other weapon with a report, the Leader may make a Silent Move Test. If he succeeds, add 1 to the Arrival Counter.

Drawn to the Kill: Every Round of Combat after the Arrival Counter hits 0 (so beginning on the 3rd Round in most circumstances) 1d5 Genestealers arrive on the scene, beginning 50 metres away from the centre of the combat. (This means they spend their first Round closing.) When the total number of active Genestealers present surpasses 15, they have reached a critical mass and become a Horde of Magnitude 10. From this point, their brood telepathy summons more of their kind at an accelerated rate, increasing the Horde's Magnitude by 1d5+1 each Round after the Horde forms.

The maximum number of Genestealers that join in one combat is 30 or a Horde of Magnitude 30. This counts towards the total number of Kill-Markers needed to complete the Mission Objective, and the total number of Genestealers in the settlement never exceeds 120 Kill-Markers' worth.

STABLE

The theratryx stable in Grensvayl is modest, built to house only a half-dozen of the reptilian mounts. The bones of several of the creatures still litter the dirt floor, along with a few chitin plates proving their sharp teeth and claws took at least one alien down with them. Unlike the Argrax stalls, this smaller structure is stone and relatively undamaged. It is oblong, with a wide entrance where double doors once stood at each end. The Space Marines may see a use for the building in their combat strategy. Its solid walls are good protection, and the close quarters effectively prevent enough Genestealers to form a Horde from getting inside.

However, the xenos are also clever enough that they do not continue to charge into a disadvantageous battleground. After sufficient casualties, they try other tactics such as:

- Tearing through weak points in the roof.
- Breaking off their attack and feigning retreat as they lurk in wait for the Space Marines to emerge.
- Summoning infected warriors to bombard the building with flaming projectiles

Optional Encounter: Circling Like Vultures

If the brood knows fresh lifeforms are inside the warrior lodge (below), it is quite possible Genestealers are keeping watch outside. This may be what draws the Kill-team's attention to the building.

WARRIOR LODGE

Most Auran villages have a warrior lodge near one or more critical points in the city, and Grensvayl is no exception. This small, square structure is close to the sealed off ravine entrance. Three survivors from Karthas's recent war party have fortified themselves inside the lodge. While they have made short, guarded runs to the riverbed for water, they are as short on food as the rest of Grensvayl. Furthermore, one of their number has deduced the corrupting effect of the Malisectors' bite and shared his theory with the trio. All of them are now highly suspicious that the others might be infected. They might be right. Read aloud or paraphrase the following if the Battle-Brothers enter the lodge:

You are greeted by ivory blades when you step inside. Three Aurans occupy the rectangular building, each in a different corner, and each with their weapons held ready. They all have a gaunt, malnourished cast. One is a bald man with small black eyes; the second is a leathery older woman, and the third is a little more than a boy—around the age that the Adeptus Astartes choose their recruits. All three freeze in indecision upon seeing you—obviously not what they were expecting. The warriors glance at one another, but do not lower their weapons. "What new beast is this?" the woman accuses with a shake of her gyrblood. The bald man points a lean finger at you. "It is a trick! Malisectors are hiding inside those statues!"

THE GENESTEALER'S KISS

Sooner or later the Battle-Brothers realise they are dealing with Genestealers. These creatures reproduce by implanting their own genetic material into host organisms of virtually any living species—including humans. A Genestealer is capable of using the same telepathy that links a brood of the horrific xenos together to dominate the mind of a being infected by its genetic material. When this victim reproduces with its own species, the offspring is a twisted hybrid of Tyranid and host bio-seed. These hybrids eventually interbreed and birth purestrain Genestealers as the course of this bizarre species' reproductive cycle.

Once the Kill-team realises what they face, the players are bound to have a few questions about certain mechanics.

BECOMING A HOST

A Space Marine's superior physiology added to special Deathwatch treatments makes him immune to the Genestealers' infection, but to others, it possesses a great risk. This change is not instantaneous; the character does not turn on his allies in the next Round. The exact pace at which a host becomes subverted to the alien will is left up to the GM. Anyone within the aura of the Virtue psychic power gains +20 to his Toughness Test to avoid being infected by a Genestealer's bite. See the Genestealer profile on page 47 for the exact mechanics of the bite.

DETECTING INFECTION

An Auspex, Diagnostor Helm, or similar augury instrument must be used to determine if a person has become infected by a Genestealer. A character using one of these devices makes a **Difficult (-10) Medicae Test** to determine if the patient is infected. Two or more Degrees of Success with the Reading psychic power also gives this information. The GM should roll all detection Tests in secret so that the players do not know whether they passed or failed, as a failed Test always yields a clean reading.

CURING INFECTION

Obscure and arduous medical procedures—known by many Apothecaries and members of the Ordo Xenos—exist to remove the taint of a Genestealer. However, this requires an extremely skilled practitioner of the healing arts working in advanced medicae facilities. After a week of gruelling scans, operations, and genetic scouring, the medicae may attempt a **Very Hard (-30) Medicae Test** to see if the treatment has been effective.

Jaff

This young warrior had only just passed his Trial of Proving in time to join the ill-fated war party. As he is still maturing, his build is slighter and shorter than the other Aurans. He appears to be holding together with remarkable resolve and courage given the circumstances—he may even remind some of the Space Marines of their young selves. However, he realises that he is far out of his depth in this situation, and follows any direction given by the Space Marines.

Srena

This sinewy, middle-aged woman shows obvious distrust for the Space Marines. She was already trapped here when (or if) they completed the Divested Hunt, and hence eyes them with the same haughty disdain most Aurans have for outsiders. She is not inclined to follow their lead without a strong argument.

Gorus

All Aurans must be warriors in order to survive, but nearly all of them have a second occupation. For most this is farming or hunting. In the case of Gorus, it is lorekeeping. He keeps the oral histories and legends of the Auran tribes, giving him a deep base of knowledge to draw upon. He is the most vocal about the possibility that one of the other survivors could be infected, and is the source of much of the doubt that spread through the small party.

The Battle-Brothers now must decide what to do with the Aurans. Do they leave them here until the settlement is cleansed? Do they purge them? As Gorus points out, they could be hosts for Genestealers. Whether one or more of the warriors are actually hosts is up to the GM's discretion. To avoid over-complicating the rest of the settlement purge with a retinue of NPC's, the GM should choose a scenario that avoids dragging the entire survivor party through Grensvayl. Options include:

- One of the warriors is under Genestealer dominion. The next time the party faces a combat with the brood, the infected warrior's first act is to turn on the party—starting with the easiest targets: the other Auran warriors.
- At least one of the warriors is infected and makes a strong plea to stay fortified in the lodge until the Battle-Brothers have cleansed the city. In reality, this is a contingency plan by the brood to spread their influence in Haistand even if the colony here is eliminated.
- All of the warriors are infected. They insist on reinforcing the Battle-Brothers, and take the next opportunity to lead them into an ambush.
- None of the warriors are infected, but one or more have been driven insane by the constant state of fear and paranoia. They turn on their allies the instant someone tries to convince them to leave the lodge.

If at least one of the survivors is not under the influence of the Genestealers, he is likely to tell the story of how Karthas led the warriors into the orchards. The Genestealers descended upon the war party, and paid no attention to Karthas as he calmly walked away, leaving his men to their doom.

BARRICADES

Years ago the last untainted citizens of Grensvayl made their stand just west of the river bed, where they had a clear line of sight in most directions. This resistance is no more. Their makeshift defences—built of bone, ploughs, and even talons and chitin from the enemy—crumble as a testament to the victory of the xenos.

APOSTATE CAVERNS

These natural caverns, adjacent to a rich node of Decavane crystals, were the source of Grensvayl's doom. Samech's apostate Mechanicus landed here over a decade ago, expanding the natural cave system for their mining operation, and seeding the deadly Genestealers as cover for their work. Read aloud or paraphrase the following when the Battle-Brothers near the western cliffs:

As you near the western edge of the settlement, you can see immediately that there is something unnatural set into the cliff wall. A shock of twisted, corroded metal mars this world of plants and stone. Looking closer, you see that fragments of artificial rock face still cling to what appears to be a mangled bulkhead door. Larger chunks of this shattered veneer lie in rubble nearby. Once, this hatch might have been well hidden, but now it is just as ruined as the surrounding town.

CAVERN ENTRANCE

Originally built for secrecy, the entrance to the caverns now stands out starkly against the cliffs. The stone camouflage may have been enough to deceive the natives, but the very predators the Magi introduced became their undoing. The rent entry testifies to the price of the apostates' false sense of security.

THE MINING CHAMBER

Those who assume Genestealers are merely animals often find it is the last mistake they ever make. The creatures are quite intelligent, particularly Broodlords. Furthermore, they pass a sort of racial memory to their offspring. In the case of Grensvayl, even though recent generations of Genestealers have been born in an isolated feral settlement with none but their own alien kin to learn from, some of the recent infected warriors still have a loose grasp of technology. They know that the Tech-priests' possessions hold some kind of power, but do not understand how to use them. A small group of infected warriors has taken up residence in the mining chamber, determined to discover the secrets of the mysterious machines.

The mining chamber is by far the largest section of the caves. Dormant drilling lasers, extraction bits, and complex storage arrays line the walls of the large room. The complex structure of a Decavane crystal is notoriously fragile, and it must be removed from its natural environment with great

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

In the Apostate Caverns, the Battle-Brothers encounter many important links to the greater story of **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**. For cohesion in the GM's mind, here is an overview of how these pieces fit together.

LINKS TO THE OTHER MISSIONS

In order to subvert the warp gate, Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes must first be able to get to it. Magos Vayze devised a way to use spent Decavane crystals to absorb the same great quantities of energy they can emit. While the Irradial Forge certainly has more traditional uses for Decavane as a power source, its role as an energy sink is what makes it vital to the Ruin Bringer.

CREATING ORIGINAL MISSIONS

There is no set amount of time that has to pass between any of the Missions in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**. You can run interim Missions or use the pre-written ones back to back. Another possibility is to create more Missions that fit in with the overall story. The Sword of Vigilance opens with an overview of all the information that must be assembled to guess what the forces of Chaos are plotting. **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** could easily become several more Missions if you feed those clues to the Kill-team one at a time. Presented here are some ideas if you want to devise your own interim Missions.

Use the Radial of Chaos as a Link. All three Missions in the Emperor Protects point to the Vinculum Proselytes—specifically their symbol and Magi—as a common factor. Using those same elements in other operations makes it clear that they are part of the same story. You could also allow the Kill-team to learn more about the Vinculum Proselytes and their blasphemous mixture of technology and sorcery prior to the final Mission.

Encounter Lamdus Rize and the Alpha Legion. Dahzak allied with the Alpha Legion for a reason: there is much to be done before the operation can launch. In the background, Lamdus and his men are in engaging in many preparatory military actions such as sabotaging key relays to make the Ruin Bringer's passage easier. The Battle-Brothers might encounter them in this context before A Stony Sleep.

Present Dahzak earlier. Defeating a villain can be even more satisfying if the protagonists first build up antipathy for him. The vector amplifier in A Stony Sleep is not the first, and may not be the last piece of arcane technology Dahzak pursues. He could potentially build up a long enmity with the Battle-Brothers before they finally defeat him.

care before being refined into a power source. The mining equipment was all designed for this delicate, arduous process. The huge central drilling column occupies the heart of the chamber, obscuring the infected warriors lying in wait on the other side. As makeshift weapons, none of the tools available compare to a Space Marine's armament. However, should it become relevant, assume a laser drill counts as a lasgun, and an extraction bit can be removed and used as a combat knife.

Arrows of Light

Operating the complex equipment in the chamber is beyond even the average Imperial citizens. Xenos-dominated feral worlders stood little chance of puzzling it out. All the same, through trial and error (and not a few deadly accidents) they discovered the machinery in the cavern can be used as a weapon. When the Space Marines enter the cavern, they can make an Awareness Test opposed by the warriors' Silent Move. Battle-Brothers who succeed hear the warriors scrambling amongst the machines in time to avoid being Surprised.

The infected warriors touch the correct wires together, and the forward part of the chamber fills with arcing energy. This energy has the same Damage and Penetration as a Meltagun. Although the attack does not have the Flame property, treat it in the same manner for purposes of avoidance: the feral worlders do not roll to hit. Instead, the Battle-Brothers make an Agility Test to avoid taking damage. The three men hunker down behind the blocky energy coils and drill banks 50 metres away. This gives them virtually complete cover with an AP of 30. Once they are dispatched and the crystal assemblies stop emitting electrical pulses, the Space Marines can get a better look at the area.

Crystal Processing

The source of the deadly energy is a large web of Decavane crystals linked to directional electrodes. They do not appear to be powering anything, and an **Ordinary (+10) Tech Use Test** confirms that the assembly's only purpose seems to be to emit large bursts of power from the crystals. Beside the array is a large stack of dull, grey crystals that have been completely drained in this manner. They are cold to the touch.

The room also contains a refining cylinder (identifiable with a successful **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**). This more traditional equipment bombards the Decavane with photons until it is stable enough to pack and transport. This device and the amount of crystal beside it are much smaller than the emitter web and its expended fuel.

The Mining Shaft

The apostates have left a huge hole in the stone beneath the drill. It is several metres across and extends twenty meters down. If anyone descends, they see an even larger hollow created by years of mining. Judging by the amount of rock removed and the density of crystal still remaining in the walls, it possible that thousands of kilos of crystal may have been extracted. The total quantity of crystals, drained and refined, in the rest of the complex is only a slight fraction of what this mine appears to have provided.

DECIPHERING THE SCHEMATICS

The unidentifiable designs in the transport chamber are for Thaumagramm Diodes, the corruptive technology which is the cornerstone of Dahzak's plan. While finding these schematics is not crucial to **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**, it does provide a way for the player characters to start assembling the clues that link the Missions together. The primary skill involved in understanding what the diagrams depict is Tech-Use. However, Forbidden Lore (Warp) is also essential to completing the picture.

If the group has a Techmarine who shows an interest in unravelling this mystery, let him lead the efforts to understand what they have discovered (possibly in concert with a member of the Inquisition if he lacks the Forbidden Lore component). If the group does not have such a character, an NPC can carry on the research in the background on Erioch, reporting his various stages of progress to the player characters. Below are some revelations you can slowly release at the appropriate pace (possibly beginning in the Transport Chamber if a Techmarine examines the diagrams there).

- The schematics are for a relatively small device, but it requires a potent power source. This is almost certainly why they needed the Decavane.
- The device uses a forbidden fusion of the arts of technology and warp sorcery. Furthermore, it seems made to interact with other creations that have similar properties.
- The principles of the design have certain patterns in common with teleportation technology. Something in the flow of powers depicted relates to time and space manipulation.
- The schematic is for some sort of oscillation device that transforms or alters the flow of energy.

The GM may also want to reward anyone who takes the trouble to scan or climb down to this level by having a lone Infected Warrior or Genestealer hiding in the darkness. This justifies their diligence in searching every corner of the settlement to be sure they cleansed it completely. (If the Kill-team doesn't thoroughly investigate, the GM can decide whether that has ramifications or not.)

SOUTH CAVE

The apostates used the cave south of the entrance as their living quarters. It contains overturned cots and a scattered pile of broken cogs, all liberally stained with old blood. The cogs' arrangement suggests the echo of the grotesque machine they once formed, leaving little doubt that the chamber is better off in its damaged state. Several of the ruined components are etched with the symbol of a cog inside an eight-pointed chaos star. (The Radial of Chaos, which is not a known symbol.)

Two of the slaughtered machine cultists have been dragged away, but the body of the most mechanised of the cabal was left behind. It takes a moment to recognise the pile of tubes,

coils, and manipulators as the remains of a living being. He was too much metal and not enough flesh to be of interest to the Genestealers, and so they picked what little sustenance they could from his frame and left the rest to rust. A successful **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore: Jericho Reach Test** recognises the characteristics of one of Samech's apostate Mechanicus Magi.

TRANSPORT CHAMBER

The apostates brought the planet's doom with them in stasis along with equipment and drills. Their most precious, dangerous cargo was a captured Genestealer from Samech's infamous stock of "specimens." Its vacant transport tube still sits in this cavern, deceptively innocuous amidst the various other refuse of their endeavour.

A large, plasteel cylinder sits among the debris, covered in a thick layer of grime. Lifeless bio-monitoring screens checker the stasis tube, and a six-shackled adamantite restraint harness lies beside it.

While the other contents are largely empty crates and broken tools, an **Ordinary (+10) Search Test** finds a stack of parchment schematics and drained data-slates. Some of the schematics depict the mining array in the main chamber. However, a few of the schematics depict... something else. Read aloud or paraphrase the following if they are examined:

The durable parchment and rich inks have survived the years of dirt and dankness well. This was obviously an important document scribed with care. The main diagram shows an octagonal crystal conduit of indeterminate size. Several notations and sub-diagrams detail runes and complex circuit patterns illuminated on the device.

A **Routine (+20) Forbidden Lore (Warp) Test** can identify the runes as the markings of sorcery.

VICTORY

When the Kill-team has cleared the town, their easiest exit strategy is to vox the Thunderhawk for extraction from the ring of fire. However, they are certainly free to make more dramatic exits such as blasting open the rubble sealing the ravine, sending the dammed river cascading back through Grensvayl.

WHERE IS THE BROODLORD?

Depending on how much the characters and/or players know about Tyranids, they may be aware that the pinnacle of Genestealer evolution is a deadly and psychic creature called the Broodlord, and that Broodlords are often found at the head of infestations such as Grensvayl's. This knowledge might convince some that their Mission is not over until they have slain the Broodlord (and they would be right). However, the creature is no longer in the settlement.

If the characters are focused on this creature, the GM can take the opportunity to remind (or reveal to) them that a Broodlord did emerge just a few years ago, and was thought killed. (See A Tireless Foe on page 32.) Alternatively, he certainly can re-arrange events to confront the Broodlord and infiltrators in Haistand before the celebration—a feast which is bound to go far smoother without the catastrophic interruption! However, the characters (not just the players) should have a good reason to believe that such a creature is still alive before proceeding down that route.



THE HEROES' RETURN

"To inspire is our duty as surely as battle. We know too well the horrors that assault men's souls every day. With hope and with faith, we guard those souls just as with blade and bolter we guard their bodies."

—attributed to Roboute Guilliman

If all has gone well, the Kill-team returns apparently triumphant. That evening, Rylus meets them on the roof again to discuss the future of the Imperium on Aurum. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you emerge into the dry evening air, the sun is setting. It streaks the golden sky with a rich sheen of bold crimson and warm orange, making the luminous heavens look like a great mural of the planet's namesake metal. The Caele faces the horizon, but he turns as he hears you approach. With the halo of the gold sunset behind him, the tall warrior could have stepped out of a painting.

His face smiles, but his eyes are grave and joyless as he greets you. "I am humbled. You have accomplished what my people could not, and cleansed us of the shame of this taint. Alkedre is already preparing arrangements for your victory feast. I hope you will indulge us this one last Auran tradition." Even the forced smile fades. "I think we will see fewer and fewer of them in the years to come. Do you still wish us to join with—to return to—your Imperium?"

The Caele requires little convincing (assuming the Battle-Brothers are still behind this part of their Mission). He knows they have saved his planet from a threat he could not, and is more or less honour-bound to accept their request. However, he offers one last alternative.

"Will you at least consider another option? You could tell the Imperium that the Gene Stealers had planted their roots too deep. Tell them that our world is doomed, and that your people must flee it for their own safety. The ancient soul of Aurum tells me that the Crusade will not be kind to our people. How long before we become only farm labourers for your armies? Until all that makes this planet glow is stripped away? For years the Aspiration has preached that death will soon come to Aurum if their armies do not stop it, and this may be true. But our warriors would gladly fill the war grounds to lay down their lives against an enemy. They will not find such peace in servitude."

He sighs, and looks over you and your Battle-Brothers. "I have never seen warriors that are your equal, and your vision stretches even beyond the stars of Aurum. Give me your counsel, and I will follow it."

Rylus accepts whatever recommendation the Kill-team makes. If the Battle-Brothers are at odds with one another, use Charm Tests to determine whose influence reigns. Charm or Logic Tests may also be used to make Rylus feel more confident about a decision that involves Imperium control of Aurum. Regardless of the decision they lead him to, he insists on holding their victory feast before they leave. However, the mood the Battle-Brothers leave Rylus in certainly shades his demeanour through the rest of the adventure.

A DAY FOR CELEBRATION

The festivities are scheduled to start just before midday, and Alkedre has requested that the Battle-Brothers arrive at the homestead slightly earlier to prepare. Most Space Marines understand the importance of ceremony, but if by chance any (or all) of the Space Marines decide not to attend their own victory celebration, it carries on without them in absentia. Diaz Lan still has a duty to solidify relations with the planet, so he has no intention of leaving orbit without attending this monumental step in gaining their acceptance. This leaves the Battle-Brothers with the morning to follow up on loose ends, if they so desire.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

Depending on whether they spoke with the war party survivors in Grensvayl and other clues, the Battle-Brothers may have deduced that something is wrong with Karthas. If they bring their suspicions to the Caele's attention, he immediately arranges a meeting for them, although he is slow to believe any accusations. Alternatively, if Karthas is not with the Caele or at the promethium pits, he may be found in his home north of the commerce aisles. His pregnant wife, Leyann, is present there. At first the Broodlord dwelt beneath their home, recovering from the grave burns it received in its last escape attempt. Once it healed, the city den proved ideal for spreading its genetic taint through the population.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: OFFENDED HONOUR

Depending on the Battle-Brothers' actions, Zayr has any number of reasons to feel that they have trampled his pride. They may have dishonoured him by uncovering the promethium pits, or the Auran culture by refusing the Divested Hunt, or just shamed him personally by succeeding in Grensvayl where Zayr's men had failed. If Zayr feels sufficiently humiliated, he challenges the Battle-Brothers by splitting the rock of grievance.

Splitting the Rock of Grievance: This ritual begins by presenting the other party with two pieces of a quartered stone. Each man then uses their pieces to delineate two corners of the boundary in which they will fight. Most combats are to the first blood (a hit that does 3 or more Wounds), but the victor always has the option to shatter the loser's skull. The skull is then also quartered and left by each of the stone markers for one week.

FOLLOWING UP IN THE BLACK DEPTHS

It is possible the Battle-Brothers may decide to investigate the promethium wells after making peace with the Caele. In this case the GM has a few options. He may decide to reward their diligence by letting them discover and purge the creatures at the wells. The Broodlord could appear alone at Lan's shuttle, in the Caele's residence, or not at all—yielding a less eventful but more celebratory feast. Alternatively their venture to the black depths could begin one of the scenarios in Missing the Party on page 41.

If the hiding Genestealers remain undiscovered, they do not leave the wells until the celebration begins and Haistand's guard is down. There is no sign of them in the capital prior to the celebration, but see Missing the Party.

The encounter opens when Zayr approaches the Battle-Brothers and wordlessly drops two pieces of stone before them. Even if they don't understand the significance, everyone around them seems to. A crowd immediately forms, whispering and keeping their distance. Either an onlooker or Zayr himself explains about splitting the rock of grievance. Of course, nothing forces the Battle-Brothers to accept the challenge. If they refuse, Zayr denounces them before the onlookers:

"These are the most noble warriors of the off-worlders?! So great that they run from a challenge? Truly your people are cowards with no sense of honour. You may have Rylus fooled, but you show your true face now."

Unless one of the Battle-Brothers makes a speech which sways the crowd in their favour (a difficult task), refusing the challenge lowers the Kill-team's standing in the eyes of the natives considerably. They are a far less enthusiastic audience at any ensuing public events, and the Battle-Brothers are likely to hear murmurs of "coward" in nearby crowds for the duration of their stay in Haistand.

If they do accept, the combat must be one on one. The Kill-team needs to select a participant (it does not necessarily have to be the Leader). The only stipulation is that he may not use ranged weapons. Unlike the Divested Hunt, no one pressures him to remove his armour or advanced weapons. However, he might choose to do so of his own accord, given that his opponent has only scale armour and primitive bone gyrbldes.

The crowd is respectfully silent during the ritual and shows no favouritism. After the rocks are placed, everyone makes room and the combat begins. Power armour or no, the odds are incredibly stacked against Zayr. This combat is more about how the Battle-Brother chooses to treat his stubborn and outmatched opponent. Does he wear his power armour? Does he pull his strikes—which might otherwise kill the Auran outright? Does he opt to finish Zayr off? If by some fluke Zayr does win, his pride is sated and he does not make good on the option to quarter his opponent's skull. (This is probably fortunate for him, as he would have a hard time cracking a Space Marine's skull.)

THE VICTORY FEAST

The Battle-Brothers who arrive at the Caele's homestead as requested are met by Alkedre. She attempts to deck each of them in a necklace displaying the fangs of the Diabloodon and threaded with a few of its distinctive scales. (If they brought back a sizable portion of the creature, she may even present one of them with a fiery red scale cape; if they spurned the Divested Hunt then obviously no trophies are involved.) Diaz Lan and Brigadier Heth are present as well in dress uniforms. They have been invited to accompany the small procession.

Shortly before the sun reaches its peak, the procession sets out, walking the main thoroughfare between the Caele's homestead and the Hall of Victory. Rylus and the Battle-Brothers are at the head of the line, flanked by roughly a dozen of the Caele's most favoured warriors (this includes Heydal and Karthas if he has not been dealt with). Behind them trail Alkedre and four Aurans carrying a raised platform on their shoulders—a monument to the Battle-Brothers' victory. On it is splayed the mangled remains of a Genestealer from the ruin of Grensvayl. The creature is ritually impaled on a number of intersecting spears. Read or paraphrase the following for anyone present:

The Aurans have turned out in force to celebrate your victory. From the moment you exit the Caele's gates you see them lining the streets and thronging close around the procession. The change in their demeanour is dramatic. Everywhere you turn the tanned faces are grinning and cheering—their weapons waved aloft in salute, their ululations of celebration ringing through the city.

Everyone's mood is joyful. The Aurans are rid of a great and shameful threat; the Imperium has finally won respect in the eyes of the natives. The group slowly makes its way towards the Hall. Large bonfires—fuelled with bundles of plains grass—burn a scintillating golden orange around the amphitheatre in front of the Hall. The monument-bearers set the Genestealer corpse at the centre of the stone stage as the boisterous crowd files into the rows. Rylus climbs to the stage platform, and beckons the Battle-Brothers to join him. Read or paraphrase the following:

Rylus steps forward to stand beside the gruesome display. He raises one hand, and the crowd falls silent. "My people, as I look in your faces, I can see you know that today is a great day. By this act of bravery by the Imperium's warriors, by these Adeptus Astartes, our lives are changed forever." He gestures at the monument. "For more than a decade these monsters have threatened our planet, as the Imperium's speakers have tried to tell us they threaten the lives of all men. We would not listen." He turns to Brigadier Heth, and then to the Battle-Brothers. "Whatever else may come, we hear you now. Whatever other rocks of grievance we may split, the ancient Spirit of Aurum knows you as noble warriors."

MISSING THE PARTY

Individual Chapters and even individual warriors have their own ideas about what is within the bounds of their duty, and what is acceptable to their honour. What if some (or all) of the Battle-Brothers refuse to attend the ceremony, or are not invited because of strife with the Aurans? In this case you will still want to draw the absent characters towards the climactic action. This final confrontation can either be in the Hall of Victory as written, or the Combat Sites from that fight can be spread across the city to represent the breaking pandemonium.

One way to do this is to let them suddenly discover that the Genestealer threat is not as cleansed as the Caele would like to believe. The most interesting way to do this depends on what they have decided to do while the victory feast goes on. Some options include:

- If they are out in the city, a Challenging (+0) Awareness Test may spot the brood trying to creep through the low grasses from the North into the city. The Battle-Brothers reach the intruding aliens just as they finish scaling the northeast cliff and charge into the Hall of Victories.
- If the Kill-team has not dealt with Karthas, throw them a lead towards his home. There, the Kill-team discovers a hidden cellar where human and reptilian bones show that something with a prodigious appetite has been hiding. The room smells faintly of promethium. Worse yet, a fresh set of clawed tracks lead out of the cellar, and towards the Hall.
- A bloody, exhausted escapee from the promethium well stumbles into town. It may be chance that the Battle-Brothers are the first people to spot him, or if they spoke with the prisoners he may have sought them out deliberately. He relays a chilling story of monsters rising out of the flooded caverns and ripping their way through the inmates on their way towards Haistand.

The crowd erupts into cheers, which Rylus allows to continue for a time. Anywhere that Aurans are near Imperial representatives such as the Missionaries or Guardsmen, they can be seen heartily thumping the off-worlders' shoulders with their weapon hilts. As the exultation dies down, the Caele continues. Depending on how the Kill-team guided him, he goes on to announce his intentions for the future of the Imperium and the planet. If the Battle-Brothers agreed to his proposal, he is ambiguous about his intent, expecting the situation to resolve itself when the Kill-team makes its report.

Then, Rylus turns to the Battle-Brothers and indicates for them to address the crowd. The Kill-team may be surprised by this turn of events, but it is Auran tradition for warriors to address their fellows when being honoured. The Caele is encouraging but not insistent. Allow any character that is willing a chance to address the crowd. Unless they declined Zayr's challenge the audience is friendly and receptive. Use Interaction Tests only as a fallback for players who aren't sure

THE SLAUGHTER IN WARTIME

Just because the Battle-Brothers and the Aurans may be at war instead of feasting together doesn't mean the remainder of the Genestealer brood has gone away. If relations with the natives turn bloody and are never mended, Lan and a handful of men come to the surface to rescue the remaining Imperials. When this happens, the Genestealers seize their chance to try infecting him. The combats set in the Hall can easily be modified to create a series of fights scattered across Haistand.

what their character would say, or as an option for anyone who would like chance to dictate whether they provoke an exceptional reaction (positive or negative).

The celebration moves into the Hall of Victory after the public address. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The warm Auran sun filters in through the high windows, bathing the feast hall in warm gold light. Several long tables have been prepared with the hospitable planet's bounty. Dozens of varieties of sliced fruit and baked grains surround centrepieces of whole, roasted argrax and platters of basted midasaur ribs. Pitchers of handfruit nectar and fermented red sap are available. As the chosen attendees file in, small emerald lizards assemble around them to beg for table scraps.

The Hall is large, but it cannot possibly hold the entire city's population. After the main procession enters, the Aurans by the door appear to be holding an impromptu blade-throwing contest for the right to enter. Eventually the winners filter in to occupy the empty benches, grinning and cheering at their guests. Most of Haistand's NPCs are present, seated around the hall. The Battle-Brothers are free to join the feasting wherever they desire. Available tables and conversation include:

The Caele's Table: The Aurans' pensive leader answers his people's questions about the Imperium and the Space Marines. If he spots the Battle-Brothers, he tries to gesture one over to answer their inquiries first-hand. Possible questions include:

- Have they ever fought anything more fearsome than the Genestealers, and what was it?
- How do the Space Marines move in such heavy armour? Depending on how it is explained, one of the Aurans may follow the explanation with a request to try the armour on.
- Why are the Space Marines so much bigger than the other Imperials?

Heth and Alkedre's Table: The Brigadier and the Sinsir are discussing life in the Imperial Guard. Heth gives a glory-filled recruitment speech straight out of the Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer. Alkedre seems quite impressed by the vision presented. However, in parallel with their discussion, the two Guardsman who accompanied Heth appear to be growing enamoured with the Auran warriors' description of their tribal life.

Father Marius's Table: The Missionary is telling the story of how the Emperor re-gathered the scattered Primarchs to him. He is on the three challenges of Leman Russ if a Battle-Brother approaches, and it looks like the Aurans might be considering re-enacting one or more of the tests. Unless egged on they settle for emulating one or both of the first two challenges; eating or drinking (as opposed to a combat challenge).

- If any of the Battle-Brothers participate in a drinking challenge, it can be represented by opposed Carouse Tests. Battle-Brothers gain a +10 to this Test from their Preomnor.
- Eating competitions can be represented by opposed Toughness Tests. Space Marines gain no additional benefits beyond their Unnatural Toughness.

Heydal and Lan's Table: Heydal has finally been relieved of his trying sentry duty. The Rogue Trader coaxes information about the Genestealers out of him, while Heydal seems perplexed and fascinated by the concept of currency, something foreign to their barter economy.

The Last Table: The occupants of the last table depend on the actions the Battle-Brothers have taken. If they saved any of the warriors in the lodge, then they occupy the table, recounting their tale of survival in Grensvayl. Otherwise, if they have not dealt with Karthas, he and three recently infected warriors sit in a cluster of unsuspecting Aurans.

After sufficient roleplaying to establish what everyone is doing at the feast, have each character make an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test**. Those who pass hear a distinctive shrieking hiss over the clamour of the hall, and may act

immediately. (Those who failed are sure to notice the resulting activity and can act on the following round.) Read or paraphrase the following:

The Genestealers' appearance in the hall is so sudden that they seem to have materialised, like a discordant element of a dream—or a nightmare. Many of the creatures are stained black, and drip viscous crude promethium. There is no moment of posturing, and no time for their victims to scream. The first Aurans cut down never even see what murdered them. They die with cups in hand, smiles on their lips. The next few are not so fortunate. They have just enough time to begin reaching for their weapons. They die with the reflections of the xenos monsters in their dead eyes.

At the head of this teeming brood is a monster larger and more hideous than the rest. It towers above its smaller kin, every midnight plate ridged with protrusions, and a wicked intelligence gleaming in its malicious eyes. The Broodlord leaps towards the Caele's table as its chitinous minions progress down the banquet laid out for them.

CELEBRATION TURNED TO SLAUGHTER

The feast hall is quickly overtaken by carnage. The entire building is a frenzy of battle, but a distinct fight breaks out around each of the tables. Each Battle-Brother may choose to stay where he was, or spend a Round moving from one table to another. Because friend and foe are densely intermixed in the hall, the GM should strongly consider using the optional rule on page 248 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook for Stray Shots.

It is important to note that this is not a random attack by mindless animals. Genestealers are far more intelligent and cunning than many give them credit for. The assault on the hall has a specific purpose and target: to infect the Rogue Trader Diaz Lan. Like all Tyranid creatures, if Genestealers remain through a Hive's consumption of a planet, they are ultimately re-absorbed into the Fleet's pool of biomatter. The drive to avoid this fate is the very trait that makes Genestealers effective vanguard organisms. They are driven to flee ever further from the oncoming Hive Fleet, infecting and destabilizing more planets as they go.

Being on the border of the Orpheus Salient, Aurum is close enough to the oncoming Fleet that the Genestealers' instinct to move onward is paramount. A Rogue Trader is the perfect host for these creatures. Once loyal to the brood, his human seeming, his ship, and his unusual freedom of passage could carry the Genestealers to hundreds of distant worlds given enough time. The feast represents the first time Lan has been to the planet since the Broodlord's escape. All other bloodshed in the Hall is a distraction, a decoy meant to pull attention away from Lan so that he can be implanted without notice.



FROM THE BLACK DEPTHS

The Genestealers have been hiding in the promethium wells, hence the reason for their splotchy coats of the substance. However, being covered in fuel is particularly disadvantageous if facing foes that wield fire. The Genestealers automatically fail any Tests to avoid catching on fire, and take 2 additional points of damage per round from fire and weapons with the Flame Quality. Note that the Broodlord was not in the pits and thus this rule does not apply to it.

The Caele's Table

Naturally, Rylus immediately leaps to the front of the Auran ranks. The scarred Broodlord's psychic abilities and combat prowess threaten to quickly cut through the Caele's men and leave him overwhelmed through sheer numbers alone. When rolling for sideline combat results for this combat site, both sides gain +10 to their Opposed Test as long as their respective leader (Rylus or the Broodlord) remains to lead them.

Heth and Alkedre's Table

Two dichotomous combat styles are evident in this combat. Heth and his two guardsmen have flipped over a long table and fire from behind it. The Aurans form an outnumbered front line, trying to hold the deadly taloned creatures back from the Guardsmen while not obstructing their shots. Because of the Aurans' defensive tactics and their alertness to friendly fire, the rules for Stray Shots do not apply here, and characters firing into the melee suffer only a -10 penalty instead of the usual -20.

Father Marius's Table

However slow the Aurans may be to accept Father Marius's teachings, they leap to defend him from the xenos as if he was one of their own. Father Marius is a loyal servant of the God-Emperor and does anything but cower. He bellows words of the Emperor's wrath at the oncoming horde. The Aurans form the front line against the Genestealers, and Marius scorches any of the creatures that threaten to overwhelm them with his holy flamer—which is particularly effective against the promethium-spattered creatures. This section of the hall crackles with flame in short order.

Heydal and Lan's Table

The brood cunningly assaults this location with a smaller force, creating the appearance that the Heydal and Lan are holding their own without assistance. The false purpose of their attack is represented by the lower Weapon Skill at this location. If Karthas is present at the feast, he further aids this deception. Every Round that this centre is in Combat, in addition to assessing casualties, make an additional Opposed Test between the Genestealers' effective Weapon Skill of 55 and Lan's Dodge of 44. If Lan fails, he must pass a

RUNNING THE VICTORY HALL FIGHT

There is a lot of activity in the hall during this scene. It can be easy to get overwhelmed or sidetracked with all the enemies and NPC's involved. The GM can use one simple rule to keep the fight manageable and interesting: keep the focus on the player character point of view. Track the total number of Rounds since the fight began, but stick to only to rolling for sideline combats when a Battle-Brother takes time to assess it, when he enters the combat, or at the end of the fight when you need to know the final outcomes. A character can take a Half Action to assess the situation of one other combat, or a Full Action to assess the entire room. The maelstrom of clashing steel and claws is too dangerous and frantic to distil meaning from quick glances while defending oneself.

SIDELINE COMBATS

A sideline combat is any combat where a player character is not participating. Each combat site has a specified number of allies and Genestealers present. The prowess of the individuals at each site is abstracted into a single Combat Skill for that site. The profile for each site can be found on **Table 1-3: Combat Sites** (see page 45). Whenever you need to assess a sideline combat, roll an Opposed Test of the site's Combat Skill vs. Genestealer Weapon Skill for every Round they have been in sideline combat. Each degree of success indicates one death in the opposing ranks. When the number of one side reaches 0, they have been wiped out. Assume that named NPCs are always the last to die in a group of allies.

PLAYER COMBATS

Because NPC's are present (at least to begin with) at most of the other tables, the same principle applies to fights where the Space Marines are involved: keep the focus on the player character(s). Simply put, assume the heroic presence of a Battle-Brother turns the tide of the battle at any combat site where he is engaged. As long as a Battle-Brother is actively fighting at a site, his allies are collectively able to diminish the Genestealers' numbers by one each Turn (in addition to any the Battle-Brother kills).

If the GM prefers not to leave the combat outcomes up to chance and to instead determine the outcomes narratively, he may find it useful to make notes of how each combat should go—with assistance and without—ahead of time.

Toughness Test or become infected as per the Genestealer's Kiss mechanic.

Any character fighting at this combat site or who spends an Action that includes observing it can make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**. If he succeeds, he notices that the Genestealers seem to be attacking with less fury here and are centring their efforts on Lan. If Karthas and his warriors are present to give the illusion of a greater struggle, this test becomes Difficult (-10), but if passed also reveals the warriors who are only feigning combat.

WHAT REMAINS?

At last the flames receded, and I saw the ruin of all that I had once treasured. As the ashes ran between my fingers, I could not recall what had possibly been worth this price.

—Author Unknown, from document fragments recovered in the Black Reef

When the combat finally subsides, the Hall of Victory is strewn with alien corpses and dead Aurans. The GM assesses the final outcomes of any sideline combats, and determines who is still standing. In addition to the specific case of Lan, he should also decide how many Aurans have become infected and if this fate befell any other important NPC's. Brigadier Heth knows enough to report if he has been bitten, and Lan knows enough to hide it, but all of the other NPC's have no notion that a stray bite is even of concern unless the Battle-Brothers tell them.

Lan's ship has the medical facilities to treat one person infected by a Genestealer, but no medicae skilled in doing so (which means this is only a viable option if the Kill-team has an Apothecary). It also has no stasis tubes large enough to hold a person, although a Battle-Brother might think to retrieve and repair the tube in the Apostate Caverns (requiring an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test**). Unless they can come up with further options, the group faces the unpleasant task of locating and dealing with any other infected victims before it is too late.

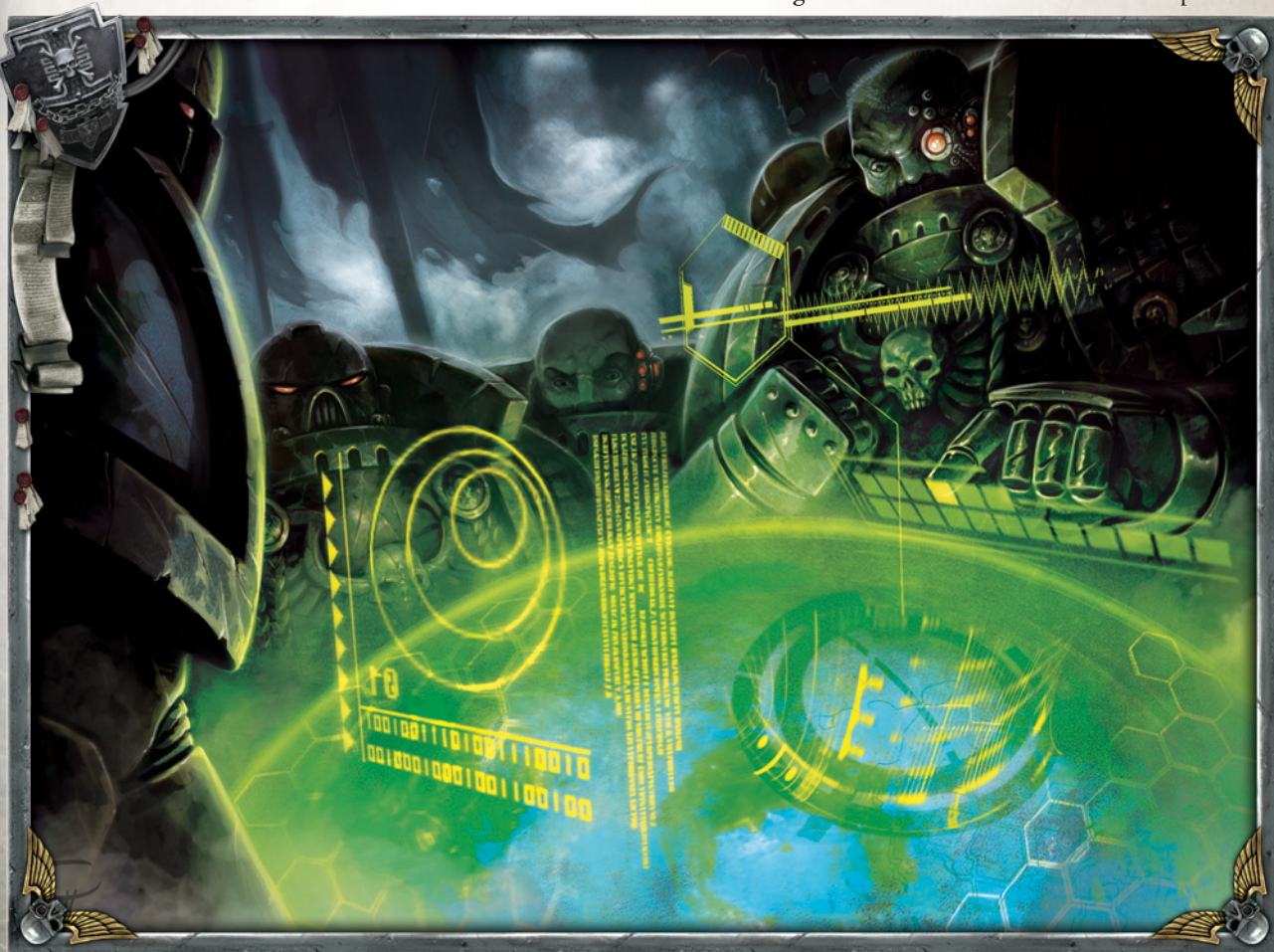
Hopefully Rylus survived intact and can carry out whatever course of action the Battle-Brothers convinced him to follow with regard to the Imperium. If he did not, then Alkedre inherits the title of Caele and immediately begins to use this incident as a rallying point for the Aurans' need to unite with the Imperium. Although deeply saddened by the turn of events, both Rylus and Alkedre support the Kill-team in whatever must be done to cleanse the recently infected. At some point during the follow-up, Heth, (assuming he survived) comments that all this might have been avoided if the Aurans had trusted the Imperium to help with their problem from the beginning.

It is up to the GM to determine the success of the Kill-team's approach to cleansing this last Genestealer taint—both in truth as well as in appearance. If Karthas has survived undetected until now, he does his best to avoid any tests or scans that might reveal him now. Of course, if he is not stealthy enough that might finally be his undoing.

Once the Deathwatch has closed matters to their satisfaction, Lan returns with them to the *Horizon's Pride*. Their choices will have long-lasting ramifications for the fate of the golden planet.

A SOLEMN RETURN

Lan sincerely thanks the Battle-Brothers on behalf of the Crusade for their help with Aurum, but otherwise keeps to himself, sobered by his brush with the Genestealers. When the ship reaches Erioch, he bids them a formal but brief goodbye before leaving them to debrief with their Watch Captain.



REWARDS

Table 1–2 Mission Experience Rewards shows the value of completing each of the Objectives if you award experience using the detailed mission-based method. Additionally, if the Battle-Brothers recovered the thaumagramm diode schematic, this is worth 100 additional XP, as is vindicating Kohl Bennex, and discovering the promethium operation. If the Kill-team exposed Karthas as a servant of the enemy, award 150 XP. If they realised that the brood was targeting Lan, award 50 XP, or 100 XP if they realised and prevented it from occurring.

The following are worth 2 Renown each:

- Completing the Divested Hunt
- Convincing the Aurans to join the Imperium; if the Kill-team incited war with the Aurans, this subtracts 2 Renown from the total earned on the Mission

The following are worth 1 Renown each:

- Purging (or appearing to purge) the Genestealer threat from Aurum
- Keeping all of the Imperial NPCs (Heth, Father Marius, and Lan) from dying

As always, the GM should feel free to further reward clever plans and good roleplaying.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The most immediate ramification of this Mission is the disposition of Aurum. Depending on how the Battle-Brothers left the planet, the Imperium may have gained a valuable world, whose conscripted troops soon appear in Imperial Guard regiments. Or they may have created one more bloody

battlefront that the Battle-Brothers one day need to return to. If Karthas and his infected allies were not uncovered, then the Genestealer infestation will almost certainly undergo a resurgence on the golden planet. If they were destroyed, then perhaps that threat truly has been ended—or perhaps not if it suits the GM. The nature of the unusually nurturing planet's "spirit" remains unaccounted for as well.

Relevance to Dahzak's Plan

The Space Marines hopefully found the bodies of the apostate Adeptus Mechanicus, whose use for the Decavane crystals at this point remains unclear. They may also have recovered the schematics for the thaumagramm diode, which can be slowly deciphered by PCs or NPCs in the time leading up to *The Sword of Vigilance*. Several of the Kill-team's choices echo through the overall story of **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**. A summary of these effects can be found on page 142.

TABLE 1-2: MISSION EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Objective	Experience Awarded
Discover what is causing the deaths on Aurum	325
Eliminate the threat on Aurum (purge Grensvayl)	350
Persuade the Aurans to join the Imperium*	400
Return with information on who brought the xenos to Aurum	200
Protect the Aurans from the final Genestealer outbreak (including pre-emptive elimination)	400
Succeed in the Divested Hunt	200**
Corrupted Servitors, Spooking the Herd, Offended Honour	75 each

*You may wish to award partial experience if they resolved the situation in some other manner

**Extra experience over formula for the effort involved

TABLE 1-3: COMBAT SITES

Combat Site	Caele Rylus	Heth and Alkedre	Father Marius	Heydal and Lan
Number of Allies	14	22	7	14**
Number of Genestealers	8*	12	4	6**
Brood Weapon Skill	65 / 75	65	65	55
Heroes' Combat Skill	45 / 55	39	45***	40

*Does not include the Broodlord

**Does not include the infected warriors

***Add an extra degree of success to any contest won by Father Marius and his allies thanks to the potency of Flame attacks. Also assume if Marius uses *The Emperor Protects*, he does so when one or more Battle-Brothers are present in his combat.

APPENDIX: NPCs

ALKEDRE FIRESTALKER

For complete information on Alkedre see page 20.

Alkedre Firestalker Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	32	50	45	48	46	52	45	44

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 26

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +10, Swim (S), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int) +10.

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Counter Attack, Crushing Blow, Lightning Attack, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Swift Attack, Wall of Steel.

Armour: Saurian Scale Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Two-Handed Talon Blade (2d10+7 R; Pen 0; Unbalanced).

Gear: Red scale laurel; Tribal tokens and trophies.

ARGRAX

These temperamental herd lizards are a cousin of the ubiquitous grox.

Argrax Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	—	65	68	12	12	42	35	14

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 22

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Traits: Bestial, Brutal Charge, Size (Hulking), Natural Armour (Scales) 4 (All), Natural Weapons (Clawed Hooves), Quadruped, Stamped.

Armour: Scaly Hide (All 4).

Weapons: Clawed Hooves (1d10+6 I; Pen 0; Primitive).

Gear: None.



AURAN BROODLORD

The apex of the Genestealer brood, a Broodlord is a towering monster with a dangerous cunning to match its singular deadliness. The Broodlord serves as the psychic anchor for the brood's telepathy and commands its lesser brethren as the alpha predator. Once the reproductive cycle of the Genestealer brood births one of these monstrosities, any opposition will be hard pressed to stamp out the alien infestation.

Auran Broodlord Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
76	—	(12) 75	(14) 74	(12) 65	48	60	64	—

Movement: 16/32/48/96

Wounds: 80

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int), Swim (S),

Talents: Ambidextrous, Brood Psyker*, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Hard Target, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Preternatural Speed, Psi Rating (6), Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Traits: Dark Sight, Fear 3 (Horrifying), Improved Natural Weapons, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour (Hardened Carapace) 8 (All), Natural Weapons (Claws), Size (Enormous), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Speed (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Tyrannid.

***Brood Psyker:** A Broodlord is a psyker but its powers draw upon a localised portion of the Tyranid Hive Mind rather than direct manipulation of the warp. Because of this, a Broodlord does not need to test to use its psychic powers and never suffers Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp. A Broodlord may only use one psychic power during its turn.

Psychic Powers: Aura of Despair (functions as per the psychic power Weaken Resolve), Hypnotic Gaze (functions as per the psychic power Shackle Soul), and Brood Telepathy (as per the psychic power Short Range Telepathy, but may affect all Genestealers and infected creatures within range).

Armour: Hardened Carapace (All 8).

Weapons: Claws (1d10+16 R; Pen 9; Razor Sharp, Tearing), Genestealer's Kiss** (1d10+7 R; Pen 6).

Gear: None.

****Genestealer's Kiss:** A Genestealer possesses an ovipositor within its maw that implants the alien's genetic material into its victim, seeding the target's body with a parasite that will contaminate the victim's offspring and form into a hybrid creature. Over time, a group of hybrids will eventually breed purestrain Genestealers. In this manner, Genestealers often infiltrate a society from within. If a victim takes 1 or more Wounds from this bite, he must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or become a host for the Genestealer's corrupting seed. Once a victim reproduces, he cares for the rapidly growing hybrid with a paternal affection induced by the nascent brood telepathy of the growing creature. A **Very Hard (-30) Medicae Test** can remove the Genestealer's taint, but doing so requires a week of care in an advanced medicae facility. Space Marines are immune to this effect.

AURAN GENESTEALER

As insidious as it is deadly, the Genestealer is a predator without peer. Infestations of these creatures can cripple a world with cold and alien efficiency. The stealth and guile of these intelligent monsters is only exceeded by their terrifying combat prowess. Razor-sharp claws and lightning quickness make for a melee combatant that can fell all but the mightiest of opponents. Perhaps worse still is the prospect of being left alive by these creatures: an infected host doomed to breed more Genestealers and strengthen the expanding brood.

Auran Genestealer Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
65	—	⁽¹²⁾ 60	60	⁽¹²⁾ 60	30	55	40	—

Movement: 12/24/36/72

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int), Swim (S),
Talents: Ambidextrous, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Hard Target, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Preternatural Speed, Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Traits: Dark Sight, Fear 2 (Frightening), Improved Natural Weapons, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour (Reinforced Chitin) 4 (All), Natural Weapons (Claws), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Speed (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Tyrannid.

Armour: Reinforced Chitin (All 6).

Weapons: Claws (1d10+14 R; Pen 7; Razor Sharp, Tearing), Genestealer's Kiss* (1d10+5 R; Pen 6).

Gear: None

***Genestealer's Kiss:** A Genestealer possesses an ovipositor within its maw that implants the alien's genetic material into its victim, seeding the target's body with a parasite that will contaminate the victim's offspring and form into a hybrid creature. Over time, a group of hybrids will eventually breed purestrain Genestealers. In this manner, Genestealers often infiltrate a society from within. If a victim takes 1 or more Wounds from this bite, he must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or become a host for the Genestealer's corrupting seed. Once a victim reproduces, he cares for the rapidly growing hybrid with a paternal affection induced by the nascent brood telepathy of the growing creature. A **Very Hard (-30) Medicae Test** can remove the Genestealer's taint, but doing so requires a week of care in an advanced medicae facility. Space Marines are immune to this effect.

AURAN QUARANTINE PERIMETER GUARD

Serving at the Grensvayl Perimeter is a grim honour. Only the most proven warriors are entrusted to keep the Malisectors contained.

Auran Quarantine Perimeter Guard Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	41	52	48	45	35	46	32	35

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 24

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S), Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +10, Swim (S), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Heightened Senses (Sight), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Swift Attack.

Armour: Saurian Scale Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Fang-Tipped Spear (1d10+6 R; Pen 2).

Gear: Tribal tokens and trophies.

AURAN WARRIOR

The Aurans are a proud warrior people. Every boy and girl is raised to fight for survival and honour from a young age. The Soul of Aurum provides for them, nourishing the land and their bodies. Its people grow exceptionally tall and strong within its golden light.

Auran Warrior Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	41	46	48	45	35	38	32	35

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S), Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +10, Swim (S), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Swift Attack.

Armour: Saurian Scale Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Fang-Tipped Spear (1d10+5 R; Pen 2), Talon Blade (1d10+4 R; Pen 0) or Bone Sword (1d10+5 R; Pen 0; Primitive), and either an Auran Gyrblade (1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Primitive, Special) or Bow (1d10+2 R; Pen 1; Primitive).

Gear: Tribal tokens and trophies, Quiver with 12 Arrows (if armed with Bow).

CAELE RYLUS DARKSCOURGE

Rylus is as exceptional among his people as his people are among the specimens of humanity. Truly, it is difficult for most who look upon him to deny that he has earned some sort of favour in the eyes of a greater power. The question is, what? For complete information on Rylus Darkscourge see page 21.

Caele Rylus Darkscourge Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
68	48	66	65	55	48	45	52	50

Movement: 5/10/15/30**Wounds:** 35

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Command (Fel) +20, Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +20, Swim (S) +10, Tactics (Int), Tracking (Int) +10, Wrangling (Int) +10.

Talents: Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Blademaster, Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Duty Unto Death, Furious Assault, Iron Jaw, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lighting Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Preternatural Speed, Step Aside, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Wall of Steel.

Traits: Touched by the Fates (3).

Armour: Golden Saurian Scale Armour (All 6).

Weapons: Ancient Serrated Talon Blade (1d10+10 R; Pen 4; Balanced, Tearing), Bone Dagger (1d10+8 R; Pen 0; Primitive).

Gear: Bone Circlet; Tribal tokens and trophies.



CORRUPTED SERVITOR

These servitors have been blighted by some unknown force. An unhallowed energy now pulses through their power circuits.



Corrupted Servitor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	35	(10) 50	(8) 40	10	10	30	45	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6**Wounds:** 20

Skills: Awareness (Per), Trade (any one) +10, Trade (Technomat) +10.

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain).

Traits: Armour Plating, Dark Sight, Machine (4), Natural Weapons (Razorhands), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength, Unnatural Toughness.

Armour: None (All 6).

Weapons: Razorhands (1d10+14 R; Pen 2; Tearing).

Gear: Internal vox (to receive/relay instructions only).

DIABLODON

This creature is Aurum's consummate predator. It holds a near-mythical status in the local culture, and to slay one is the mark of a great warrior.



Diablon Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	(15) 59	(10) 55	35	15	40	36	01

Movement: 6/12/18/36**Wounds:** 75

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Combat Master, Fearless, Heightened Senses (Smell).

Traits: Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (Thick Scales) 5 (All), Natural Weapons (Bloodied Claws and Massive Jaws*), Size (Massive), Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

*Massive Jaws cannot be Parried

Armour: Thick Scales (All 5).

Weapons: Bloodied Claws (1d10+15 R; Pen 3, Toxic**), Massive Jaws (1d10+15 R; Pen 2; Tearing).

Gear: None.

**The fetid blood and remains coating the Diablon's claws give its attacks the Toxic quality.



ROGUE TRADER DIAZ LAN

For more information on Diaz Lan see page 27 of the DEATHWATCH GAME MASTER'S KIT.

Rogue Trader Diaz Lan Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	52	35	41	44	52	43	39	47

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 17

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Jericho Reach, Koronus Expanse, Rogue Traders) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Evaluate (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int) +20, Literacy (Int) +10, Pilot (Space Craft) (Ag) +20, Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Eldar) (Int), Tactics (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Deadeye Shot, Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Mighty Shot, Peer (Imperial Navy), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Step Aside, Touched by the Fates (2), Two-Weapon Wielder (Ballistic).

Armour: Master-crafted Carapace Armour (AP 7).

Weapons: Inferno Pistol (10m; S/-/-; 2d10+8 E; Pen 13; Clip 3; Rld Full), Ceres-Pattern Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full, Tearing), Master-Crafted

Power Sword (1d10+10 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Auspex, Cartograph, Elucidator, Set of fine clothing

Exceptional Leader: As a free action once per Round, Lan may grant an ally that he can see and who can hear him +10 to any one Test.

FATHER MARIUS

Father Marius is a cleric of the God-Emperor of Mankind. He has spent decades trying to bring salvation to the people of Aurum. Despite rejection and numerous setbacks, his faith in his religion and the Auran people does not waver. While his martial prowess may not approach that of an Imperial Guardsman or Auran warrior, all loyal servants of Mankind learn how to effectively smite its foes.

Father Marius Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	28	40	35	42	31	45	48	50

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 22

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Heresy) (Int), Literacy (Int), Medicae (Int), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed) (Int) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Cleanse and Purify, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), The Emperor Protects**, Unshakeable Faith.

Traits: Touched by the Fates (2)

****The Emperor Protects:** By spending a Fate Point, Marius grants himself and a number of allies equal to his Willpower Bonus immunity to the effects of Fear and Pinning. Additionally all ranged or close combat attacks made against him and his designated allies are at a -10 modifier. These benefits last for the duration of an encounter. By burning a Fate Point, Marius may allow an ally (never himself) to resist the effects of any single attack, effectively allowing the ally to emerge unscathed as if by a miracle. The Fate Point must be burnt once the attack has hit but before Damage has been rolled.

Armour: Flak Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Chainsword (1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced), Flamer (1d10+4 E; Pen 2; Range 20m; S/-/-; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full, Flame).

Gear: Ecclesiarchal robes, aquila pendant, sepulchre, censer and incense, micro-bead, 1 fuel reload for Flamer.

INFECTED AURAN WARRIOR

These men and women have fallen inexorably under the control of the Brood. Their battle prowess has been subtly enhanced by the alien taint. They follow the commands of the xenos and recklessly defend their masters.

Infected Auran Warrior Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	41	58	48	42	35	40	32	35

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 28

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S), Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +10, Swim (S), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Brood Brother, Fearless, Frenzy, Heightened Senses (Sight), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Swift Attack.

Brood Brother: The warrior is affected by the Brood Telepathy of the Broodlord. He automatically enters Frenzy if any member of the Genestealer brood is threatened.

Armour: Saurian Scale Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Fang-Tipped Spear (1d10+6 R; Pen 2).

Gear: Tribal tokens and trophies.

SKY REAVER

These avian reptiles hunt in large flocks.

Sky Reaver Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	—	35	42	55	15	45	35	10

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Concealment (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tracking (Int) +20.

Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell).

Traits: Bestial, Trait: Flyer (8), Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (Scales) 3 (All), Natural Weapons (Talons), Cloud of Talons.*

Armour: Scales (All 2).

Weapons: Talons (1d10+3 R; Pen 0).

Gear: None

***Cloud of Talons:** A single Sky Reaver is not a great threat, particularly to an Adeptus Astartes. However, in large numbers they descend from the sky like a bladed storm. When Sky Reavers form a Horde of Magnitude 15 they gain the following advantages: Attacks on the Horde are at -10 as their malleable cloud easily disperses and reforms around incoming blows. Their Attacks gain the Tearing Quality, and they gain the Swift Attack Talent. They lose these bonuses once the Horde breaks or drops below the required Magnitude.

THERATRYX

Aurans use this reptilian biped as a mount and beast of burden. However, much like the Aurans themselves, you can take the beast out of the wild, but you cannot take the wild out of the beast.

Theratrux Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	55	42	44	15	45	35	10

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Concealment (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tracking (Int) +20.

Talents: Furious Assault, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell), Sprint, Takedown.

Traits: Bestial, Brutal Charge, Improved Natural Weapons, Size (Hulking), Natural Armour (Scales) 3 (All), Natural Weapons (Talons).

Armour: Scales (All 3).

Weapons: Talons (1d10+5 R; Pen 4; Tearing).

Gear: Domesticated Theratrux have a riding harness, otherwise none.

ZAYR

For complete information on Zayr see page 20.

Zayr Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	41	55	50	45	37	46	45	46

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 26

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Command (Fel) +10, Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int) +10, Swim (S), Tracking (Int), Wrangling (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Blademaster, Crushing Blow, Die Hard, Dual Strike, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Swift Attack.

Armour: Saurian Scale Armour (All 4)

Weapons: 2 Auran Gyrblades (1d10+7 R; Pen 0; Primitive, Special).

Gear: Tribal tokens and trophies.



A STONY SLEEP

A MISSING
INQUISITOR

•
THE FORTRESS
WORLD

•
A TRAIL TO THE
SOUTH

•
THE CITY BENEATH
THE SEA



A STONY SLEEP

Beneath Man's glories that rose and fell, they slumber. Beneath the shadow that eclipsed an age, they slumber. Beneath the tenuous grasp that reaches to reclaim, they slumber. Do not wake the sleeping ancients.

—anonymous prophecies found in
Watch Fortress Erioch's Vaults

Karlack is the lynchpin of the Achilus Crusade's military might and central to the defences of the Iron Collar which guards the Well of Night. The natives of the once-green planet maintained their Imperial traditions through the Age of Shadow, and welcomed the Crusade as long-lost allies. Their reward was a planet quickly leeching of resources and transformed day by day into a teeming hive of soldiers and bureaucrats working to keep the Crusade moving forwards. The dwindling local population have forgotten why they ever welcomed the Imperium, and their complacency has turned to a festering resentment as they choke on their poisoned air and are forced to scrounge for the very crops they have been forcibly recruited to grow.

Yet something older than mankind and its petty feuds sleeps beneath the surface of Karlack. In an age long before man began to count the years, it became the resting place of an ancient alien race with technology far beyond human understanding. Some senior members of the Ordo Xenos have tracked the remnants of this civilisation not just to the Jericho Reach, but to lost worlds and ancient ruins across the galaxy. They see the signs of a race whose reach was seemingly unlimited. What only a few of these scholars suspect is that the tombs hold not corpses, but an diabolical force that waits to one day rise again.

These ancient xenos possessed many secrets of mastery over space and time that Dahzak must rediscover in order to perfect his thaumagamm diodes. The sorcerer and Magos Vayze seek a piece of technology called a vector amplifier. However, retrieving one from the tombs on Karlack required infiltrating the most highly protected Imperial planet in the Jericho Reach. To carry out such a daunting mission, the Vinculum Proselytes turned to the Alpha Legion—Chaos Space Marines who excel in such strikes behind enemy lines. For years the Alpha Legion on Karlack has sabotaged Imperial forces and incited native rebellions to misdirect and weaken Imperial resistance while they search for their objective. During those same years, Inquisitor Zaer Vincent of the Ordo Xenos also delved into the mysteries of Karlack. This brought him into competition with the Alpha Legion, and they kidnapped him to learn what he knew and to keep him off their trail. However, when an Inquisitor disappears, eventually someone is going to notice. And that someone is about to recruit the aid of the Deathwatch.

OVERVIEW

The Alpha Legion's influence has slowly permeated Karlack like the tendrils of an insidious infection. Even before Alpha Legion cell leader Lamdus Rize allied with Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes, the planet's xenos legacy was of interest to him as a tool in his efforts to raise anti-Imperial sentiment among the population. His most successful anti-Imperial cult feeds on the fallacy of a benign master race that once inhabited Karlack. This group calls itself the Reborn; Yale Ivaris—handpicked by Rize to grow the group's size and capabilities—leads the xeno-cult in rebellion and recruitment. Although the evidence of a past civilisation cannot be denied, the rest of this xeno-cult's creed is entirely contrived by the Alpha Legion to create unwitting servants.

Since committing to aiding Dahzak's assault on the warp gate, Rize has turned the xeno-cult's attentions towards unearthing their deities' legacy. Inquisitor Vincent's investigations into the same subject made him a danger and an opportunity. After capturing him, the Alpha Legion masqueraded as Black Templars to infiltrate his quarters in an Imperial fortress, plundered his research, and left a deadly trap for whoever might try to investigate his disappearance. Although he managed to kill several of the Chaos Space Marines, Vincent ultimately failed to stop the Alpha Legion from extracting his secrets.



INQUISITOR ADRIELLE QUIST

Adrielle Quist was first noted by Inquisitor Carmillus for her prodigious telepathic abilities and sharp, investigative mind. She was one of a select few Acolytes brought to the Tower of Brass when her mistress became Inquisitor of the Chamber at Erioch. Quist earned her rosette five years ago, and remains Carmillus's primary field agent. She has a deep fascination with alien technology that she keeps tightly concealed. She is all too aware that many around her would brand her a radical or traitor for her desire to see the Imperium study and match the technological advancement of races like the Tau. She is secretly one of the Crucible Resolvate's principal sources of xenos artefacts.

It is Vincent's disappearance that draws the Battle-Brothers into Karlack's turmoil. Inquisitor Quist requests their aid in locating her colleague. However, the Alpha Legion's trap soon leaves the Battle-Brothers on their own to investigate not only Vincent's disappearance, but also the attempt on Quist's life and the false Black Templars. Their trail leads to the Cenotaph of Achilus in Kar'thir. Here, the Battle-Brothers have their first encounter with the Reborn. They also have the opportunity to meet one of Vincent's surviving cadre. In Kar'thir all evidence points towards a looming threat in the xenos ruins beneath Karlack's ocean. In the rebellious and geologically unstable southern islands, the Battle-Brothers must gather enough information to locate this sunken city. The archipelagos also hold the chance to run up against Ilvaris and his minions, the Vinculum Proselytes, and discover the fate of Inquisitor Vincent.

Once they have acquired the necessary information and resources, the Kill-team can enter the cursed alien necropolis. When they arrive, they find that the Chaos Space Marines have already started a chain of events that could lead to the rise of an alien war host in the very heart of the Crusade's fortress world. They must find a way to reverse their enemies' work or see Karlack submerged under a tide of xenos.

UNSTABLE FOUNDATIONS

Karlack is a planet in the midst of a radical transformation. The Imperium would say it is reaping the benefits of inclusion in the glorious Imperium of Mankind, but not all the indigenous people share such rosy optimism. If the Kill-team had a hand in changing Aurum's permanent status with the Crusade during The Price of Hubris, Karlack serves as a portal to a future that will be or might have been for the Aurans. Karlack's setting should evoke a strong contrast between the Imperial military might and the feudal traditions being eroded. Literally and thematically, A Stony Sleep is about power built on shaky foundations. Rebellion festers in the Crusade's greatest stronghold, xenos tombs lie beneath Karlack's holy places, and traitors litter the ranks of the just and the unjust alike.

MISSION MODIFICATIONS

In addition to the usual scaling of enemy numbers that you need to do for group size and experience level, this adventure contains challenges designed for the squad to overcome by working together. If your group is particularly small, you should decrease the number of challenges at the Kal'thane Bulwark, and decrease the difficulty of destroying the power matrix in the sunken city. If you want to run A Stony Sleep as a standalone adventure, the Alpha Legion certainly has enough incentive to see Karlack fall even without the Vinculum Proselytes' influence.

DOWNTIME

Every Mission in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** includes a return to Watch Fortress Erioch and the opportunity for Battle-Brothers to interact with each other and the NPCs there. Some GMs may prefer to abbreviate these segments and get to the action faster. However, a Battle-Brother's life and relationships between Missions can be very different from his personality on the field of duty. GMs running long campaigns that focus on character development and politics should make sure the players have these chances to showcase a different side of their characters. By their nature Missions also tend to be isolated. Erioch is the most convenient (though certainly not the only) centre for interactions that span a campaign rather than a single adventure.

AQUATIC COMBAT

A large portion of this Mission takes place in an oceanic region. While no encounters were explicitly written to take place in the water, any number of circumstances might cause the GM to need rules for combat in this environment. For underwater combat, Weapon Skill and Ballistics Skill Tests are at -20 while submerged. A Swim Test is required to move effectively during aquatic combat. If the Test is passed by two more degrees, the difficulty of Attack Tests are reduced by -10. For further information, **Chapter VII: Playing the Game** in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook provides extensive information about swimming and water terrain.



A MISSING INQUISITOR

If any of the Kill-team know Inquisitor Quist well enough to care about her movements, then they are aware that she has been back upon Erioch only a few days before requesting a meeting in her chambers at the base of the Tower of Brass in the early hours before the waking cycle. True to its namesake, this spire knifes into the void from the hull of the Watch Fortress. Quist is afforded several linked rooms in the lower levels. Read aloud or paraphrase the following when the Kill-team arrives:

The vaulted doors into the Tower of Brass have remained unchanged over the millennia, inscribed with the catechism of hate: The Mark of the Xenos. However, the guard stationed outside them changes as the title Inquisitor of the Chamber changes bearers. The size and nature of an Inquisitor's sentry force is indicative of the resident of the gleaming edifice. In keeping with Inquisitor Hezika Carmillus's violent and martial nature, she keeps no guard at all: a message that she can face any threat on her own.

You pass through the unlocked doors and ascend two spiralling flights of stairs to Inquisitor Quist's audience room. One wall is a transparent plate of glassteel facing into the void. At this time before Erioch's weak dawn, it faces the dim light from the system's cold, rising star. Quist stands in the centre of the patterned marble floor, arms clasped behind her back.

The Inquisitor exchanges brief, cursory greetings with the Kill-team before continuing. Her request stems from a missive only hours old, and she is eager to act upon the news it contained. Quist deals well with Space Marines in part because she has never been one for idle pleasantries, and this meeting holds even less of them than usual.

As soon as you have all entered the room, she speaks. "I will be brief, as time is of the essence. Too much has already been wasted by the careless and the idle. I do not believe any of you ever made the acquaintance of my colleague, Inquisitor Zaer Vincent. He was—is—a fine man with a nose for secrets. It may have finally been his end. He has been investigating an increasing number of harmful incidents and rumours of a xenos presence in Karlack's less tamed southern hemisphere. I'm sure I do not need to elaborate on the ramifications if such rumours should prove true on the Crusade's key fortress world. Yet no one has heard from Vincent in many months." She holds up a folded letter. "Until now."

Quist goes on to tell the Kill-team that she received the letter, written in Vincent's hand, only hours ago. It is dated 816.M41. The perils and inefficiencies of war on an unclaimed frontier kept it from her hands for almost a year.

Now, long after his disappearance his last communication has finally reached the Ordo Xenos. Quist has a close personal history with Vincent, and his hand-written letter was sent because of that history more than any official reason. She does not elaborate on their background; she simply presents the Kill-team with the letter (see page 55).

When they are done reading it, she says:

"Whatever malign forces protect these secrets, they may have already killed one of my Ordo. I do not intend to be their next victim. Will you aid me in exposing and purging any xenos taint on Karlack?"

Quist knows little more of Vincent's investigation than is written in the letter. To her knowledge, he has been out of contact since departing with a handful of Throne Agents to Karlack. If anyone comments on the personal tone of the letter, or asks what he was apologizing for, Quist dismissively insists that it has no bearing on the Mission.

ARMING AND OATH-TAKING

This Mission has a suggested Requisition rating of 140 (rounded down from 143) based on the following assumptions:

Primary Objective: Protect Inquisitor Quist from harm (Skilled Objective, 17 Requisition)

Primary Objective: Complete Inquisitor Vincent's investigations into the southern oceans (Skilled Objective, 17 Requisition)

Primary Objective: Prevent the sleeping ancients in the city beneath the sea from rising (Veteran Objective, 18 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Discover the fate of Inquisitor Vincent (Novice Objective, 11 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Kill or capture Isiaah Faln (Veteran Objective, 13 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Get past the Alpha Legion forces in the tomb city (Veteran Objective, 13 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Determine the city's exact location (Skilled Objective, 12 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Find a way to enter the tomb city (Novice Objective, 11 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Acquire transport capable of operating in extreme ocean depths (Skilled Objective, 12 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Prevent the Sons of Taeg from completing their assassination at Citadel Primaris (Veteran Objective, 8 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Help Mediator Dyne deal with Alexei Drahj (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Defeat the xeno-cult beneath the Cenotaph (Novice Objective, 6 Requisition)

This seems like a high rating for an escort Mission, since the Deathwatch has no idea what they are actually sending the Battle-Brothers into. However, one Inquisitor has already vanished, and Quist has a vested personal stake in the Kill-team's success. Since she is the Mission Authority, it is easy to justify why she might be generous with equipment.

THE INQUISITOR'S SHIP

As the chief field agent of Erioch's Inquisitor of the Chamber, Inquisitor Quist spends far more time in the void than she does on Erioch. Her ship, the *Angelus Invictus*, is modest in size but highly customised. She provides the Battle-Brothers a communal but sizable room for the journey. Retractable metal slabs are built into the walls; their size is identical to the stone plinths of Erioch's cells, leaving little doubt that this room was made for the explicit purpose of transporting Kill-teams.

The ship has only a skeleton crew; whatever cadre the Inquisitor has, they are obviously out upon their own missions. Other than a few servitors and a decrepit cherub that rarely shifts from its perch in the galley, the living crew is limited to a pilot, a Navigator, and a Vindicare assassin.

SAMINEL MODAR

Quist's Navigator lurks inside a voluminous cloak. Its shroud protects him from sight, providing only fleeting glimpses of shadowed and weathered skin beneath. He does not avoid the Kill-team, but never engages them in conversation, speaking only when spoken to. His raw voice responds with flawless high gothic, in a tone as cold and timeless as the void itself.

NIHL ZEE

The Vindicare Temple is a sanctioned sect of the Officio Assassinorum. Their agents specialise in stealth and sniping. Nihl left Hive Malfi for the training temples on Terra at so young an age that he remembers nothing else. He is a lithe, quiet man who speaks to everyone—serf, Space Marine, and Inquisitor—with eloquent but brief honesty. He does not seem particularly pleased to have been tithed to the Ordo Xenos, but speaks no ill of the Inquisitor or her cadre.

THE ABSENT PILOT

The door to the bridge remains locked for the duration of the trip, and the crew avoids discussion of the pilot. If the Battle-Brothers make any attempt to approach the bridge, Quist meets them with a polite request to respect the privacy of her agents.



To: Inquisitor Adrielle Quist
From: Inquisitor Zaer Vincent
Subject: The City in the Sea
Priority Clearance: Arch-Emblematis

Adrielle,

I know that our last conversation was less than civil, but as I prayed for guidance on who could fulfil my task if I failed, no face came to my mind but yours. I am perilously close to finally uncovering the truth beneath the legends and fatalities associated with Karlack's southern seas.

My latest work with the island sensor arrays has showed conclusively that a group of unnatural structures does lie beneath the ocean, and I have triangulated them with nearly with enough precision to make the journey. However, I have begun to suspect that I am not the only one interested in finding these ruins. The surrounding islands teem with xeno-cultists. Their most troubling aspects are the unusual degree of organisation they have displayed lately, and the core of well-researched theories about the planet's xenos history that underpin many of the tenets of their religion. It seems unlikely the natives could have made such deductions on their own. Either an outside force is aiding these rebels and cultists, or Karlack's ancient inhabitants are not as dead as we foolishly believed.

I have one last preparation to make, and then I will be departing for those cursed waters. I pray to the Throne that I will only find the dead. As you know too well, caution has always been my blessing and my curse. If some ill should befall me, my notes are in my quarters at Citadel Primaris. And if this is my last opportunity to tell you, I'm sorry.

The Emperor Protects,

-Zaer

THE FORTRESS WORLD

"Let this moment mark the turning of the ages. We return the Emperor's light to this planet as we return it to this shadowed Reach. This fortress will stand as a monument to the Imperium's immortality."

—Lord Militant Achilus at the groundbreaking of Karlack's Citadel Primaris

The approach to Karlack is unique within the Jericho Reach. Read aloud or paraphrase the following on approach:

At the heart of the Crusade's military power and the centre of the Iron Collar that defends Imperial possession of the warp gate, the fortress world's perimeter is littered with defences. The first layer of fortified space is a sphere of mechanised battle stations, their augur arrays constantly scanning the void. A few track the Angelus Invictus with their plasma batteries as it passes. Next, on the outskirts of the occupied ring, are the massive space docks where Adeptus Mechanicus adepts repair and slowly construct new ships for the Imperial Navy. These jagged spires and gargantuan platforms berth everything from gleaming new fighters to the war-ravaged skeletons of cruisers who survived battles their crews did not.

Supply stations, more advanced sensorium arrays, and void-faring troop barracks orbit closer to the faded greyish-green planet. Karlack's sky and atmosphere are thick with the smoke of industry and clouds of dirt thrown up by the ongoing construction. Once you clear the brackish cloud layer, the landmasses are patchworks of bare earth, dull armoured fortifications, and the occasional stretch of green farmland where fast-growing crop strains are continually planted and harvested for processing into rations.

Tens of thousands of troops and transports stage from Karlack at any one time, regiment upon regiment preparing to replace the losses of an especially bloody battle in one of the Crusade salients. However, in addition to the many bases and emplacements in its orbit, the planet also requires a large permanent garrison for defence and maintaining order. Such troops occupy hundreds of stations across Karlack, but the largest, first, and most important of these is Citadel Primaris.

Citadel Primaris towers like a mountain above a plain of levelled earth. Observation decks and weapon emplacements jut from the sloping walls at regular intervals. The *Angelus Invictus* lands on one of the immense duracrete pads between a Valkyrie transport and a huge Marauder bomber. Inquisitor Quist presents her rosette to the straight-backed guards at the main gate, and the Kill-team proceeds inside. A large gravel yard lies beyond the high walls, where several squads are drilling under the watchful eye of a Commissar. Before Quist and the Battle-Brothers can even cross the yard, a man in a



General's dress uniform emerges from one of the tall bastions, flanked by a dozen guards in black flak armour.

The man is Lord General Castus Iacton. He briskly but courteously greets the team before ushering them into his ready room. Recognition sparks in the Lord General's eyes as Quist explains who she is and why she has come. When she finishes, Iacton replies:

"Inquisitor Quist, I was beginning to wonder if you were ever going to come. Your colleague left this behind, with the strictest orders that I was to deliver it to you only." He walks to a small adamantine vault edged with gold filigree, and aligns several dials. The door swings open, and he withdraws a lacquered box. It is etched with ornate designs, and held shut by a series of warded locks even more diabolical than the one on his safe. He carefully presents the box to Inquisitor Quist.

As Quist takes the box from his gloved hands, have the Battle-Brothers make **Challenging (+0) Awareness Tests**. Anyone who passes notes a faint astringent odour as she works the locks. It may occur to them that Quist is the only individual in the room not wearing gloves. Immediately after reporting this fact to any characters that succeeded in the check, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

LORD GENERAL CASTUS IACTON

Lord General Iacton has the heavy responsibility of command over Karlack. He is the most senior military officer on the planet, and bears responsibility for keeping it safe from both outside attack and any internal failing of faith, security, or logistics. This duty does not encompass just the ravaged planet, but extends to the farthest hollowed-out asteroid and smallest monitor buoy in the system. He is a stern man tasked with more responsibilities than one man could ever hope to handle. The ceaseless demands of his duties have left him short on patience—even for Inquisitors and Space Marines.

The Inquisitor spends a moment scrutinizing the interlocking chains and coded wards. Then, she slides a chain aside to reveal a circle of runes with the Inquisition's symbol in the centre. She depresses the symbol and the runes light up in an amber glow.

Pause briefly after this section, giving the players a chance to interject if they desire. If no one interrupts, continue:

Buried within the chain links and carved into the locks are partial icons, like pieces of a puzzle. In a very deliberate order, Inquisitor Quist rotates the fastenings to align the symbols. As she forms each one: a skull, a leering face, a sword, the amber runes turn green. At last only one remains. She pauses for a few seconds, squinting at the box as though to clear her vision.

Again, pause here to give the players a chance to interrupt. If they still do nothing, continue:

She rubs her temples and aligns the two halves of an Aquila. The final rune turns green. As Quist lifts the lid her breathing is noticeably erratic. She sways slightly. The box tumbles from her hands as she falls to the floor, colour quickly draining from her face. The unlocked box lies beside her, open lid showing nothing inside.

The box's seal mechanism is laced with a virulent contact toxin. The severity of Quist's exposure to it depends on how long she handled the box. If the Battle-Brothers interrupted before she started opening the box, she is incapacitated but not in danger of dying. If they separated her from the box before she finished opening it, then she may make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** to avoid the poison's deadly effects. If she opened the box, then no Toughness Test is possible. If the toxin takes effect, the Inquisitor's life is forfeit without immediate medical attention.

THE FATE OF INQUISITOR QUIST

A swiftly administered **Ordinary (+0) Medicae Test** can save the Inquisitor's life. If the group lacks an Apothecary, the GM should be generous in allowing the Kill-team to salvage this objective in some other way—perhaps through a clever application of the anti-toxins stored in their power armour. It is also possible that a Medicae in the Citadel could be summoned quickly enough to prevent her death. If the Kill-team makes little effort to save her and the GM has no further use for Quist in his campaign, there is nothing to stop her from expiring before the Battle-Brothers' eyes either. However, this should be an appropriately grave moment for the Battle-Brothers, as it was their task to protect the Inquisitor on this Mission—a task they have now failed. They will surely want to seek out and bring justice to the enemy that so dishonoured them.

DITCHING THE INQUISITION

If Quist never gets near the box (or wears her gloves that day), the GM should consider finding some other reason to separate her from the Kill-team. Her profile is provided and she could continue to lead this Mission, but this isn't likely to be as engaging for the players. Solving xeno-cult conspiracies is the bread and butter of the Ordo Xenos, and if they remain with Quist, the Space Marines could end up feeling like glorified bodyguards as she adeptly puts together the clues. Some other possibilities for putting the Battle-Brothers in control include:

- Reveal the Alpha Legion's involvement sooner—perhaps with a sighting of the Chaos Space Marines in their regular armour. The confirmed sighting of a Traitor Legion makes this a matter for Space Marines at least as much as the Ordo Xenos.
- Increase the sense of urgency and have time pressure force the group to split up. Quist and her agents (and possibly Dyne) retrieve the city's coordinates for the Kill-team. The storms and earthquakes around the planet increase, and Quist orders the Kill-team to proceed immediately after acquiring the submersible rather than waiting for her.
- Increase the importance of Alexei Drahj. He gets wind of the Ordo Xenos and flees. Quist and Dyne make pursuing him their priority, and the Kill-team must complete the original Mission on Karlack.

In addition to the missing Inquisitor Vincent, the Kill-team now has a (hopefully) near-assassination to contend with. If Quist lives, she is at best severely weakened and must remain under the care of the Citadel's medicae staff. Nihl Zee remains at her side to stand guard. She charges the Kill-team with finishing her Mission, and discovering who made the attack. At this point the Citadel is open to them.

THE READY ROOM

Like everything Imperial on Karlack, the Lord-General's ready room carries the faint stigma of being "new." Despite attempts to tarnish the gold luminators and age the parchment of freshly inked maps, one cannot help but notice the telltale lack of wear that comes with new construction. Several star charts hang about the walls, with entirely too many unclaimed worlds marked, and the Hadex Anomaly festering in the very centre of the Imperium's trident of conquest.

If questioned, the Lord General is cooperative though noticeably impatient. He reveals the following information:

- Inquisitor Vincent left Citadel Primaris almost a year ago (around the date of his letter to Quist). When he departed, he left the box in his quarters.
- The Inquisitor claimed to be here to staunch the flourishing Cold Trade of xenos relics in Kar'thir, but the Lord General knew he spent a great deal of time on other more secret matters.

After a few minutes of questioning or at any point that the conversation seems to be lagging or growing repetitive, Iacton exclaims:

"Isn't there some report you can retrieve? I told all this to the other Space Marines just last week!"

According to Iacton, the "other Space Marines" bore the markings of the Black Templars. (The Battle-Brothers may make an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Jericho Reach) Test** to realise that no Black Templars are on the roster of Achilus Crusade forces). The Black Templars asked Iacton many questions about Inquisitor Vincent, and investigated the Inquisitor's quarters, which had been left undisturbed since his departure. It was actually their suggestion that he move the box from Vincent's room to his vault. Once the other Space Marines had finished their investigation, they departed; Iacton believes they may have had a few documents in their possession. Their transport's trajectory suggested they were headed elsewhere on the planet, but beyond that Iacton has nothing to suggest.

TROOP BARRACKS

Citadel Primaris can house whole regiments easily, but its accommodations are less than luxurious. As the fortress's least valuable resource, the guardsmen are stored in the exterior rooms, the first layer beyond the high protective walls. Tall ladders line the walls so that occupants can climb to the upper bunks, which are stacked dozens high. The guardsmen peer down curiously from their perches if they spot the Kill-team, but keep their distance. They do not have any information on Inquisitor Vincent; in fact the vast majority of them arrived after his disappearance. However, they can offer various relevant insights on the planet based on a **Routine (+20) Inquiry Test**. (A Command Test may be substituted for this roll, but the Test becomes Challenging (+0) as the men are intimidated.) The GM may add appropriate bonuses for good roleplaying (see Table 2-1 below).

VINCENT'S QUARTERS

The Inquisition's reputation has been quite effective in keeping Vincent's room isolated. The troops who know it exists have a very real fear of facing execution for glimpsing the wrong document or artefact. The room is a converted office, with an unmade and largely unused cot in one corner. The small, disorderly room could easily be mistaken for the home of a lowly scribe. Parchment litters the desk and the cot, books lie open—each with a dozen page markers in it, and stacks of journals tower perilously on every flat surface. Several of the drawings depict geometric symbols of xenos origin.

A **Routine (+20) Search Test** locates several items of interest. The first item is an Artefact Manifest (See the handout on page 86) describing ruined fragments of the alien technology Vincent encountered on Karlack. It is stored with the other materials of his investigation, suggesting some connection between them. The Search Test also allows the Space Marines to determine that a page has been freshly torn from one of his research journals. The journal's title page reads "Beneath the Cenotaph." The book is full of hand-written observations, sketches, and theories about the ancient history of Kar'thir, where the Cenotaph of Achilus resides. Vincent's notes suggest that the indigenous city may have been built on the ruins of a civilisation that pre-dated human settlement.

TABLE 2-1: INFORMATION ON THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS

Degrees of Success	Result
0	The southern continent is a source of strange occurrences, ill omens, and heretical cults. Troops are regularly deployed to put down uprisings and defend the scattered Imperial holdings.
1	As above. Also, the cult activity in the south has been on the rise. In particular, a group called The Reborn has been especially destructive.
2	As above. Also, The Reborn used to be a fairly minor operation, no greater than the rest of the insurgent rabble. Their transformation into a serious threat began when a man calling himself Feynir Surbryte became their leader. Their operations are not isolated to the south, and they have hidden cells all across the planet.
3+	As above. Also, several people have been executed in Kar'thir over the last few years for participating in the underground sale of xenos artefacts, or the Cold Trade. Many suspect that a great deal of their proscribed stock comes from the south.

If the Search Test succeeds by two or more degrees of success, the Battle-Brothers also find the torn scraps of a parchment strip behind a desk. This brief note was taken from inside the box by the impostor Space Marines, and shredded. However, a little patience can reconstruct the message. It reads:

No door that we would understand leads into the city. This key will afford you entry.

PRINCE-PREFECT ALLEWIS LXXXIII

Prince Allewis the eighty-third ruled Karlack when the Crusade first made contact. The Imperium was quick to praise him for his preservation of tradition and the Emperor's creed. He in turn was quick to support the re-assimilation into the Imperium, and the re-introduction of the many wondrous technologies the people had forgotten. No one benefitted more from these marvels than the Prince himself. The Crusade bestowed upon him the additional title of prefect, and has made sure he lives in safety and comfort. He now occupies a suite on one of the Citadel's highest levels, sound-proofed against the clamour of armies and vehicles outside.

Allewis is a shrewd politician who kept his planet in line with strong public demonstrations of force before the Imperium's arrival. His primary function now, beyond serving as a figurehead, is to advise the Lord General on his people's culture. Although he has been able to take a far less active role in the ruling of Karlack since the Crusade arrived, his political instincts remain unchanged. He understands that he stands in a precarious situation—dependent upon the Crusade

to maintain his station, and yet in competition with them for influence over the planet and its resources. His best asset in this power struggle is to grow his allies on and off planet. He is always quick to invite important visitors for an audience, and the Battle-Brothers are no exception. If they spend long at Citadel Primaris a native servant approaches them with a perfumed envelope bearing the wax seal of a sleeping felid.

Optional Encounter: the Prince's Sanctuary

Should the Battle-Brothers take Prince-Prefect Allewis up on his offer, they board an ascender that carries them hundreds of metres up to the Citadel's upper levels. The Prince's receiving room is decorated with off-world luxuries and a large silver crest of a sleeping felid hangs prominently on the mantle. As the Kill-team arrives, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"Welcome, welcome fine visitors." The Prince-Prefect ushers you into a richly appointed room that belongs in a noble's hive spire, not a fortress. The exterior balcony provides a sweeping view of the murky sky and bare earth outside. He gestures at a side table obviously prepared by a shrewd diplomat versed in the Adeptus Astartes. A basin of ice holds large, sturdy goblets of wine sized so that even power-armoured hands can grip them. The accompanying delicacy of Bekrin otter has been seared on large skewers making it equally easy to partake of. "Now, the Adeptus Astartes only call when something important is afoot. How can Karlack's Prince-Prefect assist you?"

THE CITY BENEATH THE SEA

The legends associated with Karlack's southern seas are so varied and mutable that attempting to sift out the grains of truth from them has been a daunting task. Still, certain themes have recurred in my historical research and the hundreds of oral legends recounted to me. Points of agreement include:

The Sunken City—Dozens of accounts report the existence a vast ruined city deep beneath the southern ocean. Details of its appearance are sparse, but the few that exist point with disturbing agreement to a definitively inhuman design.

Ill Omens—Virtually everything about the south is viewed with gloom and pessimism. Whether the tide is high or low, the sun shines or storms rage, soothsayers rush to call it bad tidings. Every disaster, poor crop, and stillbirth on the rest of the planet is quickly attributed to the omens from the south.

Restless Machine Spirits—False augury readings, engine failings, rebellious weapons—all of these phenomena and more seem to occur with unusual frequency near the southern oceans.

Spectres of Death—Of all the images conjured by the native tales, this is the one which haunts my dreams. The most common purpose of these dark, ghostly apparitions is as collectors of lost souls. These black, shrouded beings rise from the sea to drag men down to oblivion. Afterlives aside, what concerns me is that if any truth lies in this particular legend, then whatever lies beneath the sea may not be quite dead after all.

He listens intently to whatever information they reveal, making noises of consternation and sympathy at all the appropriate moments. The Prince has two primary assets at his disposal: the Planetary Defence Force and a vast network of eyes and ears across the planet. Once he has assembled an idea of what he might be able to offer the Battle-Brothers based on his resources, he gets to his own agenda.

The relationship between Allewis and Lord General Iacton is strained at best. Allewis's desire to maintain some security and standard of living on his planet (at least for himself) is not in accord with the Crusade's great need for manpower, materials, and food. Their latest bone of contention is over the re-building of the Karlack 1st. Iacton has his eyes on the royal guard to provide a core of men with combat training to this rebuilt regiment. Allewis on the other hand believes that the Planetary Defence Force is already far understrength, and does not want to give away a single man.

He asks them to speak to Iacton on his behalf, and persuade him to leave the royal guard here. Allewis is confident that the opinions of the Adeptus Astartes would carry strong weight with the Lord General. In exchange, he offers whatever aid he has surmised might be helpful. This might include supplies, sightings of the Black Templars, or the simple promise of a favour depending on what the Kill-team told him of their mission. If they refuse his offer, he is gracious, but provides no useful information aside from small talk of dreadful riots in the south.

MUSTERING GROUND

Vast flats of levelled ground radiate out for miles from Citadel Primaris. A haphazard stream of troops lands and depart in shuttles at all hours of the day and night. The small figures of lone officers pace between the blocks of soldiers, bellowing commands and catechisms that are swallowed in the perpetual roar of vehicles.

The Karlack 1st is slowly assembling in their allotment of dirt. This is no less than the fourth time this regiment has been re-founded, and the Imperial Guard looks like it is recruiting from the bottom of the barrel. The men still wear their woven native clothing; many are boys too young to even undergo Space Marine trials, while others are so old and sickly they seem unlikely to survive the space voyage to their first deployment. Their leader, Commander Emvire, paces restlessly through the scrawny ranks.

TRAINING GROUND

The space between the outer Citadel walls and the main fortress itself is a training ground. Presently, several squads of the 16th Maccabian Janissaries run orderly drills on the hard-packed dirt. This regiment of iron-masked soldiers was recruited from the Calixis Sector's bright, cold shrine world of Maccabeus. Their grim determination and deep-rooted faith make Maccabian troops well suited to the corrupting horrors the Acheros Salient.

Minka Thrace

Minka Thrace leads the drills on the range. She is a small, fierce woman with a piercing grey gaze. She and her brother were orphaned at a young age by a religious schism. She attended the Schola Pergenium and was tagged for a future of military leadership, while her brother joined the Black Priests.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: ASSAULT ON THE PRINCE

Prince-Prefect Allewis has done a remarkable job keeping himself in favour with most of the oppressed population. However, there are fractious elements that attribute considerable blame to him for the plight of Karlack's native people. One such group calls themselves the Sons of Taeg, after the dead baron of Kar'thir. The enmity of this small but capable minority is one of the things that keeps him behind the fortress walls. Hatred is a powerful motivator, and even the fortress is not enough to deter the Sons of Taeg. Composed largely of former knights and other members of what used to be Karlack's privileged class, these men were already trained in the primitive arts of war. They quickly added stealth and guile to their repertoire to avoid Imperial reprisals.

For months, they have carefully planned an assassination of "The Turncoat Prince." One of their members enters the Citadel walls driving a six-wheeled transport stacked with crates that allegedly contain rations. In fact it holds more Sons of Taeg. Unfortunately for them, their timing coincides with the Battle-Brothers' presence. Shortly after the troops in the yard begin to file out from their drilling to return to their camps, the Sons of Taeg burst from their hiding place, willing to sacrifice their lives to take down Prince Allewis. If they are anywhere in the Citadel's vicinity, the Kill-team

Esteemed Warriors of the God-Emperor,

You would do me great honour if you would meet with me at the summit of this magnificent Imperial castle. I know that men of your importance are always short on time. I promise you brevity, and an unparalleled knowledge of the places, people, and history of this humble planet.

Your faithful servant,

Prince-Prefect Allewis XXXIII



THE ILL-FATED KARLACK 1ST

The Crusade has raised five regiments from Karlack since making contact with the planet, providing vital replenishment to the forces from other sectors that ship through the warp gate. No tale of a regiment in the Jericho Reach is a pleasant one, but the Karlack 1st has been shattered and reformed three times since its inception.

- **786.M41:** The regiment receives passage to the coreward battlefield on the Lord Militant's *Proclamation of Wrath*. They are lost with Lord Militant Achilus himself in the infamous Gellar field failure.
- **812.M41:** The regiment is decimated by the first Tyranid offensive.
- **786.M41:** The regiment is shattered on the Death World Ravacene, reduced to only a handful of men from the bloody war and toxic environment.

COMMANDER EMVIRE

Commander Tarik Emvire has had the dubious fortune of surviving the last two events that desolated the Karlack 1st. He is a tall, burly man who now wields a chain axe instead of the steel one he possessed as Kar'thir's master at arms before the arrival of the Imperium. He has greyed significantly in the decades since he joined the Hammer of the Emperor. He also carries a persistent cough from the ash-choked environment of his last posting.

cannot miss the ensuing commotion. The Sons of Taeg profile can be found on page 91 Most notably, each man has a single demolition charge containing 1d5+1 kg of explosives readied. (Roll separately for the payload of each rebel, and do not reveal the numbers to the players.) These bombs are deadly, but they were intended to be planted, not thrown. If a Son of Taeg becomes desperate enough to use his explosive charge as a weapon, it travels only 2 metres + 2 metres for every degree of success on his Ballistic Skill Test. If the Test is failed, this means it still detonates but travels nowhere. This means there is a high probability the thrower himself is caught in the blast. He will only make such an attack if death seems imminent (this includes being targeted by a Space Marine). To make matters worse, the rebels stole fatigues from the green recruits of the Karlack 1st, making them very difficult to pick out from actual Guardsmen. The bulk of their explosives is largely what gives them away.

These explosives aren't something that a Space Marine can ignore, but fully armoured they can survive a few detonations and keep fighting. The real danger is not to the Battle-Brothers, but to Citadel Primaris, its stationed troops, and of course to Prince-Prefect Allewis. By the time the Battle-Brothers reach the training range, it is a confused maelstrom of combatants, corpses, and explosions. Assume at this juncture the surviving number of Sons of Taeg number twice that of the Kill-team. The following rules apply to this fight:

Camouflaged Enemy: On the first Round a Space Marine enters this combat, and every time he wishes to locate a new hostile target, he must make an Awareness Test to pick out a Son of Taeg from the actual Guardsmen. (No Test is required to locate a foe one of his Battle-Brothers is already fighting.)

Stand Back! An exploding demolition charge kills a number of Guardsmen equal to the blast radius of his charges (kg x 3) unless the Battle-Brother takes some action to get them out of the way before his opponent dies. His options are:

- The Battle-Brother can order the Guardsmen to get clear of the combat. To do so, he makes a **Routine (+10) Command Test**. If he succeeds, the soldiers pull back a number of metres equal to their Full Move (6) plus 1 metre for every Degree of Success. This is a Half Action for the Battle-Brother and may be repeated to move the men further.
- The Battle-Brother can toss men great distances with his enhanced strength (although the "saved" Guardsmen may end up with bruises and broken bones). For every Half Action he spends sweeping Guardsmen out of the way, he removes a number of men from the blast area equal to his Strength Bonus.
- As a last resort, the Space Marine can throw himself on a blast to shield others from the explosion. This requires a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** to act in time. If he succeeds, the Battle-Brother fully stops the blast from killing any Guardsmen, but the explosion adds an additional 1d10 per 2 kg to its normal Damage. This is a Reaction.

Death to the Turncoat! The ultimate goal of the Sons of Taeg is to take out the Prince-Prefect. Any of the rebels who go undetected for 5 Rounds make it inside the Citadel on their 6th Round, and proceed towards the Prince-Prefect's quarters. Assume the following progression of their movement:

- Rounds 7-8: Moving through the halls towards the ascender. Each agent has a 20% chance of being located and killed in combat with loyal forces before they make it to the ascender.
- Rounds 9-12: Riding the ascender up to Allewis's level
- Round 13: Moving to Allewis's quarters
- Round 14: Attempting to blow up the Turncoat Prince. (All of Allewis's guards are engaged in the fight outside the Citadel.)

FOLLOWING THE BLACK TEMPLARS

When the "other Space Marines" left the fortress, their next destination was the Cenotaph of Achilus. In addition to Vincent's plundered notes, other possibilities exist for putting the Kill-team on the trail to Kar'thir.

- An enterprising Techmarine may filter through the data banks from the Citadel's sensor logs. A **Challenging (+0) Logic Test** can extrapolate their exact vector.
- The Prince-Prefect may not personally step much outside the Citadel these days, but his eyes and ears are another matter. His informants in Kar'thir heard of black-clad Space Marines in the city last week. Allewis expects a reciprocal favour for sharing this information, although he may find himself disappointed.

- Mediator Dyne hears about the follow up on his master's disappearance and sends a message (intended for Quist) to the Citadel asking for a meeting in Kar'thir. Once in the city, the Kill-team hears of the Black Templars' recent presence. (See Stories from Kar'thir on page 63.)

UPON THIS ROCK

The Cenotaph of Achilus looms in the heart of Kar'thir, Karlack's largest city. This towering black monument entombs the Crusade's first Lord Militant, Tiber Achilus. Built upon the ruins of an ancient Imperial temple, it has become the spiritual heart of the Crusade in many regards—with all the curses and commendations that entails. Read aloud or paraphrase the following as the Battle-Brothers approach:

The Cenotaph is a gleaming monolith of black marble, built in the centre of a sprawling feudal town. It dwarfs the muddy wooden buildings that huddle like supplicants around its base. Large swathes of bare earth scar the settlement and its adjacent lands; some of them hold the skeletons of abandoned construction. Large cargo haulers rumble down other dirt paths, throwing huge clouds of dust into the air.

The Cenotaph was anticipated to become a popular pilgrimage for the newly devout of the Jericho Reach. However, when the Crusade did not progress as smoothly as its leaders had hoped, they quickly abandoned their efforts to modernise Kar'thir in order to funnel resources into the salients. The remains of their grand ambitions now crumble, neglected. A modest landing pad, one such fruit of these abandoned labours, sits on the edge of the city. An unpaved trail leads from it up into Kar'thir's heart.

THE CITY OF KAR'THIR

Before the Crusade's arrival, Kar'thir was a prospering centre of art and commerce under the rule of Baron Taeg. Now, it has seen better days. The population has slowly atrophied from sickness and emigration. The Baron, the most visible member of Karlack's nobility after the Prince moved to his new office inside Citadel Primaris, was executed for supporting rebellion several years ago—an Imperial verdict many natives question. With its last advocate gone, the city is a desolate, grimy jumble of half-finished construction, abandoned feudal shops, and the roaring machines of progress.

A large majority of the settlement's denizens are Karlack's natives, still eking out a living in the diminishing city. The people of Kar'thir generally have one of two reactions to the Battle-Brothers. Either they treat them with deferential respect, or they avoid them with the same distance they give all representatives of the Imperium. These mixed reactions are partly caused by the citizens' limited recognition of the Space Marines for what they are. The Adeptus Astartes are a subject only depicted in oral tradition and extrapolated imagery. If the Battle-Brothers make their nature clear to a native, they are more likely (though not guaranteed) to garner respect.

TAEG MANOR

Baron Taeg's ancestral home slowly crumbles in one quarter of Kar'thir. Respect and superstition keeps most of the locals from crossing through its iron gates. Its lawn is a stark patch of green in the dirty city, although it has evolved into a tangle of weeds and interlocking trees without anyone to maintain it. The three-story estate is dark within, and rumour says its dead Lord still walks the halls. The only ghost for the Battle-Brothers to encounter here is Mediator Dyne, a member of Inquisitor Vincent's cadre.

Dyne is extremely pleased to contact allies he can reveal himself to. He offers his assistance on the Kill-team's task unconditionally, and requests their aid with his duty. He has uncovered that the merchant Alexei Drahj is using Kar'thir as a hub for smuggling xenos artefacts. He has the channels to arrange a meeting by posing as a prospective buyer. However, without the rest of his cadre, he lacks the firepower to bring the well-protected criminal to justice. Dyne asks if the Battle-Brothers are willing aide him in this matter. (See the Cold Trade optional encounter below.)

FOREIGNER'S TRIANGLE

The first Imperials to settle in Kar'thir occupied apartments bordered by three main thoroughfares. As more prospecting traders and visiting Crusade officials gathered in this district, it took on its nickname with the natives. The first wave of improvements to the city's rudimentary infrastructure began here. A few blocks of finished modern buildings stand alone in the epicentre of the abandoned renovation efforts. A jagged ring of desolate skeletal structures and demolished lots radiates out from the triangle.

The Unfinished Basilica

On the outside, this incomplete Administratum building appears little different from the other lonely skeletons around it. The framework stops at six stories, with no more than crossbeams laid on any floor. The eroding edifices still wait for statuary and the arched windows remain open holes. This unassuming exterior is precisely why the xenos artefact traffickers of the Transpired Circle selected it for clandestine meetings and exchanges. (See the Cold Trade optional encounter below).

THE TANNERY

From the outside, there is nothing noteworthy about this workshop on the western edge of town except the usual stench of dead animals and tanning agents associated with leatherworking. However, its interior houses a passage that leads to an ancient site deep beneath the Cenotaph. It is obscured behind racks of hanging animal skins, and the Battle-Brothers are more likely to find themselves coming from the reverse side of the passage.

MEDIATOR LAZEL DYNE

Dyne is an accomplished sage, and often served as the face man for Vincent's operations. He wears simple local robes with a draping hood to keep his cranial implants from attracting attention. For two years he has investigated the "Cold Trade" of xenos artefacts in Kar'thir. Much of the last year has been spent waiting for his master to return—a possibility that grows ever more remote.

If Dyne hears that agents of the Ordo Xenos are nearby, he attempts to contact them. This may be via letter at the Citadel, or seeking them out in person if he can find them in Kar'thir. Dyne can provide some insight into the last known actions of Inquisitor Vincent. According to him, Vincent uncovered the location of the ruins beneath the sea just before he disappeared. He gathered his cadre to make some final preparations in the southern islands, and intended to then head for the sunken city. Dyne is well-versed in the steps Inquisitor Vincent had to carry out in his investigation of the city. He can educate the Kill-team on any or all of the obstacles they may face if they seek to find it themselves. (See the Objectives on page 69.)

Dyne remained behind as he was close to rooting out the artefact traffickers. He never heard from the cadre again. He also knows that Vincent spent a great deal of time in Kar'thir studying the Cenotaph, but can only conjecture what connection it has to the xenos structures in the southern ocean.

THE OBSIDIAN PAVILION

The original centre of Kar'thir was razed (along with many buildings) to accommodate the Cenotaph. Even though no sign remains of the dark stone tiles that gave the square its name, it maintains the title of "Obsidian Pavilion," and still serves as the central function area of the city. The activity now clusters around the steps up to the towering monument.

The western side of the plaza holds freshly built stocks and a gallows. The stocks are crowded with transgressors against the Imperial Creed. The rest of the pavilion holds a scattering of visitors and locals. The off-worlders are primarily dignitaries and merchants making a show of piety. Alexei Drahj may be present with his usual retainers, casually inspecting the impoverished population's wares. The desire for new Imperial currency draws the natives to the foot of the Cenotaph. They hawk everything from handmade jewellery to rough-carved aquila icons, largely by waving these wares in their hands. A sizeable portion of the peddlers offer stone fragments with dull gold etchings, calling them "Eternity Charms." These trinkets are supposedly wrought from the ruins of the holy site on which Kar'thir was founded, although some smell suspiciously of fresh paint.

IN AGE THERE IS STRENGTH

In the Imperium, older is usually better. Anything built in contemporary times is a copy of a copy of a copy of a design only half remembered. Karlack reeks of newness, and nowhere is that more apparent than the Foreigner's Triangle. Its architects did their best to weather the stone and tarnish the metal for a false veneer of age, but it does a poor job of concealing the planet's lack of mankind's legacy.

Stories from Kar'thir

The Obsidian Pavilion is the easiest place to interact with the natives, although certainly not the only one. Below are various stories that might be gleaned through interaction in Kar'thir:

- "Everyone knows there's something wrong with the oceans below. There was an ill wind blowing from the south the day my wife bore our still babe. It was the cold breath of the reapers that live on the ocean floor, coming to take our poor child."
- "Have you come to avenge Baron Taeg? His spirit rests ill, I tell you. His shadow moves back and forth in the halls of his old estate, and I've seen the lights flickering late at night from the road outside."
- "Eternity Charms are nothing to be concerned with. They're just harmless little reminders that good works can be immortal. Worse things change hands in Kar'thir. The Transpired Circle come like vultures to pick the ancient bones clean. The tales of what they find in the mud and rocks are so nightmarish I couldn't begin to tell you what's true and what's not. But if you want something to look at, how about a nice, safe Charm? I'll give you a good price on this one."
- "What sort of miracle or menace has brought the holy Adeptus Astartes to us twice in so little time? I think I'd best be strong in my ignorance—better not to know. But sure as I stand before you blessed warriors now, there was another group here in the Pavilion just a few days ago. They didn't stop to bless us with their words as you have, just went right to the Cenotaph there."

THE CENOTAPH OF ACHILUS

The Crusade's first Lord Militant is memorialised in a tomb whose grandeur is derived from brute size. There is nothing ornate or intricate about the towering black monolith; it is just a soaring pillar of stone engraved with an ever-growing tally of the lost. Before the Age of Shadow fell across the Jericho Sector, Kar'thir centred around a fabulous church of the God-Emperor built on the top of a rolling hill. That temple of Imperial faith toppled long ago, but the Cenotaph is built of magnificent black plinths excavated from its foundations.

On the western side of the monument there are tall doors which lead into the crypt's interior. These doors are supposed to be sealed, and the fact that they stand damaged is an immediate sign that something amiss. A large breach exists in these panels, easily wide enough for a Space Marine

to enter. When the Battle-Brothers cross the threshold, the tomb's interior is a drastically different environment from the outside. The unexposed sides of the black marble retain strange golden markings that glitter in the low light. A giant white likeness of the lost Tiber Achilus stands in the monument's hollow heart, equally empty. The original Lord Militant was lost to the warp, and the stone effigy serves the place of a coffin. The path of the intruders is immediately obvious; a gaping hole in the floor leads down into the ruins beneath the tomb.

The opening drops into the nave of a crumbling Imperial cathedral. The wooden pews have long since rotted, and any ornamentation been stripped by scavengers, but statue fragments and faded patches of murals remain. The Battle-Brothers find themselves facing fragments of their own likenesses: Space Marines in old marks of armour carved into the support pillars. However, the tunnels continue. The walls of multiple altar niches and the apse gape open, revealing that an even more ancient site exists behind the Imperial construction. All of the chambers beyond are walled in the same sleek black material that forms the Cenotaph itself.

THE EMPTY MAUSOLEUM

Behind the apse is an empty, cavernous sepulchre. Bare shelves and empty platforms evidence the many sarcophagi that once occupied the chamber. A square platform stands in the middle of the chamber. All that remains of the dull metal statue once topping it is a set of oblong boots with overlapping scales terracing the slope of the foot. Opposite the statue is a circle etched in the black floor. Close inspection reveals inactive gold micro-circuitry inside its 5 metre radius. Everything else was looted generations ago.

THE CRUMBLING RELIQUARY

This section of the ancient structure is in the worst state of disrepair. The construction above has caused collapsed walls and earthen cave-ins that render this chamber a maze of rubble. A faint, repetitive scraping echoes from ahead. A **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** identifies the sound of metal tools in the dirt. It can also lead the listener to the source of the digging. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you come around a crumbled pillar, you see three men in local clothes. They use shovels and spades to dig underneath the rubble. You catch the last fragment of a conversation: "Don't you think if they've spent all this time down here they must know the place better than us?" Another voice replies, "Didn't say they don't. Just saying I don't want to gamble they're the types to share."

The men's names are Stephan, Weyr, and Kall. They freeze for a moment at the sight of hulking men in power armour and then react in uncoordinated panic. Roll Initiative and treat the ensuing Rounds as a combat to determine if the grave robbers get a chance to act. They are not thinking rationally, and take the following actions unless **Very Hard (-30) Interaction**

Tests are made. Stephan lobs his shovel in the Battle-Brothers' direction and tries to run deeper into the rubble to hide. Weyr brandishes his pick and does his best to look menacing with it. He attacks with it if anyone draws near. Kall, the only one to apparently recognise them, drops to his knees and begins praying to the Emperor for forgiveness.

When the "combat" is over, presumably the Battle-Brothers have custody of at least one prisoner, along with their plunder. The results of the men's toil lie in a nearby burlap sack. It contains a dozen chipped pieces of marble identical to the "Eternity Charms" and a strange green orb.

Obviously outclassed, the grave robbers are forthcoming with any information the Battle-Brothers ask for. At this juncture they just hope not to be turned over to the local PDF officers. They offer at least one of the Stories from Karthir (See page 63), and may also provide the following facts depending on the conversation:

- This is their third expedition since the opening appeared in the Cenotaph. Most of their findings have been Eternity Charms, but there was one other unusual item—a strange staff with branching crescent blades—which they sold to Alexei Drahj.
- They have heard strange voices coming from the other end of the ruins, past the carved tunnels. At first they thought it to be competitors for artefacts, but glimpses of hooded figures made them reconsider a confrontation. They have stayed clear of that section. Its occupants must have some other way in and out.

The men conclude any conversation with a vow never to enter the ruins again, and a plea to let them leave quietly.

THE CARVED TUNNELS

Twin tunnels wind back from two of the altars; their walls covered in remarkably preserved images. While the familiar vertical strips of geometric golden script do occur at regular intervals, it is carved reliefs that dominate the passage. The imagery varies: landscapes with geometric structures, odd skeletal faces, and sarcophagi. A circular panel ringed with glyphs depicts a series of structures beneath a horizontal line. If any of the Battle-Brothers stop to examine this image, the line could be interpreted as the level of the ocean above the buildings. A **Challenging (+0) Ciphers (Xenos Markings) or Hard (-20) Logic Test** detects a recurring mathematical theme in the symbols around the relief, suggesting map coordinates. However, without the cipher key, no further decryption is possible.

THE CULTIST CHAMBER

Whatever purpose the western ruins may have once served, they are now a site of worship for the Reborn. The carved tunnels unite in a small vestibule which opens up to an immense man-made chasm. This opening is 30 metres wide and appears to stretch down into the ground for hundreds, if not thousands of metres. Its present occupants are not the first to discover this location. Once a black facade covered the entry chamber, but it is pitted and scarred from years of scavengers picking away at it. The walls on either side of



the deep chamber crumble a few grains at a time, weakened when the huge pillars used to construct the Cenotaph were excavated. Deep below a warm light glows faintly, and soft voices echo.

The descent towards the bottom of the chamber is thousands of metres. Without any additional gear the Climb Test is Challenging (+0)—a risky process, but not impossible. The GM should provide generous bonuses for any clever ideas on scaling down more safely, such as the Ultramarines' Lead by Example ability using knives for climbing spikes. For simplicity's sake use only one Test to represent the descent, which takes about thirty minutes. Should any character be in possession of suitable climbing gear or a Jump Pack, he can make an attempt (with the most applicable Skill) to grab

THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE

The Battle-Brothers are likely to guess that the recent damage to the Cenotaph and the ruins below was caused by the "other Space Marines," and they would be correct. The Alpha Legion impostors failed to obtain the sunken city's true location from Inquisitor Vincent, forcing them to retrace his steps in discovering it. All of the new openings (in the doors of the monument, the ceiling and walls of the ruined cathedral, etc) have a melted look and are ringed with the corrosive remains of a chemical reaction. Some form of potent acid burned these passages silently to avoid notice.

THE REBORN

It is difficult to say how long this xeno-cult has existed on Kar'thir, but they have waxed in size and power since the Crusade's arrival. This seductive philosophy begins by creating a level of comfort with the alien, awakening Karlack inhabitants to the reality that their world is built on the ruins of an ancient civilisation. Then, the xeno-cult's leaders extol the virtues they have surmised about their predecessors. They call this advanced xenos race the Undying. The Reborn hold that this wise and powerful race first mastered technology, and then the mysteries of life itself. They took to the stars to spread their knowledge and foster the growth of fledgling races. Eventually these benefactors fell into peaceful slumber to let the young races continue on their own. Some day they will awake and begin a new age of enlightenment and immortality for the faithful.

The xeno-cult's name refers to both the philosophical rebirth of extolling the alien over the human, and the immortality they expect the Undying to bring when they arise to reclaim the galaxy. The Reborn believe fervently in this utopian destiny, and violently defend it.

THE ALPHA LEGION'S INFLUENCE

All the Reborn truly believe in their creed, except their leader, Feynir Surbryte. The Reborn was little more than a handful of dreamers and discontented rabble until the Alpha Legion took an interest in Karlack. They chose this group as the vehicle for their destabilisation, and inserted a charismatic and devious new leader to help the Reborn grow and organise. Now, they are a force to be reckoned with. They have fanatical cells in nearly all of Karlack's major population centres.

any comrade that fails his Climb Test and prevent them from tumbling to their doom. (If any unfortunate characters fail and are not saved, they wake up sore and bruised on a convenient rock outcropping many metres below, less one Fate Point.)

As the Battle-Brothers descend the wall, they can begin to observe the activity beneath them. If anyone is equipped with magnification equipment, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Figures gather below, dressed in the simple wools and cotton weaves of Kar'thir's residents. Rising above them in the centre of a room is a crude statue. Its metal body is humanoid but vaguely defined—either deliberately or due to poor craftsmanship. Only the head is clearly fashioned and painted; it depicts a stark white human skull.

Further down, their Auto-senses begin to pick out the words spoken below them. Their leader (the tanner who owns the shop with the passage in it) is sharing vibrant stories of the generosity and benign deeds performed by beings called the Undying. The Battle-Brothers catch the end of a parable:

"And then the Undying said to the farmer: 'I see that you have learned well the lessons we have taught. Your crops flourish in the drought while those of your neighbours wilt. I shall grant your request.' The farmer fell to his knees in thanks as the Undying floated gracefully to his ailing child. The Undying laid his cool hand upon the boy's brow. The sickness left his body, and he was whole again."

The xeno-cultists then spend several minutes offering their praise and devotion to the statue and talking excitedly of the aliens' return. When the team comes into visual range, everyone can now see the scene described previously. The Battle-Brothers can make **Challenging (+0) Awareness Tests** at 20 metres up to notice concealed ledges at that height (one on each side of the room). Each of these large rock shelves has a large metallic device in its centre and a spiral passage leading down to the main level. The passage take 25 metres of movement to traverse from ledge to floor.

If they continue down the chamber wall, have the Kill-team make a Silent Move Test opposed by the Reborn Cultists' Awareness when they are 15 metres from the floor. If they are not detected, the xeno-cultists are Surprised on the first Round the Space Marines reveal themselves. If they are detected, then the Reborn initiate combat while the Space Marines are still climbing.

Enough of the xeno-cultists recognise the Adeptus Astartes and know them as the enemies of their xenos idols that they refuse to be drawn into conversation or negotiation. See the Reborn Cultist profile on page 93. The main group forms a Horde of Magnitude 32 around the statue. Two smaller groups break off and flee into either side passage, emerging

THE LIGHTNING PROJECTOR

Each ledge holds a sleek silver array with three curving prongs. These devices are all that remain of the impressive weapons that once fortified this alien tomb. Over time (and many grisly deaths), the Reborn puzzled out how to operate the projectors. When activated, the two nodes form a crackling arc of electricity that can be directed by pivoting the arrays.

Once per Round, in addition to their normal attacks, the Reborn can make a Ballistic Skill Test as an attack against every Battle-Brother standing on the chamber floor (but not on the walls or ledges). This attack may be Dodged as normal. The lightning arc does 2d10+5 E Damage with AP 8 and has the Shocking Quality. The projector only works so long as both nodes are active. However, the mass of xeno-cultists prevents the Battle-Brothers from assaulting a node directly until the Horde around it has been reduced by at least 50% of its Magnitude.

The xeno-cultists also occasionally shock their own members with stray hits. This does not happen frequently enough to incur significant Magnitude Damage, but does leave a string of charred corpses on the floor.

a Round later on the concealed ledges. Each of these Hordes is Magnitude 20, and the two groups collectively control the lightning projector (as detailed in the sidebar). The elevated Hordes gain the Fearless Talent as they have nowhere to go and are guarding sacred relics of the Undying, but the main group breaks normally.

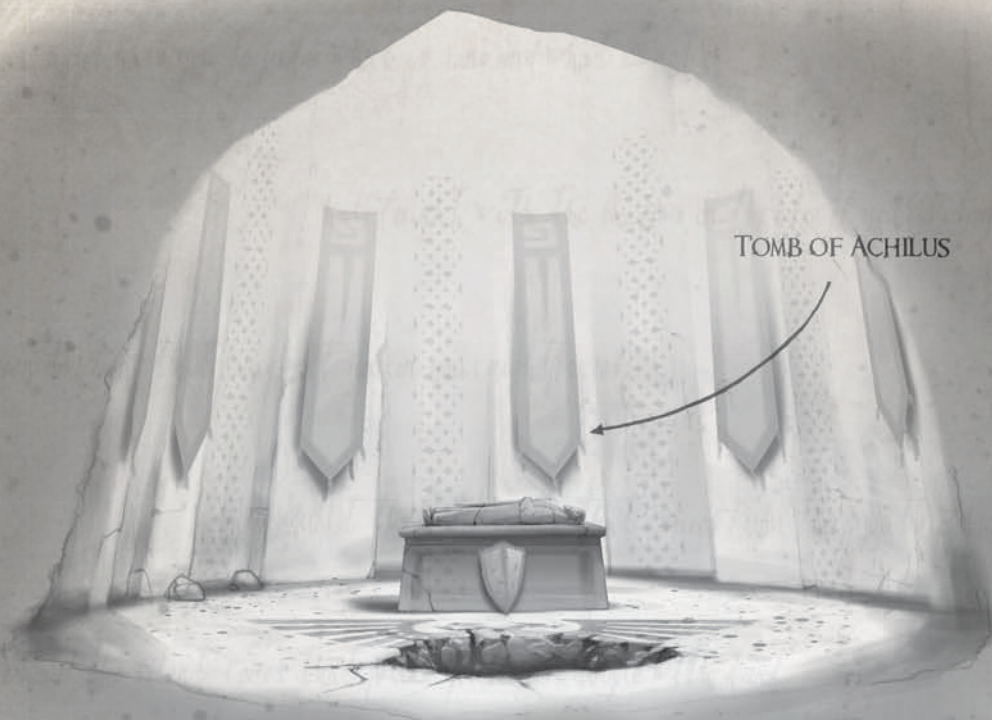
The passage back to the surface is clearly visible from ground level (and in fact is where the main Horde of cultists flees if broken). Once the Kill-team has taken care of the Reborn, unless they want to make the long climb back up the chamber walls, they are likely to take this exit back into Kar'thir. The passage slopes gently upwards. For a few hundred metres the walls are smooth, as though cut with the same technology that built the ruins. However, after that the walls become uneven, braced by rotting wooden struts and frequently twisting around rock formations. It would have taken generations to tunnel this far at Karlack's current technology level. The Battle-Brothers finally emerge in the tannery. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Even before you see the light of the exit, your Auto-senses alert you to the stench of rotting flesh and excrement. You may wonder what sort of charnel house lies ahead. However, when you step out of the tunnel, the only dead you see are the skins of animals. You are inside a tannery, where hides are splayed in the various stages of curing. A pair of young boys toil over the reeking vats.

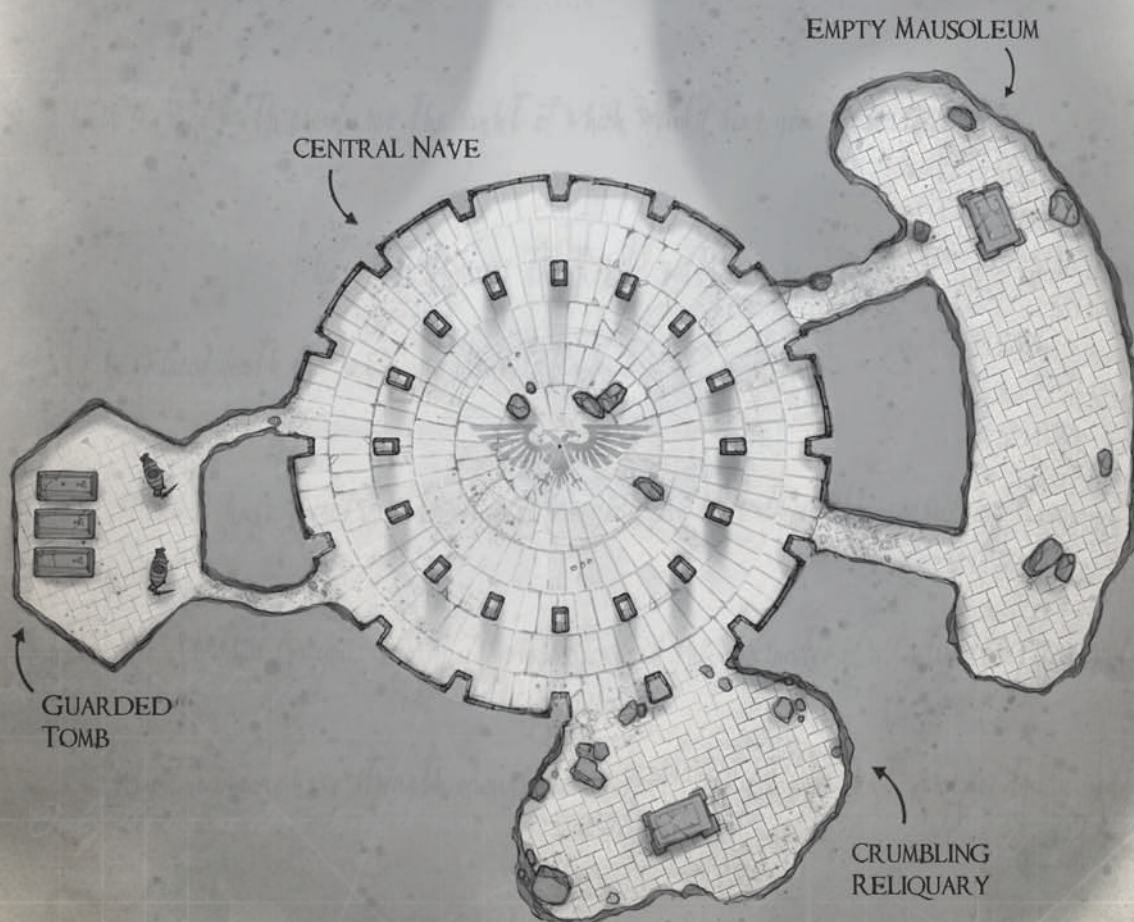
The boys are the tanner's apprentices, and if they spot the Space Marines they stare in utter confusion and terror. The frightened and bewildered boys can give the absent owner's name (Oldreg) if asked, but appear to know nothing about his activities outside the shop, or even the existence of the passage. The bottom floor of the tannery is the workshop, and the upper floors are divided into a room for the boys and one for their employer. Oldreg's room contains several handwritten stories similar to the one he told to the other xeno-cultists, and several Eternity Charms. Each of the apprentices also has an Eternity Charm, given to them by their employer. As they cannot read, they have no scriptures, but innocently confess that Oldreg has told them many fables of the Undying. Although they were too young to join the cult, he had begun slowly poisoning their minds with his religion masked as children's stories.

THE MANY-HEADED BEAST

If the Battle-Brothers spend time examining Oldreg's possessions, they come to the conclusion that the xeno-cult in Karlack is only one facet of a much larger whole. Oldreg has a correspondence history with Feynir Surbryte. The letters appear to have been hand delivered, leaving no clues to Surbryte's location. However, Oldreg appears to have been making notes on Inquisitor Vincent. The notes and letters depict that Vincent visited the Cenotaph of Achilus repeatedly. For the last several months before his disappearance, Oldreg or another xeno-cultist was constantly shadowing him.



TOMB OF ACHILUS



CENTRAL NAVE

EMPTY MAUSOLEUM

GUARDED TOMB

CRUMBLING RELIQUARY

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE COLD TRADE

As Mediator Dyne indicates, Kar'thir has a flourishing population of xenos artefact traffickers. The underground business started while Lord Militant Achilus still lived and the Crusade was celebrating new, stunning victories regularly. Resources poured into rebuilding Karlack in the Imperial image, bringing droves of the wealthy and politically connected to claim a stake in the planet's future. The inundated natives quickly realised that the trinkets they sometimes unearthed fetched high prices with certain elements of these newcomers. The Crusade was too occupied with securing their hold on the planet and the Salients to delve into native commerce, and Karlack's status as a fortress world made it the ideal hub for a black market. As long as the merchants were careful, they could operate literally under the Imperium's nose. This situation drew the attention of the Transpired Circle, and Alexei Drahj has slowly been amassing wealth and power in Kar'thir.

The rudimentary luxury of the Foreigner's Triangle does not meet Drahj's refined standards. He resides in orbit on his cruiser, the *Frozen Tear*, shuttling to and from the surface to conduct his business. The corrupt trader protects himself with an entourage of bodyguards. Their profiles along with his can be found on page 88. It is possible to find Drahj in several of Kar'thir's locales, most notably the Obsidian Pavilion. However, his exchange point at the unfinished basilica is the least public of these and thus the best place to catch him in the act.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Drahj uses the unfinished basilica for illicit deals. If Dyne sets up a meeting, Drahj arranges it for the dark hours of the morning. It is up to the Battle-Brothers whether they want Dyne to actually go to the site or lay some other form of ambush. If the Kill-team decides to lie in wait before the criminal arrives, they find his enhanced senses harder to fool than they might have expected. Make the appropriate Opposed Tests. Drahj brings six bodyguards with him. If he arrives first, two remain at his side while the other four position themselves in the girders of the incomplete building.

Violence erupts at the first sight of a Space Marine, and Drahj fights fiercely for his inhuman life. He knows even if the Space Marines took him alive, his nature would still condemn him. He throws pretence to the wind and uses every gift at his disposal.

TABLE 2-2: ACTIONS IN THE UNFINISHED BASILICA

Action	Acrobatics or Agility Test†
Melee (per Round)	Routine (+20)
Half Move or Dodging	Ordinary (+10)
Full Move	Challenging (+0)
Run or Charge	Difficult (-10)

† Activating the magnetised boot soles of Astartes power armour negates the need for these tests but has the usual effect on Movement.

THE TRANSPIRED CIRCLE

The planet Transpire sits at the edge of the Deserter's Coil, one more husk of a planet slowly being repopulated by all the Reach's worst elements. Transpire holds the region's typical pockets of aspiring Chaos devotees, but it is also home to one of the Reach's largest trading posts for xenos technology. The loose cartel calling itself the Transpired Circle was founded here from natives of the Jericho Reach, Imperial deserters and a few ambitious, unscrupulous traders drawn from far away. Alexei Drahj is simply one member of the Circle's inner ring. This handful of men and women keep hold of their power only by making the most vile deals with Chaos.

The Transpired Circle secretly references the device unearthed on its planet of origin by its founding members. This blasphemous alien relic corrupts the human form, granting inhuman gifts to the few who manage to survive the process. However, it is said that after the carefully shrouded ritual of initiation, no one is ever quite the same. Their behaviours change slowly over the years, with the oldest members of the inner circle now using their ill-gotten fortunes to pursue agendas no man can fathom.

Drahj himself is one such survivor, now a xenos perversion in human skin. He balances his arrogance with charm, at least in the presence of the Adeptus Astartes.

Fighting within the unfinished basilica Administratum is precarious. Each of the six levels is 8 metres above the next, and wide and deep enough for such parameters to be irrelevant. What is relevant is that none of the stories above the ground have been finished; they are only cross works of girders. Each beam is 15 centimetres wide, and they form a grid of squares 4 metres to a side. This provides sufficient footing for stationary fire, but melee combat, Dodging, and Movement all run a risk of falling (see Table 2-2). If firing between levels, the beams provide AP 25 cover to the Body of any target directly above or below the firer.

Drahj's shuttle (parked with all the others on the edge of the city) holds a stasis box where he keeps his most interesting wares. It is sealed with a gene-coded lock, but getting a biological sample is hopefully not a difficulty (one way or another) after the fight. The box contains one or more of the following:

- A staff topped with crescent blades, extremely similar to the sceptre in Inquisitor Vincent's notes.
- A small field projector of some kind. Its black casing is smooth, and the dull green runes on it have been unpowered for centuries. An **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** notices some similarities between the item and a dilation field.
- The broken stock of a xenos rifle. The weapon is forged from a dark, sleek metal. A set of coils vaguely resembling the inside of a suspensor sit near the grip.
- A Tau pulse carbine rifle

The Deathwatch is certainly within its rights to execute any survivors, or ample authorities exist on Karlack to turn the criminals over to. As well, the disposition of the technology cache is up to the Kill-team.

A TRAIL TO THE SOUTH

Solidarity is our shield. Loyalty is our weapon. The bonds of duty hold stronger than steel.

—From the Oath of Loyalty

The Kill-team's final objective is probably not a surprise to them: follow the impostor Space Marines to the sunken city. If the Kill-team does not naturally gravitate towards trying to find this mysterious location, the GM has several options for pointing them towards it:

- Deciphering the glyphs in the carved tunnels
- A series of anomalous seismic tremors have been wracking the southern hemisphere, causing rampant destruction and tidal waves. Imperial diviners and the Geomancers alike attribute it to something more than natural activity.
- If any of the Reborn are left alive, at least one of them is aware that many of their brethren are preparing for a "Great Awakening" somewhere in the south. Interrogating or Intimidating this information out of the survivors is an Ordinary (+10) task.
- Sometimes, the simplest methods are the best. Inquisitor Quist (if she lives), General Iacton, Mediator Dyne, or any other allied party may simply point out that the city was Vincent's primary interest, and there is a good chance that the enemy is seeking it.

However, the southern oceans are a large place, and the ruins beneath it are legend—and legends rarely come with map coordinates. The Alpha Legion expended a great deal of effort to learn about and gain access to the location. Finding the ruins is not trivial for the Kill-team either. Any of the NPCs knowledgeable about the planet suggests that the Kar'dane Monitoring Bulwarks are most likely to have what they need to reach the sunken city.

THE KAR'DANE ISLANDS

The Kar'dane archipelago chain is home to the Crusade's only sizable holdings in the southern hemisphere. During the Crusade's original occupation of the planet, the southern islands seemed like an isolated, low-population region ideal for locating expensive and delicate sensor arrays. Consequently, most of the planets' monitoring and science stations, as well as a large portion of the generatoriums for planetary defence were built here. Unfortunately, neither the climate nor the population behaved as the Crusade expected. Storms and tidal waves have repeatedly damaged the valuable equipment, and the islands proved home to Karlack's most fractious rebels. Various sized contingents of Planetary Defence Forces are stationed at the bulwarks to keep them secure.

Quist's shuttle or military vehicles are both available to transport the Kill-team to the archipelago, as well as a pilot if they so desire. The islands are rocky, with beaches of coarse, black sand. Many of the landmasses measure only a few dozen metres in diameter, but those large enough to



have what could be called an interior support surprisingly lush vegetation. The hardy plants cling to the rock through the thin soil, keeping their roots through storms that have ravaged the Imperial stations.

Roughly two dozen stations dot the Kar'dane islands. The largest juts hundreds of metres high in a haphazard jumble of antennas and augury dishes patched and re-patched with whatever the attendant Tech-Priests could scrounge. The smallest is little more than a lone vox monitor atop a cylinder that scarcely has room for a single officer to sit inside.

FINDING THE SUNKEN CITY

Although the Battle-Brothers may not know it yet, getting into the city requires a little more than just finding out where it is. What the Battle-Brothers need from the monitoring bulwarks depends on how much they know by this point. The prerequisites equate to the following Secondary Objectives:

Objective 1: Determine the city's exact location. The Battle-Brothers should already be aware they need this information.

Objective 2: Acquire transport capable of operating in extreme ocean depths. The deepest parts of the ocean apply pressure far greater than being crushed beneath the foot of a titan. The vacuum pressure differentials that spacecraft must withstand come nowhere close to rivalling those in the depths of Karlack's oceans. Reaching the city requires a submersible vehicle specifically built to withstand extreme pressure.

Objective 3: Find a way to enter the tomb city.

Inquisitor Vincent's box originally contained a sigil that unlocks the city's outer doors. Since that is now in the possession of the Alpha Legion, the Battle-Brothers need an alternate means of entry. Hopefully they already have this information from Vincent's note or Dyne, but if they do not, another opportunity to learn lies in the archipelago.

The monitoring bulwarks below present possible avenues for fulfilling these Objectives, although the GM and his players may devise other options.

THE KAL'THANE BULWARK

Kal'thane Island is also called Mount Kal'thane, as it is actually a dormant volcano. Its variation from the other real islands leaves it isolated, with no other land masses in sight. The monitoring station nests in the crater at the cone's summit. Even though Magos Geomancer Quezalt has no official rank with the PDF, he is clearly in command of the dozen troops stationed in a facility packed with sophisticated cogitators, augur arrays, and data processors.

Karlack is of interest for the Geomancers for two reasons: the unusual seismic and tidal activity in the south and as Quezalt puts it, "the opportunity to witness a greatly accelerated decay of the natural geologic state due to modernisation." Quezalt is the most senior of his order on the planet, and although he has not been bothered yet by cultists, Quezalt knows it is a possibility if the southern region is not brought under control, and thus he would be very receptive to the Kill-team's needs—if he didn't have more pressing concerns.

The seismic activity that drew the Geomancers here has grown from interesting to dangerous. Whatever is happening in Inquisitor Vincent's city beneath the sea is causing catastrophic earthquakes and tidal waves in the southern hemisphere. The Kal'thane bulwark is in real danger of being swallowed by the volcano it resides in. The problems are immediately evident when the Kill-team arrives, as tremors wrack the island. Small avalanches of dirt and basalt rock constantly slide down the slope of the cone. Magos Quezalt does not throw away this Ommissiah-sent chance to preserve himself and his work. After the Battle-Brothers explain their purpose, he says:

"Tautology: I would take readings if I could. The erratic seismic phenomenon exceed this facility's structural limits. They also disrupt the machine spirits' concentration. Their augur readings will be inaccurate as long as the activity continues to measure above sixty point four on the vibration index. The activity is currently four times this limit, and I calculate that it will continue to escalate."

Quezalt explains that the seismic activity has been growing in intensity for the last few days. The volcano sits on a fault line, and all the Magos's analysis indicates that it will soon collapse in on his location. He does not spend long on other topics before getting to the mutually beneficial option:

"Both our problems arrive at the same solution. I have isolated the main fault line through the island. The local plates can be stabilized for a period of two years by large magnitude applications of opposing force. Such as—" The Magos is interrupted by a thunderous rumbling. Several loud impacts clang against the side of the facility. Quezalt rushes to his cogitators and pours over a ticker stream of binary. He looks up from the thin print out as it continues to spew from the machine, and resumes his sentence calmly. "Such as explosives. I have already placed sixteen of the twenty necessary devices. However, the last four seismic pivots remain beyond my physical capacity to reach. Were individuals such as you able to place the four charges, I can initiate the stabilisation. Consider in your timing: a seismic wave is about to reach us that will submerge this island in eight minutes."

There are four remaining points on the island where charges must be planted. The Magos initiates a hololithic display of the island and points the locations out, briefly describing each. (The Circumstance column of the Quick Reference handout for this Mission gives the amount of detail the Kill-team receives.) The charges may be placed in any order, but all the tasks must be complete before the shockwave hits. All of the locations involve some sort of challenge in placing the charge (or the Magos would have done it himself). Some of these tasks might benefit from having multiple Battle-Brothers working together, but if they do not split their numbers at all, chances are slim that they will be able to finish before the seismic wave destroys the facility.

+++To: Deathwatch Operatives+++
+++From: Lord General Castus Iacton, Citadel Primaris+++
+++Subject: Kard'dane Monitoring Bulwarks of Note+++

-Kal'thane Bulwark: A senior member of the Geomancers of Vanity resides at this bulwark, studying Karlack. It therefore has some of the most sophisticated augur arrays available.

-Kal'dir Bulwark: This may be an opportunity for mutual benefit. This bulwark has been under assault by deviants of the Reborn for months. The last vox transmission suggested the attack may be so relentless because the bulwark has something the xenocultists want.

-Kal'vex Bulwark: The largest of the bulwarks, Kal'vex also has excellent sensor arrays, as well as personnel with extensive experience in the southern region.

-Kal'tran Bulwark: Our few dedicated watercraft dock at this bulwark. The bulwark should be able to provide you with a submersible that can reach the ocean floor.

The four deployment points are:

A Submerged Cavern

This deployment point deep beneath the volcano can only be reached by approaching it through a submerged passage with a strong opposing current. Reaching the necessary location is an Extended Test requiring 4 successful **Difficult (-10) Swim Tests**. Each Test represents 30 seconds. The only benefit to having multiple Battle-Brothers attempt this deployment is two chances of someone succeeding.

A Narrow Crevice

This deployment point is deep within the volcano cone. A narrow fissure provides an opening to the location, but the 60 metre long path to it is only centimetres wider than the charge itself. Magos Quezalt provides a special launcher for firing the charges over long distances, but the cumbersome reload process takes 60 seconds. Making the shot with the launcher is an **Arduous (-40) Ballistic Skill Test**. The firer may use the Aim action, but the time necessary increases by a factor of 6 (30 seconds for +10 / 60 seconds for +20) due to the complexity of lining up the shot. Any abilities that reduce the difficulty of a Called Shot also reduce this shot's difficulty. Assistance from a second Battle-Brother halves the time necessary to reload the launcher.

A Massive Granite Slab

The earthquakes started before Quezalt was able to place the charge in this deployment point, and now the necessary spot is covered with a huge piece of granite that broke off from the cliff side. Pushing it out of the way to drop the charge is an Extended Strength Test requiring 4 successful **Arduous (-40) Strength Tests**. Each Test represents 30 seconds. Normal rules for assistance apply.

An Elevated Cave

This cave in the volcano's side is at the most unstable part of the island. The cave is already well on its way to collapsing, and a constant hail of stone and stalactites rain from its ceiling. The charge must be planted at a location 500 metres back in the cavern. If the Battle-Brother does not adequately avoid the largest

ADJUSTING THE DEPLOYMENT POINTS

This encounter was designed for at least five Battle-Brothers. For a Kill-team of four (or if only one Battle-Brother attempts the Massive Granite Slab) drop the Strength Test Difficulty to -30. If the Kill-team has three or less members, lower the Granite Slab difficulty and reduce the number of deployment locations to the size of the Kill-team.

chunks of falling rubble, he is constantly buffeted and knocked down, greatly impeding his progress forward. Determine how far the Battle-Brother(s) can Run in one minute by taking his Agility Bonus x 36. Running through the cave requires a **Challenging (+0) Dodge Test** each minute. Failure indicates that for the next minute, the Battle-Brother only moves at his Full Move speed (one third of his Running speed). The only benefit to having multiple Battle-Brothers attempt this deployment is two chances of someone succeeding.

By the time the Battle-Brothers get their instructions and reach the deployment points, they have only four minutes left to complete the tasks at hand. However, all the locations except the narrow crevice require one minute to get clear of the blast radius. Anyone who does not deploy their charge within three minutes may continue trying, but if all the charges are deployed by the four minute mark, Quezalt still detonates them regardless of who might be caught in it. Anyone who does not get clear of the blast takes 8d10 I Damage. Because of the distance between the deployment points, there is not sufficient time for a character to change locations before the quake hits. The Quezalt has a large supply of charges, and therefore these are never a limiting factor. Clever solutions (for example, flying through the cave with a jump pack) should be rewarded with bonuses or automatic success.

If they fail, their pilot has the good sense to lift off ahead of time, but the bulwark and all its venerated machines are doomed. The volcano walls collapse in on the crater, crushing the station (and possibly Magos Quezalt as well). The Kill-team must get the coordinates some other way.

If the island is stabilised, the Magos expertly performs their request, and in short order indicates that the epicentre of the disturbances lies deep within the Sinner's Trench. He gives them the exact coordinates, and notes that his machine spirits also divine a large amount of non-native rock formations at that point.

THE GEOMANCERS OF VANITY

The ruined world of Vanity is home to a constant battle for possession between the Achilus Crusade and its enemies. The lethal radiation and burnt-out geography are key obstacles to both sides, as they kill most soldiers before they can be of any use. The Adeptus Mechanicus has established a small subterranean enclave in one of the planet's most poisoned regions. Here, they study the nature of rock and earth, hoping to find knowledge in the wasteland that can be turned to a martial victory. This order calls themselves Geomancers. They can be found to a smaller extent on other worlds in the Jericho Reach, studying unusual geologies and terrains.

THE KAL'DIR BULWARK

Kal'dir is one of the largest islands in the archipelago, and offers plenty of thick jungle for the Reborn rebels to hide within. The xeno-cultist fighting force has maintained their siege of this modest coastal bulwark for months on end. Their vox transmitters were destroyed early in the conflict. Since that time, the station's most senior officer, Lieutenant Tiron, has learned precisely why Kal'dir is such a priority target. They sit directly above a small trove of Undying technology. Tiron has sealed the heretical cache, so he does not understand its true value. The contents are not weapons, but marble tablets and icons of worship. Most significantly, the cache contains an inscribed octahedron identical to the one in

Vincent's notes—another sigil key. This artefact is a key in both a literal and metaphoric sense. In addition to opening the tomb city, the runes on its exterior unlock the cipher from the carved tunnels under Kar'thir. If any of the Battle-Brothers detected the mathematical theme in those reliefs and recorded the images, he can use the key to determine the sunken city's location without further information by making a **Difficult (-10) Ciphers (Xenos Markings) Test**.

Of course getting into the bulwark means the Battle-Brothers first need to get past the force laying siege to it. The Kal'dir xenocultists are far better organised than their brethren in Kar'thir, and possess heavy weapons for breaching the fortified facility. (See the Militant Rebel profile on page 90, and use it to form a Horde.)

If the Battle-Brothers break the cultists' siege, Tiron gladly rids himself of the materials that made his installation such a target. If the Kill-team managed to get inside while the assault still continues, Tiron is not so cooperative. The bulwark is running low on supplies, and he knows he and his men are dead without intervention. Driven by desperation, he draws his pistol and shakily demands that the Battle-Brothers deal with the xeno-cult at his doors before he opens the seal (which truthfully poses little barrier to the Adeptus Astartes warriors).

THE KAL'VEX BULWARK

The Kal'vex bulwark takes up every centimetre of its small island and extends precariously out over the ocean. This region of islands is particularly wracked with storms, and the bulwark has become more haphazard with every emergency repair. The situation only declined when the Tech-priests grew offended at the state of affairs and forsook Kal'vex. Since that time it has relied on technomats and rough emulations of witnessed tech-rites to keep the facility together.

When the Battle-Brothers arrive, one of the region's typical storms rages. Have their craft's pilot make a **Challenging (+0) Piloting Test** to avoid sustaining damage to the vehicle while landing. The station's personnel are baffled by the arrival of the Adeptus Astartes, clearly trying to understand what could possibly warrant a visit to their run-down post. Once they understand that the Space Marines want to use their augury systems, a pall of awkward silence falls across the crew. Finally, one of them reveals that all such systems were long ago plundered for components to appease the aqua processors, stabilisers, and other vital machine spirits of the bulwark. However, if the Kill-team reveals their interest in rumours of the sunken city, the staff directs them to an unusual guest.

The Castaway

The Battle-Brothers are led to a small but neat room furnished with a cot and chest. The nameless refugee inside washed up on the bulwark a few months ago, terribly injured and mostly insane with starvation and exposure. He has said enough in his ramblings for the station's men to glean that he survived a shipwreck far out to sea. Over time, he began to speak of a city beneath the ocean with fervent certainty. He has demanded to be taken there several times. Through all of this, he has never given his name. The PDF officers apologetically suggest that maybe he can tell them something about their objectives.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The man slouches on the cot, his back pressed to the corner of the room. He is wearing coveralls obviously borrowed from the bulwark's occupants. They hang on his malnourished frame; his skin is flaking and sallow, and his eyes are lost in the terror of someplace very far from here. When he sees you, he whimpers and draws into himself. A small, pleading noise begins to repeatedly come from his lips. "No no no no no no."

Only when he sights their Deathwatch shoulder plates does his reaction change. His eyes fixate on the silver symbol, and he stares in childlike wonder. If the Battle-Brothers have already been to Surbryte's camp in Kar'dane, then they recognise the man immediately. It is Inquisitor Vincent. Depending on the topic, roleplaying, and Interaction Tests, below are some responses they may garner:

Who are you?

"It's better not to remember. I know what I used to be. So proud. So foolish. At the end, I was weak."

What happened to you?

"No less than I deserved. No less than all men like me deserve. But oh, the pain. I wasn't ready to be judged. I wasn't ready to die, not rotting in the dark with the old ones. I have failed."

Did you go to the city in the sea?

"I-I don't know. I saw it so clearly while the water filled my lungs. But seeing is not being. They go. Yes. Yes. Your dark brothers go."

What is in the sunken city?

"The old ones." He lets out a creaking laugh that turns into a hacking cough. "The Undying."

How do we reach the sunken city?

He shudders. "That is always the question, always what you want to know. I told you, didn't I? Told you about the key." A few tears trickle down his hollow, sunburnt cheeks. "God-Emperor curse me, I gave you the key."

WHAT CAN BREAK AN INQUISITOR?

Mighty though they are, bastions of iron will and the judges of whole planets—Inquisitors are still men. Vincent spent months being tortured by a Chaos Space Marine, and ultimately betrayed his sacred vows. He destroyed one sigil key to keep his captors from obtaining it, but he eventually broke and told his tormenter how to retrieve the second one stored at the Citadel. (He didn't plan on them poisoning the box.) Once the Alpha Legion had a key, Vincent directed them to a location far out in the southern seas. This location was not the sunken tomb city, but a turbulent field of deep sea vents. The Inquisitor's intent was to see both his foes and himself lost forever beneath Karlack's restless ocean. In this too he failed. Their vessel was ill-prepared. It did sink, and the Chaos Space Marines did perish, but Rize read the Inquisitor's journals at Citadel Primaris. He gleaned enough to use the cipher key on the carvings beneath the Cenotaph, and find the real location on his own. Furthermore, cruel chance spared Vincent the watery grave that claimed his captors. He survived the crash, barely. His guilt and the weeks he spent adrift in Karlack's ocean have depleted his physical and mental reserves.

WHAT DOES HE KNOW?

When his faculties were fully intact, Vincent learned that the Reborn's "Undying" mythos was rooted in a grain of truth. Karlack obviously contains the ruins of an ancient civilisation, but Vincent began to suspect that some of the aliens might still be alive, in hiding or in stasis. When he painstakingly tracked down their suspected location, the mythical sunken city, he also learned that it was impossible to enter without a sigil key. Unfortunately Lamdus Rize was also looking for any trace of this xenos race. When he learned that the Inquisitor had already done the hard work for him, he had Ilvaris lure the Inquisitor and his cadre into a trap. How much of this Vincent remembers now is questionable.

About The Augurs...

While the castaway is an interesting find, any directions he might provide are certainly less than reliable. A visual inspection of the stripped sensorium arrays easily reveals that they could be re-assembled by anyone with the Tech-Use skill, and perhaps even by the technomats who took them apart in the first place. Unfortunately, the PDF crew draws the line at letting their painfully re-constructed technology be torn apart. They aren't foolish enough to directly oppose the Adeptus Astartes with force, but do everything they can to sabotage modifications done without their consent. Such mischief might include: loosening the exterior scaffolds while the Space Marines try to work, creating power overloads, and throwing garbage down from upper ports, and harsh language. Their cooperation may be gained through exceptional persuasion, or with a **Very Hard (–30) Tech-Use Test** to lay out a plan for repairing both the augurs and the vital systems in a manner that leaves both functional.

Making the repairs requires 15 hours minus the Degrees of Success on a Tech-Use Test. This time can be halved if the bulwark's remaining two technomats assist. It also requires the implementer(s) to climb through the jumbled scaffolds of the exterior in the raging storm to make the modifications. Everyone who does this must make a **Difficult (–10) Climb Test** or plunge into the roiling sea. Any technomats who fall are lost to the waves. However, a Battle-Brother may attempt a Swim Test (with the usual modifiers for armour, see page 208 in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook) to make his way back to the rigging. Even if he fails, his life sustainers easily keep him alive until he can flounder back along the ocean floor.

Once the Augur Arrays have been re-assembled, a **Difficult (–10) Scrutiny Test** is needed to interpret the readings from these patched machine spirits in the turbulent weather. If the Kill-team waits for the storm to subside (which it does in 1d10 hours), the Test is only Challenging (+0). If they can coerce Vincent into giving them jumbled directions on where to scan, they gain a +20 bonus to the Test.

THE KAL'TRAN BULWARK

The Kal'tran bulwark is not immediately visible on approach to the mid-sized island. Most of the complex is built into the submerged rock of the island, with several docking bays and glassteel observation ports. A small, square building on the mainland contains the hatch which leads into the installation.

A tall, lean man called Senior Docktender Orvel meets the Kill-team. He makes a clumsy salute as he tries to imitate what he has seen the Crusade forces do. When the Battle-Brothers bring up the bulwark's deep sea transport, his face seems to grow slightly green. Reluctantly, he informs them of the situation.

Kal'tran is supposed to be home to the most advanced deep sea vessel on the planet, the Jericho Cathurian class submersible. However, it is also home to the largest force of Reborn insurgents on the planet—and they have stolen the Cathurian. Submersibles are not common vehicles in the Imperial armoury, and the Cathurian is rare even among submersibles. If the city is located in a deep part of the ocean (and the Battle-Brothers know it is if they have already obtained the location coordinates), Senior Docktender Orvel certainly knows of no other methods to transport them there.

The theft happened only a few days ago. Much to the PDF's shame, a Reborn cultist had existed in their midst, and he allowed his fellows to gain access to the submersible. By the time Orvel and his men realised what happened, the Cathurian was already headed out to sea. The Senior Docktender admits that he suspects where the rebels have the submersible, but does not have the men or firepower to reclaim it. The Reborn have several holdings on the island, but only one that borders the water. If the Battle-Brothers can retrieve the Cathurian or simply secure the area where it is being kept, Orvel will gratefully provide a trained crew to take them wherever they want to go.

The Reborn Encampment

The costal encampment of the Reborn militants is on the other side of the island. Their leader, Feynir Surbryte, is overseeing the site personally. It is not coincidence that Surbryte's forces stole the Cathurian at this juncture, because they are headed to the same location as the Deathwatch. The Alpha Legion's best intelligence (largely drawn from Dahzak's divinations) suggests that a massive number of souls may have to be sacrificed to resurrect the xenos from their tombs. With the submersible in their possession, the Reborn have been steadily sending their members to the sunken city. What worshipper of the Undying wouldn't want to be a part of awakening their beloved patrons? The xeno-cult's leader, for one.

The man presently going by Feynir Surbryte is cosmopolitan enough to know good never comes from disturbing powerful beings. His time serving the Alpha Legion on this planet is growing to a close. Soon it will be time to take on a new identity and further the Legion's fractious agenda on another world. His last duty is to funnel his flock into the sunken ruins as fodder for Lamdus Rize's plan.

The encampment can be reached by taking a sea vessel around the island, or by crossing through its jungle on foot. Several dozen identical beige tents are pitched along the sandy white beach. Most of them are similar on the inside: a few bedrolls, a weapon cleaning kit, and perhaps a handful of personal items. However, one such tent belongs to Yale Ilvaris, and it is considerably more interesting (see opposite). The sand covers thirty metres between the tree line and the murky ocean. Once this beach might have been idyllic, but decades of manufacturing, construction, and runoff from over-farming show their effects in the south as well. The choppy water is a brackish green-brown, and dead fish line the shore. The Cathurian is hard to miss, its grey hull rising above the water line a few dozen metres out.

Mines ring the encampment. If the Battle-Brothers approach by land, roll an Opposed Test between their Awareness and an effective Concealment Skill of 55. Success means they spot the mines and are able to avoid them. On a failure, everyone in the vicinity takes 3d10 X Damage with a Penetration of 2. Moreover, their presence is revealed to the xeno-cultists, who quickly rush out into combat.

Battling the Reborn

The camp is a wide, open stretch of sand dotted with tents. Each tent is 2 metres wide and tall; the tents obscure sight, but do not provide any significant AP if used as cover. If a Battle with the Reborn breaks out, it has two distinct sets of Adversaries. The first is a Magnitude 36 Horde of militant cultists. The second is Feynir Surbryte and the other senior members of the Reborn. The senior xeno-cultists number 1 less than the number of Battle-Brothers. Use the Militant Rebel Cultist profile on page 90 to construct the Horde, and individual Militant Rebel Cultists equipped with Cult Weapons for the senior members. The Horde forms a protective ring around their leaders, shielding their enlightened leaders with their bodies. Assume this ring is 8 metres from the outer edge to the inner edge. Until this mass of xeno-cultists breaks, the Kill-team cannot advance on the leaders in the centre, and all ranged attacks on them incur a -30 Penalty.

FEYNIR SURBRYTE

Feynir Surbryte is only the latest identity of the man born Yale Ilvaris. Ilvaris is the definition of an opportunist. Born on a small planet in the corona of the Hadex Anomaly, he drifted from one cult to another, with an innate knack for choosing the winning side. More pragmatic than dogmatic, his talents eventually brought him into an alliance with the Alpha Legion. Destabilisation through cults and unrest is a key strategy for this Traitor Legion. In exchange for such luxuries as juvenat treatments, Ilvaris has roused discontent and furthered the Alpha Legion's cause from within on more than a dozen worlds.

Ilvaris and his Feynir Surbryte persona are to thank for the prominence of the Reborn on Karlack. The bastion of Imperial might makes an obvious target of interest for the Alpha Legion. For reasons not revealed to Ilvaris, the Chaos Space Marines had a particular interest in the planet's xenos legacy even before they agreed to help with Dahzak's plan. It was for this reason they directed his efforts specifically towards the Reborn. Through their puppet, the Alpha Legion has taught the cultists how to repair and operate some of the powerful "Undying" artefacts they have unearthed. Through Ilvaris's training and charismatic leadership, the zealous xeno-cult has developed a sizable contingent of competent fighters.

The senior xeno-cultists have managed (with help from their Alpha Legion patrons) to salvage a few working pieces of the Undying's advanced technology. Their alien weapons pose a far graver threat than the xeno-cultists' guns. Surbryte and his closest devotees wield sleek rifles with a vibrant green chamber inset in the barrel. They emit wide beams of disintegrating energy. This deadly polarised lightning scours away skin and armour more efficiently than the most caustic acid. Layer by layer the target's molecular bonds break. Starting with the armour, then the skin, then his insides, the victim's body turns into gaseous particles that bond with the beam of the weapon. If no Battle-Brothers are struck by a flayer rifle in the first Round of combat, the GM may want to assume a xeno-cultist took a stray hit so he can still describe the lurid effects.

The Traitor's Bargain

A survivor to the end, Ilvaris hangs onto life (by burning his last Fate Point) after all his followers go down. He squints up at the Angels of Death looming over his injured body, and decides it may be time to rethink his allies. If the Battle-Brothers come near him after fighting the xeno-cult leaders, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Surbryte's breathing is shallow, but he still breathes. He winces up at you with a look of resignation. "Will you hear me out before you dispense your justice, favoured of the God-Emperor?"

Ilvaris makes a bid for his life. He paints himself as the victim of cruel fortune. Born under the heel of Chaos in the Charon Stars, he had no choice but to serve the region's foul masters. Through all this, he never truly gave his soul over to the dark powers, a fact he encourages them to verify by checking his body for the marks of Chaos (of which he has none). To try to prove his worth, he offers to reveal everything he knows about the Alpha Legion and the Reborn. Below are facts he may disclose:

- The Reborn were nothing until Lamdus Rize sent Ilvaris to organise them. They would never have gotten any of the alien technology working if the Alpha Legion hadn't shown them how.
- Ilvaris doesn't know much about what the Undying really are, but Rize seems to have suspicions. For many years they were nothing but a mythical idol to rally behind. Then Rize joined with some organisation on Samech. Suddenly, he became far more interested in the aliens that used to inhabit Karlack, and driven to discover sites related to them.
- Rize lured Vincent into an ambush here in the southern islands. He killed most of the Inquisitor's cadre, and spent months trying to learn what Vincent knew about the city beneath the sea. Ultimately, the Inquisitor folded. Ilvaris isn't sure what happened after that, but just a few days ago Rize directed him to acquire the Cathurian and begin shipping his followers out on it. Ilvaris doesn't know where they're going, but he knows they aren't coming back.

If the Kill-team lets him keep talking, he vows to repent his evil ways. He may even mean it, at the GM's discretion—particularly if the Deathwatch Space Marines give him reason to think they can point him towards a brighter future than being the Alpha Legion's agent provocateur forevermore. He continues trying to negotiate for his life until the Kill-team either accepts, or silences him.

Ilvaris's Tent

The xeno-cult's phony leader lived in much the same fashion as the rest of the Reborn; his furnishings and possessions seem typical of those elsewhere in the camp. However, an

THE ALPHA LEGION

Of all the accursed Legions who turned from the light of the Emperor during the Horus Heresy, the Alpha Legion remains the most enigmatic. Their emblem is the Hydra, symbolizing the multi-headed nature of their Legion, with each group able to act independently of the others. They excel in infiltration and destabilisation. The practice they employed on Karlack is a common one for them: stirring up cults to weaken and distract the target before the Alpha Legion launches its attack.

One other idiosyncrasy of these Traitors is that they still use their battle cry from times past: "For the Emperor!" Needless to say these words on the lips of betrayers is a grave affront to loyal Space Marines. Most assume this reaction is the reason the Alpha Legion use the phrase.

Ordinary (+10) Search Test reveals two items of interest. If the Kill-team made a deal with Ilvaris then he points everything out himself in a guided tour.

Weapons Locker: Ilvaris left this innocuous case under his cot unlocked in his rush to join the fray outside. It contains indentations shaped to store his wraithblade and temporal distorter. It also contains a needle pistol with several doses of virulent poisons, and a thick glove covered in spikes that taper to needle-thin points. The inside of the lid is scarred with oxidation. Once it displayed an etched marking, but someone deliberately burned it away.

Data Crystal: This crystal contains pict recording from Rize's interrogations of Inquisitor Vincent. A sampling of the contents includes:

Dated ten months previous:

The picter shows the nondescript interior of a beige tent. A man with a neatly kept beard stands straight-backed in the frame. A large figure crosses close to him, looming. The Chaos Space Marine's armour is bears a blue and green scale pattern. He takes off his helmet, revealing short blond hair. He speaks calmly. "We each have the ability to inconvenience each other, Inquisitor. You could take a good deal of my time—time I would rather not lose. And I, I could take a good deal of your flesh. Flesh I assume you would rather not lose. So I propose we both depart this tent now, with all our assets intact. Just tell me, how do I find the xenos monoliths?"

Dated four months ago:

The picter shows the same tent, and the remnants of the same bearded man. A metal rack has been brought into the tent, and he hangs from it by metal shackles that appear to have been welded on around his wrists. His withered, bloody body shows that the Traitor kept his promise. His captor enters, carrying a shaggy object. He tosses it at the Inquisitor's feet, and the face of a dead woman stares up. "That was the last of them. She mentioned something quite interesting in her last screams, however. She seemed to think the sigil you destroyed wasn't the only one you found. Tell me about this second key."

Dated three weeks ago:

The picter zooms in very close in on the Inquisitor's face, which is drawn in pain and drenched with sweat. Out of sight, something makes a strange buzzing whine—like the hybrid of a shrieking animal and a bone saw. "No more..." his hoarse voice is like gravel. "There is... There is another key." The noise stops, giving way to expectant silence. "It's at the Citadel—in my chambers." The view remains fixed, but off-screen the Alpha Legion warrior speaks. "Then we shall go and acquire it. Then you will take us to the tombs."

Alpha Legion Dreadclaw

An Alpha Legion's Dreadclaw assault pod sits at one end of the camp. This flight-capable drop pod is what brought the Traitor squad to the planet, and where they stored their equipment. A **Challenging (+0) Security Test** opens the hatch underneath the hull. Cautious and secretive to the last, the Traitor Marines have left little informative on their vessel. However, a set of storage chests do hold one thing of great interest: the "Black Templar" armour.

The baroque, spiked profile of Chaos power armour is difficult to disguise no matter how it is painted. For that reason, the Alpha Legion had to acquire armour from loyal Adeptus Astartes for their masquerade. Upon closer inspection, none of the suits of power armour are actually Black Templar in origin. They come from an eclectic array of loyal Chapters—no doubt pillaged from the Battle-Brothers who opposed them in past encounters. The GM can decide exactly which Chapters are most interesting, but the list of initial Achilles Crusade forces on page 339 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook makes a good starting point. The unique emblems and inscriptions have all been covered with thick black paint, and the Black Templars' white cross symbol stencilled on the shoulder pad. A Space Marine's eye can pick out the distinguishing marks underneath the paint and forged tabards, but it is easy to understand how those outside the Adeptus Astartes would miss the difference.

Despite their recent service history, these suits appear to be untainted beneath the false colours. They could be returned to honourable service either with the Deathwatch or their home Chapters.

The Cathurian

The submersible lies stationary several meters out from shore. Its adamantite-grey hull is smooth except for a few embossed Imperial icons. Two exterior hatches are unlocked. If Ilvaris is serious about siding with the Deathwatch, he informs them that a crew of apostate Adeptus Mechanicus await them inside the submersible. Otherwise, whoever enters the ship first may be in for more than one unpleasant surprise. These corrupt followers of Arch-Magos Vayze are high-ranking Magi on Samech. Using the poisonous fruits of forbidden science, each

A HERO'S NAME

The stolen armour provides an opportunity for the GM to plant his own campaign history or hooks for future Missions. Many suits of power armour bear the name of their owner, and those of particularly venerable Adeptus Astartes display identifying heraldry. The Kill-team may find a set of such armour. It could be the property of a hero whose fate was heretofore unknown, and perhaps provides a link to a duty unfinished that the Battle-Brothers must follow up on. Alternatively, perhaps one suit of artificer armour stands out from the others. It obviously belonged to a great hero, but no one has ever heard his name. Who was this Battle-Brother and why have all records of his deeds disappeared?



one of them is not only a master of machines, but a twisted chimera of logical order and its antithesis.

Despite being formidable combatants, their task on Karlack is to transport the sacrificial lambs to the sunken tombs and aid in finding a vector amplifier. Battling Space Marines is an unnecessary risk to those priorities. When the Battle-Brothers enter the Cathurian they find the dark Tech-Priests scrambling to make the vehicle ready for a departure. However, a single Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine oversees the operation. Unlike the Magi, the Chaos Space Marine is ready and waiting for his nemeses to arrive.

Battle in Close Quarters

Two Apostate Mechanicus Magi work near the entry hatch when the Battle-Brothers enter the Cathurian. Unless the Kill-team is deliberately loud, the Magi are Surprised. The hiding Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine holds his action until the end of the Round in an attempt to ambush the Kill-team. Only Battle-Brothers who win an **Opposed Test of their Awareness versus his Concealment** notice him before he attacks.

Once he engages, two more Tech-Priests join him in defending their stolen prize. The area around the entry hatch is a square four metres on a side. Beyond this are narrow, random, snaking halls. (If the Kill-team entered simultaneously through both hatches then the GM can improvise an intersection of passages between the two.) The Chaos Space Marine and the Apostate Magi attack from the halls, using them for cover.

Fighting in the cramped passageways imposes a –10 penalty to the Weapon Skill of all the Hulking combatants, including the Alpha Legion Space Marine. The profiles for this encounter can be found on page 89. The Apostate Magi carry pendants bearing the same cog and chaos wheel symbol that the Battle-Brothers might have seen in the cave on Aurum.

Taking the Submersible

Should the Battle-Brothers fail to clear the Cathurian before signalling Kal'tran to come and retrieve it, the Samech Magi attempt to depart in the vessel. A **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test** alerts anyone nearby that the craft's engines are waking. If it is detected early, there is still enough time to make a dash for the hatches. Otherwise, the next indication is when the Cathurian starts submerging. At this juncture, the Kill-team must create enough breaches that it can't safely dive, or find some other unorthodox way to stop it from getting away.

After the Battle-Brothers seize the Cathurian, they discover the Magi and Chaos Space Marine weren't alone. The vessel's locked port hold contains several dozen Reborn cultists who were waiting to join their brethren for the great arising of the Undying. The controls for the hold doors are on the bridge, and the magi kept said doors locked to avoid unnecessary complications. The Battle-Brothers can unlock the doors, jettison the xeno-cult passengers, or simply leave them where they are.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: VIPERS IN OUR MIDST

The traitor at Kal'tran is not the Reborn's only inside agent. Among "Surbryte's" possessions there is a contact list of other members inside the planet's military. The longer the Battle-Brothers delay in getting this list to Iacton, the greater the chance that these individuals will find out about Surbryte's defeat and flee or cause damage. Most of the bulwarks as well as the Kill-team's transport have a long-range vox that can send the information directly back to the Citadel Primaris for immediate action. Lord General Iacton replies personally to the transmission. Once he has absorbed the lists, he states that he can take care of most of the traitors, but requests the Battle-Brothers to deal with one serious security threat. Isiaah Faln is the master of Malvon bulwark, which controls a substantial portion of the southern defence grid. Faln has the potential the potential to cause massive damage before loyal forces reach him, and due to his proximity to Kal'tran, he may already know about the Reborn's fall. Iacton asks the Battle-Brothers to detour to the nearby island and take Faln down before he does lasting harm.

Malvon is similar in environment to Kal'tran, only smaller in landmass. Owing to its strategic importance, this bulwark is a squat, heavily fortified structure. Unfortunately for the Kill-team, it is also heavily armed, and Faln did indeed receive word of the Deathwatch presence in the islands. The PDF troops under his command wouldn't know a loyal Space Marine from a traitor, and he has taken advantage of that to rally them with a story that mirrors the Kill-team's initial problems at the Citadel. Faln's troops believe the region is under assault by Chaos Space Marines, and Faln has warned them that these foes of man may try to fool them with lies.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following when the Battle-Brothers get their first look at the bulwark:

The octagonal grey structure is roughly two stories tall, and topped with four twin-linked long-barrelled autocannons on pivoting turrets. A thick wall—4 metres tall and topped with razorwire—surrounds the compound.

The Battle-Brothers' options range from a reckless frontal assault to negotiation or guile. Use the following information about the base layout to help in running the encounter. The GM may reveal some of this information or offer suggestions based on the success of an **Ordinary (+10) Tactics Test**. He may wish to roll this Test in secret so that the players are not sure of the validity of their information.

AUTOCANNON EMPLACEMENTS

Each Emplacement does 5d10 +8 X Damage, Pen 6, with Range 500, RoF S/2/5 and the Twin-Linked Quality. The guns are controlled from a station inside the base, using the operators' Ballistics Skill of 35. Should anyone choose to attack the emplacements themselves, they have AP 15 and it takes 30 Wounds to destroy one of the barrels. The long barrels prevent a gun from firing at a target directly adjacent to the building on which it is mounted, and the weapons are never considered Point Blank Range. Similarly, while the emplacements' elevation gives them line of sight over most of the compound, anyone staying close to an intervening building is obscured.

MAIN ROOM

This octagonal structure has murder slits on the sides which do not have attached passages. Each slit can accommodate enough PDF soldiers to form a Horde of Magnitude 10. More soldiers than that are inside the Base, but the size of the slit limits how many can fire at one time. Therefore, the Horde maintains its Magnitude of 10 even if it takes Damage, as more soldiers replace the dead. However, keep track of any Magnitude Damage done as it applies to the Magnitude of soldiers faced inside. There is too much noise to attempt normal communication with the soldiers while they are firing. The main room has two access hatches on the roof; opening them from the outside requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**. Opening the main door from outside requires a **Difficult (–10) Tech Use Test**.

SECONDARY ROOM AND OBSERVATORY

The secondary building contains the gunnery station for the autocannon emplacements on its lowest level, and the Command Observatory (where Isiaah Faln is located) at the top. Moving between stories takes one Round to traverse the stairs. The west side of the ground floor has an escape exit that is not as well secured as the main entrance, but is also concealed from the outside. It can be spotted by anyone on

that side of the complex with a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**, and opened with an **Ordinary (+10) Security Test**. While most of the base is constructed from materials too strong for personal arms fire to break through, the mirrored glassteel panels lining the third story are a weak point, and shatter if a single attack does more than 25 points of Damage to them.

PERIMETER WALL

Reaching the base requires going over or through the thick perimeter wall, which is 4 metres high. If climbed, the razorwire does no more than scratch the paint of Astartes power armour. Breaching the wall requires dealing 10 Wounds of Damage to the same spot after penetrating its AP of 25.

LANDING PAD

The landing pad is currently empty, and the two control consoles are unmanned. If a Battle-Brother crouches behind a console at the right angle, he has nearly complete cover from all of the turrets. While neither of these consoles house the controls for the main door, they could be used by a Techmarine to interface with the central cogitator. The consoles do have vox panels that connect to the main building's proclaimer system. A large ascender leads down to the ground level corridor that adjoins the base, but the door here is also sealed identically to the main door. This corridor also has a murder slit on either side.

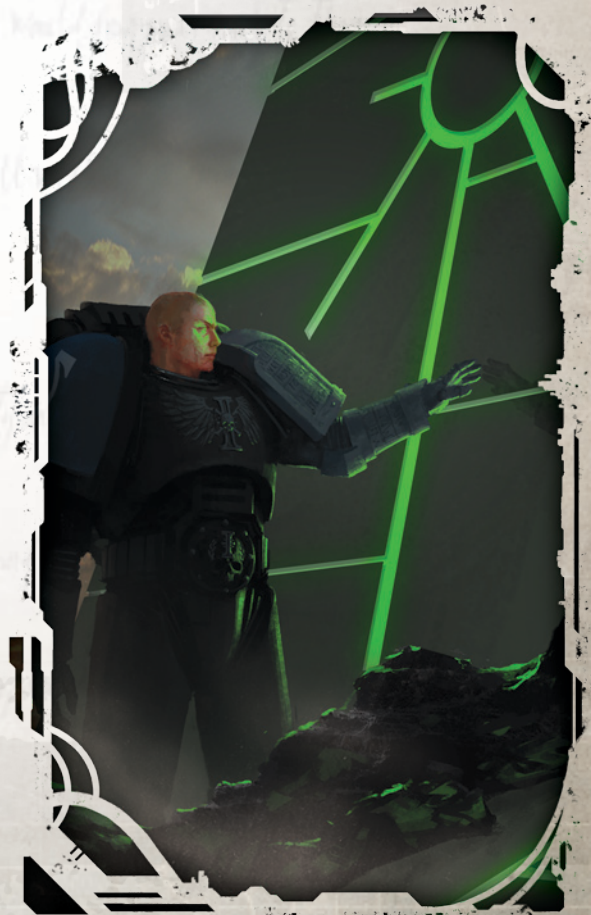
WHAT SLUMBERS BENEATH KARLACK

Warhammer 40,000 fans have almost certainly recognised the architecture and other telltale facets of the aliens entombed beneath Karlack. They are an ancient race that will one day be dubbed the Necrons, and they are anything but the benign entities the "Undying" myths paint them as. Before the rise of man, this technologically advanced civilisation began to worship the C'tan, star gods, who eventually transformed them into a race of living metal hungry for the life force of other beings.

The Necrons and their C'tan masters submitted themselves to stasis-sleep millions of years ago, waiting for a fertile time to rise and once again harvest the life of the galaxy. The Necrons do not become known to the Warhammer 40,000 universe at large until 897. M41 when they begin to wake in force. That is decades later than the current Deathwatch setting. As always the GM can make his own choices about his campaign, but be aware that any happenings which introduce the Necrons as a tangible enemy force earlier deviates from the official Warhammer 40,000 timeline.

INSIDE THE BASE AND ADDITIONAL FACTS

The distance from ground to roof in the base is 8 metres, except for the Command Observatory which rises another 4 metres above the rest of the roof. The actual Magnitude of the Horde of inside the base is 50, less any Magnitude Damage done through the murder slits. However, the confined nature of the base gives the Horde an effective Magnitude of 20, only using their actual Magnitude to calculate Breaking thresholds. Once face-to-face with the men, the Battle-Brothers may also try to persuade them to put down their weapons through roleplay or Interaction Skills. Meanwhile, as soon as the Kill-team breaches the base, Faln tries to escape through the secondary building's side exit.



THE CITY BENEATH THE SEA

Sometimes at night the sea grants me glimpses of what lies beneath. Often I see not what is, but what was and what might be, for the ocean is more ancient than the mountains.

—from the writings of an ancient Terran Prophet

Unless one of the Battle-Brothers is trained in piloting a submersible, the Kal'tran Bulwark provides Lieutenant Helmsman Shayde Athenos to command the vessel. The young, slightly plump junior officer apologetically explains that using the augury-only guidance systems of submersibles requires special training. All the Captains who can do so are presently deployed. She resolutely promises to deliver the Kill-team to their destination safely.

The cramped submersible was not built to accommodate Space Marines, and they must hunch awkwardly to fit in most spaces of the ship. Perhaps one of them could loom in the bridge, but Athenos encourages them to wait in the starboard hold. Be certain to decide where everyone is located in the submersible and where the sigil is, as this plays an important role later on. In particular, the GM should decide if any additional NPCs are seated in the hold with the Battle-Brothers. This could create some interesting situations.

Even the reinforced hull of the Cathurian groans as the Kill-team descends into Sinner's Trench. Only the densest alloys can hold up the pressure at these depths, so the claustrophobic submersible has no viewports. It runs on the perceptions of the machine spirits alone. For hours the occupants experience an endless feeling of sinking. The waters grow more and more turbulent as they approach their destination. Towards the end of the journey, a powerful shockwave suddenly rocks the vessel, and it turns pitch black as every powered machine goes out, including power armour and the Cathurian itself. Pause and let the characters react, before informing them a minute later when the machines start to wake. If anyone makes an inquiry to the bridge, Athenos gives a reply laced with colourful expletives indicating she doesn't know what it was. A constant rumbling vibration now pulses through the hull. They continue on for another thirty minutes.

NO WAY OUT

By all appearances, when the Kill-team first arrives in the tomb city, they have no way to leave. Of course it wouldn't be a very enjoyable adventure if the characters were forced into a situation with no way out but death. Your players probably have a sense that you wouldn't be this unfair, but that doesn't mean the characters are in on the secret. There are great roleplaying opportunities in the Kill-team believing that they face certain death here in the alien structure. You can encourage those opportunities by highlighting how grim their situation looks.



Then read aloud or paraphrase the following.

The sense of movement slows as you near the coordinates. Suddenly the Cathurian shudders violently; your ears fill with the terrible sound of impact and buckling metal. Alarm klaxons begin to blare. The voice of Lieutenant Helmsman Athenos comes over the proclaimer. "It's all right! We're not breached. I don't understand. The augurs don't show anything here... Oh for the Shining Saint's sake would someone turn off that noise?" The proclaimer cuts off.

The Battle-Brothers have reached their destination. The sigil begins to emit a bright green light, which illuminates the seams of anything that might contain it. On the other hand, if someone is actively holding it, they barely have time to notice the light. The instant a living being makes contact with the sigil, everyone in the room displaces with a sensation very similar to teleportation deployment.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

One second you were bathed in the green light, and the next you stand in the centre of an alien city. Towering obelisks of gold-etched marble intersect shapes of smooth curves and Euclidian angles—all revealed in their own virid illumination. At first the sky and the horizon are shimmering black, but then you see a long cylinder floating above you: the Cathurian. You are in the fabled sunken city, and a huge dome of force surrounds it, holding back the press of the lightless waters. That is what the ship struck, and where the sigil has taken you.

Whoever touched the sigil finds it in their hand or near their feet as they get their bearings. The Battle-Brothers (and any unfortunate guests) stand in a square depression amidst the xenos structures. Emerald light is fading from the border of lines and symbols as the mysterious transport mechanism powers down. The force dome appears to be emanating from an elevated crystal far in the distance. Anyone with an auspex or similar sensors detects huge amounts of energy flowing through the radiant green polyhedron.

Ahead, giant doors stand parted. They are as tall as drawings depict the entrance to the Golden Throne. Beyond them, the monolithic tomb awaits.

THE ALIEN TOMB CITY

The city beneath the sea is not a ruin. It is a great tomb, and however wrong about these aliens the Reborn cult may have been, they were right about thing: this ancient race is immortal. They do not rot here; they only wait to re-awaken. The Traitor Legions behind the entire scheme intend to see that happen. While their primary objective may be retrieving the technology sample for Dahzak's cabal, they are not about to pass up the opportunity to strike at the Achilus Crusade. Karlack is the very lynchpin of the Iron Collar, and if such a powerful enemy were to assault the planet from within, the Crusade might never recover.

The complex where the action takes place is only one small fragment of the huge tomb city, but it is still massive. The smallest corridors are wide enough to fit two Rhinos abreast; the stone chambers are tall enough to hold a Titan. Within these xenos crypts, Lamdus Rize learns the peril of attempting to deceive a seer. Dahzak had divined that the Alpha Legion would betray him, and gave Sethahar orders to strike pre-emptively. Once they had obtained a vector amplifier and begun opening the tombs, Rize's use to the cabal was at an end.

The Chaos Space Marines detect the Battle-Brothers' arrival. Sethahar allows Rize to deploy his men to buy more time. However, as Sethahar and Lamdus reach the departure circle, it becomes clear that the sorcerer has no intention of waiting for the Alpha Legion before leaving. The two Chaos

LEFT BEHIND

What if one of the player characters wasn't in the hold when the sigil activated? The Cathurian has a single nautical boarding torpedo, built from the same pressure-tolerant metal as the submersible itself. This is how Athenos had been originally expecting to deploy her passengers. If anyone was left behind, they can load into the boarding torpedo while the Enginseers adjust its electromagnetic properties. They target what appears to be an unstable portion of the dome, theorizing the altered field may allow the torpedo to pass through. Then they fire the Battle-Brother(s), and pray.

Space Marines turn on one another on the far side of the Monolith field. While this action takes place "off screen," the Kill-team's new Primary Objective should be obvious: stop the aliens from waking. However, the sunken city also offers opportunities to learn more about their enemies and their real goals (see page 141 for a map of this region).

ENTRANCE

The Battle-Brothers immediately notice the sluggishness of their armour and the heaviness of their limbs as they enter the radius of the vitality absorption. Beyond the entry corridor are two overlapping pyramidal chambers, extending so high that their apex is scarcely visible from within. Intact sarcophagi scale these mountainous walls, thousands upon thousands built into the incline. The Kill-team also finds the recently shattered remains of a bizarre spider-like creature and its apparent victims on the smooth floor.

IMPLACABLE HUNGER

The energy drain the Kill-team experienced earlier on the sub was the activation of the tomb's primary systems—the call for its occupants to wake. This process required great amounts of energy, and the alien xenos city is capable of harvesting that from anywhere. Most of that energy came from the life forces of the Reborn xeno-cultists. However, the mechanism continues to slowly leech life from every source available to it—flesh and machine alike. As long as the absorption field remains active it has the following effects:

- **Vitality Leech:** Anyone inside the tomb complex carries one level of Fatigue. Note that this affects xeno-cultists and Chaos Space Marines as well.
- **Power Drain:** Any device that uses a power source behaves as though under the Minor Disruption effect of a Haywire Field. See the table on page 143 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook.

The GM may also wish to embellish with inopportune equipment failures on either side at random intervals. Note that the alien technology and constructs are not affected.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The metal carcass of a large construct is strewn across the chamber. You count several jointed limbs—the length of each close to your entire height—and at least one weapon arm. It is primarily pitted with bolter fire, but some portions of the creature bear the scars of a power weapon. One of the severed limbs is gnarled and misshapen, as though crafted to mimic the deformity of mutation. Several dead xeno-cultists also lie in the chamber, their bodies shorn to pieces and riddled with singed openings. Their lips are frozen in screams of horror.

An **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny Test** observes that both the bolter shells and the wounds made by them are Adeptus Astartes calibre.

ALPHA LEGION ASSAULT

The next triangular chamber has several square openings leading into a hallway behind it. The Kill-team has little chance to look around, as they are immediately assaulted by Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines. At this point the Alpha Legion's goal is to kill or at least delay the Kill-team until Lamdus and Sethahar can complete their own primary objective: retrieval of a vector amplifier. However, even as this combat takes place, Sethahar is enacting his betrayal.

If any of the Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines survive (either because they withdraw or were not present) they return to harry the Kill-team once they discover that they have been left behind. They realise that they are now trapped in the tomb with the rising xenos, and know that the Adeptus Astartes must have a sigil of their own in order to have entered. Their goal on subsequent attacks—which can occur anywhere in the complex—is to take the sigil key. (This can be a good way to draw your players' attention to one means of their own escape if they don't figure it out.)

In any situation where the Kill-team has the opportunity to observe Alpha Legion corpses (such as after battle with them) have each character make a **Difficult (–10) Scrutiny Test**. On a success they observe a thin layer of a foul-smelling ochre powder coating their enemy's armour. A **Difficult (–10)**

WITHIN THE TOMBS

The interior of the Necropolis feels more like a xenos world than a location on an Imperial Fortress planet. The GM can help maintain this alien feel by drawing attention throughout the tombs to some of the following environmental aspects:

- In many places the stone of the tombs is so smooth it seems like metal. Sometimes it is cold to the touch, and others strangely warm.
- Brilliant green energy crystals and green illumination
- Strange geometry in all of the structure's angles and ordered xenos runes

Lore: Scholastic (Chymistry) or Very Hard (–20) Chem-Use Test identifies the substance by smell and appearance. The powder is trialkaline. This substance is a powerful anti-corrosive often used in toxic environments. It can also be analyzed in a safer setting using the proper equipment, which requires only a **Routine (+20) Lore: Scholastic (Chymistry) Test**.

If anyone attempts to follow the trail of the other agents of Chaos and the xeno-cultists, it requires a **Challenging (+0) Tracking Test** to locate the miniscule patches of rubble and blood left by their passing. Their course leads down the northeast passage of this hallway.

CONTROL DEVICE

Like all of these aliens' technological remnants, this smooth, angular mechanism has little in common with the gothic, ornamented machines of the Imperium. The device orchestrates the energies of the tomb city, including the waking and stasis of its occupants. Whatever omen or stimulus it may have initially awaited, Sethahar's spell—channelling the life force of hundreds of xeno-cultists—triggered it early. A pulsing green crystal tops the pyramidal control structure, which itself sits on a vast cylindrical platform open to the black sea-sky. Gold walkways connect the platform to two other identical circular islands. Corpses heap across one another on these islands.

The gold bridges are flat and only a few centimetres thick, but solid as adamantite. However, an eight metre gap has been melted from each walkway with a high-powered energy weapon, trapping the Reborn xeno-cultists on the stone pillars where they died. They bear no visible wounds, but their skin is pale and ashy. If anyone examines them, the bodies are ice cold to the touch.

The control device is too foreign to consider operating. Its dark, shimmering surface bears no visible interface. The crystal continues to throb slowly, like the beating of a sinister heart. It is incredibly resilient but not unbreakable, possessing AP 20 (but only one wound). If any of the Battle-Brothers decide to shatter it, the absorption field effects end. However, power continues to hum through the tomb, and the low rumbling persists as ancient seals continue to deteriorate. It is too late to stop the creatures from waking.

STARSCAPE ALCOVE

This alcove is covered with carvings. However, before the Battle-Brothers can examine them closely, they have xeno-cultists to deal with. A handful of the Reborn fled the Chaos Space Marines and alien construction rather than be herded onto the pillars. While they came to their senses in time to avoid becoming sacrifices to the awakening, they are still trapped in the tomb city. Roughly a dozen people huddle together beneath the alien carvings. They gasp at the first heavy tread of a Space Marine boot, but their fear turns to relief when they see the symbols of the Inquisition and loyal Adeptus Astartes Chapters. They erupt into a cacophony of pleas for salvation and forgiveness.

If the Kill-team does look closer at the depictions on the walls, they are part navigational and part worship. Similar to the reliefs at the Cenotaph but far more elaborate, these

designs track the movement of the galaxy's eastern fringe. Glittering gold lines weave among the stars and nebula; these unlabelled courses seem like the focus of the pieces more than the stars themselves. Correlating any of the objects on the wall to the Jericho Reach is only possible with the encryption key, and even then it is not easy. The chart depicts many dead stars and planetary bodies that no longer exist, and lacks many that have been born since its creation. Gleaning meaningful information from the charts on the spot requires a **Challenging (+0) Navigation (Stellar) or Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Test**. However, it is possible to capture picts of the relief and compare them to standard charts later. Findings might include:

- When this map was etched, the Hadex Anomaly did not exist. Instead, at that location the chart shows the ill-fated systems that became the Charon Stars. No sign exists of what might have caused the terrible wound in reality that would one day drag them into the warp and their damnation.
- The area now dubbed the Well of Night is surrounded by geometric symbols that not even the cipher can elucidate.
- The region where the Black Reef sits is completely void, as though unexplored and uncharted.
- Nearly all the celestial bodies show some discrepancy in their nature or location given the countless aeons that have passed since the chart's carving. Except the Erioch system, which is shown exactly where it hides today, accompanied by mathematical notation showing seven identical planets.

IDOL ROOM

This alcove mirrors the position of the other. It does not contain carvings, but statues. Auspexes refuse to penetrate the shimmering metal, but the sculptures produce a hollow echo if struck. Each slender figure is vaguely humanoid, but their features and visages vary widely. Their faces are without exception cold—either mocking or hungry or both. The few that bear weapons carry nothing similar to the technology found with the Reborn. These representations almost seem to be the gods' gods.

A RUINED PORTAL

The various structures of the massive tomb city connect via a series of portals. When power returned to the tomb, the dormant stacks of metal blocks once again framed gateways of swirling emerald light. This is what the Chaos Space Marines had been waiting for. They sundered the closest portal and stripped it of its vector amplifier. If the Kill-team encounters the portal's remains, it lies in a heap of polyhedral shapes with the last flickers of energy quickly fading from it.

THE MONOLITH FIELD

The northern wall of the ringed hall holds one of the complex's few openings. A long portion of the wall has been cut away, forming a window. This window looks directly onto a field of glowing pyramids floating above a dark, sheer surface. Each monolithic ziggurat holds a large green crystal at its apex, and it crackles with arcs of energy. It is difficult to grasp the exact size of these edifices from within the tombs, as the massive complex renders even the largest objects insignificant in comparison to its own scale.

A long tower of steps leads from a nearby hall spoke down into the field. The trail of the remaining Chaos Space Marines takes this exit out into the expanse of hovering pyramids. Only then does their size take on meaning. These are not more buildings, but weapon platforms. Each of their four corners mounts an array of huge energy weapons. These beam weapons look identical in all but size to the alien rifles in the hands of the senior reborn. If their strength increased as much as their size, these weapons could be capable of stripping the hull from a Rhino.

The smooth pyramids hover motionless. However, their inert appearance is deceptive. It is impossible to say whether the structures trigger on proximity or if their machine spirits possess some malicious awareness, but if any Battle-Brothers attempt to cross the field, the monoliths erupt with deadly beams of destructive energy. Anyone wishing to cross the long field must apply diligence to avoid being flayed alive. He can make a series of Dodge Tests to avoid being hit or Concealment Tests to avoid being detected. (The GM should determine the exact number and difficulty of these Tests depending on the level of the characters. See page 66 for the Damage taken on a hit from the lightning arc projectors.)

The far side of the field holds two points of interest. One is the arcane transport device that can be used to leave the necropolis. The other is a magnificent view of the energy crystal projecting the force dome around the Necropolis. It floats with two bordering platforms hundreds of feet in the air. An opening appears to lead out to this area from elsewhere in the tomb, but there is no ground connection from the monolith field. For more information on the transport circle and the energy core, see below.

TRANSPORT CIRCLE

The Undying were masters of space and time. Teleportation was a common method of travel for them, as witnessed in the sigils. Naturally, the devices are not one way. At the edge of the monolith field is a large ring inscribed with gold circuitry. An **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny Test** recognises it as virtually identical to the one in the empty mausoleum beneath the Cenotaph. Its centre contains a vertical slot that is conspicuously the size and shape of the sigil key. By the time any pursuers reach this point, Sethahar has gone. The surrounding warp still echoes with the taint of his sorcery.

However, Lamdus remains. The Battle-Brothers cannot miss the Space Marine in Alpha Legion power armour who leans up against a fractured pillar. He still lives, barely. His helmet is gone, his armour scorched by fire and rent as though by blades. His eyes come to focus on the Kill-team, and he clears



the blood from his lungs before speaking. Lamdus is unarmed and slow moving. Assuming they do not kill him before he can speak, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Chaos Space Marine's lips twist into a self-deprecating smirk. "It took you long enough to get here," he rasps. "I was beginning to think my vengeance would have to die with me." The bent heraldry on his armour and the number of blackened trophies that remain suggest this man was an important member of his Legion. "Listen closely, loyal sons." He savours the last two words in bitter amusement. "There is more at stake here than even this world. On Samech- on Samech Dahzak schemes. Our purpose in it no longer matters. He beat us to betrayal. So...better your victory than his."

Rize may have breath left to whisper short answers to one or two questions; if anyone asks about Inquisitor Vincent, Rize believes he perished at sea with the rest of his men. The Chaos Space Marine leaves them with one last enigmatic warning:

"Do not let Dahzak foresee your intentions as he did mine. Only the- the Emperor protects." He does not draw another breath.

Rize is content to die if the Kill-team leaves him to do so. His iron will resists any attempts to revive him; he has no desire to be a prisoner of his enemies.

Know Thine Enemy

The Alpha Legion is too secretive for the names of their leaders to circulate, but many other Chaos Space Marines covet infamy. Dahzak is one of those. A **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (The Traitor Legions) Test** recognises the sorcerer's name. The Degrees of Success determine how much a Battle-Brother knows about him (see Table 2-3 on page 84).

THE WRITHING CORRIDOR

When the Kill-team enters this long corridor, have each member make an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test**. Those who succeed perceive movement on the ceiling high above them. From where they stand the entire dark plane above seems to ripple like a shadowy ocean. Anyone capable of magnification or some form of closer inspection sees swarming beetle-like constructs made from the same metal as the arachnid remains at the necropolis's entrance.

THE WESTERN PASSAGE

This dark corridor ends in a wall of collapsed stone; the tombs have not perfectly survived the years and the seismic activity of their own opening. The passage leads deeper into the necropolis, but it would take some time to move the fallen stone. An **Easy (+30) Tracking Test** confirms that nothing tangible has passed this way in centuries.

WAKING ANCIENTS

The Battle-Brothers' Objective to keep the slumbering xenos from waking is a race against a ticking clock—a clock whose hands they can't see. Even without an objective timer on the last part of this Mission, it is important to create a sense of urgency and escalating threat. The move from the still tombs at the entry way to the writhing tombs beyond is one way to do this. Others include the tremors growing louder, and the monolith power crystals beginning to light.

If the GM feels that the players have tarried too long, he may want to consider having a small wave of occupants actually rise. This will drive home how imminent the xenos' waking is. The profile for spectral harbingers has been included in the appendix. Since they can become incorporeal, these wraiths would be the first to exit their sarcophagi. Furthermore, their ghostlike appearance means they seem more like spirits of the dead than a race of living metal aliens, thus keeping the Warhammer 40,000 continuity intact.

MATRIX ANTECHAMBER

Two open doorways lead from either side of this perpendicular room into the power matrix. As the Kill-team nears this juncture, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You no longer need to suppose what the construct at the entrance looked like intact. One undamaged and in possession of all eight limbs hovers through one of the wide entrances in eerie silence. Had it been forged by Imperial hands, such an advanced creation would surely be adorned with embellishments and litanies. Instead, its angular shell reflects only functional considerations. Its massive body is unpainted metal; the only colour it carries are several glowing green photo-receptors on its small head. One of its forward limbs is a wicked trident of claws. The other is a long, sinister energy weapon. The emerald eyes momentarily brighten as it fixates on you.

This automaton has crawled the tombs for millennia uncounted, maintaining the sanctuary of its masters until their return. The tomb guardian is a mighty enemy, primarily lashing out with its bladed claws, and only using the particle emitter on foes at range or who are exceptionally armoured. It knows only devotion to its masters and has no sense of self preservation. It relentlessly attacks these intruders until they or it are destroyed. If the GM wants to increase the challenge of the last encounter, he may wish to imply that time is up on the Objective. In that scenario, if the Battle-Brothers don't split their attention between destroying the power matrix and fending off the tomb guardian, all is lost. Note that the guardian causes Fear; see page 277 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook for how Fear affects Space Marines.

NECROPOLIS POWER MATRIX

The tombs' power core is a room of suspended platforms and arcing electricity. Each of the antechamber doors leads out to a floating disc, across from which a perpendicular network of three more discs hovers completely unsupported. The sixth circle hangs in the centre, with a flashing green crystal hundreds of times bigger than that on the control device, or even the monoliths. It flashes ever brighter as the tremors grow in intensity. If the Battle-Brothers find a way to the power matrix through a different route than the antechamber (such as through the monolith field), the tomb guardian attacks there instead.

A virtually impenetrable force dome similar to that covering the sunken city protects the power matrix. (It counts as a force field with a protection rating of 95 and no Overload possible.) However, this is only detected if the Kill-team studies the crystal carefully before launching an attack on the power matrix. The first time anyone attempts to damage the crystal in any way, the core's defence mechanisms activate. This has two primary effects: first, the core's defence batteries power up. In every subsequent Round, it fires the equivalent of a Particle Emitter beam at every character in the room, using a Ballistic Skill of 40. Secondly, it calls the monoliths on the field, which begin to drift towards the elevated platform.

TABLE 2-3 DAHZAK'S INFAMY

Degrees of Success Details Known

Standard Success	Dahzak is a powerful Chaos Space Marine sorcerer known to be operating in the corrupt worlds of the Charon Stars. He is an exiled member of the Thousand Sons Traitor Legion
One	The stories of Dahzak's past exploits in the Jericho Reach often place him at battles for troves of tainted tomes and talismans. Among the Thousand Sons there exists a splinter cabal led by the exile Ahriman. It is rumoured this faction was responsible for turning the majority of the Thousands Sons Legion into the Rubric Marines. Dahzak is or was a member of this cabal.
Two	Dahzak is a powerful diviner, and owes much of his status to his ability to predict the moves of his enemies. While his innate talents seem to lie in foresight, it is said he constantly seeks and acquires spells and items related to direct interaction and movement through the warp.
Three (or more)	Dahzak fell strangely silent shortly after the arrival of the Achilus Crusade. While the optimistic like to boast that he was slain in the initial clashes of the Acheron Salient, dark whispers from the Hadex Anomaly say that he has spent those long years forging an alliance with other corrupt powers of the Charon Stars to enact some terrible plan.

The Battle-Brothers are now in double jeopardy of running out of time. The aliens are close to waking, and even if the Kill-team avoids the arcing energy, they stand a slim chance of survival once the monoliths get into range. They need to devise some method of shutting down the core, and quickly! If the players continue to repeatedly Attack the power matrix with their usual methods, the GM should drop a hint that a direct assault might not be the best approach. For example: *"Once again your plasma blast spatters harmlessly on the deflection barrier. Nothing you have done seems to have scratched the device. You're beginning to think you might need another way to shut it down."*

Ideally the Kill-team comes up with a plan that uses their individual abilities to overcome this challenge. The easiest way to represent it is with the Assistance rules on page 204 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook. For this task, ignore the limit on the number of characters that can assist, but set a Difficulty that is at least Very Hard (–30) for the base Test. Based on their plan, decide which action (and therefore whose Test) will be the main Test. Then allow each assisting character to describe what aid they are giving, using either a Trained Skill, Talent, Special Ability, Psychic Power, Squad/Solo Mode Ability, or a piece of equipment. Possible examples include:

- Using Demolitions to create a super-penetrating blast with linked krak grenades.
- Use of the Divination discipline to determine the best timing and angle for overcoming the force field.
- Applying Tech-Use or Ferric Lure to disrupt the gravitic suspension system of the core and de-stabilise the matrix
- Using a Signum to coordinate fire.

If the Kill-team fails an attempt, it means that a particular approach does not work and they must try an alternate plan (by at a minimum choosing a new character or Test for the main Test). Additionally, each failure means another volley of energy from the defence systems, and time for the monoliths to draw closer.

THE CRASHING TIDE

The power matrix is all that is holding back the crushing ocean above. If the Battle-Brothers succeed in destroying the power matrix or otherwise de-activating the tombs, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The green light of the power matrix goes out. For a moment, there is utter silence. Then the black sky collapses into a torrent of falling water.

If they are outside at the power core, the Battle-Brothers must get inside and quickly to avoid being swept away as the ocean crashes down on the necropolis. The impact of millions of tons of water creates fractures immediately. Large stone chunks fracture from the tombs as they begin to fill with water. If the Battle-Brothers have pieced together how to use the sigil to depart the tombs, they battle rising water and the collapsing structure to make it back to the transport circle

If they don't use the circle, other possibilities for their survival include:



- If the boarding torpedo was launched, it can survive even the pressure of the crashing waters. The Battle-Brothers could shelter inside it and vox to the Cathurian for retrieval.
- Abuse the Battle-Brothers with a Round or two of crushing Damage and Fatigue as their armour buckles and begins to implode. At the last moment, the Cathurian grapples them with an electromagnet and pulls them inside before they perish.

When Lieutenant Helmsman Athenos sees the Kill-team, read or paraphrase the following:

"You're alive! Well, thank the Shining Saint." She has no time to say anything else as the Cathurian spins violently. You can feel the ship buffeted and pulled by the whirlpool and debris of the collapsing necropolis. The metal hull strains and the submersible's engines roar as it tries to counteract the pull. With a sudden forward lunge, you feel the vessel pull free of the suction. The Cathurian's engines bang and rattle like a shoddy bionic lung, but you are on your way back to the surface.

The Battle-Brothers have a few hours to get their bearings, treat their injuries, and discuss what just happened before the Cathurian limps back to dock at Kal'tran. Oddly, any technology the Battle-Brothers may have taken off the Reborn xeno-cultists has vanished without a trace. However, the sigil key remains.

TABLE 2-4: MISSION EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Objective	Experience Awarded
Save Inquisitor Quist's Life	350 XP
Complete Inquisitor Vincent's investigation and determine what lies beneath the southern ocean	350 XP
Prevent the Reborn from rising and consuming Karlack	400 XP
Discover the fate of Inquisitor Vincent	175 XP
Kill or capture Isiaah Faln	250 XP
Get past the Alpha Legion forces in the tomb city	250 XP
Determine the city's exact location	200 XP
Find a way to enter the tomb city	175 XP
Acquire transport capable of operating in extreme ocean depths	200 XP
Prevent the Sons of Taeg from assassinating Prince-Prefect Allewis	150 XP
Help Mediator Dyne deal with Alexei Drahj	100 XP
Defeat the xeno-cult beneath the Cenotaph	75 XP

ARTEFACT MANIFEST

Crescent Bladed Sceptre

To the best of my observations this short staff is purely ceremonial. It is topped by two large crescent blades and two smaller sets of blades, all symmetrical. It does appear to have some form of micro-circuitry embedded in the handle, but it is of insufficient magnitude to possibly constitute a weapon. It does appear that the bottom part of the sceptre has broken off.

Crystal Conduit

I have personally collected three samples of these translucent tubes in varying sizes, and they are perhaps the most commonly found xenos artefact on Karlack, aside from the rock fashioned into so-called "eternity charms." I shudder to think how many of these relics are probably in use as doorstops and even glassware by the natives. The conduits have proved highly resistant to heat and energy, suggesting they were used to conduct power in weapons and technology.

Field Emitter

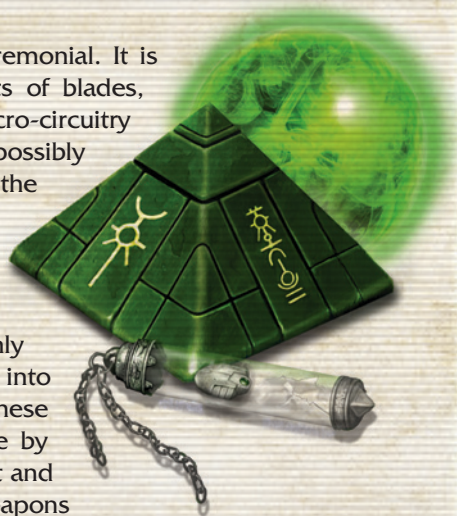
This small device bears a passing resemblance to force fields and similar Imperial devices, leading both Dyne and myself to speculate that it likewise emitted some kind of field. However, it is entirely possible that the artefact serves no such purpose. It could be an explosive, a beacon, or perhaps even just a lifeless religious icon for all the response we have been able to prompt from it.

Metal Carapace

This curious metal shell is at once smooth and angular. Less than a metre long, it appears as though some sort of appendages once connected to both sides of the shell. Its underside displays remnants of gravitational projectors.

Broken halberd

There is very little left of this weapon. The composition of its handle is similar to the sceptre, although the circuitry is less complex. Its weighting and broken joints suggest some form of double-bladed melee weapon.



BY THE AUTHORITY OF INQUISITOR ZAER VINCENT, ORDO XENOS



Escape by Teleportation

If the Battle-Brothers use the sigil, they find themselves beneath the Cenotaph of Achilus, at the matching circle in the Empty Mausoleum.

RETURN TO CITADEL PRIMARIS

Quist is awake and recovering when the Kill-team returns to Citadel Primaris. She listens intently to whatever report they give. If they retrieved Inquisitor Vincent, she asks that he be brought to her. The broken man weeps quietly against her shoulder and she speaks gentle words of comfort to him. All the while, her left hand drifts beneath her robes. It emerges with her bolt pistol. In one swift motion, she brings it to the back of his head and pulls the trigger. The explosion spatters her in his blood. Mediator Dyne stiffens, as though about to retaliate for the death of his master, but Nihl's presence is enough to make him think better of it. If the Space Marines have grown attached to Vincent or the GM has some other reason to believe they might want to interfere in this matter, he may want to allow an Agility Test to intervene before Quist pulls the trigger.

On the other hand, if the Kill-team reports his existence but left him elsewhere, she verifies his location and gives a small nod to Nihl, who silently departs to dispatch him. If the Battle-Brothers do not make an issue of the execution, then Quist has nothing more to say on the matter. However, if they question her at the Citadel or on the return trip to Erioch, she says simply:

"The Zaer Vincent I knew was a good man. He devoted his life to protecting mankind even in the Reach where many of the faithless have forgotten the Emperor. The person I killed was a broken traitor. He gave aid to the enemies of man and rambled about xenos ruins to anyone he saw. He was a liability to the Ordo, and it would show no pity for his failing. The clean death I gave him was a mercy."

Quist's preference is that everyone believes Vincent died with his retinue—not to hide the execution but to preserve his integrity. She requests that they let her be the one to report on him, but does not argue if the Battle-Brothers take other actions. She may, however, hint that she will omit being poisoned from her report (assuming it happened) if they agree to her request.

RESPECTS FOR THE DEAD

The Battle-Brothers most likely bring news of at least one Inquisitor's death after this Mission. The Inquisitor of the Chamber, Hezika Carmillus, arranges a funerary ceremony shortly after the Kill-team's return. The following assumes Quist lived; if she perished Inquisitor Carmillus takes her place in presiding over the rites. The Battle-Brothers are given the option to attend. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The funeral takes place in one of many unused chambers along Watch Fortress Erioch's exterior. Death has finally given it a purpose. Had the ceremony been somewhere other than a remote war front, it might have been a grand political affair. Instead, the attendees number a few dozen, mainly the resident Ordo Xenos members and Battle-Brothers like yourself. Watch Commander Mordigael and several others give short eulogies.

The Battle-Brothers may also elect one of their number to speak, if they so desire. As the ranking member of the Ordo Xenos, Inquisitor Carmillus speaks last:

"None of us can ask for more than to die in service to the Imperium. The number of people who hear our name or speak praises over our coffin does not change who we were in life, where we succeeded and where we failed. A cold grave is reward enough; for it is the only rest the vigilant will ever know. So go now to the slumber you have earned." She gives the signal for the casket to be released into the void.

REWARDS

Table 2–4 Mission Experience Rewards (see page 86) shows the value of completing each of the Objectives if you award experience using the detailed mission-based method.

The following are worth 1 Renown each:

- Preventing Inquisitor Quist from being poisoned or if she chooses to omit it from her logs.
- Stopping the Reborn xenos from rising again.
- Defeating the Alpha Legion.
- Killing or capturing Isiaah Faln.
- Any two of the following: stop Alexei Drahj, bring Inquisitor Vincent to Quist, stop the sons of Taeg from killing the Prince-Prefect.
- If the Battle-Brothers deliberately killed any Imperial citizens other than cultists, they lose 1 Renown.

The GM should reference page 270 in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook to see if the Kill-team qualifies for additional Renown for completing multiple Objectives. As always, he should also feel free to further reward clever plans and good roleplaying.

FUTURE MISSIONS

The starscape in the submerged temple might have raised or answered any number of questions. The GM could easily add one or half a dozen sites marked upon it that the Deathwatch must now examine. One can only hope that all traces of the tomb city were crushed by the sea. However, Karlack's southern oceans are infamous for washing strange objects up to shore. Even as the Battle-Brothers return home, inhabitants of the archipelagos might be hauling a shimmering metal idol out of the sea.

APPENDIX: NPCs

PRINCE-PREFECT ALLEWIS

For more information on Allewis see page 59.

Prince-Prefect Allewis Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	34	33	41	35	50	52	45	44

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 16

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Carouse (T), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry), Scrutiny (Per) +10.

Talents: Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Weapon Training (Las).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Monoblade (1d10+3 R, Pen 2, Balanced), Duelling Laspistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 7; Clip 1; Rld 1 Full, Accurate, Tearing).

Gear: Extremely fine and expensive clothing, ornate and ostentatious jewellery, 2 spare charges for duelling laspistol.

ALEXEI DRAHJ

This rich merchant is secretly a member of the Transpired Circle. Like his dark peers, he has sacrificed his humanity for wealth and personal power.

Alexei Drahj Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	50	(10) 58	(12) 65	(8) 47	52	48	60	50

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 38

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int +10,)Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Concealed Cavity, Heightened Senses (All), Lightning Attack, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Preternatural Speed, Swift Attack, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Traits: Dark Sight, From Beyond, Regeneration (3), The Stuff of Nightmares, Transpired Alteration.[†]

Armour: Armoured Bodyglove (AP 3).

Weapons: Custom Ryza-Pattern Plasma Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 7; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full, Overheats, Reliable), Xenocrafted Power Sword (1d10+16 R; Pen 6; Balanced,

Power Field), Xeno-Filament Grenades (Thrown; SBx3m; S/-/-; 4d10+4 R; Pen 6; Blast (1); Tearing).

Gear: Expensive yet practical clothing; Personal encrypted vox, chrono, 3 Xeno-filament grenades.

†Transpired Alteration: Some members of the Transpired Circle can control their bodies at a structural level that rivals psychic biomancers. Once per Round, as a Free Action, Drahj can make a Willpower Test. If he succeeds, he may add +10 to one Characteristic until the next time he uses this ability.

ALEXEI'S THUG

Thug Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	35	35	40	38	30	36	38	24

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Weapon Training (Las, SP)

Armour: Mesh Armour (4 All)

Weapons: Monoblade (1d10+4 R; Pen 2), Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/- 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full), Lascarbine (35m; S/2/- 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 40; Rld 2 Full; Reliable).

Gear: Micro-bead vox, 1 Hand Cannon Reload, 1 Las charge pack, Lho sticks

MEDIATOR LAZEL DYNE

For more if information on Mediator Dyne, see page 63.

Mediator Lazel Dyne Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	45	48	44	(12) 60	55	50	36

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Ciphers (Inquisition) (Int) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (All) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Inquisition, Heresy, Xenos, Psykers, Warp) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +20, Literacy (Int) +20, Logic (Int) +10, Medicae (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (All) +20; Scrutiny (Per) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic and a number of human and xenos tongues) (Int) +10).

Talents: Electro Graft Use, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Concealed Cavity, Exotic Weapon Training (Web Pistol), Foresight, Infused Knowledge, Logis Implant, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Academics, Inquisition), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Polyglot, Swift Attack, Total Recall, Unnatural Intelligence (x2).

Traits: Knowledge is Power[†], Cyclopaedic Learning^{††}

Armour: Concealed Mesh Armour (All 4)

Weapons: Customised Hellpistol (35m; S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2 Full, Tearing), Mordian-Pattern Power Sword (1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Data-slates, auto-quill, scrolls, parchment, micro-bead vox, badge of office, cerebral plug.

†**Knowledge is Power:** Once per session, Dyne can automatically pass an Intelligence Test or a Skill Test based on Intelligence. This only counts as a standard success.

††**Cyclopaedic Learning:** Dyne automatically succeeds at Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Tests. If degrees of success are required, he counts as having rolled 01 on his test.

LAMDUS RIZE

For more information on Lamdus Rize, see page 82.



Lamdus Rize Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
60	55	(10) 68	(10) 50	56	52	45	48	46

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 30

Skills: Awareness (Per), +10 Charm, (Fel) +10, Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Underworld) (Int), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Imperium) (Int), Concealment (Ag) +20,

Demolitions (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Drive (Ground Vehicles, Skimmer), Forbidden Lore (Heresy, Traitor Legions, Warp) (Int) +10, Interrogation (Fel) +10, Literacy (Int), Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Occult) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Int) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int) +10, Tactics (Int) +20, Tracking (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Blademaster, Bolter Drill, Combat Master, Die Hard, Fearless, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Insidious Infiltration†, Inspire Wrath, Jaded, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, True Grit, Wall of Steel.

Traits: Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: Astartes Power Armour (Head 8, Arms 8, Body 10, Legs 8).

Weapons: Astartes Bolt Pistol (30m; S/3/-; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Clip 14; Rld Full, Tearing), Astartes Bolter with Motion Predictor (100m; S/2/4; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Clip 28; Rld Full, Tearing), Astartes Combat Knife (1d10+15 R; Pen 2), Astartes Power Sword (1d10+18 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Bolt pistol and Bolter reloads, Multikey, Stummer

†**Insidious Infiltration:** The Alpha Legion are masters of sowing dissent and often recruit members of the native populace to act as agents and spies. They gain a +20 to Skill Tests involving the coercion of others (excluding fellow Astartes) to their cause. Additionally, they gain a +10 modifier to all Concealment and Silent Move Tests.

ALPHA LEGION CHAOS SPACE MARINE

For more information on the Alpha Legion see page 75.

Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	58	(10) 66	(8) 46	55	40	45	48	30

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 25

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm, (Fel), Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Underworld) (Int), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Imperium) (Int), Concealment (Ag) +20, Demolitions (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Drive (Ground Vehicles, Skimmer), Forbidden Lore (Heresy, Traitor Legions, Warp) (Int) +10, Interrogation (Fel), Literacy (Int), Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Occult) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Int) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int) +10, Tactics (Int) +10, Tracking (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bolter Drill, Die Hard, Fearless, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Insidious Infiltration†, Jaded, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, True Grit.

Traits: Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: Astartes Power Armour (Head 8, Arms 8, Body 10, Legs 8).

Weapons: Astartes Bolt Pistol (30m; S/3/—; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Clip 14; Rld Full, Tearing), Astartes Bolter (100m; S/2/4; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Clip 28; Rld Full, Tearing), Astartes Combat Knife (1d10+14 R; Pen 2), Chainsword (1d10+15 R; Pen 4; Balanced, Tearing).

Gear: Bolt pistol and Bolter reloads, Multikey, Stummer.

Insidious Infiltration: The Alpha Legion are masters of sowing dissent and often recruit members of the native populace to act as agents and spies. They gain a +20 to Skill Tests involving the coercion of others (excluding fellow Astartes) to their cause. Additionally, they gain a +10 modifier to all Concealment and Silent Move Tests.

FEYNIR SURBRYTE

Feynir Surbryte is simply the latest pseudonym of Yale Ilvaris. He is a cunning survivalist who has made it through many wars—some of which he started. He is armed with advanced alien technology. This both protects him and furthers his message of the aliens' powerful wisdom.

Feynir Surbryte Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	45	38	40	42	38	35	45	48



Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Carousing (T), Charm (Fel) +10, Climb (S), Command (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Xenos, Heresy) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Occult) (Int) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic), Survival (Int), Swim (S), Tech Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Exotic Weapon Training (Cult Artefacts), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Training (Las, SP).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1).

Armour: Custom Xeno Mesh Armour (All 5); Refractor Field (PR 30, Overload 01–10).

Weapons: Mono-edged Ritual Knife (1d5+3 R; Pen 2), Flayer Rifle (200m S/2/—; 2d10+5 E; Pen 8; Clip Unlimited; Recharge, Volatile, Special[†]); Wraithblade (1d10+8 R, Pen Special^{††}; Tearing).

[†]In addition to normal damage, a target who takes one or more points of damage (after Armour and Toughness) from a Flayer rifle suffers 1d10 points of Toughness damage.

^{††}Attacks from a Wraithblade have the Warp Weapon Trait.

Gear: Temporal Distorter,^{†††} Cult paraphernalia, elaborate clothing, minor curios of bizarre and alien design.

^{†††}**Temporal Distorter:** This arcane piece of xenotech allows the user to manipulate the passage of time, permitting him to move out of phase with his opponents. The artefact may be activated as a free action and requires a **Challenging (+0) Tech Use Test**. If successful, the user gains an additional full action during his turn. All normal limits to taking actions during a turn apply, with the exception that he may make an additional attack action with this extra full action.

MILITANT REBEL CULTIST

Unlike their city counterparts, these cultists have been trained for rebel military operations in the southern islands. Only the xeno-cult's highest-ranking members are worthy to hold the amazing weapons of the Reborn. Those not so fortunate are more appropriate to use with the Horde rules, as an individual does not pose much threat to a Battle-Brother.

Militant Rebel Cultist Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	38	35	35	35	25	35	38	25

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag), Survival (Int), Swim (S).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Exotic Weapon Training (Cult Artefacts), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP).

Armour: Flak Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Ritual Knife (1d5+3 R; Primitive), Autogun (90m; S/3/10 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full) or Lasgun (100m; S/3/— 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 60; Rld Full). A select few cultists are gifted with the eldritch cult weapons listed below.

Weapons: Flayer Rifle (200m S/2/-; 2d10+5 E; Pen 8; Clip Unlimited; Recharge, Volatile, Special[†]); Particle Emitter (45m S/2/5; 3d10+8 E; Pen 12; Clip Unlimited; Recharge, Tearing); Wraithblade (1d10+5+SB R, Pen Special^{††}; Tearing).

[†]In addition to normal damage, a target who takes one or more points of damage (after Armour and Toughness) from a Flayer rifle suffers 1d10 points of Toughness damage.

^{††}Attacks from a Wraithblade have the Warp Weapon Trait.

Gear: Cult paraphernalia, primitive clothing, strange icons of unknown origin.

SONS OF TAEG

The Sons of Taeg use the Militant Rebel Cultist profile with the addition of explosive charges (see page 61) and Karlack 1st Fatigues added to their Gear. They are not armed with Cult Artefacts.

APOSTATE MECHANICUS

The Apostate Magi of Samech are infamous in the Jericho Reach. No deed is too foul and no knowledge too blasphemous if it increases their power.

Apostate Mechanicus Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	55	(10) 50	(10) 52	35	55	45	45	—

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 22

Skills: Ciphers (Apostate Machine Cult) (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Machine Cult) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology, Warp) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Cryptology, Occult) +20; Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna-Lingua, Unholy Tongue) (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Autosanguine, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Disturbing Voice, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Fearless, Feedback Screech, Infused Knowledge, Logis Implant, Luminen Blast, Luminen Charge, Machinator Array, Mechadendrite Use (servo-arm), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Paranoia, Prosanguine, Rite of Fear, Swift Attack, Talented (Tech-Use), The Flesh is Weak (2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Traits: Fear (1), Machine (4), Mechanicus Implants.

Armour: Corrupted Mechanical Flesh (All 7).

Weapons: Locke-Pattern Bolt Gun (90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 24; Rld Full; Tearing); Chain Axe (1d10+14 R; pen 2; Tearing), Hellpistol (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2Full), Wickedly Clawed Servo-arm (2d10+16, Pen 10; +10 to Grapple Tests).

Gear: Dark robes inscribed with blasphemous sigils, various debased cybernetic implants and corrupted clone-organs, Auspex, Combi-tool.

INQUISITOR ADRIELLE QUIST

For more information on Quist see page 25 of the **DEATHWATCH GM's KIT**.

Adrielle Quist Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	41	35	40	51	52	43	59	47

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 21

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (All) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (All) (Int) +20, Invocation (WP), Literacy (Int) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Eldar) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Air of Authority, Fearless, Good Reputation (Adeptus Mechanicus), Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Adeptus Mechanicus, Deathwatch, Inquisition), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Psy Rating (6), Quick Draw, Swift Attack, Touched by the Fates (3).

Armour: Exceptional Craftsmanship Adamantite Armour (AP 6).

Weapons: Digi-las (3m; S/-/-; 2d5+5 E; Pen 5, Clip 1; Rld N/A), Force Halberd (1d10+9 R; Pen 8; Unbalanced), Ceres-Pattern Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full, Tearing).

Psychic Powers: Beastmaster, Compel, Long Range Telepathy, Mind Scan, Short Range Telepathy.

Gear: Data-slate, Elucidator, Inquisitorial Rosette, Micro-bead vox.

Indomitable Will of the Inquisition: Once per game session, Quist may automatically pass one Willpower Test (including Skill Tests based on Willpower and psychic powers). If degrees of success are a factor, then she is considered to have rolled a 01. This ability can be used before or after making Willpower Test, and can always be made regardless of any other modifiers that apply to the Test.

INQUISITOR ZAER VINCENT

Inquisitor Vincent is a pale shadow of his former self. Weakened by torture, near-death, and guilt, his profile reflects severe Characteristic Damage.

Inquisitor Zaer Vincent Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	34	22	30	25	51	22	20	18

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Inquisition) (Int) +20, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (All) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag+10), Forbidden Lore (All) (Int), Inquiry (Fel) +20, Literacy (Int), Logic (Int) +10, Medicae (Int), Scholastic Lore (All) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Tau) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Logis Implant, Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Inquisition), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Wielder (Ballistic).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (0).†

Armour: Carapace Armour (AP 6).

Weapons: None.

Gear: Data-slate, Inquisitorial Rosette, Micro-bead vox

†Vincent has spent his last Fate Point. He still retains the ability to trigger Righteous Fury.

NIHL ZEE

For more information on this Vindicare Assassin, see page 55.

Nihl Zee Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
60	75	(8) 45	(8) 45	(10) 51	33	58	55	25

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Ciphers (Officio Assassinorum) (Int) +10, Concealment (Ag) +20, Contortionist (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) +20, Scrutiny (Per), +20, Search (Per) +10, Shadowing (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Tracking (Int) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Catfall, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Duty Unto Death, Fearless, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (sight), Hip Shooting, Independent Targeting, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Mighty Shot, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Talented (Shadowing, Silent Move), Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic), Unnatural Agility.

Traits: Dark Sight, Temple Assassin†.

Armour: Stealth Suit (All 3).

Weapons: Exitus Rifle (200m; S/—/—; 2d10+4 I; Pen 9; Clip 10; Rld 1 Full, Accurate), Exitus pistol (30m; S/3/—; 2d10+4 I; Pen 9; Clip 5; Rld 1 Full, Accurate).

Gear: Vindicare Stealth Suit and Spy Mask (Provides Motion Predictor and Preysense sights, adds +10 to Dodge Tests and +20 to Concealment and Silent Move Tests). Telescopic and Red-Dot Laser Sights for both Exitus weapons, 5 spare clips each (note the Exitus weapons may be reloaded with single shots as a reaction), fire selectors.

Special Ammunition: Nihl Zee has one each of the following rounds:

- Shield Breaker Round: Ignores the Daemonic Trait, any protection from a Psychic Power, and any protection from a Field item. When targeting a Psychic Power and/or Field the power/item ceases to function for 1 Round.
- Hellfire Round: Inflicts +1d10 damage and may inflict Righteous Fury on a damage die roll of 9 or 10. The attack also has the Tearing Quality.
- Turbo-penetrator Round: Inflicts +2d10 damage and adds +5 to the Penetration and adds the Felling (2) Quality.

†**Temple Assassin:** His advanced training affords him two main benefits. The first is physical perfection that grants him a re-roll on any Acrobatics, Climb, Contortionist and Swim Tests. The second is preternatural grace which allows him to take a number of extra Reactions equal to his Agility Bonus. These bonus Reactions can only be used to make Dodge or Parry Tests. Nihl Zee may still only attempt a single Dodge or Parry against each attack made against him. Additionally he may attempt to Dodge any attack, including attacks that are not normally eligible for a Dodge Test (such as massive explosions or an invisible psychic attack).

LORD GENERAL CASTUS IACTON

For more information on Lord General Iacton see page 57.



Lord General Castus Iacton Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	48	32	45	40	48	35	42	50

Movement: 4/8/12/24**Wounds:** 17

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Ciphers (Imperial Code) (Int), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, War) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) +20; Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, (Int)).

Talents: Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Good Reputation (Imperial Guard, Planetary Defence Forces), Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Peer (Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Inquisition), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Swift Attack.

Armour: Carapace Armour (AP 6).

Weapons: Lucius-Pattern Hellpistol (35m; S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2 Full).

Gear: Data-slate, Micro-bead vox, Numerous medals and honours.

MAGOS GEOMANCER QUEZALT

For more information on Magos Quezalt see page 70.

Magos Geomancer Quezalt Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	50	⁽⁸⁾ 46	58	35	68	55	44	12

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 25

Skills: Ciphers (Imperial Code) (Int), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Machine Cult) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag) Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Adeptus Mechanicus) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, Geomancy, Numerology) +20; Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna-Lingua) (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Autosanguine, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Chem Geld, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Fearless, Feedback Screech, Ferric Lure, Ferric Summons, Foresight, Infused Knowledge, Logis Implant, Luminen Charge, Machinator Array, Master Engineer, Mechadendrite Use (all), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Prosanguine, Rite of Pure Thought, Swift Attack, Talented (Tech-Use), The Flesh is Weak (3), Total Recall, Unnatural Strength (x2).

Traits: Mechanicus Implants, Soul of Iron[†]

[†]**Soul of Iron:** Magos Quezalt has given up his humanity in order to embrace the glory of the machine god. All Interaction Skill Tests are at a -30 penalty. However, he gains one bonus degree of success with any successful Skill Test involving Scholastic Lore (Geomancy).

Armour: Carapace Armour and Armoured Flesh (All 9),

Weapons: Ceres-Pattern Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full; Tearing); Ommissian Axe (2d10+12 E; pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced).

Gear: Numerous cybernetic implants (including Augur Array and Bionic Heart), Advanced bionic arms, Robes of office, Auspex, 3 Servo-skulls, Vox-caster, Combi-tool, Utility mechadendrites.

GRAVE ROBBER



Grave Robber Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	22	30	30	25	22	30	28	20

Movement: 2/4/6/12**Wounds:** 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Survival (Int), Swim (S).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Shovel (1d10+1 I; Primitive, Unbalanced) or Thrown Shovel (SBx3m, Thrown, 1d10+1 I, Primitive).

Gear: Ragged clothing, ill-gotten valuables, rotten odour.

REBORN CULTIST

These Imperial citizens have abandoned their loyalty to Mankind and the Emperor to revere the xenos instead. Unfortunately, their alien gods have not gifted them with weapons or martial prowess. The only threat they pose is in the press of sheer numbers.

Reborn Cultist Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	33	30	30	35	25	35	38	25

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 12

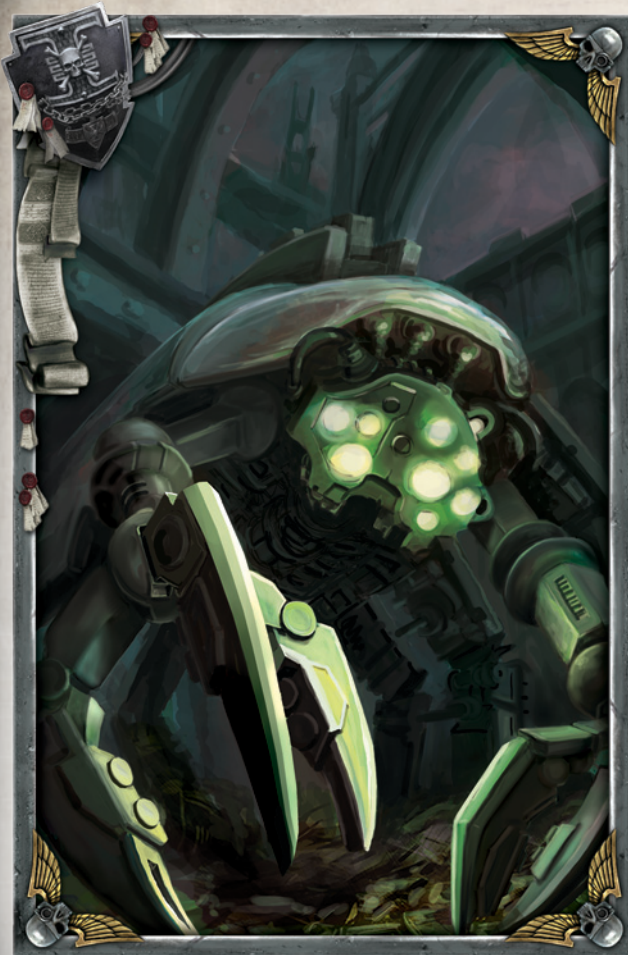
Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag), Survival (Int), Swim (S).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Ritual Knife (1d5+6 R; Primitive), Flintlock Musket (30m; S/-/- 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 1; Rld 5 Full; Primitive).

Gear: Cult paraphernalia, ragged clothing, strange icons of unknown origin.



GUARDIAN OF THE TOMB

This spider-like automaton has guarded the xenos tombs for ages uncounted. It lives only to protect and repair the advanced technology of its sleeping masters. They equipped this mighty construct to protect them well; its heavy metal exterior houses a host of whirling blades and a large version of the aliens' deadly energy weapons.

Guardian of the Tomb Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	35	(15) 55	(15) 58	26	20	35	45	—

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 75

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Dodge (Ag), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Combat Master, Swift Attack, Talented (Tech-Use).

Traits: Auto-stabilised, Dark Sight, Fear (2), Hoverer (4), Improved Natural Weapons, Multiple Limbs, Natural Armour (Metallic Shell), Natural Weapons (Bladed Claws), Size (Enormous), Strange Physiology, The Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x3).

Armour: Metallic Shell (All 10).

Weapons: Bladed Claws (2d10+15 R; Pen 8), Particle Emitter (45m S/2/5; 3d10+8 E; Pen 12; Clip Unlimited; Recharge, Tearing).

Gear: None.

SPECTRAL HARBINGER

This ethereal, bony creature may rise from the tombs beneath Karlack's southern sea if the Battle-Brothers tarry too long. It is only the first scout of a much larger host that will overwhelm them if they do not act quickly.

Spectral Harbinger Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	48	(10) 50	(10) 55	(8) 45	30	45	45	—

Movement: 9/18/27/54

Wounds: 24

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20.

Talents: Crushing Blow, Lightning Attack, Preternatural Speed, Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Traits: Dark Sight, Fear (3), Hoverer (9), Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (Metallic Exoskeleton), Natural Weapons (Bladed Claws), Phase, Regeneration (6), Size (Hulking), The Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: Metallic Exoskeleton (All 8).

Weapons: Bladed Claws (1d10+9 R; Pen 2, Tearing, *Phase Strike).

Gear: None.

***Phase Strike:** If the creature succeeds on a Weapon Skill Test by three or more degrees of success, that particular attack may not be parried and the Damage from the attack is not reduced by armour.





SWORD OF VIGILANCE

THE PIECES FALL
INTO PLACE



A TURBULENT
VOYAGE



THE IRON PIT



THE IRRADIAL
FORGE



AFTERSHOCKS ON
ERIOCH



THE VIGILANT SWORD

"A shield is not always the right instrument of defence. Sometimes you give a man a shield and show him how to stand true. However, it is the Adeptus Astartes' duty to protect mankind by taking the sword to that which man cannot stand against."

—Vulkan He'stan of the Salamanders Chapter

Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes finally have everything they need to complete their attack on the warp gate. At the eleventh hour, the Battle-Brothers realise how great a menace stirs on Samech. To protect all of the Jericho Reach, they launch a pre-emptive strike into the heart of the Chaos-held Acheros Salient.

OVERVIEW

The Deathwatch eventually deciphers the meanings of their findings on Karlack and Aurum, and realises that the unholy alliance on Samech is targeting the Warp Gate. The Battle-Brothers have an opportunity to champion their own theory and bring it before the Chamber of Vigilance. Once the threat is recognised, defences around the Iron Collar are bolstered. However there is little assurance that the Crusade can stop the assault. The Kill-team is charged with entering the corrupt mechanical heart of Samech and halting the scheme before it launches.

The renowned *Thunder's Word* transports the Kill-team. Once on Samech, the path to their Objectives is relatively evident, but without making some detours to garner additional information and allies, the chance of success is remote. The Kill-team can choose between several potential groups to aid them in destroying the warship *Ruin Bringer* and penetrating the Irradial Forge where their enemies and the thaumagramm diodes await.

RUNNING THE VIGILANT SWORD

This Mission sends the Battle-Brothers into a hostile environment to accomplish an Objective of the utmost importance. It's the kind of high-stakes adventure that Space Marines—and their players—live for. As one would expect on a planet full of enemies, opportunities for combat are everywhere. The Kill-team encounters many injustices that heroes may have a difficult time looking past, and the environment is especially offensive to Techmarines. If the players stop to battle every patrol and destroy every twisted machine, you are in for a lot of fighting. If your group enjoys that kind of game, no problem. However, those who don't want to spend the entire night rolling dice should remember (and help the players remember) that the Kill-team has a job to do—and it is not fighting in the streets. Ideally the group



wants to balance a focus on the Primary Objective with doing some “collateral good.” You should decide ahead of time which Optional Encounters you want to present to the Kill-team as possible Tertiary Objectives so that you can bring them to the team’s attention.

The Kill-team’s task is monumental. This adventure allows them to make certain choices or complete additional Objectives to make their Primary Objective easier. Stress the difficulty of accomplishing their goal if they do not go out of their way to help others and gain allies. Few of the options offered to the Kill-team are savoury, but some are certainly lesser evils than others. If your group is unwilling to sacrifice anything—the slightest of their precepts or a single civilian life—it is up to you whether they stand a reasonable chance of success.

Another factor that can help (or hinder) the Battle-Brothers is the choices they have made in the Missions leading up to this one. In addition to the summary table of consequences below, each event where the consequence is relevant carries the label Mission Consequence. This should help you easily spot them during the narrative.

If you want to use this Mission without building on the previous two adventures in the Emperor Protects, the realisations that lead to the Kill-team’s deployment can come entirely from the Deathwatch’s information network. You should pick a balance of assets and obstacles to give the Kill-team from Table 3–1: Mission Consequences (see pages 98–99). Rather than being the result of their actions, these events are just the beginning state of the Mission.

KNOW THEM BY THEIR WORKS

The Kill-team faces many decisions in the line of duty. These choices range from what advice to give a king to whether or not to dig through a cluttered room. Large and small, the repercussions of these choices follow them. Table 3-1: Mission Consequences (see page 96) summarises some of the key decisions the Battle-Brothers make (or do not make) during **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**. The Story Effect column describes how you can convey the results of their actions within the narrative. The Consequence Timing column indicates when the fact becomes relevant (which may or may not be the best time to communicate it). The Statistical Effect describes the mechanical effect on the various situations the Battle-Brothers face during **The Sword of Vigilance**. The table is organised in roughly the chronological order that the decisions occurred. Each relevant point in the story also has a note to reference the mission consequences.

False Conclusions

If your group prefers a story with more twists and turns, you may want to begin the Mission on Erioch with a slightly incorrect idea of what Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes are planning. If the players champion their own theory—right or wrong—this should be the accepted assumption as long as it is remotely plausible. Otherwise, the Chamber of Vigilance draws the conclusion that Dahzak and his allies in the Charon Stars intend to use the thaumagramm diodes to power an undetectable warship. There are plenty of opportunities later on Samech to reveal what is really going on.

THE PRINCES'S LETTER

Below is a letter from Prince-Prefect Allewis, greeting the Battle-Brothers and informing them of some information he has received. The letter makes an excellent player handout if you choose to make it available to your players. The map referenced in the letter can be found on page 107.

THE PIECES FALL INTO PLACE

For days I had kept my eyes downcast, trying to deny the dark bloom above. At last, I could deny its weight no longer; with hesitant eyes I turned my face to the festering sky. There, I saw the horror that cannot be unseen, learned what cannot become unknown. I pray now only that the end I see in that hellish stage above comes swiftly, to cure me of its vision.

—Account of the Hadex Anomaly's rise, circa 658.M41.

Begin with an overview of recent events in the Jericho Reach. Hive Fleet Dagon continues to edge closer to the heart of the Crusade. The Tau's siren song of heresy still lodges in too many Imperial ears. More troops have been spent on the Acheros Salient to hold a line that should be advancing. At this point, the GM should recap any of the mission consequences with the timing of Opening that occur based on the choices so far, or some of the Terrible Puzzle pieces from the table below that haven't come up during the game so far. This is also a good opportunity to cover happenings relevant to your individual campaign, and describe what the Battle-Brothers have done since their last Mission.

Mission Consequences: The survey of the Acheros Salient should include the effects of the choices involving the royal guard and/or Isiaah Faln on the war effort. If the Imperium is at war with Aurum, this should be mentioned during the discussion of the Orpheus Salient. If Prince-Prefect Allewis sent his interrogation results, share those at this time.

A variety of facts must conjoin for the Deathwatch to comprehend the true magnitude of the threat Dahzak poses. Table 3-2: A Terrible Puzzle (see page 99) lists the facts that the masters of the Vigil need before them to recognise the menace forming. It is possible for the player characters to be the ones to uncover one or more of these facts, either as follow up from a previous adventure in this book (for example, researching the diode schematic) or as a part of intermediate Missions of the GM's own devising. The exception is the last piece of information about the antisonate plating. This knowledge is the trigger for the third Mission.

Esteemed Friends,

I cannot have you believing that my boasts of helpful ears were idle, particularly now that I owe you my life. As you can imagine, we have spent a good deal of time trying to crush the remnants of the conspiracy you uncovered. During this time, Lord General Tacton encountered a stray member of the apostate Tech-Priests who had a hand in recent events. Our prisoner knew precious little that you did not already uncover. However, we did persuade him to share some information about his home on Samech. Our Lexographers have sketched a map based on that intelligence. A copy is included. May it benefit your illustrious organisation.

Your faithful servant,
Prince-Prefect Allewis XXXXXX



TABLE 3-1: MISSION CONSEQUENCES

Decision Location	Action Taken	Consequence Timing	Story Effect	Statistical Effect
Aurum	Finding the thaumagramm diode schematic	Combat in the Diode Chamber	The Battle-Brothers have a solid understanding of what a thaumagramm diode is and the havoc it can cause.	The Battle-Brothers are mentally prepared for the effects of the diodes and gain a +10 to resist them.
Aurum	Leaving Aurum actively at war with the Imperium	Opening / Arming	The Auran pacification war has been slow and costly. Resources in the Reach are more strained than ever.	The scarcity of resources impacts the Deathwatch as well. Subtract 10 from the Mission's Requisition Rating
Aurum	Completing the Divested Hunt	Combat with Mutated Servitors, Soul Alembic, Defiler Foundry	The desolate Reaving Canyons are quite similar to the lava wastes of Samech. The Battle-Brothers gained insight on how to use this type of terrain effectively.	In combats on Samech's open lava wastes, the Battle-Brothers always count as having cover with AP 2.
Aurum	Preventing Lan from being infected by the Brood	Opening / Briefing	If Lan was infected by the Brood, key Imperial relays along border of the Orpheus and Acheros Salients have been destroyed by an unknown attacker.	If the relays stand, the Deathwatch has better information on Samech to brief the Kill-team.
Karlack	Allowing the royal guard be inducted into the Karlack 1st (Not accepting the Prince-Prefect's request)	Opening / Skitarii combats	The royal guard's presence in the new Karlack 1st greatly increased its starting combat prowess.	If the royal guard joined the Karlack 1st, the number of Skitarii present in certain encounters decreases as Samech has lost troops in combat with the regiment
Karlack	Saving Prince-Prefect Allewis from being murdered	Opening / Briefing	The PDF captured and interrogated one of the Apostate Magi on Karlack. The Prince-Prefect shows his gratitude by sharing the outcome with the Kill-team	The tech-priest did not know what the alien technology was to be used for, but he was "persuaded" to give detailed information about the layout of the Irradial Forge, which the Kill-team now has.
Karlack	Killing or capturing Alexei Drahj	Journey on the <i>Thunder's Word</i>	If Alexei Drahj and his ship, the <i>Frozen Tear</i> , remained free, he damaged the <i>Thunder's Word</i> in a recent conflict.	If the Kill-team did not stop Drahj on Karlack, it makes the <i>Thunder's Word</i> more vulnerable to detection.
Karlack	Saving Magos Quezalt's equipment at the Kal'thane Bulwark	Opening / Briefing	Magos Quezalt eventually learned that Samech tech-priests had been on the planet. He sends the Kill-team an item that he believes will be helpful if they face the apostates again.	Quezalt's algorithm purifier provides spiritual protection and a +10 bonus to Tech-Use Tests when dealing with Samech's unclean tech.
Karlack	Killing or capturing Isiaah Faln	Arming	If Isiaah Faln had the opportunity to damage Karlack from the inside, it impacted the war effort.	The increased availability of resources impacts helps the Deathwatch resupply as well. Add 10 to the Mission's Requisition Rating if the Kill-team dealt with Faln.
Karlack	Finding the trialkaline in the Tomb City and identifying it	Arming / Samech	Forge Master Greyweaver recommends protecting the Kill-team's gear in a similar manner.	The Battle-Brothers' equipment is safe from the rust decapods' Highly Acidic Trait.
Karlack	Hearing Lamdus's warning and warding themselves with the Emperor's blessings	Arming / Irradial Forge	The Emperor's blessing masks the Battle-Brothers from Dahzak's sorcerous sight.	Dahzak is completely unaware that the Deathwatch is coming to Samech. This affects certain events inside the Irradial Forge.

TABLE 3-1: MISSION CONSEQUENCES, CONTINUED

Decision Location	Action Taken	Consequence Timing	Story Effect	Statistical Effect
Samech	Contacting the sympathisers	Irradial Forge Slums	The sympathisers provide information about the Irradial Forge district.	+10 bonus to Tactics and Concealment or Silent Move Tests while in the Forge District
Samech	Retrieving Arcus Dyre from the Soul Alembic	Breaching the Outer Forge Wall	The Vinculum Proselytes devote troops to combating Dyre instead of the Battle-Brothers.	Decreases the number of foes guarding the Irradial Forge
Samech	Finding and successfully interpreting the anti-venom formula	Xenos Pens	The group's Apothecary learns how to counteract a certain venom	The Apothecary can restore Wounds to anyone poisoned by the Venomthrope and inoculate against it.

Table 3-2 also presents options for letting NPCs bring information to the Kill-team that they might have missed or didn't follow up on, but make an effort to let the player characters provide as much of the foundation as possible. The more you guide them to assemble this information themselves, the more it makes the Battle-Brothers the owners of the story.

When you are ready to begin The Sword of Vigilance, roleplay through how the last matter comes to the Kill-team's attention. (Discussing it in character helps to emphasise that the information is important, and gets everyone in their character's mindset). The passage below is just one example of how to do this:

Mission Consequences: Change the Watch Captain's opening sentence to a recap of the disruption in the Orpheus Salient's communication lines if Lan is infected by the Brood.

You stand in a Briefing Theatre with your Watch Captain. Behind him the latest lines of the Crusade fluctuate on the holo-projector. Coloured shapes wink in and out as the cogitator updates its information about current battles. Your Watch Captain gestures just behind the line of the Iron Collar as he reviews the latest intelligence from the watch stations: "Given the proximity of Pyrathas to the Orpheus Salient, it certainly could be vanguard organisms. It bears further scrutiny." He changes the image on his data slate. "Lastly, there is this report from Watch Station Iobel. Samech has been trading for the components of antisonate plating in prodigious quantities."

"Antisonate plating is costly and has mass limitations. We have never encountered it on anything larger than a Defiler. Whatever they are fashioning, it is far larger, and will be all but undetectable to most augurs."

Most players are eager to be engaged in the story and you won't have any problems getting them to begin speculating and hopefully make the link to the Vinculum Proselytes on their own. However, if they are slow on their recall or to make connections, their Watch Captain can prod them with a statement like "You encountered agents of Samech recently, did you not?" If all else fails, the importance of recent events does not elude the vigilant masters of the Watch. They draw their own conclusions and summon the Kill-team to the briefing described below.

Whoever first puts all this information together, PC or NPC, brings it to the Chamber of Vigilance's attention. The Masters of Erioch convene for a short time to discuss. Depending on the nature of your campaign, you may wish to roleplay through this meeting with the Kill-team in attendance. Otherwise, you can simply have the Chamber meet behind closed doors and emerge with their decision.

TABLE 3-2: A TERRIBLE PUZZLE

Fact	Possible Player-Driven Discovery	Possible Discovery by NPCs
A faction exists in the Magi of Samech called the Vinculum Proselytes. Their activity has been on the rise for the last several decades.	Researched by PCs after finding the symbol on prior Missions	Known by Forge Master Greyweaver
The Thousand Sons Sorcerer Dahzak seems to be devoting a great deal of resources to chasing ancient technology. This is contrary to his cabal's usual pursuit of sorcerous knowledge.	A Battle-Brother performs further research on Dahzak's cabal after encountering them on Karlack	Information from the Achilles Crusade via Diaz Lan
Stories have begun to circulate in the Reach about the Thaumagramm Diode, a device that can induce or alter the flow of warp energy through technology.	A Battle-Brother spends time between Missions deciphering the schematic found on Aurum	An NPC deciphers the schematic or a warning is recieved from the Crucible Resolviate
At least one forge on Samech is purchasing large quantities of antisonate plating.	N/A or an original mission	Watch Station reports, informants, or findings from another Kill-team's operations

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: PERSUADING THE CHAMBER OF VIGILANCE

The senior Deathwatch members form the Chamber of Vigilance, which meets in the very heart of the Watch Fortress. When it convenes to discuss the discoveries around Samech, its attendees include Watch Commander Mordigael, Inquisitor Carmillus, Epistolary Axineton, Forge Master Greyweaver, Battle-Brother Pellas, and all present Watch Captains. When the Kill-team enters the Chamber, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"You enter the domed Chamber of Vigilance. Beneath your feet, scriptures of the Codex Astartes are set in the black stone floor as you move to join the circle of watch keepers in the room's centre. They stand round the engraved Deathwatch symbol, with the waning light of Erioch glinting off its metal surfaces and casting the Chamber's membership in the star's pale, dying colours. Antique servo-skulls slowly orbit the room, stirring the trails of scented smoke which waft from the ceremonial braziers. The circle parts to afford you a space within it; then Watch Commander Mordigael speaks.

"Keepers of the Watch, do you stand your vigil?" The ritual opening is short; the Chamber seldom has time to waste when it convenes. You chorus back the traditional response with those beside you: "I stand vigilant. The Watch never ends."

"The Watch Commander lets the echo of that vow die before he says, "Like the pieces of a terrible puzzle, events are conjoining in the Reach to suggest a picture greater than any single occurrence. Who will speak to this threat?"

You may wish to select an appropriate rival or rivals to be the voice of dissension; this option works best if the characters feel strongly that the evidence shows a threat. (Otherwise you will end up in a monologue as the NPCs debate.) The opposing faction may truly believe that the evidence is coincidental, or rivalry with the Kill-team may have clouded their judgment. In either event, this gives the Kill-team someone to debate with or persuade during the gathering—and a place to focus their attention in the crowd of NPCs.

BRIEFING

When the Chamber of Vigilance agrees to act (as it should in the end), Watch Commander Mordigael wastes no time in commencing the Mission. He summons the Kill-team into the Chamber if they were not already present (in which case you may wish to describe the environment using the first descriptive passage from the optional encounter). With the Battle-Brothers in the ring of Vigil, Mordigael speaks:



"It is true, we have only speculation as to what the so-called 'Vinculum Proselytes' are crafting in their blighted forge. However, it cannot be denied that some foul power rises there, and it means only ill for Mankind. The Chamber of Vigilance has judged that these activities must be halted. Brothers, you have kept the watch proudly. Now we ask you to pursue the enemy you have sighted. Samech is a den for traitors to Mankind and Machine alike. If they are conjuring a new weapon it can only bode ill for the Emperor's subjects. Find it. Destroy it. See that their infection does not bleed through the Iron Collar."

To assault the Iron Pit by force would require a massive war fleet, to say nothing of the extra firepower required simply to travel that far behind the front lines of the Acheron Salient. Given the compelling evidence, the Crusade is likely to agree that a large operation would be effective, but that assembling such a force would take a great deal of time. The Jericho Reach may not have that time to spare. Therefore, the only option is to insert a Kill-team on the Forge World that can infiltrate the targeted forge district rather than to launch a frontal assault.

Watch Commander Mordigael goes on to inform that Battle-Brother Pellas and the *Thunder's Word* will take them to Samech. The Frigate already eluded the armada above Samech once, in a famed mission to recover records from the Slaughterhouse. The Emperor's hand is evident now, as that very data provides the only insights the Deathwatch has into Samech. The records describe many of the most influential Forges on Samech. One such power is the Irradial Forge. When the conversation turns to the Forge, Battle-Brother Pellas activates the hololith projectors in the floor. They display a short block of data titled "Irradial Forge- Domain of the Vinculum Proselytes." It contains planetary co-ordinates and an embedded pict. The pict is black and white but of good quality. It shows a medallion, slightly tarnished, as though taken in the aftermath of a battle. It bears the same symbol as the Magi on Aurum and Karlack: the Radial of Chaos.

Additionally, a network of humans who may aid the Deathwatch existed at one time on the forge world. Available data is sparse, but these Imperial sympathisers use the symbol of a five-pointed star to identify one another.

Epistolary Axineton interjects, "Not that we have proof they still exist. The last record of them is over two hundred years old." Mordigael nods to acknowledge the risk. "We must have faith that they still exist. But if they have fallen, our brothers will find some other means of completing their mission."

The following information and rumours may be available about Samech and the Irradial Forge if the Battle-Brothers seek to learn more about the planet. **Mission Consequence:** Consider whether the Imperial relays still stand when deciding how much detail to provide.

THE ANTISONATE PLATING

If you do want to run an adventure where you reveal the final piece of the Terrible Puzzle, here is an example set of components that could be used to build such a Mission:

- **Background:** On the asteroid ring around Dakinor, the Imperial Guard fight an un-ending battle against a death cult called the Torment. The battle for Dakinor has taken a sudden turn for the worst. The Torment have pushed the Imperial Guard back from several key positions in rapid succession. This would be a concern for only the Crusade and not the Deathwatch, if the Torment's sudden victory streak was not built upon a powerful assortment of alien technology. The source of their new armaments is a deal with the Irradial Forge on Samech. Antisonate plating is refined from rare, wave-absorbing ore, and the Torment have located a supply on the nearby planet Veren.
- **Location:** Dakinor's barely-habitable asteroids circle the gas giant, and it is upon these satellites that the Mission is waged. The visible starscape evokes a sense of being exposed directly to the void.
- **Objective:** The Primary Objective is to uncover the source of the Torment's new armaments.
- **Enemies:** In addition to the Torment, the Velk'Han Sept are present at Dakinor when the Kill-team arrives. The Tau are notoriously protective of Veren, and they launch a brutal assault on the Torment for violating the planet.
- **Assets:** The Velk'Han Sept's main target is the Torment, not the Deathwatch. This means the cult is weakened and distracted. Furthermore, the Space Marines' power armour means the thin atmosphere and extreme temperatures of the asteroids trouble them far less than most of their opponents.
- **Obstacles:** Despite the Battle-Brothers' equipment, they do not know the peculiarities of the celestial bodies like the local foes. The asteroids could present all sorts of challenges related to unstable terrain, gravity, and other celestial objects. There is also no love lost between the Tau and the Deathwatch, and in this case the enemy of my enemy is still my enemy. Lastly, if the Velk'Han Sept does its job too efficiently, then the Deathwatch may never learn if the cultists had uncovered some alien artefact cache.
- **Choices:** Do the Battle-Brothers risk that the Tau assault might destroy all answers to the Deathwatch's questions, or do they fight to protect (at least temporarily) a heretical cult? During the Mission, the Kill-team locates the main armoury where the Torment stores their ill-gotten xeno-tech. They have a fleeting opportunity to detonate the entire asteroid, but the Imperial Guard is embroiled in conflict on it. Do they sacrifice the guardsmen to destroy the alien tech?

It is a good idea to hold the reveal about the Antisonate trade deal until the end of the adventure, lest its big picture meaning distract from the Mission at hand.

- The forges of Samech trade their barbaric technology to anyone who can meet their price. They are crucial to keeping the enemy fleets of the Acheros Salient supplied.
- The dark forges' minions stray far across the Jericho Reach. More than one Battle-Brother has died trying to prevent them from capturing forbidden xenos technology and furthering their power base.
- Samech's leadership is fractured. It does not have one ruling body. Instead, each of the great forges is an independent district with dictatorship over the affairs around their territory. Internecine conflict is common over commerce or secret lore. However, every forge contributes ships and weapons to Samech's fleet. In defence of their spoils they are united, and no planet in the Reach can boast a stronger armada in its orbit.
- Samech turned against the Imperium and the Adeptus Mechanicus long before the Hadex Anomaly formed. Immersion in the warp breach was just fuel on the flame of their depravity. The Jericho Reach has as many legends about the formation of the Anomaly as it has lost worlds. One such tale refers to a forge district that comported with the ruinous powers and revered the mutant even before the birth of the malign rift. The legend implies the forge may have been what summoned the Hadex Anomaly.
- Particular if the communications relays are still functional, information on some of the possible targets of opportunity (Tertiary Objectives) may be available.

EPISTOLARY AXINETON

The White Consul Librarian is exacting and unsubtle. If you have no NPC with a better reason to oppose launching a Mission to Samech, Axineton can be used as he is usually quick to find fault. Some objections to the proposed Mission may include:

- The Alpha Legion is renowned for Misdirection: The Battle-Brothers' reports cite Alpha Legion involvement in this plot. This Traitor Legion is known for spreading false information. This is probably an elaborate ruse to divert the Deathwatch's attention from a real threat.
- The Orpheus Salient is more pressing: The Deathwatch does not have time to chase theories. Every day Hive Fleet Dagon draws closer to consuming another planet. The Deathwatch should focus on seeing that the Jericho Reach does not suffer the same fate as Prandium did. (If using a different NPC, substitute their pet cause.)
- The powers of the Charon Stars do not make alliances easily: If a Chaos Space Marine sorcerer and some faction of Samech really do have a tentative alliance, their true aim has to be grander than simply building a ship. The Kill-team should seek out the enemy's real plan, not chase rumours into the Iron Pit.

More details on Epistolary Axineton can be found on page 336 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook.

ARMING AND OATH-TAKING

This Mission has a suggested Requisition Rating of at least 125, modified by the events with Faln and Aurum per Table 3–1: Mission Consequences. This Rating is higher than the total of the Objectives, representing the crucial and challenging nature of the Mission. If the Kill-team effectively represented the Mission's importance to the Chamber of Vigilance, each Battle-Brother also receives one bolter clip (28 bolts) of Vengeance Rounds. Although this high Rating opens up many options for equipment, the mission authorities recommend against Terminator **armour** because its size and bulk make it harder to stay undetected. (However, Forge Master Greyweaver has an obvious enmity for Samech's tech-heretics. He may still be persuaded to issue it to Battle-Brothers with the appropriate Renown.) Battle-Brothers who rely on special ammunition may wish to requisition more clips than usual.

Mission Consequence: If the Battle-Brothers found the trialkaline powder on Karlack, Forge Master Greyweaver suggests treating their power **armour** and weapons with a similar anti-corrosive before departing. He theorises that something in the planet's toxic environment may pose a danger. If Magos Quezalt owed the Deathwatch a favour, the Kill-team is also issued the algorithm purifier he provided.

Primary Objective: Stop the thaumagramm diodes from being used to corrupt the warp gate—or whatever equivalent menace the Deathwatch believes grows on Samech. (Veteran Objective, 18 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Make sure the forces of Chaos are not capable of making more diodes to try again later. (Veteran Objective, 13 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Destroy whatever means the enemy is planning to use to slip past the Iron Collar. (Skilled Objective, 12 Requisition)

Secondary Objective: Kill Dahzak (Skilled Objective, 12 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Destroy the Paragelle (Veteran Objective, 8 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Rescue the Imperial Sympathisers from the Skitarii (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Destroy the Defiler Foundry (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Destroy the Servitor Nursery (Novice Objective, 6 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Rescue Arcus Dyre and convince him to aid the Mission (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Identify the trade in tainted cogitators (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

Tertiary Objective: Cause as much damage as possible to the infrastructure of Samech without jeopardizing the Mission (Veteran Objective, 8 Requisition)

A TURBULENT VOYAGE

"The empyrean's foulness bled out through the pores of space, like a murderous infection beneath the skin of reality. There, one cannot pretend that daemons are not separated from us by a tremulously thin veil. I pray I need never enter that place again."

—Rogue Trader Kazandus Lan, speaking of the Charon Stars

Samech is one of the most well-protected planets in the Acheros Salient, and lies deep behind enemy lines. Fortunately, no vessel is better suited to make this run than the *Thunder's Word*, a Deathwatch Gladius-class frigate. Details on the *Thunder's Word* and its commander, Battle-Brother Pellas, can be found on page 335 of the **DEATHWATCH Rulebook**. This is not the first time the vessel has had to slip into the territory of the apostate Magi. However, the last time did not involve deploying forces to the Iron Pit itself. The forge world's atmosphere is choked with pollution and rife with ionisation. This should make the entry of a single drop pod relatively difficult to detect. From that point on, the Kill-team is on their own.

Life aboard the *Thunder's Word* is very similar to that on Erioch. Other Deathwatch Space Marines crew the ship, and its interior reflects a similar aesthetic to the interior of the Watch Fortress. While it lacks the training amenities of the massive fortress, the crew regularly engages in hand-to-hand sparring in the limited cargo hold, and the Kill-team are treated as brothers in arms by the other Deathwatch Space Marines. Conversations in transit offer another chance to present the players with information on targets of opportunity. If the Kill-team engages in extensive discussions with the crew, another subject sure to come up is the ship's service history.

Battles of the Thunder's Word

The Slaughterhouse Infiltration: This mission is the reason the *Thunder's Word* has the best chance of bringing the Kill-team safely to their destination. The *Thunder's Word* bypassed Samech's entire fleet to reach "the Slaughterhouse," a watch station circling a nightmare world. One of the keys to their success was the discovery of "Altaire's Arrow." Their Navigator, Altaire Vor'cle, discerned a narrow shaft of relatively calm space in the turbulence around the Hadex Anomaly. Not only does Altaire's Arrow allow safe passage, but it also helps mask the presence of a ship travelling through it.

The Defence of Hestus: Removed from all the primary battle fronts, Watch Station Hestus drifts through space like a rogue moon. It orbits no known celestial body, but slowly travels some incalculable path that keeps it forever in sight of the Jericho Reach. Several years ago, the watch station drew the eye of Chaos raiders thinking to corrupt it into a part of their arsenal. The *Thunder's Word* deployed to investigate the sudden cessation of its data beacon. They arrived to face an Infidel raider, but it called for aid before they could destroy it. Wave after wave of Swiftdeath fighters and Infidel class raiders

THE EMPEROR PROTECTS

The dying warning of Lamdus Rize was "The Emperor Protects." What did he mean by these words? Dahzak commands the foul sorceries of Chaos, and he excels at using them to predict the movements of his enemies. However, the light of the Emperor blocks his vision. The Sword of Vigilance contains several points where it is possible for Dahzak to use his foretelling against the Kill-team. Space Marines usually swear oaths of valour before a Mission, and often bear some form of holy icons on their personages. However, only very specific protections foil the sorcerer's divination.

If the Battle-Brothers interpret the warning as a need to seek out the Emperor's blessing, a priest or Chaplain is certainly available on the Watch Fortress to perform such a rite and affix special purity seals. A successful **Challenging (+0) Lore: Scholastic (Imperial Creed) Test** also interprets the warning thusly. If the team consults an NPC on the matter, they might make this test for the characters. Another form of protection is to select the Oath to the Emperor at Oath-Taking. It is possible for the Kill-team to select this oath regardless of Rize's warning. Even if it was not chosen deliberately, the oath still conveys its protection, although the Battle-Brothers may never know that the Emperor shielded them.

assaulted the *Thunder's Word* as the foe threw their entire force at the Deathwatch vessel. Not only did the *Thunder's Word* prevail, they completely eliminated the entire raiding fleet.

Sighting of Hive Dagon: In another of the vessel's better known exploits, the *Thunder's Word* was the first to discover the Tyranids encroaching on the Jericho Reach and live to tell the tale. The crew spins a compelling first-hand account of finding the Freya system suddenly emptied of all life, and the morbid puzzle of trying to understand what could have wrought such death—followed by the dreadful answer from the assault of two Tyranid drone ships.

The Kalenikos Extraction: The Crusade's landing at the beaches of the Raek Forest cost thousands of Imperial Guard lives. As the Fist of the Emperor struggled to maintain their eroding hold in the sand, reports quickly accumulated of an alien presence that seemed hostile to both the Imperium and the Tau Empire. The Ordo Xenos covertly began an investigation, only to be cut off when the Crusade withdrew from the world. The *Thunder's Word* was responsible for the location and retrieval of the Ordo Xenos operatives before they were lost with the other abandoned souls.

Battle Wounds

As indicated on Table 3–1, if the Kill-team did not end the proscribed trading activities of Alexei Drahj, the *Frozen Tear* soon came into conflict with the *Thunder's Word*. If this happened, the *Thunder's Word* is still obviously healing from that fierce battle. The hull shows many temporary patches over long lance fissures, and the plasma drives occasionally produce energy spikes that ripple through the ship. During the journey to Samech, the Techmarines obviously strive

to continue the repairs. The ship's crew recounts how they encountered the *Tear* by chance outside the Quarantined Worlds, and their cogitators reported it as a known violator of the sanctions against xeno-trafficking from Polyphemos. When they attempted to board the vessel to assess its purity, it opened fire.

THE IRON PIT

"These vile innovators have abandoned creed and loyalty, to force their own whims upon the Omnissiah's perfect designs. The machine is not a slate to sign with your own crude hand. These betrayers will learn the gravity of their mistake."

—From the Fabricator General's declaration of Samech's apostasy

Even before its Magi turned traitor, before being consumed and expelled by the Hadex Anomaly, the hungry forges of the Adeptus Mechanicus had stripped Samech of resources. It is a land of poisonous waters, soil that cannot support life, and strip-mining scars that plunge kilometres into the planet's crust. These trenches and craters made natural sites to build manufactorum and hab clusters. Consequently, while Samech has its share of towers and spires, the majority of its forges burrow into the ground rather than climbing skyward. The planet has been plundered to such a degree that the remaining ferrous metals of Samech's outer core are unevenly distributed and shift frequently. This creates strange magnetic currents and fierce electric storms.

Synthetic protein supports most of the planet's inhabitants, but the lack of biological material cannot be fully overcome. Most of Samech's genatoriums and vehicles use atomic energy. However, promethium is a vital component in certain ancient devices and maintenance rituals that the planet's Magi have corrupted, but not foresworn. Given its status in the Charon Stars, there is little Samech cannot acquire through trade—but the magi were never content to depend on others for anything so vital, and so they devised the Carbon Transmuter. This machine's twisting maws of pistons and bubbling alchemical vats can take any organic matter and convert it into glistening black promethium. The most common and easily obtained organic resource is of course human menials. Moreover, the Transmuter is not the only horror with a taste for human flesh in the Irradial Forge district. The mutant elite grow more abominable and further removed from humanity with each passing generation. Many consider themselves above manufactured protein rations; this leaves only one plentiful source of meat for their refined palates. Between such hunger and the taxing conditions under which the menials labour, Samech consumes life at a voracious pace. The Magi rely on a combination of the slave trade and breeding to keep their stock of labour from depleting.

Even the warp has spawned only the weakest parodies of life in this barren ecosystem. After a warp intrusion, tainted worlds often emerge overrun with daemons and mutated life forms. While Samech has its share of both, the warp's influence took root most deeply in the technology for which the planet is renowned. The forges must constantly use sonic emitters to repel rust decapods—fist-sized parasites that feed on metal. Their swarms have had a

profound effect on the already ravaged planet's surface. Millennia of industry stripped kilometres off the planet's crust; in some cases it came close to reaching Samech's upper mantle. When the rust decapods evolved, they sought these weak points like boreworms seeking exposed flesh. The creatures are impervious to heat, and therefore capable of feasting on the planet's metal-rich mantle without harm. The resulting breaches frequently erupt in geysers of molten minerals. These volcano-like fissures cool into irregular ore masses, which are immediately beset by the parasites until they breach the crust again. Samech sometimes trades rust decapods with the vile forces they favour. All that stops them from being a menace to the entire Acheron Salient is that the forces of Chaos are little better at controlling the parasites than the Crusade. Several of the Salient's early battlefields are now quarantine zones full of the destructive creatures that neither side can enter without quickly finding their vehicles and armaments devoured by ravenous decapod swarms.

Another strange but less overtly harmful type of fauna are the simuloptera, which are virtually unknown beyond the planet. The original purpose of these nanotech colonies can only be speculated, but they changed drastically once Samech entered the Hadex Anomaly. With chroma-simulator shells, they are the perfect chameleon. A hive can range from the mass of a bolter to a Thunderhawk, and mimic the appearance of anything with equivalent size.

When the *Thunder's Word* arrives, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The **Thunder's Word** has proved true a second time. War cruisers and defence satellites vie for space around this bastion of unwholesome power. The **Thunder's Word** cannot possibly remain unseen for long. Below this cloud of the enemy's vessels burns Samech. It is an uneven red rock, covered with lacerations of blistering lava and the dark cancers of forge cities whose jagged tendrils embrace the planet. Dozens of orbital docks are locked in orbit; some have metal umbilical cords that plunge through the gray atmosphere to the mechanical placenta of the forges.*

The Battle-Brothers each receive a teleport homer for extraction. However, they must deploy by drop pod. The dense, charged nature of Samech's atmosphere makes it far too likely that a teleport deployment would land them in lava, unstable ground, the heart of a reactor, or some equally lethal hazard.

SAMECH

Anyone familiar with the fronts of the Achilus Crusade knows of Samech's existence, and that it is an apostate forge world supplying arms to much of the Acheron Salient. Characters trained in Lore: Common (Jericho Reach) or Lore: Forbidden (Adeptus Mechanicus) know more. Beyond the established intelligence on page 349 of the *DEATHWATCH* Rulebook, the Imperium has only speculation and unreliable data. (However, see the rumours below for some of said speculations.)

CONDITIONAL ENCOUNTER: PUSHING THE ODDS

If the Battle-Brothers ended the threat of Alexei Drahj and prevented the conflict where he damaged the *Thunder's Word*, the ship slips undetected into Samech's orbit for a second time. In this case, the drop pod launch goes smoothly. However, if the frigate still bears the damage from their recent battle with the Transpired Circle, the planet's defence augurs detect the erratic energy signature of their plasma drives. The first sign of trouble comes only a few moments after translating back into real space. Read aloud or paraphrase the following.

*Without warning, the **Thunder's Word** shudders and tilts as a battery salvo reverberates off the hull. The external feeds show several dingy red ships breaking orbit to turn towards your vessel. Pellas's voice comes over the vox system: "Go Brothers! To the drop pods! We will do our duty here. Do yours."*

However, before the Kill-team can reach the drop pod, there is a resounding impact against a nearby bulkhead followed by the shrieking of tearing metal; the bulkhead begins to spark and melt. Skitarii pour from the boarding torpedo. At this point the Battle-Brothers are 60 metres from the drop pod. The unfailingly loyal soldiers have only one goal: keep the enemy from reaching Samech. They split into two equal sized groups (the total number of Skitarii should be roughly equal to the number of Battle-Brothers plus four). One attacks the Battle-Brothers, while the other focuses on destroying the drop pod before the Kill-team can launch. The Kill-team must decide whether they stop the Skitarii from wreaking havoc on the *Thunder's Word*, or concentrate on getting to the pod and launching their Mission. Should the Horde succeed in disabling the drop pod, it takes ten minutes and a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** to repair the damage. This means the Kill-team must wipe the boarders out to a man, or do an unparalleled job of protecting the technician. The Skitarii profile is on page 134.

A SHIP IN PERIL

Even if the *Thunder's Word* was not detected initially, there is a limit to how long it can remain hidden in Samech's well-protected orbit. This adventure is full of tertiary objectives and colourful content to explore. You do not want to deny your players the chance to explore it, but every group's tolerance for such exploration is different. If you need to redirect the focus back to the Primary Objective or increase the sense of urgency, the *Thunder's Word* can periodically vox down in an increasing state of peril, urging the Kill-team to hurry so that they can be extracted. An Optional Encounter associated with this problem is also provided.

INTO THE HEART OF DARKNESS

He beckoned to the spirit of murder, to the profound evil, to the darkness in the heart of the land.

—Extract from a Terran cautionary tale

When the Battle-Brothers deploy, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The first few seconds after the drop pod launches are calm in the weightless silence of the void. Then you hit Samech's atmosphere; the pod lurches and rattles as though protesting immersion in this vaporous taint. The violent movements buffet your pod, and you can hear the roar of fiery plasma sheathing your descent. This gives way abruptly to the thunder of the retro rockets when they kick in, slamming your shoulder pads against the top of your harness as they slow your fall. The super-heated air around the pod dissipates and the data screen on the central column displays the rocky ground rushing towards you. With a final jolt, the drop pod hits the rocky surface.

Except for the settling dust of your landing, the harsh landscape is still as death. The pitted crags snake endlessly in all directions, and nothing moves under the ruddy sky.

A smooth, glassy rail lies nearby, running roughly north and south. It is perfectly level, and the contrast only serves to emphasise how uneven the ravaged land is. The rail spans huge gaps, hanging alone in the air with a gravity-defying disregard for the yawning abysses beneath it. The Kill-team's information indicates that this rail line leads north towards their destination.

The first hour of their trek is uneventful. However, when they are a few kilometres out from the forge district, the area's sentry spirits detect the power signatures of their **armour**. Skirmishes between the different forge districts, as well as feral machines and raids from scavengers are all common on Samech, and the Battle-Brothers are mistaken for just another band of raiders. The planet's magi have devised an infinite arsenal of blasphemous and lethal technology to defend their secrets. What greets the Battle-Brothers is a type of "improved" servitor crafted by Arch-Magos Vayze. These monstrosities are a product of Vayze's long-standing fascination with the power to be gained by fusing Samech's tech heresies with the power of the dark gods. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You spot the phalanx of machine-beasts several dozen metres out. The heavy brutes are neither quiet nor agile as they lumber over the jagged terrain. It is as though someone took the most Chaos-deformed mutants they could find, and then covered them with crude augmetics and corroded armour plating. Over time, the foul essence of the creatures beneath have warped the machines as well as the flesh.

The mutated servitors have no ranged weapons and move slowly. The Battle-Brothers have no trouble picking several of them off with ranged weapons before they get into close combat. The number of the twisted creatures that actually get near the Kill-team should outnumber them roughly 3 to 2. As with most of Samech's lava wastes, the ground is rough and broken. Deep crevices and rocky teeth cover the ground. You should emphasise this fact to the players when setting up the combat. If anyone wants to get creative with the terrain, it is a fair assumption that a pit and/or extrusion is never more than Run distance away.

Mission Consequence: If the Battle-Brothers completed the Divested Hunt they may use the terrain to provide cover with AP 2 as a Free Action.

IRRADIAL FORGE SLUMS

Only a few minutes after dealing with the mutated servitors, the Irradial Forge at last comes into view. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you proceed, the colossal forge grows on the horizon like a rising, malignant sun. Its outline ripples, and you cannot tell if it the effect of the planet's constant heat, or some shifting property of the structure. It is as large as any hive, a twisting complex of pipes and chimneys and panels. Some portions are meticulously ordered while others look more like the result of an accident than a design. Eventually a secondary structure emerges in the distance, a few kilometres away from the forge itself: the two spiky pillars of the shipyard. Not until you are nearly at the end of the rail do the ramshackle slums come into view. They are a sad, sprawling clutter of metal boxes. In the shadow of the Irradial Forge the flimsy, stunted buildings look more like the forge's rejected offal than the homes of millions. The closer you draw, the more oppressive the heat becomes.

Here in these slums, the enslaved human menials eke out a meagre existence during the precious few hours they do not labour for the Forge. The Vinculum Proselytes place an emphasis on breeding volume, so the majority of the Irradial Forge's menials are born, live, and die on the tainted planet. However, a steady infusion of slaves keeps the gene pool varied and viable.

A life of privation and toil quickly grinds down the spirit no matter where the slave was born. The menials are as a rule too downtrodden and effectively conditioned to do more than what their masters demand and scratch in the dirt to survive. They wear loose mass-produced coveralls and keep their hair closely cropped. While Samech is relatively distant from its corrupted red sun, the man-made thinness of the planet's crust has increased the temperature drastically over the years. Furthermore, the miasma of gases in the atmosphere traps radiant heat. Like an insect under a magnifier, wood, parchment, clothing, and other flammable materials are subject to combustion when the sun is at its peak. Large pails of inert mineral powder fill every corner of the slums, for dousing an unfortunate building or menial who cooks too long under the red sun.

Prominent slums locations are detailed on page 107.

THE BLACK ENGINE

The Black Engine's rail has criss-crossed Samech for thousands of years. Its history stretches back before the Age of Shadow, and some say before the Age of Man. The spiked iron beast that presently travels the rails is the invention of Samech's current regime, but its efficacy relies on the inimitable phenomenon surrounding the archeotech track. The track does not exist solely in the physical world. Anything that touches it takes on the same properties, becoming Incorporeal. This allows vehicles upon it to travel without the restraint of physics or air friction, and to ignore any environmental hazards.

Unless one of the Battle-Brothers passes a **Difficult (-10) Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech) Test**, they are not aware of the rumours associated with this device and have no reason to shy from the tracks. However, if anyone should stand upon the rail, he gains the Incorporeal Trait for as long he remains in contact.

The GM may also find it adds an interesting dynamic to the combat if the Black Engine itself passes by in the middle of the fight. The Round before it arrives, describe the howling sound generated by the oscillating blades around the wheels. The monitoring systems of their power armour may detect a sudden drop in the stifling temperature of Samech's air. On the next round, the Engine barrels through. It is ten metres long, with a face carved into a perpetually open maw. Razor sharp metal implements jut forward, forming the impression of teeth and a leering tongue. The construct's body bulges in a segmented arch, with each metal plate possessing a spindle of more blades that slice and spin at anything close to its body. Groaning chains link a baroque ebony carriage to the Engine; the two are roughly equal in size.

Anyone standing directly on the rail must pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** to leap off in time to avoid being struck by the Engine.

Should one of the Battle-Brothers fail this test, they take Damage as though hit by the Engine's crush attack as both they and the Engine are incorporeal at that moment. (See the Black Engine's profile on page 136).

THE BLACK ENGINE TERMINUS

One spoke of the translucent rail ends here at the southwestern corner of the slums. A gargantuan iron cage covers the end of the line, where the Black Engine sleeps between runs. The cage is presently empty, the doors thrown open. A few metal platforms and corroded loaders surround the cage. Beyond this, a wide radius of collapsed structures suggests that nothing survives too long close to the engine's holding place.

THE PROVING ALTARS

The corrupt Machine Cultists must still replenish their numbers as they succumb to age. Every day dozens die gruesomely on the proving altars, where hopefuls go to implant themselves

with the organs of devotion. Each of the eight altars consists of a stone operating plinth and a black case that holds organs, medi-sacraments, and ritual instruments. Even under the potent stimulants, immune-suppressors, and pain blockers in the sacraments, very few have the skill and the fortitude to survive such a self-performed operation. However, the reward is worth the risk.

PLAZA OF SUSPENDED MOTION

This convergence point of the main thoroughfares through the habs is the decrepit heart of the slums. It is here that the masters of Samech descend to address their drudges, to exact fealty, and to mete out punishments. The source of the plaza's name is obvious. The electromagnetic winds and foul energies of the planet flow down the paths to this centre as well, creating a tumultuous field of altered gravity. Many ferrous objects have been stranded in this anomaly over the years; scraps of steel, combitools, an empty stubber, and even a bionic leg spin slowly in midair.

The field is fickle about what it claims. The Battle-Brothers' power armour fails to interest it, but the GM might decide it tugs at a piece of gear or two. This requires an Opposed Strength Test against the Field's Unnatural Strength x2 of 40. Should anyone attempt to dislodge an item once it has become trapped, the task is close to impossible—now requiring

an Opposed Strength Test against Unnatural Strength (x3) of 60. However, equipment or abilities like Ferric Lure or similar approaches to disrupting the magnetic field are quite effective.

THE SORTING FACILITY

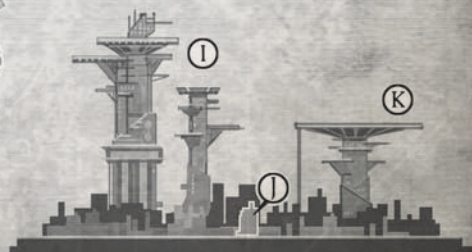
As the Battle-Brothers are sure to discover, the Irradial Forge has developed a sudden thirst for the souls of psykers. In times past, the Vinculum Proselytes only paid attention to those with strong psychic potential, putting them down before they could cause harm among the menials. All that changed when they allied with Dahzak. Now they comb the population as meticulously as any Governor extracts tithes for the Black Ships. Anyone found to have the slightest connection to the warp is whisked away to the ominous Soul Alembic.

The Magi razed several dwellings to form an open space near the plaza where they can sift the population for psychic energies. A large mutant named Cyluk is in charge of the sorting. One by one he brings that day's candidates before a Magos with a psy-tracker. A contingent of Skitarii stand around the perimeter of the facility, discouraging onlookers and corralling the unfortunates for the next trip on the Black Engine.

FORGE SLUMS



- A. Plaza of Suspended Motion
- B. Shipyards
- C. Sympathizer Base
- D. The Paragelle's Sanctum
- E. Dispensary
- F. Makeshift Sorting Facility
- G. Black Engine Terminus
- H. Altars
- I. High Docks
- J. Dockmaster's Office
- K. Atmospheric Platform



Shipyards (side-view)

THE ORGANS OF DEVOTION

This barbaric initiation practice is common on Samech, although the particulars of the ritual implants vary from one forge district to another. In most locations, the case contains cooling units to keep the organic components from spoiling too quickly. Some of the most commonly found organs include:

- **The Savant's Eye** – Every survivor has a slightly different tale of what this augmetic eye reveals when they connect it to their optic nerve, but more than one candidate has expired from terror after completing this step.
- **Necrotic Hand** – This implant is meticulously replaced to ensure it does not decay too far. It is always cut from a living person and then allowed to age eight days before being placed in the case.
- **Logic Nodule** – The composition of this palm-sized organ varies widely. Most commonly, it is a small circuit board or cogitator matrix, but more esoteric interpretations also exist. While it grants no known functionality, making space for it in one's chest cavity is an exercise in special calculations.
- **Filament Lung** – Used only by the most elite forge districts, whose preserved ranks of techpriests age slowly and can wait decades for a promising candidate to replenish them. This artificial lung is an airtight weave of metal and glass. It is one of the most diabolical self-implantation rites because the aspirant must first remove an organic lung to exchange for the filament lung.

THE IMPERIAL SYMPATHISERS

Seeking out the "sympathisers" is not strictly necessary, but their knowledge and occupations on Samech can aid the Battle-Brothers considerably.

On many forge worlds the traditional Imperial cult is eclipsed by the creed of the Ommissiah. For those labouring on a planet whose Magi abandoned even the faith of Mars, the Emperor is not even a distant memory. Generations of Samech's downtrodden human population have lived and died scarcely understanding that anything dwells beyond their choked red sky. It is only through slaves from off-world that any memory lives of the Imperium, or the stars. The nature of the sympathisers has fluctuated drastically throughout their existence, depending on the vision of the members at the time. At the time of the Deathwatch's last information, the sympathisers had a more concrete understanding of the outside and the Imperium than they do today.

The current incarnation has no name for the salvation that they whisper lies in "the Beyond," but they do believe in that which they cannot name. Bartered slaves still speak of stars, and a Golden Man who helps humans move between them. For those seeking some form of hope in amidst the drudgery, those vague ideas are enough to cling to. It is that hope—an emotion which has abandoned most of Samech—that unites the sympathisers. They do not even have a name for their own organisation; they are a kinship of faith, not words. At

PATROLS IN THE FORGE SLUMS

As a rule, a life of mental conditioning and toil leaves the menials little room for rebellious intent. Only moderate effort is put into policing the slums, but they are not altogether unattended. The Battle-Brothers occasionally have to dodge patrols of Skitarii and mutated servitors as they move through the city. (The GM can include an optional encounter with a patrol whenever pacing calls for more action.) The base size for a patrol should be a group of 6 Skitarii or 5 mutants.

In their black power **armour** the Adeptus Astartes look more like constructs than men to a society raised without the Space Marine's image. Therefore, the humans react very little to the Kill-team as long as they make no hostile movements. However, if at any time the Battle-Brothers take an action that the GM feels would draw Magos Vayze's attention (such as getting into combat with a patrol) he should increase the patrols per *The Time for Subtlety has Passed* sidebar on page 118.

Mission Consequence: Decrease the size of the patrols if the Battle-Brothers did not stop Karlack's Royal Guard from joining the Imperial Guard.

their heart is an older woman named Myrlaine. In her large, anarchic shamble of a hab, the sympathisers gather to imagine the Beyond.

While the sympathisers have no scriptures and no religious doctrine, they do have a single artefact that embodies all their hopes. This treasure is a worn piece of leather tattooed with fine inks. Anyone familiar with interstellar travel recognises it immediately as a hand-made star chart. The sympathisers have passed the map between them for centuries, pointing at a particular symbol and knowing it is significant without understanding why. The irregular circle is labelled Samech for those who can read; the menials cannot. Many of the Reach's most prominent systems are depicted with a five-pointed star—the origin of the sympathiser's symbol.

If the Forges of Samech know about this underground for hope within their domain, they have done little to quell it. Perhaps such unreasonable faith in the menials' reality of slavery escaped their rational constructs, or perhaps they see the movement as harmless. The fragile thing has certainly caused them no trouble so far.

Myrlaine

Myrlaine is what the menials term "a tender." Every day dozens of menials become incapacitated from disease, malnutrition, exhaustion, and industrial accidents. A tender's duty is to triage the injured and unwell. She cares for the few menials who can be quickly returned to labour, and sentences many more to become fuel for the Irradial Forge. She hides her disgust with her duty well, as she knows she would be removed from her role if the ruling powers ever suspected she was anything but mindlessly compliant.

CYLUK

In the Irradial Forge district, mutation is a sign of favour. Those who develop debilitating mutations are quietly put down, and only those creatures who exemplify superhuman traits survive to become the taskmasters and overseers in the slums. The Vinculum Proselytes encourage the degenerates to abuse the menials, keeping their privileged class sated with petty cruelty and the slave class broken in fear and despair.

MAKING CONTACT

Due to the size of her “family,” Myrlaine and her charges occupy a three story building on their own. The Battle-Brothers cannot miss it if they pass by. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

From a distance the small hab appears identical to the others around it—unique only in the placement of its patches and how its skewed angles vary from the equal but differently irregular angles of the next hab. However, from the front, the building has something none of the other units do. Every window has a five-pointed star hung in it. Most are irregular, and no two are cut the same. They are fashioned from foil and plastic and scraps of canvas.

If the Battle-Brothers choose to approach the building, one of the recovering tenants spots them first. The man—who has a large, dirty bandage around his head and his arm in a sling—stares at the walking suits of metal. His or her expression is too stunned to convey any form of fear. When the Space Marines speak or get closer, he begins shouting wordlessly and pitching nearby debris (harmlessly) at them. Myrlaine emerges from the door a moment later. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A stout woman steps out of the hab and eyes you. “What beyis this? New machine-men to run about? Well what beyare you doing here? I don’t need trouble at my door” She addresses you in a rhetorical tone. Servitors do not speak and she is obviously not expecting an answer. She reaches out her hands as though about to try shoving you on your way.

Myrlaine is quite startled to realise that these tall, (mostly) metal-clad creatures are not servitors, but recovers quickly. The only obstacle to getting her aid is that she and the other sympathisers have never heard of the Adeptus Astartes. However, Imperial symbols or even the mere mention of space travel and other planets is all it takes to convince them. Their precise opinion of the Kill-team depends on how they describe themselves and their task, but the sympathisers are pre-disposed to think of them in familiar terms. If they gain a rough understanding of the Space Marines or the Deathwatch, they call them “The Golden Man’s Sentinels.”

SPEECH PATTERNS OF THE MENIALS

Warhammer 40,000 is full of planets that have developed language idiosyncrasies over long separation from the Imperium. The read-aloud dialogue for the menials is written with a small twist on the verb “to be.” Whenever it is used in its present tense, “bey” is concatenated at the front of the usual verb tense, turning am into beyam, are into beyare, and so on. If you find this too cumbersome to roleplay, feel free to switch the verb tense back to good old Low Gothic: am, is, are.

The other sympathisers include 3 forge workers named Altus, Syrik, and Humour, who—like the majority of Samech’s population—labour in the manufactorum, applying patterns by rote to small cogs in a large machine they will never understand. Dalton is a food processor who keeps the Dispensary running, and their last regular member is a man named Rij. Rij is a cadalvager. He has the unsavoury task gathering those who die in Myrlaine’s care as well as bodies from the slums, and sorting through them to determine the best use for each: corpse-servitors, food, or fuel. The sympathisers seem more relaxed if the Space Marines remove their helmets. This makes them look more like men and less like the mechanical horrors that dominate Samech.

Words of Advice

None of the menials have ever been inside the Irradial Forge itself, but they give whatever aid they can to these agents of The Beyond. First and foremost, the sympathisers know a great deal about the forge district. They can describe the slums, the shipyards, current happenings, and the most common forces serving the Magi. An overview from them provides the Kill-team with a +10 bonus to any Tests where a lay of the land would be beneficial, such as Silent Move Tests to sneak through the city while avoiding patrols, or Tactics Tests to choose a defensible position. They can also offer advice on some of the Kill-team’s objectives, which might include:

- There is no doubt that activity in the shipyards has increased of late. The number of menials assigned to labour there has easily tripled in recent years, and vehicles constantly run between the yards and the forge. The perimeter is not guarded, but none of the sympathisers have ever been inside. One of the manufactorum workers offers to slip into a shipyard work crew and report what he sees if the Battle-Brothers so wish.
- Arcus Dyre could be a powerful ally, scapegoat, or distraction if the Kill-team wants to use him. Dyre is a powerful psyker. On a planet with little exposure to the Imperial Creed, this carries no stigma in the menial population. The Vinculum Proselytes’ practice of harvesting them means that they have caused few accidental warp incursions. For many years Dyre was the source of great damage to the Irradial Forge. He was a one-man resistance army, and the only open freedom fighter the district has ever known. (There is not a small

amount of admiration in the sympathisers' voices when they speak of him.) A short time ago, his rebellion finally ended in capture. He was only recently taken to the Soul Alembic. If the Kill-team could free him, he has nothing but malice for the Forge and its masters.

- Rij trucks corpses up to the very gates of the Forge itself. If the Battle-Brothers wanted to masquerade as recently deceased, their size would be unusual but not problematic. The Proselytes favour physically capable templates drawn from the planet's mutants. However, they would need to take off their armour to blend in, which poses obvious drawbacks.

THE DISPENSARY

With no flora and no organic fauna to speak of, the menials are utterly reliant on the Irradial Forge to feed them. A hungry worker is a less productive worker, and the Forge's Magi run exact calculations to ensure the optimal mass of protein ships to the dispensary each day. Inevitably, these rations fall short. Not by intent, but through theft, spoilage, and neglect.

Twice a day, crowds form and conflict ignites as the dispensary hands out corpse starch wafers and amino strings. This is an opportunity to see the menials at their worst. Men bludgeon one another with rocks and pipes to be first in line; people shove and jostle, and anyone who falls to the ground is crushed under the press of bodies. Every few days someone tries to scale the outside of the dispensary to reach the higher floors where the rations are stored. To prevent such escapades, the dispensary's outer walls are coated with heat-intensifying foil. A would-be liberator is lucky to fall back to the ground with major burns. The charred skeletons of a few more stubborn individuals are permanently fused to the building. Yet always, someone else is hungry enough to think they can succeed where the last man failed.

Some days, members of the mutant elite come to watch the sport. If the show fails to be bloody enough for them, they remove some of the food to up the crowd's desperation.

THE PARAGELLE'S SANCTUM

To be sure, the heretical leanings of Samech meant that immersion in the Hadex Anomaly was a less drastic change than it was for many neighbours. Still, nothing escapes the warp without unwanted side effects. The daemonic entity known as the Paragelle is one such example. Since the swollen corona of the Anomaly first receded, this creature has quietly festered in the Irradial Forge. It provides no end of fear and anger for her to manipulate, and it has a numerical symmetry which pleases her. Magos Vayze is well aware of her existence, but by his calculations it is easier to keep her sated on blood and violence than to risk provoking her into wreaking havoc.

The Paragelle feeds on murder and bloodlust. In such a down-trodden population, these emotions take little effort to kindle. Once they ignite, a lifetime of pain and oppression quickly turns the Paragelle's victims into a blaze of hatred and aggression—a banquet that she savours until it grows stale, when her current protégé is sacrificed to nurture her next work. The daemon takes the form of a voluptuous copper-

THE LEGEND OF LADY MIRA BRACHELVA

Lore from early in the Age of Shadow tells of the Lord Brachelva of Bolgra, who was so enraptured by the beauty of the hive commoner Mira that he married her and raised her to be his Lady. Here, the accounts begin to differ. In some versions he was a cruel and jealous man who kept her locked away until she went mad from isolation. In others Mira was the cunning temptress, plotting to betray her husband since their wedding night.

Regardless of her motive, all the stories agree that Mira turned her husband's guards and soldiers against him one by one, filling them with jealousy and devotion to her. One bloody night, she set the entire spire against itself. A hundred jealous suitors dispatched her husband in an instant, and then turned to killing one another for her favour. By sunrise, the lovely woman was alone in a home turned red for her pleasure.

Some whisper that that Mira eventually found a new husband, one who appreciated her inner "beauty" and granted her many tender gifts.

haired woman calling herself Lady Anshelene. This charming beauty in scarlet robes stands out in the slums like a flower in a desert. The menials do not question her existence, or her absurdly clean and intact dwelling—just across from where the crowds gather and riot at the Dispensary. She is an artefact of the environment, as fixed and accepted as the Irradial Forge itself. However, the Battle-Brothers cannot miss the conspicuous building and inhabitant if they pass by. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Between two of the grime-caked, scorched hab structures stands a grey marble villa. Columned steps lead down to a harsh line of contrast with the dead earth. Only gauze shields the arched windows, fluttering in an absent wind. Behind this veil you see a woman's silhouette moving, leaning over to whisper in the ear of a guest. You observe that her shape has the curves men find pleasing—just as you might note that a bolt shell is cylindrical.

The Paragelle recognises Space Marines for what they are, and is certain of two things: They are a risk to her existence, and delicious violence is sure to follow in their footsteps. Once she is aware of them, the warp entity does her best to avoid their attention. However, she is hardly inconspicuous, and an **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test** detects uneasy warp currents around her. If the Battle-Brothers interact with her, she puts on her best show of support for their cause. She presents herself as a slave from a bordering world, and the forced bride of the former overseer. After his death, she managed to retain his holdings. She does her best to comfort her suffering peers—or so she says. She lavishes the Space Marines with encouragement to fight for the menials' betterment.

THE DAEMON'S BARGAIN

It is against a loyal Space Marine's nature to make a bargain like the one the Paragelle offers. While the Grey Knights may be the sworn hunters of daemons, creatures of Chaos are an affront to all Space Marines. However, for completeness it is worth stating that accepting her deal yields 2d10 Corruption Points, and deep ramifications for the soul. Furthermore, it results in a loss of 1d10 Renown for the entire Kill-team should it ever be suspected that their success was built on a corrupt foundation.

A NOTE TO THE GM ON THEME

In a traditional DEATHWATCH game the player characters should not be making deals with daemons. (That is more the purview of DARK HERESY, which offers supplements like THE RADICAL'S HANDBOOK.) The Paragelle is intended as an enemy for the Kill-team to uncover and slay. You should do your best to make sure she comes across as devious, and the players don't misinterpret her as one of the "lesser evils" they may have to compromise with. There is nothing minor about the evil of Chaos.

If they press "Lady Anshelene" for more active assistance, the Paragelle's greed for the souls of such perfect warriors tempts her to risk exposing her nature. She insinuates that she might be able to turn some of their enemies against one another. However, she claims to fear for her own safety during the fallout. She says:

"Let us make sure we have an accord. You seek my aid, and will accept all the consequences it brings?"

If her suddenly serious tone is not enough to make the righteous wary, an **Easy (+30) Lore: Forbidden (Daemonology) Test**, or an Ordinary (+10) Test on some other appropriate Lore (such as Occult or Warp) immediately recognises the makings of a daemonic pact. The Paragelle does not attack the Space Marines unless they force a confrontation. If they see through to her true nature, they may be able to use this to stage an Assault on their terms.

THE SHIPYARDS

The shipyards lie outside the main forge. Here, the dark Tech Adepts construct the stealth vessel that will be used to slip past the Iron Collar to the warp gate. The facility consists of a wide atmospheric platform and two orbital docking towers that stretch into space. Menials and servitors haul materials between the different structures, while the attendant tech-priest oversees operations from his small orchestration station. On close approach, easily the most noticeable feature of the docks is the Mars-Pattern Titan splayed between the two docking towers. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:



Your eyes are drawn immediately to the blocky, bipedal war machine between the two docking towers. The battered Titan has been posed in a gesture of defeat and servitude; it kneels with its gun barrel arms stretched between the spires. Even on its knees the god-machine is nearly a hundred feet tall. It appears the noble mind-core could not be subverted by the apostates, and they had to console themselves with making it into a trophy.

Any character with the Lore: Common (War) Skill should make an Easy (+30) Test. Success identifies the Titan as a Mars-pattern Warlord class. Success by three or more Degrees identifies its heraldry as the lost *Astrum Conflagro*, which disappeared from the pages of history when this region of space was still the Jericho Sector. The god-machine deserved a better end than its humiliation here in the Charon Stars.

Unlike many of the other slave labourers in the forge district, the humans in the shipyard have equipment that could almost be used as weapons. They carry plasma torches and similar advanced cutting implements necessary to build warships. They might be swayed to rise up by a convincing speaker—although the cost in their lives would be great. The Servitors are not combat models. During any fighting, they are at worst obstacles and at best cover. A ring of Skitarii surrounds the yard, spaced roughly twenty metres apart from one another. Before the Battle-Brothers can enter the yards, they have to get through the guards. Should this be accomplished via combat, there are 12 Skitarii here.

TITANS

Many consider Titans to be the ultimate weapons of war in the vast technological arsenal of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Their Titan Legions only deploy by the command of Mars itself. These colossal machines carry weapons that can pulverise tanks, and their void field generators allow them to ignore lesser blasts like a man might ignore buzzing insects. Titans require several crew to operate. The crew's commander, called the Princeps, links his mind with the Titan's own. This requires years of special attunement and training.

FREEING THE ASTRUM CONFLACRO

There is a chance the Kill-team may accidentally destroy the imprisoned Titan in their assault on the shipyard (see Docking Tower Wreckage, below). If they want a more certain and deliberate path to freeing the noble machine, possibilities include a Demolitions Test to blow it free of its bindings, or a Tech-Use Test to activate and overload its reactor. The GM should allow the Kill-team to use any reasonable plan they can devise.

The Battle-Brothers may move from one part of the shipyards to another while in combat with the Horde.

ATMOSPHERIC PLATFORM

This platform is clearly the oldest part of the yard; it is encrusted with ornamentation and symbols layered on over the centuries. Were one to peel back the strata of heraldry, they could watch the history of the Forge's changing masters play in reverse. This is the widest of all the construction surfaces. All the work that can be done before ship assembly is performed here in atmosphere. One such task is refining the rare glass and alloys to produce antisonate plating. If any of the player characters take the ascender up to the top of the platform (or otherwise find a way to view it) read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A small mountain of glassy black stone sits on the centre of the platform. Torches, smelters, bellows, and metal presses surround it. Each tool is covered by dozens of sensors and gauges, tracking pressure and temperature in what is obviously an arduous production process. Nearby lay a few sheets of the finished antisonate material. The thin panels are light-consuming black. Nothing that touches them reflects, not light or sound or Samech's implacable heat. They strike the senses more like voids in reality than tangible objects.

The Space Marines may startle several menials and have to push aside servitors, but nothing on the platform protests whatever the Battle-Brothers choose to do there.

REPORT FROM INSIDE

If the Battle-Brothers accept the sympathisers' offer to survey the shipyards, the scout reports back that it is well-guarded. The forge labourer is not trained in assessing battle logistics, but from the picture he paints it would be nearly impossible to penetrate without at least alerting the Forge to their presence.

SHIFTING THE BLAME

One of the simplest ways to avoid drawing attention to their presence is for the Battle-Brothers to have some other group participate in the assault and take credit for it. If they choose to ally with Arcus Dyre or the Alpha Legion, either of them can take credit. Another option is for the sympathisers to join the assault. However, they are not combatants and most of them die in the retaliation that inevitably follows.

DOCKMASTER'S STATION

This small, fortified building would be of little interest were it not for two facts. First, the formula for antisonate plating is stored in its cogitators, and second, it has an occupant who reports the Battle-Brothers presence and summons reinforcements if not swiftly dealt with. A lone tech-priest sits in the station, alternately firing out at the Battle-Brothers and trying to raise help on the vox. (A call that a Battle-Brother may attempt to scramble with the proper Skill and equipment.) The single door is sealed, requiring a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to open. The building was not intended as a combat bunker. Its thin metal walls only provide cover with an AP value of 12. An **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test** also notes a sliding window to one side. This part of the building is weaker and can be broken through by 15 or more points of Damage.

DECAVANE REPOSITORY

This large storage building is built into the base of the high docking column. The supply of drained Decavane from Aurum has accumulated here over the years. The room is frigid despite Samech's blazing exterior. Ice hangs from the ceiling and frost clings to the walls. Several containers of the blackened crystal have been loaded onto palettes, as though the time to transport and install them is near.

THE HIGH DOCKING COLUMN

Dozens of these colossal dock structures dot Samech's blazing exterior. The most powerful and influential forge districts do not just manufacture warp engines and plasma drives; they construct entire warships for the Iron Pit's armada and their debased allies. The ground level entrance to the subsonic lift platform is unguarded. It takes several minutes to ride all the way up. The tube doors open onto the docking pinion ring where a pile of flimsy void suits stands for the labourers' use. Ships of all sizes berth at

THE TREACHEROUS ARROW

Should the Battle-Brothers delve for more details on how the *Ruin Bringer's* assault was to play out, Samech actually intended to use the enemy's trick against them. After the *Thunder's Word* slipped by them so easily the first time, the Iron Pit investigated and eventually located Altair's Arrow. The Vinculum Proselytes intended to use this same passage to sneak behind the Iron Collar.

each pinion, in various states of repair and constructions. The malignant, pulsating light of the Hadex Anomaly floods down. Anyone who looks directly at the warp breach automatically gains 1 Corruption Point. The docking pinions are above the atmosphere, in the void itself. Therefore the rules for maintaining power armour's environmental seal become important should combat break out. Treat an armour puncture as being in a gradually worsening atmosphere per the rules for vacuum exposure on page 261 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook.

The infant *Ruin Bringer* berths along one of the docking pinions, an unreflective black shape against the sickly glare of the Hadex Anomaly. Its skeleton is complete, showing it to be no bigger than a raider class vessel. The antisonate plates are half laid, giving the illusion that darkness swallows the front half of the ship. No one notices the Kill-team immediately; they are just tiny shapes roaming on the monolithic towers. However, if they approach the *Ruin Bringer*, they find it actively under construction. More monotasked servitors and several Tech-priests (use the profile from *A Stony Sleep* on page 91) labour to complete the warship. When they spot the Kill-team, they do not fight. Instead, most of the apostates break for the lift platform to try and sound an alarm. If the Tech-priests stayed on the docking pinion, the only way back would be straight past the Battle-Brothers. Fortunately for them, the zero gravity environment means they have more options. The Tech-priests launch themselves in various directions: towards lower pinions, adjacent pinions, and perhaps

even straight up. The number of Tech-priests who don't miscalculate and go free-spinning into the void should be roughly equal to the number of Battle-Brothers. See page 210 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook for details on zero gravity.

Once the Kill-team secures the area, they can deal with the vessel as they see fit. Its plasma drive is installed although the warp drive is not. If the Kill-team's plan for the *Ruin Bringer* results in an explosion and they do not detach it from the scaffolding first, it may destabilise the entire docking tower. That could be either a hazard or benefit depending on whether the Kill-team prepared for it. You may want to roll 1d10 on Table 3–3: Docking Tower Wreckage to decide exactly what happens if the main tower collapses. Unless specifically stated in the result, the *Astrum Conflagro* remains held in bondage by the atmospheric platform. Destroying the *Ruin Bringer* alerts the forge to the Kill-team's presence unless they made provisions for some other group to take credit.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: PAYBACK

Not all of the Alpha Legion went to Karlack with Lamdus Rize. A handful of the Chaos Space Marines remained behind, and they survived to learn of the betrayal. They are not interested in partnering with the Deathwatch (nor would any loyal Space Marine be likely to embrace a Traitor), but they are hungry for revenge.

At a time and location of the GM's choosing, a short-burst signal comes over the Battle-Brothers' vox links:

"Agents of the Deathwatch, we know your symbol and why you have come. If you want to learn why you are truly here, we are behind the dispensary."

TABLE 3-3: DOCKING TOWER WRECKAGE

Roll	Result
1	The docking tower breaks apart above the atmosphere. Some pieces float harmlessly into space while others burn up in the atmosphere on re-entry. The only effect on the surface of the planet is a meteor display.
2–3	The docking tower crashes southward. It falls across the Black Engine rail, although this does nothing to stop the incorporeal construct's runs. However, a hail of dangerous debris falls in the slums. There are a few casualties and minor damage to the flimsy structures.
4–5	The docking tower crashes into the middle of the slums. The damage to the people and the structures is vast. The psyker sorting facility is completely demolished, crushing Cyluk and the rare equipment.
6–7	The docking tower crashes to the north. The slums still suffer the effects of debris but are otherwise untouched. The tower's uprooted foundations demolish the <i>Astrum Conflagro</i> if it is still held in the shipyards. The GM may choose to count this as freeing the Titan at his discretion.
8–9	The docking tower crashes to the east. It destroys one of the Altars of Proving. The slums suffer the effects of debris.
0	The docking tower crashes to the west. The slums and manufactory suffer catastrophic devastation. Moreover, the Irradiated Forge and its outer wall take damage. The problem of crossing the outer wall is solved, and the gatekeeper forces are reduced by 25% as they deal with the ensuing chaos.

The other party refuses to answer any return transmissions. If the Battle-Brothers go to the indicated location, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The rear of the dispensary is a desolate slab of ferrocrete. The tall buildings on all four sides cast it in nearly perpetual shadow. A rusted fence runs the perimeter, although it contains many large holes and the gate's lock has rusted away. Industrial debris and dead vermin fill the lot, creating a graveyard for machine and animal alike. As you draw closer, three large shapes step out from behind a cracked pylon; their hands appear empty of weapons. Despite the shadows, your auto-senses have no trouble picking out the spikes on their power armour, its scaled patterning, and the green and blue colours. They are Alpha Legion Traitors.

If the Kill-team doesn't immediately open fire, the Chaos Space Marines begin to speak. If at the beginning or any point thereafter the Kill-team decides the Traitors must die, use the Alpha Legion profile on page 89. The trio's spokesman is called Tor, although he doesn't give his name unless asked. He tells the Battle-Brothers that his leader, Lamdus, was betrayed by the men who currently hold the Irradial Forge. They propose a deal: the Alpha Legion's aid in exchange for helping them get inside the Forge so they can have their revenge.

The Alpha Legion no longer have anything to gain by hiding the truth from the Kill-team, but Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes have much to lose. If the Kill-team asks, Tor tells them all that he knows about the real intentions of the remaining alliance: to corrupt the warp gate. (Remember that Tor does not know that Dahzak has his own intentions for it.) As long as the conversation does not turn hostile, the Alpha Legion Space Marines discuss the details of the plan: the alliance, the diodes and the alien technology necessary to perfect them, and the *Ruin Bringer*.

They can also explain the psyker culling. Samech's masters never work for free. Dahzak does not command the tangible resources necessary for such an endeavour. Instead, he offered them something no amount of slaves or ore could duplicate. He gave them freedom from the flesh through an ancient ritual. However, Dahzak—while powerful—cannot rival the first Librarians who created the mighty spell. Achieving the spell's full effect requires a cabal of sorcerers, which Dahzak did not have. The Irradial Forge made the bargain, but the result was flawed. It allowed the Magi to shed their soft flesh, but their life forces quickly began to ebb from their metal remains. Only a constant infusion of the bright life force of psykers is able to sustain the Magi's spirits in their divine machines.

If the Kill-team drags on the questioning for too long, Tor grows doubtful of their intentions and presses them for an answer on the deal. The Alpha Legion finds it as unthinkable as the

Deathwatch to fight shoulder-to-shoulder. However, they can sow confusion and distraction during the Kill-team's operations at the shipyards and the forge. Once they penetrate the Irradial Forge, the teams go their separate ways: the Deathwatch to destroy the diodes, and the Alpha Legion to see the forge complex fall. Should the Kill-team agree, the Alpha Legion's approach to trust is simple:

"Vow to do as we have agreed. Vow it in the name of the Emperor."

THE SOUL ALEMBIC

Psykers are notorious for their 'brilliant' souls, shining like beacons in the warp. Their light is not the blessed star of the Astronomican. It is an invite to all that is damnable and foul. Where these cursed beings go, only death and mayhem follow.

—Inquisitor Zayel: *Admonitions Against the Warp*

Here, Dahzak's apprentice distils the warp essence of psykers into transmuter circuits, which are sparking grids of wire and crystal. (If the Space Marines listened to the Alpha Legion, they know it is to sustain the altered Magi.) Due to its unstable nature, the Soul Alembic is at the very edge of the Irradial Forge district, some 300 kilometres from the main complex. If the Kill-team wants to enlist Arcus Dyre (or simply to find out where the psykers are going), it is going to be a long march if they do not find a faster alternative.

TAKING THE BLACK ENGINE

The quickest option—although far from the safest—for reaching the Soul Alembic is to board the Black Engine. Should the Battle-Brothers decide to use the temperamental machine, they find it straining in its cage at the terminus. Preparing the Black Engine for travel is a three step process. First, the cage must be opened. This requires an **Ordinary (+10) Security Test**. Then, the Battle-Brothers must attach the carriage to the hooks at the back of the Engine. This is not an easy process as the Black Engine attempts to gore anyone who enters its cage with its bladed body. Finally, it must be wrangled onto the track. A **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** notes strange energy prods outside the cage; if the Engine is stunned using one of these weapons, it can be shoved 5 metres as a Half Action. The engine starts out 15 metres away from the rail, requiring 3 such actions to wrangle it there. Once the Engine is above the rail, instinct takes over. The Kill-team has only a few seconds to leap into the carriage before the raging machine begins its snarling rush down the ethereal track.

Name	Class	Dmg	Pen	Special	kg
Energy Prod	Melee	1d10+1 E	12	Shocking, Special†	4

† These energy prods are specially attuned to the strange alloys of the Black Engine. If the murderous machine is struck by an energy prod, it automatically counts as Stunned for 1 Round. Multiple hits in a Round are not cumulative. This weapon's Damage is not based on the force behind it. Therefore the wielder does not add his Strength Bonus to Damage. The Energy Prod requires two hands to use.



If the Battle-Brothers prefer not to harness the monster themselves, (assuming he lives) Cyluk sends his catches to the Alembic daily. The Kill-team can wait until the mutant and his minions prepare the Engine, although they then have to dispatch Cyluk and several mutated servitors.

Once the Engine and carriage set out upon the rail, the passengers enter the aetheric world that the ancient rail traverses. The ride is both interminable and swift. The jagged rockscape and red sky blur together as they rush past, overlaid by ghostly shapes and glass tones that have no place on Samech. The corrupt forge world and echoes of some other place mingle as time dilates. Arrival at the Alembic Lock is sudden, jarring the passengers with a harsh return to Samech's dead environment. The adamantine prongs hold the engine in place for a few minutes, providing time to debark. Then the timed cogs complete their circle, freeing the furious metal beast, and it is gone.

The Alembic's haphazard tower is visible in the distance, and the frantic roar of falling water echoes from that direction.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: RUST DECAPODS

If the Battle-Brothers make the journey to the Soul Alembic on foot or by conventional vehicle, they have a long stretch of lava geysers and mine chasms to cross before reaching their destination. At any point in the journey, you may read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You hear a loud scraping and scuttling in the canyon ahead to your right. A mass of brown and black chitin boils up the side of the fissure and rolls towards you. It comprises hundreds of spindly, mud-coloured crabs with six legs and two pairs of pincers like miniature decapitators.

Rapidly approaching is a single rust decapod swarm. Rust decapods secrete a vile acid from their shells and claws. This fills the air around them with an acrid smell, and more importantly dissolves artificial materials at an alarming rate. When the first edge of the horde reaches the Battle-Brothers, provide a vivid description of their effect on metal. An ammo clip or a portion of any vehicle suggests what they can do to weapons and power armour. The profile for a rust decapod swarm can be found on page 137.

Mission Consequence: If the Kill-team noted the trialalkaline powder on Karlack, Forge Master Greyweaver treated their armour with a powerful counter-corrosive. This negates the decapods swarm's Highly Acidic Trait.

THE USE OF SOULS

- The creation of transmuter circuits is a three-step process. First, the Soul Alembic siphons the psykers' life force into a reservoir. Then, it concentrates the stolen vitality into a potent mystical essence. Finally, Sethahar transfers this distillate into the reservoirs of the transmuter circuits, which slowly bleed warp-tainted energy into whatever machine (or tech-priest) they are installed in. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Soul Alembic is an interlocking mishmash of giant gears, like a ruined clock built into the side of a dam. Discoloured water pours slowly over the device, turning the huge metal cogs. It takes three victims at a time, each plugged into the tines of a coffin-like recess between the churning gears. The psykers' eyes are open but they stare unseeing and unblinking ahead as the machine slowly robs them of life.

On the other side from the extraction area is the transmutation altar, where Sethahar creates the circuits. He stands there at present, watching some indicator of progress on when he has collected enough energy to begin. Arcus Dyre stands out, both on psychic and visual inspection. Of the three men connected to the Alembic, he is the only one who does not look pale and close to death. His psychic power far surpasses the nascent sparks of potential the machine was designed to extract. A ring of mutated servitors surrounds the Soul Alembic, keeping watch over the operation and the null pens below where the fodder is stored. The polluted river continues to flow that direction after powering the Soul Alembic. A rotting layer of body parts drifts on the foul surface. In fact if the Battle-Brothers observe for long, they see the sorcerer issue a command to one of the servitors, which messily plucks a spent psyker's husk from the machine and

ARCUS DYRE

Most of the ambition in Samech's menials dies early on the altars of proving. There are exceptions; Arcus Dyre is one of them. Born as a powerful psyker, he rejected the planet's creed of mechanical superiority in favour of his own abilities. Had these powers not manifested at a prodigiously early age, he surely would have met a grisly fate in the augmetic hands of the Vinculum Proselytes. Instead, he shook off the reins of servitude and began a one-man campaign against the mutants and magi that held him down. For over a decade Dyre has wrought his own form of bitter revenge on Samech's masters. However, Dahzak tired of the psyker's interference, and used his knowledge of the warp to counter Dyre's only real advantage. The proud rebel is finally in null-chains and awaiting death beneath the gears of the Alembic.

He has no special regard for the Adeptus Astartes, although he is keenly interested in the knowledge held by any Librarian he encounters. Gratitude for his rescue tempers his characteristic arrogance, and he is pragmatic and respectful with anyone who reciprocates with courtesy. Like most of Samech's population, Dyre has little exposure to the Imperial Creed. He is aware of the Emperor only as the enemy of his enemy. However, he is neither a sorcerer nor a devotee of the ruinous powers. If he lives through the assault on the forge, he presents an unusual variant of the rogue psyker conundrum that the Battle-Brothers (particularly any Black Templars) may want to address.

tosses him into the runoff. A moment later, a slick appendage of weeping flesh and serrated teeth erupts from beneath the water and pulls the fresh corpse down. Oblivious, the servitor shambles down the winding path to retrieve the next energy source.

The lower pens and the Soul Alembic are separated by a vertical distance of about 10 metres, and the path between takes a Round to traverse. Only four servitors guard the pens. Freeing a group of terrified, untrained psykers is a risky proposition, but should any of the characters wish to do so, opening the gate is a Half Action, as is de-activating the nullification field it projects. Above, 6 mutated servitors reinforce Sethahar. Any of the psykers can be pulled from the machine as a Half Action. However, those less powerful than Dyre must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or die. Dyre, on the other hand, only counts as Stunned until he can pass a Toughness Test.

Mission Consequence: If the Battle-Brothers completed the Divested Hunt they may use the terrain to provide cover with AP 2 as a Free Action.

The toxic river runs along the left side of both areas, its surface occasionally disturbed by the terrible things that lurk in its depths. Anyone, Space Marine or hostile, who gets too close finds themselves having to make an Opposed Grapple Test to avoid being pulled in by a toxic dweller. The profile for the toxic dweller can be found on page 137. Anyone

who makes flesh contact with the river's water must make an **Ordinary +10 Toughness Test** or take 1d10 Wounds ignoring armour and TB. (Sealed armour is enough to protect a Space Marine.) The beast may stay within the water, or the noise and bloodshed may lure it onto the bank.

After being rescued, Dyre ransacks the corpses of his former guards for weapons and armour. He is understandably curious to learn about his unexpected benefactors. He is quite willing to aid the Kill-team either by joining them or rallying the surviving psychic rabble to follow him on a campaign of revenge. The Forge forces used a treaded, open-topped transport coated in trialkaline to reach the Soul Alembic. It is parked near the lower pens, and the Battle-Brothers may use it to return.

THE IRRADIAL FORGE

"How easy it is for you to stand upon your pedestal and call my soul deficient. But I say it is you who are deficient. You who are the cowards. The powers do not call to us so because we are weak; they call to us because they are our right. Some day, when you have realised there is no other path, you will mourn the loss of my kind."

—Rumoured to be the last words of the condemned sorcerer
Tamrus Blackwell.

The towering forge complex goes on for kilometres, further than the eye can see. It consists of three general layers. Its outskirts are the manufactorum where the bulk of the menials labour. A high, fortified wall marks the beginning of the Irradial Forge itself, with heavily guarded gates permitting passage between the two. After this is the outer layer of the forge, a wilderness of metal chambers, generators, data vaults, automated factories and devices whose purpose not even the apostate Magi can guess. Somewhere deep within that maze is the inner forge, its beating heart forged in steel and sorcery—where the Battle-Brothers must go.

THE MANUFACTORUM

The crescent-shaped manufactorum zone is a combination of soot-blackened structures and open pits. These house slow-moving assembly scaffolds and work pits where dozens of men weld, hammer, and solder. The inner forge holds many completely automated production lines, but the items produced here require manual labour. The products may require manipulation too fine for the industrial machine spirits, or the Forge may simply lack the STC needed to automate its manufacture. The complete range of items created here is too great to count, but below are some examples of the different production facilities. The same forces patrol the manufactorum as the slums, with similar risks of an encounter.

LASGUN MANUFACTORY TRENCH

A series of ledges has been carved into the cliff walls. Raw materials enter the process from the top. The workers on the highest levels weld basic metal plates and sort the focusing lenses to find those of sufficient quality. Their output slides to the tier below, who stamp and polish these inputs into base components. So the production processes cascades down until it reaches the bottom of the crevice where finished guns are loaded for transport. The frantic pace of input from the top makes efficiency a matter of survival. The flow of raw materials never ceases. If any worker falls behind, he is literally crushed by the press from above.

VOID SHIELD PRODUCTION PIT

Void shields are common defensive energy barriers used on large vehicles such as interstellar craft or Titans. In the centre of this deep pit, huge, cruiser-sized versions are slowly constructed. Menials scurry around the huge apparatus like ants piling grains of dirt atop their hill. Layer by layer they apply stabiliser circuitry and projector lenses at the direction of the presiding Magos. From his control pulpit, the Vinculum Proselyte ensures the patterns of construction are followed. At set intervals he flips the Breakers Of Confirmation. These linked switches supply power to the newly-built shields, and unseal valves around the pit's edge that pierce the planet's thin crust. Only if the void shield is functional does it spare its creators from the magma jets that erupt from the opened

passages into the mantle. This keeps the workers motivated to perform their tasks quickly and precisely. Inevitably some shortage or mishap thwarts their frenzied pace, and the charred bodies must be cleared to make way for the next group of labourers.

AMMUNITION COMPOUND

This vast assembly sty houses thousands of menials in six by four cells. The workers delicately polish, fill, and calibrate munitions ranging from grenades to stubber bullets. In order to ensure no one uses this weaponry against the forge, once a man is placed inside a cell, the door only opens when it is time to remove his spent corpse. The occupants live and sleep at their workbenches, carefully placing each finished shell in the judging receptacle. Only when the machine spirit's scales tell it that a menial has met his gruelling production quota does it fill his bowl with grey nutrient paste.

SKITARII BUNKERS

The Skitarii guard largely stay in the manufactorum zone, close to the forge's wall. Several of these drab, hardened bunkers exist in a rough crescent around the perimeter. A few hundred men sleep and drill in each one. Unless the Battle-Brothers are seeking random slaughter and to loudly announce their presence, these bunkers are best avoided.



THE CARBON TRANSMUTER

The carbon transmuter stands on the east side of the manufactorum pits. This alchemical device can produce promethium from organic matter. If the Battle-Brothers near it, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The carbon transmuter combines the odours of human waste, decay, and promethium into one terrible miasma that surrounds it. The device primarily consists of two large vats, with a series of twined distillation tubes leaking thick, foul liquid between the two. The larger vat has a heavy lid controlled by a pneumatic pump. It is currently active, the lid pressing down on the contents below. Several screaming voices echo from within the metal vat.

A Magnitude 10 Horde of Skitarii guard this important piece of equipment. A Skitarii Tribune (see his profile on page 135) is also present in a Chimera armoured transport. Promethium residue coats the carbon transmuter. If ignited, it explodes like a giant inferno shell. Any hit by a weapon with the Flame Quality automatically ignites, while any Damage with the Energy type has a 25% chance of sparking a fire. The resulting explosion does 4d10+10 E Damage to everything in a 10 metre radius, and carries the same risk of catching on fire as an incendiary grenade. If the Kill-team wants to try to capture the Chimera rather than destroy it, assume it has been breached after it has lost half of its Structural Integrity. Once it is breached, a Battle-Brother may enter it and assault the Tribune directly.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: DEFLER

FOUNDRY

While no Imperial war machine can compare with the might of Titans, the daemon-possessed engines known as Defilers are some of the most rightly feared weapons in the Chaos Space Marines' debased arsenal. The process of actually binding the furious daemon into a Defiler requires a skilled sorcerer and is beyond the arts of the Irradial Forge alone. However, each one of the possessed war engines requires a metal hull upon which runes are later etched, ceremonies performed, and ultimately the terrible daemonic machine is formed. The Vinculum Proselytes are a major producer of these chassis.

The Defiler foundry lies on the northern crest of the manufactorum zone. It is built into the side of a deep crag and uses the intense heat of Samech's cracked crust to smelt the alloys in production. Very few menials survive long in this facility. Not only does the intense heat take its toll, but the foundry has more lethal accidents than any other location in the manufactorum zone. Some factions of Samech whisper that the Irradial Forge is attempting to replicate the daemonic binding processes themselves, so that over time the whole foundry has become infused with a malicious will. However, there is no proof.

THE TIME FOR SUBTLETY HAS PASSED

At some point the occupants of the Irradial Forge realise that not only are hostiles in the district, but that they are loyal Space Marines assaulting the forge. Whenever Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes make this discovery, it has the following effects:

- The number and size of the patrols in the slums and manufactorum increase. The Battle-Brothers must more frequently work to avoid them.
- The number of guards around the shipyard doubles (if the Battle-Brothers haven't assaulted it yet).
- Add two gate guardians to the number faced after crossing the outer forge wall.

Fear keeps the foundry isolated. Only a handful of Samech Skitarii guard the facility. They would pose no resistance all to the Battle-Brothers if it weren't for their missile launchers and the ability to summon reinforcements. Furthermore, the foundry crag is full of narrow tunnels leading between the work areas. The Skitarii can squeeze into these passages, but the Space Marines cannot. This gives the forge soldiers the ability to move about in relative safety from their attackers.

The Battle-Brothers certainly manage to take down some of the guards in the opening moments of their assault. Have the Kill-team make an Opposed Test of their Concealment versus the Skitarii's Awareness to determine how close they get, and therefore how many of the enemy soldiers they kill before the rest scatter. Depending on how well the Opposed Test went, assume between 4 and 8 Skitarii managed to flee and hide. Rounding up the rest of the Skitarii before they can escape or call for help becomes a game of cat and mouse. In it, the Space Marines are the cats—very large predatory cats.

The goal of the Skitarii is to vox for reinforcements. However, their microbead vox units do not normally have the range to reach beyond the immediate environs. To boost the signal enough to call for help, a Skitarii must pass a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. The Test requires 2 Full Round Actions. At the GM's option it may not spell failure for if the Skitarii manage to call for help, it just may mean the Battle-Brothers have to hurry, or can expect a difficult encounter to start bearing down on them.

Below is a list of the different work areas in the foundry. When the Skitarii flee, the GM places them amidst the following locations in groups of one or two. Let each Battle-Brother declare which location he is searching, using the usual Concealment vs. Awareness Opposed Test. When a Skitarii is located, play out the combat normally (which should not take very long). See page 120 for the profile of a Samech-pattern Missile Launcher. An un-detected Skitarii may use the tunnels to move between locations in 1 Round. It takes 2 Rounds for a Battle-Brother to change locations and 1 Round to search a location.

Mission Consequence: If the Battle-Brothers completed the Divested Hunt they may use the terrain to provide cover at AP 2 as a Free Action.

DESTROYING THE FOUNDRY

The Kill-team may want to do some collateral damage to Samech at this important enemy site. Several ways exist to damage or destroy the Defiler foundry. Below are only a few possibilities.

- A **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** can link several of the weapons in the weapon depot together into a barrage of fire that decimates the facility.
- By using up all of their grenades (a generous GM might allow each Battle-Brother to keep one) and passing a **Challenging (+0) Demolitions Test**, the Kill-team can cause a rockslide that collapses the cliff where the foundry is built.
- At “high tide” for the magma seas of Samech, a **Routine (+10) Survival Test** can strategically damage the smelting molds, turning them into funnels for the melting ore and magma. The degrees of success achieved determine how much of the facility is drowned in the molten metal.

Foundry Locations

Smelting Moulds

The moulds for each of a Defiler’s parts are cast in stone. The moulds heat and cool with the flux of Samech’s subterranean magma tides. At high tide they grow hot enough to quickly smelt ore, the impurities separated by the electromagnetic

fields. The impurities can then be skimmed from the surface of the mould. As the magma tide rolls out, the remaining metal cools—casting the pieces for assembly.

Piston Assembly

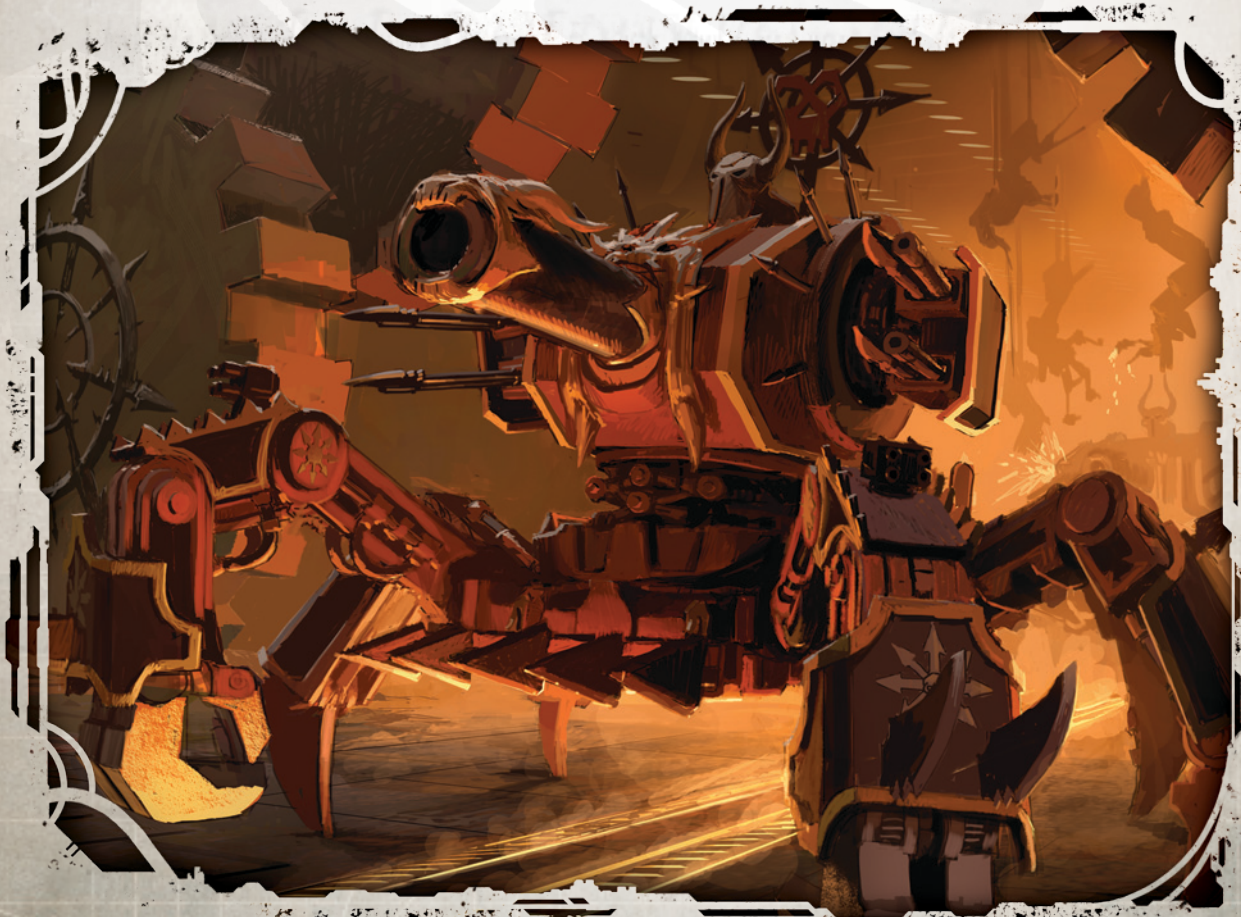
Defilers move on six piston-like legs. Here the cooled metal is finished, and the heavy armour plating welded into place. Row after row of the giant, bladed appendages form a metal forest for the Skitarii to hide in.

Actuator Production

Here, menials machine the hundreds of small moving parts that make up a Defiler. Each part must be strong enough to endure the thrashings of a bound daemon, yet perfectly shaped and calibrated so the war machine performs optimally. Because of the intense amount of manual labour needed to produce these parts, this location is crowded with menials.

Reaper Autocannon Production

The Reaper autocannon is manufactured here, beginning with smaller, lava-heated moulds all the way through the final finishing and fire-testing. Unfortunately each finished gun can only be tested on a special trigger assembly, which does not pivot. Unless the Battle-Brothers are kind enough to stand right in front of the guns, the autocannons pose little threat to them.



CHARGE!

If, codex tactics to the contrary, the Battle-Brothers decide to make a frontal assault on the gate, use the following information. The exterior is defended by Samech-pattern assault cannons, the profile for which can be found below. Assume 4 guns can face any approach angle. The shortest distance from the edge of the manufactorum pits to a gate is 100 metres.

SAMECH PATTERN WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg
Assault Cannon (Samech Pattern)	Mounted	120m	-/-/10	3d10+6 I	5	200+	2 Full†	Tearing	70
Missile Launcher (Samech Pattern)††	Heavy	250m	S/-/-	3d10+10 X	6	1	Full		40

†Clip and Reload times are for mobile versions of this weapon. The stationary assault cannons on the outer wall have effectively unlimited ammunition hoppers.

††Using Krak Missiles

Weapon Depot

The other weapons for these war machines: twin-linked flamers, huge close combat appendages, lascannons, and battle cannons are not manufactured here. These armaments are shipped in from other locations and stored here until they can be installed. Unfortunately these weapons do the Skitarii no more good than the Reaper autocannon. They are far too heavy for a single man to wield, and in many cases not equipped with a manual trigger.

THE OUTER FORGE WALL

Beyond the manufactorum pits lies the forge, but an open approach over the cracked earth and a tall iron wall separate it from where the menials may tread. Heavy gun emplacements top the walls, and each fortified gate is heavily guarded. The Battle-Brothers have several options for making it across this firing range:

- Accept Rij's offer to pose as servitor material or devise some other method of hiding in a vehicle that can approach the gate.
- Try to blast through or climb over the gate. These approaches bypass some of the more interesting roleplaying opportunities, so the GM can set the exact Difficulty of these tasks depending on how feasible he wants the options to be.
- Have some of the Kill-team's allies create a distraction. Any of the potential sources of aid on Samech can launch an attack near a gate, drawing the attention of its guards and guns. For each of the gun emplacements, make an Opposed Test between the Leader's Concealment and the emplacement's awareness of 30. The Kill-team gains a +20 Bonus to this Test because the gunners' attention is elsewhere. As with other violent endeavours, if the sympathisers participate, they take heavy casualties.
- Take a cue from the Alpha Legion's infiltration on Karlack. The Battle-Brothers have the opportunity to acquire a Chimera transport at the carbon transmuter. At the very least they are able to approach the wall in the vehicle. Depending on their ability to bluff and the alertness of the guards, they may be able to make it through to the other side.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE BEST LAID PLANS

If the Battle-Brothers made contact with the sympathisers, just as they near the gates, they receive a panicked vox transmission:

A broken, static-filled signal sounds from your vox. It sounds like Myrlaine's voice. "Not sure how...discovered...Too many..."

The Irradial Forge followed the recent trail of carnage left by the Battle-Brothers, and it led them to the sympathisers. The Vinculum Proselytes may not have proof that Myrlaine and the hab's occupants did anything wrong, but they prefer to make an example of them just the same. The Kill-team must decide quickly. Do they throw away their careful approach and return to the slums to rescue the menials who helped them, or do they press on with the Mission?

If they return, the Kill-team arrives at sunrise or sunset (whichever makes more sense based on the time of day) as a rumbling crowd forms around the dispensary. As usual, several of the mutant elite are present, goading and taunting. Outside Myrlaine's hab, a large force of Skitarii and mutated servitors forms combat squads. If they spot the Space Marines, they quickly turn their attention towards that larger threat. There are 6 mutated servitors and enough Skitarii to form a Horde of Magnitude 20. If combat breaks out, it is a cacophonous battle that reverberates through the slums.

SPLIT LOCATIONS

The setup for the riot describes events happening in two different places in the slums. The view of the dispensary is so that the GM has a firm vision of what is occurring off screen and when. Unless any of the player characters are at the dispensary, there is no need to actually convey that action to the players. They will see its consequences soon enough.

The dispensary doors open and the mutants begin their usual sport. However, when the crowd at the dispensary realises someone is fighting (and hopefully winning) against the Irradial Forge's minions, it ripples through the agitated mob like an explosion. Although the Kill-team might not be able to see it, the menials turn on the mutants. On the 3rd Round of combat at the hab, the remaining Magnitude of the Horde suddenly halves as the Skitarii go to deal with the developing riot. The Battle-Brothers can make an Awareness check to hear the sounds of combat blocks away. On the 7th Round (should the Space Marines still be in combat) the remaining enemies break as the menials' own Horde spreads out through the city.

By the time the Kill-team makes their way back to the wall, the riots have spilled into the manufactorum pits, engulfing the district in blood and turmoil. This counts as a distraction for purposes of reaching the wall and draws so many guards into the slums that only 2 of the 4 approach guns are manned.

BEYOND THE WALL

Regardless of how they reached the other side of the wall, the outer forge awaits the Kill-team. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

On the other side of the wall is a technological jungle. Forgotten transmission towers jut above shorter knots of pipes and wires. Mysterious cylinders and processing tubes rise at intervals like the trunks of ancient trees over an undergrowth of drab but irregular metal structures. A mirage-like sheen ripples across this primeval range—an oil slick of unreality from the tainted energies that infuse Samech.

Rising like a foreboding temple in the midst of this wilderness is the Irradial Forge. It is the heart that pumps Chaos-tinged blood through the machines, and it appears as nothing less than an exercise in controlled chaos. Even as you watch, its spires and churning furnaces change slowly, evolving like the patterned randomness of a kaleidoscope. Octagons and eight-pointed shapes recur in the shifting structures. A pair of turrets quadruples; a gargoye brandishes its four-toed limbs.

You don't have long to take in the blasphemous sight before the Forge's guardians herald their approach with a thunder of slow, ominous footsteps. Hulking amalgams of flesh and metal emerge from the industrial wasteland. Each one stands slightly larger than a Terminator, and it is difficult to tell where the armour plates end and the grotesque misshapen flesh begins. Even as they approach, their limbs twist to form heavy weapons.

These are the walking arsenals called Obliterators. The exact number present depends on how threatened the Vinculum Proselytes feel at present, and what else is competing for the gatekeepers' attention. The baseline number of Obliterators is equal to one less than the number of Battle-Brothers. If they drew attention to themselves in the slums, increase the number of Obliterators by 25% (round down).



The Obliterators emerge from the metal debris when the Kill-team is about 20 metres away from it. They do not attempt to take cover in the wreckage, trusting in their armoured skin and daemonic nature to protect them. However, if the Battle-Brothers decide to make use of this terrain, it provides 1d10+2 AP of cover.

Mission Consequences: If the Battle-Brothers are not girded with litanies of the Emperor, Dahzak was able to divine that an assault would be coming soon. He increased the number of gate keepers as a precautionary measure; increase the number of Obliterators by 25%. If enemies the forge considers formidable—either Dyre or the Alpha Legion—are currently drawing fire, reduce the number of Obliterators by 25%, or 50% if both are assisting. Note that any riots in the slums have no effect on the number of guardians, as they are elite forces reserved for protecting the Forge itself, not dealing with rowdy menials.

OBLITERATORS

A blasphemous melding of flesh and metal, these hulking abominations bristle with weaponry formed from the stuff of their own tainted bodies. Metal plates overlap twisted sinews and plasma runs through cable-like veins. The fluid transformations of these bizarre cyborgs speaks of a techno-arcana that is only possible through the intercession of the Ruinous Powers. Whatever their origin, these daemonkin bring thundering death with salvo after salvo of their hell-forged armaments. Obliterators can be found in the service of anyone with the technology and forbidden knowledge to further the hybrids' personal power and weapons.

THE MAZE OF METAL

The outer forge is too dense to traverse in a vehicle (and it is a tight fit at times if anyone opted to wear Terminator **armour**). The Battle-Brothers have to disembark from any transports to enter this mechanised no-man's land. Somewhere within this shifting maze of technology lies the Irradial Forge's corrupted soul. If the Kill-team received the map from Allewis, they have little difficulty pin-pointing the direction they need to go. Otherwise, they must find their way to the heart of the forge on their own.

The Obliterators were not the last of their terrifying kind in the outer forge. The Space Marines must be alert and stealthy as they move through the outer forge. Otherwise they risk not only telegraphing their approach to the Forge, but also drawing more fire. Below are some locations in the outer forge. Chaotic energies have immersed the area for centuries, to the point that direction has little meaning. When the Battle-Brothers set out, roll 1d10 on Table 3-4: Travel in the Outer Forge to determine where they arrive and how long it takes to get there. Each time they traverse the forge, one member of the Kill-team may elect to make a **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Surface) Test**. Add the degrees of success or subtract the degrees of failure from the next roll for Location. Each traversal also carries a possibility of encountering a patrol of Obliterators and/or fleshless magi. (The GM can decide the exact chances and patrol composition.) Additionally, the GM can insert his own locations into the mix (in which case he will need to modify the table).

The GM might make it obvious from the beginning that the normal laws of direction do not apply here. He may also ask the players in detail about what landmarks they are using and direction of their heading, and then roll in secret on the table. Note that results which put the Battle-Brothers in the same area they started out are valid, as it is quite possible for the twisted space of the outer forge to lead one back to where he began.

Mission Consequence: If the Kill-team has the map from Allewis or some other reliable means of navigation, add +2 to their Location roll.

Alternatively, the GM may wish to simply pick his favourite locations from the list below. He can dictate these as the points encountered (either randomly or by following the map) on the path to the Irradial Forge.

MAG-RAIL HUB

This receiving station has dozens of spokes for the magnetic propulsion cars that send and receive shipments to other forge districts. The cars also form an unreliable transport network around the massive forge itself. While taking the cars offers no more guarantee of reaching one's destination, it at least means the passenger gets there quicker. Servitors perform most of the loading and unloading here. They are unsophisticated models, neither equipped for combat nor programmed for advanced reactions. They go through their ceaseless routines completely ignoring the Battle-Brothers.

TABLE 3-4: TRAVEL IN THE OUTER FORGE

Roll	Result	Time in Transit	Modifier to Next Roll
1 or less	The Kill-team is hopelessly lost. They go nowhere, finally circling back to their previous location after hours of wandering.	1d10+5 hours	+0
2	The Kill-team has trouble navigating the confusing outer forge, but finally follows a rail line that leads them to the Mag-rail Hub. From this central location, it may be slightly easier to progress.	1d10 hours	+1
3	After hours of marching, the Kill-team sees a wide clearing in the dense machine wilderness. They emerge at the Cyprium Mine.	1d10+1 hours	+0
4	It takes several hours, but the Kill-team is beginning to get their bearings in this strange landscape. They reach the Perpetual Manufactorum.	1d10+1 hours	+1
5	The shifting nature of space plays tricks on the Kill-team. Finally they wander into the Magi Graveyard, where it seems no one else has tread set foot in many years.	1d10+1 hours	+0
6	It is difficult to say whether the Kill-team found the Whispering Cogitators, or the Cogitators found them. It seems unlikely they could have stumbled into this small location by sheer chance.	1d10+1 hours	+2
7	Optional Encounter of GM's Choice	1d5+1 hours	+2
8	The Kill-team has a good sense of the landmarks they need to pass on the way to the Irradial Forge. They find their next destination, the Mag-rail Hub, with relative ease	1d5 hours	+2
9	The outline of the Forge looms close to the Cyprium Mine. The Kill-team can only hope it is not another trick of the blighted land.	1d5 hours	+3
10	The Kill-team suspects that the Perpetual Manufactorum is very close to the Irradial Forge.	1d5 hours	+3
11	The Magi Graveyard is practically in the shadow of the Irradial Forge.	1d5 hours	+6
12 or more	The Kill-team finally reach the Inner Forge.	1d5 hours	N/A

The mag-rail cars are grey, windowless boxes. If the Kill-team takes one for transport to their next Location, they may subtract 2 hours from the time it takes them to reach it (to a minimum of 1 hour).

CYPRUM MINE

This active strip mine bores ever deeper into the damaged planet, exploiting the meagre copper veins in this location. Once the excavators might have been a more traditional design, with crenulated scoops sifting through the rubble. Over time, the Hadex Anomaly has entertained itself by touching the operation with its perverse nature. Crane arms hang empty like trees whose rotten fruit has fallen. Their spiny metal offspring bustle and burrow within the rock, stripping it under their own power now. This evolution appears at least partially defensive. Several small trenches resonate with shrieking metal and carapace; the spindly foragers fight an unending war with rust decapods over the spoils of the mine.

Like most of the outer forge, no living being oversees this operation. However, there may be an increased chance of encountering a patrol at the mine, due to its lack of cover.

MAGI GRAVEYARD

Nothing moves in this dead basin of pitted and weathered statues. At first glance the creators and the creations may be difficult to distinguish. The corpses of a dozen Magi stand here. Their flesh has long rotted, leaving vaguely human-shaped frames of metal and bone. The labour that must have killed them is a parody of man as well: metal constructs with leering faces and clockwork organs. Scorched wire and burst pipes wreath the artificial beings, providing the only hint as to what might have gone wrong. The environment and its metal-hungry scavengers have worked their ruin on the site of this failed experiment.

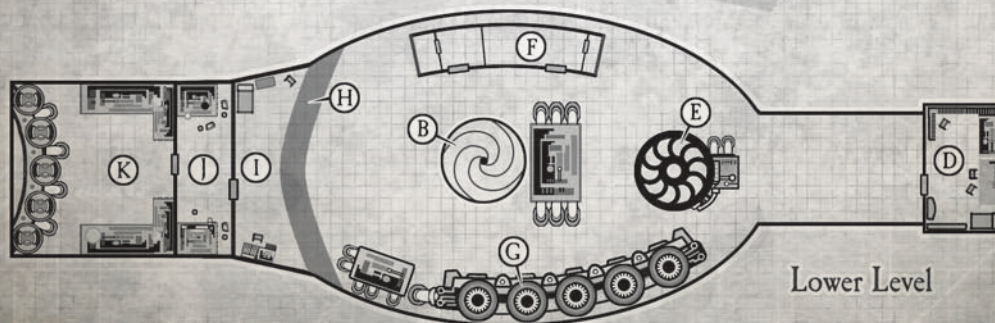
MAP OF THE FORGE

If the characters have the map Allewis provided, it appears more like a warp navigation chart than any land map. It is marked not with distances and fixed objects, but with currents, vectors, shifting landmarks, and tenuous equations. It suggests a region where space and possibly even time are malleable.

IRRADIAL FORGE

- A. Power Generatorium
- B. Iris
- C. Cogitator banks
- D. Chaos Sorcerer's Sanctum
- E. Matrix of Truth
- F. Xenos Pens
- G. Supplemental Generators
- H. Rune Wards
- I. Guardian's Chamber
- J. Workshop/Summoning Room
- K. Thaumogram Diode Room

Scale: 1 square = 1 meter



Upper Level

Lower Level

PERPETUAL MANUFACTORY

Until recently, this automated facility took raw ore into its huge receptacles and produced intimidating needle injector assemblies. The manufactory has either been forgotten or the ore simply run dry, but the production lines continue their empty motions. Rumbling belts dump phantom materials into cold smelting vats, and conveyors cycle empty moulds through cooling chambers. A pile of the facility's last output rusts at the end of the line, forming a haphazard mountain of needles.

Empty tubes for the chemicals that accompanied these devices line one wall. Each one bears a dusty but legible label and chymical formula. A **Routine (+20) Chem-Use Test** identifies most of these as various poisons and corrosive agents. However, one is an anti-toxin even more potent than that carried by Astartes power armour injectors. The label reads: "For inoculation against specimen 634-9."

THE WHISPERING COGITATORS

Here stands an artificial cliff, dozens of metres high. Its face is not stone, but circuit and screen. Hundreds upon hundreds of cogitators blink in a dizzying pattern that is neither perfectly random nor mathematically predictable. The coloured luminator buds span every hue and shade in the spectrum, occasionally their flickering converges into the startlingly precise image of a place or object. This machine's purpose, and if it has any relevance to Missions present or future, is left entirely to the GM's discretion.

A simuloptera hive swirls nearby, mimicking the bright lights to perfection. The column shifts again, forming an imitation of one of the Battle-Brothers. His likeness walks towards the cogitators and sweeps his hand along the panels in an exploratory gesture. Then the hive disappears as it becomes one with the jagged ground.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: SERVITOR NURSERY

The Vinculum Proselytes are not particular about the inputs for their combat servitors. The mutated and the untainted, the dead and the living—all become fodder for their mindless warriors. This facility (which Rij supplies) in the outer forge is responsible for the majority of combat servitors in the Irradial Forge district.

The district's obsession with the dark gods and their powers means that an unusual number of mutants, living and dead, are available to build upon. However, this number still does not approach the quantity needed to defend the forge's many holdings and launch their campaigns of conquest and exploration. Therefore, they add to the available number of mutants by altering healthy subjects. The facility's largest room is devoted to this purpose, where living men are subjected to the first steps of the mechanisation and mutation processes simultaneously. Nimble surgical arms graft artificial muscle onto their frames as their blood is pumped full of repugnant chemicals.

If the Battle-Brothers enter the servitor nursery, the presiding Tech-priests do not number enough to be a threat. As presented, the location does not include any noteworthy combat. However, if your pacing calls for a fight, the mutated servitors produced here make an obvious choice of foe. Several hundred menials are currently held for transformation. Their dispositions are as follows:

- Contained but unchanged: The most fortunate are simply locked in a crowded room, awaiting processing. Aside from slight dehydration, they are unharmed.
- Prepped for surgery: These menials are shut into a room not dissimilar from the first. However, preparatory chemicals course through their veins. If the Battle-Brothers open this holding area, the menials interpret the hulking metal men as their captors. They pour forth in a drug-induced frenzy. Use the Imperial Sympathiser profile to form a Horde. The Battle-Brothers may attempt to use normal Interaction Tests to get through to the struggling menials, but their chem fugue imposes a -10 penalty.
- On the tables: These men and women are in the midst of horrific transformations. Their skin sports bleeding lesions and bubbling tumours. While still conscious and screaming, their torsos and craniums are clamped open as the Tech-priests install the necessary components and remove extraneous fleshy organs.
- Undergoing mindwipe and hypno-indoctrination: The apostate Tech-priests save the mental cleansing until last. They prefer to let the horrific procedures and floods of chemicals "soften up" the mind before working on it. The unfortunate menials at this stage are closer to servitors than people.

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: ORBITAL BATTERY CONTROLS

The *Thunder's Word* has not had an easy time above Samech since the Battle-Brothers deployed. While the Kill-team makes their way through the outer forge, they receive a broken transmission from the frigate:

*"Kill-team, this is the **Thunder's Word**. Our situation is grave. We are taking heavy fire from plasma batteries near your location. If we are to remain, we need you to disable the local orbital defence weaponry. Transmitting coordinates of control station."*

The coordinates are only a few kilometres from the Kill-team's present location. Since the *Thunder's Word* launched the Battle-Brothers above this region of the planet, they are taking the most fire from the batteries controlled by the Irradial Forge. If the Battle-Brothers can put the weapons out of commission, they buy themselves and their allies precious time.

The control station is a tall metal scaffold with two enclosed platforms. It is neither heavily protected nor heavily fortified. Only four Skitarii man the meagre tower. The Kill-team should have no trouble dispatching them and taking possession of the station. The console's holo-projector shows the badly damaged *Thunder's Word*. It weaves in and out of the system's asteroid belt, trying to limit confrontations with the overwhelming planetary fleet. As they examine the orbital battery console, the Battle-Brothers see it can be used not only to disable the plasma batteries above Samech, but to direct them.

If the Kill-team turns the Irradial Forge's weapons on the pursuing ships, they can significantly improve the Deathwatch vessel's chances. Of course, this immediately alerts the Vinculum Proselytes that the Kill-team occupies their control station. One Battle-Brother is sufficient to fire the orbital batteries. His brothers can work to defend and fortify their position, giving them as long as possible to aid the *Thunder's Word*.

This extended attack and defence could play out over several hours of narrative time. To avoid having to make hundreds of Tests, represent this task in Strategic Rounds. Each Strategic Round represents about thirty minutes and every character has one Strategic Turn in the Round to represent their actions over that time period. Each Round is a higher level of abstraction, representing more time and a greater number of smaller events described by a single Test. Other than the amount of time per Round, the encounter follows normal **DEATHWATCH** rules.

Each Strategic Round that passes, the Battle-Brother at the battery controls can make one Ballistic Skill Test to represent his defence of the *Thunder's Word*. Assume each successful Test means one large enemy ship or one squadron of fighters destroyed. The Battle-Brothers have one Strategic Round before the Irradial Forge responds. Those not firing can use this time to prepare themselves and the tower. The GM should allow each character to describe what he is doing to prepare, and then Test on the most appropriate Skill or Attribute to gauge the effect his preparation has on the upcoming combat. Several Tactics Skill Groups could be used. Other possibilities include:

- A Security Test to determine weak points in their defence strategy
- A Tech-Use or Trade Test to craft a more defensible position
- A Demolitions Test to mine the approach to the scaffold

On the second Strategic Round, the enemy begins to arrive. Without any modification, the control station offers cover with AP 10. The initial force is a group of 4 Skitarii led by a Tribune. Every following Strategic Round, 4 more Skitarii arrive. The Skitarii do not attempt to scale the tower until 12 Skitarii are present.

If the Battle-Brothers do an exceptional job of defending their position, the number of Skitarii amassing outside may not be enough to rout them. In this event, the GM should bring the encounter to some sort of resolution before the pace drags. He may declare that they have destroyed enough enemy ships that the *Thunder's Word* successfully withdrew to a more defensible position in the asteroid belt, or have more serious reinforcements such as tanks and Obliterators start arriving.

The Kill-team should keep in mind that destroying Samech's entire orbital fleet is an impossible task, and taking on the entire guardian army of the Irradial Forge is little easier. Their goal should be to hold the control station as long as possible, not indefinitely. As long as the Kill-team has a reasonable exit strategy, let the combat wind down when they give up the orbital battery controls and assume they withdraw safely.

THE FORGE'S IRON HEART

Laridicus at last looked upon the castle of the daemons. The lands' foul hosts could not compare to the cruelty of the kings who reigned in that dark palace. You see, monsters will only follow beings even more monstrous. Can you guess what manner of creature the daemons answered to?

—Excerpt from Laridicus and the Shadow Lands, an Eleusian children's parable.

The Irradial Forge is just as vexing to navigate at its heart as it was in its outskirts. The forge has two levels. The upper workshops house most of the senior members of the Vinculum Proselytes and the equipment that supports them. The same patrols may be found on this level as in the outer forge. The lower level is where the apostates keep their most secret and terrible projects—including the thaumagramm diodes. No one but the order's most trusted and elite may cross the Iris into the lower chamber.

There is only one way into the Forge, and it is guarded by a unit of Samech Praetorians (see page 135). Their number should be one less than the size of the Kill-team. The GM should vary their weapon complement, with only one or two carrying a lascannon or multi-melta. If the Battle-Brothers have managed to conceal their presence until now, doing battle outside the Forge's gates certainly gives their presence away. Unless they somehow manage to decoy the entire sentry unit away, the time for subtlety is most likely over.

THE POWER GENATORIUM (UPPER LEVEL)

The central column of the upper forge is filled with the cacophonous din of clanging metal. Here, magnetic turbines churn in Samech's gravitic tides. Thick, wormlike cables lead from the generators into the walls. They writhe and buzz like a cascade of gleaming maggots. The power genatorium was not built to withstand attacks from within, although effectively demolishing it takes several minutes and is likely to draw the fleshless magi from their quarters (below). Destroying the generators powers down most of the upper level except the cogitator banks, and activates the sinister red auxiliary lighting.

MAGOS QUARTERS (UPPER LEVEL)

The transformed magi reside on the upper level. They have cleansed their cells of furniture, dining facilities, and all the other accoutrements of the biological. They live a pure existence surrounded only by machines and tomes of knowledge. The Battle-Brothers are unlikely to get far in this complex without encountering one of the fleshless residents. (See their profile on page 138.) An internal vox allows the first Magos encountered to call his brothers for reinforcement. The Magi number just under a dozen, and arrive in staggered numbers after the start of conflict.

Once the Kill-team shows the lifeless abominations that their existence is not as immortal as they'd hoped, the Battle-Brothers can proceed. Every chamber contains some form of proscribed lore. A great deal of it involves ways to cheat death.

Dozens of technologies deemed heretical by the Adeptus Mechanicus are spread throughout the documents in these quarters, and large collections on xenos, the warp, daemons, and more obscure arcana provide insight into the interests of the different individuals. Magos Vayze keeps his residence in this same area, although he is not present when the Battle-Brothers enter. His quarters are little different from the rest of his order's, only slightly larger. They contain more of the obscene lore and several xenotech trinkets. However, his study altar holds another copy of the thaumagramm diode schematic from the caves on Aurum (see page 37). Moreover, his own musings and research on the diodes can also be found there.

THE IRIS (UPPER LEVEL)

This segmented diaphragm connects the upper and lower levels of the Forge. Only the Vinculum Proselytes and their allies are permitted to enter the lower level, where they safeguard their most prized lore and technology. Magos Vayze has implemented a lock more secure and unbreakable than any crude key or code. The malign cogitators control the Iris. Their daemoniac inhabitants know who is permitted through the gateway, and who is not. Even the most powerful melta bombs seem unable of scratching the surface of this mighty gate. Nothing short of a Titan's grip is likely to open the Iris with brute force. To cross into the lower level, the Kill-team must find some way of bypassing the Iris. Their options include:

- Like most spirits of the warp bound to mortal masters, the cogitators obey, but they have no love for the Vinculum Proselytes. They may be persuaded, tricked, or threatened into opening the Iris. (See below.)
- Directly interfacing with the daemoniac cogitators imperils the soul of any rash enough to attempt it. However, a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test** by anyone trained in Tech-Use notices an exposed patch of circuitry that might be used to override the machines' control. Creating this manual bypass requires a **Challenging +0 Tech-Use Test**. However, that only keeps the cogitators from holding the Iris shut; it does not open it. Manually prying the hatch open still requires an **Arduous (-40) Strength Test**.

From the Data-vault of Magos Vayze:
All attempts to research the devices designated 'thaumagramm diode' (Note: See cross reference file) origin have failed. 53 textual sources found for the diodes. 53 sources cross reference older events. Earliest recording found: M36 on Corulsiem. Thaumagramm diodes used during civil war to control (detonate?) enemy weapons. These accounts refer to "uneathering" the designs. Conclusion: thaumagramm diode origin earlier than Corulsiem. The sorcerer's vision is limited. Note: diviner. Limited vision. Irony? His scope is fixed to the warp gate.
The diodes can be applied to the control and alteration of any technology. Priority test subject: Astrum Conflagro.

- The lower level is not a warp-manipulated space. It is physically connected to the upper level. Thus, it is possible to slowly melt through a more vulnerable point in the floor of the upper level to gain access, provided the Kill-team has armaments that can penetrate the floor plates. Once an access way has been created, it is a 15 metre drop between levels.

The Iris opens onto a spiralling set of stairs that descend to the lower level.

COGITATOR BANKS (UPPER LEVEL)

In the days when Samech was loyal to Mars, or at least better concealed their treachery, the planet garnered much fame for its sophisticated cogitators. They did not stop researching or manufacturing these advanced machines when they were declared Apostates. The Irradial Forge simply began to apply its principles of "improving" technology through warp infusions to the cogitators. Over the centuries this culminated in cogitators that are both self-powered and self-aware. Of course, this was only achieved through the blasphemous and dangerous binding of lesser daemons into the circuitry, using the same arts sorcerers must master in order to forge daemon weapons.

Banks of these infernal machines ring the upper level. Some have speakers that hiss in many voices, while others communicate through symbols on their screens or print-outs. A successful Interaction Test (or a well-roleplayed ruse) convinces the daemoniac spirits to open the Iris for the Kill-team. Once the portal is opened, there is nothing to stop the Battle-Brothers from cleansing the tainted machines if they desire.

Mission Consequence: If the Kill-team earned the gratitude of Magos Quezalt and he provided an algorithm purifier, it can be used to safely interface with the cogitators. In this case, forcing them to open the Iris requires a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**.

Warded Shipping Crates

Several sealed crates stand by one of the cogitator banks. Should these be opened, they hold racks of small stasis tubes. Within each one is knife-sized sliver of wires and circuits tracing vile patterns. These processor spores need nothing except a power source to rapidly evolve into impressive cogitator banks. The void-proof containers suggest these spores were going to be shipped off world.

XENOS PENS (LOWER LEVEL)

Samech is infamous for its experimentation labs, where its hungry knowledge seekers probe the physiologies of dozens of alien races. The Vinculum Proselytes are no exception to such proclivities. This dim chamber holds their current specimens in force cages. The captive aliens include:

A Tau Engineer

Fiu'Ui' Len is a member of the Earth caste. Samech goes through members of his fragile species quickly. He has only been captive a few weeks, but the effects of constant exploratory surgeries have obviously taken their toll on him. He does not speak any form of Gothic, but he knows a Space Marine when he sees one. If they do not appear immediately hostile, the Tau does his best to pantomime a plea to free him. After all, death at their hands can be no worse than remaining in the Proselytes' care.

An Ork

This green-skinned brute is in good health, and looks only slightly bored in his cage. He grins toothily when he sees the Space Marines, and bangs his fists against his holding cell expectantly. Judging from the bloodstains on the floor near his cage, it appears he has had no lack of opportunity to do what Orks love best.

A Grey Reptile

This quadrupedal creature has sharp, curved claws on all four limbs. Its skin is dry and flaking; it seems only half aware of its surroundings. It does not react to the Kill-team when they enter the room. However, if they deactivate the force cage it sluggishly attempts an escape from the forge.

An Eldar

Of all the xenos specimens, this Eldar Harlequin is unquestionably in the worst condition. Dahzak took great pains to capture one of the enigmatic Harlequins. For years the sorcerer has tried unsuccessfully to pry the secrets of the Black Library and the webway from his captive. Unlike the other xenos prisoners, the Harlequin speaks human languages perfectly, although his lilting voice is raw. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:



One of the last cages holds the lithe body of an Eldar. His clothing is ragged and bloody; patches of faded colour flicker weakly across his dying holosuit. His slanted eyes open, and he pulls himself to his feet—eerily graceful even in his broken state. He looks directly at you. "It won't be long until your sorcerer can cast his spell," he beckons them closer.

If they approach, he continues:

"It may be inevitable, whether by his doing or another's. In the end your short-sighted race always warps what it manages to wrest from the universe. As long as the gate remains in human hands we tempt fate."

An **Ordinary (+10) Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) Test** recognises the Eldar as a Harlequin. His goal is simple: make sure the Space Marines stop Dahzak from breaching the webway. However, he has no faith that the xenocidal warriors would do this if they knew he wanted them to. Instead, he does his best to lead them to making the conclusion themselves. Eldar dealings with Mankind have always gone better if they keep their true motivations secret. The Harlequin is clearly in no condition to fight. If the Space Marines condemn him for the crime of his race, he makes no attempt to defend himself.

HARLEQUINS

The Harlequins are a faction of the Eldar far removed from normal craftworld life. These warrior troubadours' best understood purpose is to re-enact the fall of the Eldar through song and dance and ensure that its lessons are never forgotten. It is also whispered that they bear an enigmatic duty to guard the fabled Black Library—an ancient repository of knowledge in the heart of the webway. These performers wear masks and costumes even into battle, where they make use of their manipulative skills to deceive and destroy their enemies. Even fellow Eldar consider the Harlequins aloof and strange.

Conditional Encounter: Captive Venomthrope

The Xenos Pens also contains a captive from Hive Dagon on the Orpheus Salient. This bulging monstrosity is a writhing mass of carapace, tentacles, and bloated sacs of toxins.

Mission Consequence: Dahzak foresaw that his enemies would one day invade the Irradial Forge. However, divination is an imperfect art. He knew someone would come, but not when or who. In preparation he equipped this cage with a psy-activated trigger. If the Battle-Brothers did not ward themselves, Dahzak can track their movements through the Forge and unleashes the Venomthrope while they are in the Xenos Pens. He does this at a time when the Battle-Brothers' attention is not on the Venomthrope's cage. However, they can make a **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test** to hear the containment field power down. If the Battle-Brothers use the Anti-toxin found in the Perpetual Manufactory (see page 124) it allows them to treat the Venomthrope's Toxic Miasma as the standard Toxic Trait instead. The high-ceilinged room is open, save for the force cages. Each of these provides cover with AP 20. If a cage is destroyed, there is a 50% chance of freeing the occupant and a 50% chance the occupant dies.

Optional Encounter: A Fate Worse Than Death

Not all of Inquisitor Vincent's Acolytes died on the archipelagos of Karlack. Unknown to the survivors, Judge Ellyn Veridos was not killed with the rest of Vincent's cadre. Instead, the apostate Magi sent her to an even less merciful fate. One organ at a time, the Vinculum Proselytes have embedded the foreign material of a dozen alien species in the former Throne Agent. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A dissection table sits in one corner. A patchwork of alien parts with a human face lies upon it. The shape suggests a female, though it is impossible to be sure. You can see her yellow heart beating through her translucent skin.

She stirs under the scrutiny of the Battle-Brothers. The woman is clearly beyond saving, but she does not accept death gracefully, weeping and pleading for her life until silenced.

She lifts one veined, miscoloured talon towards you. "Please, help me," she croaks in a voice both wet and echoing. "I don't want to die. Help me."

SUPPLEMENTAL GENERATORS (LOWER LEVEL)

The subterranean genatorium has little in common with its counterpart above. This level of the forge used to be hidden, a place for the Vinculum Proselytes to perform their research while Samech still professed loyalty to Mars. The supplemental generators are a remnant of that era. They supply the secret experiments of the lower level with secure power that could not be interrupted by any outside disaster. The generators are traditional fusion reactors, notable primarily for their mundane nature in this nest of the insane and heretical.

THE MATRIX OF TRUTH (LOWER LEVEL)

This foretelling device was the first collaboration between Dahzak and Vayze. It aims to make logic from chaos and extract truth from lies. Its core is a shifting pool of harnessed immaterium, carefully manipulated by Dahzak to reflect possible futures. A sphere of holo-recorders surround it, detailing every image that appears on the mercurial surface. The mechanical shell then relays these recordings to the data bank, where a predictive statistical formula weighs the possible lies and truths of the vision. By applying a probability filter to the fickle projections of Dahzak's oracular abilities, Magos Vayze hopes to create a more sophisticated prognosticator than science could ever accomplish alone. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

If your eyes graze the surface of the rippling orb, they are at once compelled and repulsed by its vexing images. Thousands of fragmented pictures of people and events float along its surface like oil over water. The most horrifying and the most mundane sights appear in the orb, in the most probable and the most impossible of circumstances.

Anyone who looks into the Matrix must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or gain 1d5 Insanity Points. Below are some examples of what any onlookers may witness. (This is also a perfect opportunity for the GM to foreshadow events in his own campaign or plant his own misleading visions).

- Deep in the heart of Watch Fortress Erioch, the final chamber of the Omega Vault opens. It is not one more cryptic clue or weapon that lies there. It is not the last line of defense against an alien threat. It is a dark, foul shadow that sweeps out into the unprepared Fortress. The finest warriors of the Adeptus Astartes fall like helpless children before it, and Erioch runs red with blood.
- The polluted sky over Karlack is something approaching blue today. As ever, the glittering black Cenotaph pierces

the horizon like a sword. Other black shapes begin to appear against the sky. First one, then another of these menacing alien shapes gather like storm clouds over the Fortress World.

- Row upon row of Imperial Guardsmen stand before the white tombs on Sepulchre Sigma. Their lips are blue; their skin is pale. Lord Commander Sebiascor Ebongrave strolls through their ranks, eyes narrowed. He pauses to ask a question of one soldier. The Lord Commander appears not to like the answer. Smoothly he draws his sidearm and shoots the man in the head. He moves to the next one and repeats his question.

DAHZAK'S SANCTUM (LOWER LEVEL)

This stone chamber is the one part of the Forge practically empty of any technology. Dahzak has made his lair here beneath the Irradial Forge for decades, slowly transforming the room to something secure and to his liking. An obvious guardian artefact sits in the centre of the main room. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The metre-high pyramid in the centre of the room is an obvious warning to would-be intruders. A dimensional disturbance burns at the apex of the pyramid. The pulsing disc has the obvious outline of an eye, with a lid that flutters in mimicry of sleep.

An **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test** confirms that the eye is some form of conduit to the warp, although its relatively muted signature suggests that the conduit is currently closed. If anyone enters the room, that changes dramatically. The guardian device can attack with a Bolt of Change (see Dahzak's profile) as though it were a sorcerer with Psy Rating 3. Anyone struck by the bolt can feel the raw forces of alteration pulling at their flesh even if they pass the Toughness Test.

The guardian device is not indestructible, but damaging it (or moving it) requires weapons beyond the scale that the Kill-team can carry personally. Fortunately its artificers placed too much faith in their work, and left no possibility that one blast from the warp eye would not be enough. It fires at each Battle-Brother only once before going dormant.

The sanctum holds literally dozens of proscribed artefacts ranging from xenotech field projectors to misshapen hunks of coral covered in devotions to the dark gods. The tomes and scrolls are equally dangerous and blasphemous, exceeding the sum of everything found in the Magos Quarters. The Battle-Brothers stand amidst the result of hundreds of years in pursuit of knowledge about all the things the Imperium tries to suppress. One item does stand out amidst the others. A small glass sphere holds a miniature floating sword. The device is half of a locus seeker (see page 175 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook). As with all seekers, their only way to know exactly where or how far the artefact points is to follow it to its other part. It appears Dahzak is preparing to do just that. The small device sits beside an open stellar map with several experimental vectors drawn radiating out from Samech.

CONDITIONAL ENCOUNTER:

CULLING THE PACK

Arcus Dyre and Magos Vayze have a long and bitter history. If Vayze realises the psyker is free of the Soul Alembic, he may leave the Forge to deal with his old nemesis personally. This presents the Kill-team with the opportunity to spot the Magos alone in the halls of the lower level as he departs. They may choose to dispatch him (hopefully quietly) or to simply let him leave and deal with him later. In the latter case the GM should decide the outcome of the NPC's showdown off screen.

Mission Consequence: The Battle-Brothers only have this opportunity if they chose to rescue and ally with Arcus Dyre. He returns the enmity of the Magos, and may suggest that they let him deal with Vayze.

THE GUARDIAN BARRIER

(LOWER LEVEL)

In times past this room held daemons and other entities enslaved to the will of the Forge's masters. The barrier of runes in the floor kept these guardians at bay. At present no such creatures are in evidence. Even without a denizen to hold captive, the runs provide a safeguard for the rest of the Forge should something go awry in the Diode Chamber.

ARCANOTECH WORKSHOP

ANTECHAMBER (LOWER LEVEL)

For years this workshop was the site of Vayze and Dahzak's collaboration, where all manner of experiments have succeeded and failed. The accoutrements of technology and sorcery sit side by side here. A data-slate lies inside a summoning circle. The embalmed bodies of two naked humans hold a vox between them. The alchemical cabinet contains pouches of sulphur and vials of machine oil and thick unguents that resemble those from tech-rites, except they flicker with unnatural light.

The workshop also contains active Praetorian servitors guarding the next set of doors; their number is equal to that of the Battle-Brothers. If Magos Vayze is still present in the Forge, he is at the head of this force. The Vinculum Proselytes attack. Pitched combat in this relatively small room is likely to result in many broken artefacts, documents set alight, and any other peripheral specifics the GM wishes to invent. The heavy doors between the antechamber and the main Diode chamber are sealed. Opening them requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test** or strong explosives. This would only be a minor obstacle if the Kill-team didn't also have to contend with the Praetorians. Furthermore, Dahzak's farseeing abilities allow him to direct his psychic powers that require line of sight at the Battle-Brothers from behind the closed doors.

Mission Consequence: If the Kill-team is warded against Dahzak's sorcerous sight, then he cannot see them through the doors and thus cannot affect them with his sorcery until they enter the Diode Chamber.

THE DIODE CHAMBER (LOWER LEVEL)

When the Battle-Brothers open the final doors, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You have no trouble locating what you came here for. Thaumagramm diodes cover the wall in front of you, climbing it from floor to ceiling and fanning out to the sides in sickly orange wings. The entire crescent-shaped room dances with electricity arcing from the diodes. Their evil will is like a tangible force pressing on your chest and eyes. The array of diodes dims and brightens slowly. You think you can hear that malicious heartbeat in your ears.

Dahzak is ready for the Battle-Brothers. Being far from a fool, he has pulled back to one of the tips of the room and activated Possibility Shield and/or Force Dome. Throughout this combat, Dahzak has at least one of these defensive powers sustained, lowering his effective Psy Rating per the rules for sustaining multiple psychic powers on page 186 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook. He surveys the Kill-team for a moment.

"You have come quite far to trouble my plans. How very typical of the Deathwatch, to throw yourselves into the jaws of hell even when you know that maw will devour you. Still, I can make use of your gene-seed after I tear it from your chests."

While he is an impressive sorcerer, Dahzak is truly deadly with the thaumagramm diodes at his command. Being in the chamber has the following effects:

- As a Half Action, Dahzak can infuse the inactive and broken praetorians behind the Battle-Brothers with energy from the diodes, allowing them to rise again. While so transfigured, the praetorians' eyes glow with sickly orange light, and the same energy crackles around their melee weapons. Use their original profile with the following modifications: Increase Toughness by +10; Increase melee Damage by +2; Halve Wounds total. Dahzak may only do this once, and only on a number of praetorians equal to half their original number (round down). He performs this resurrection on the first Round he can see the praetorians' bodies.
- Dahzak can channel the corrupting power of the thaumagramm diodes into the technology around him. The bearer of any machine so affected must pass a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** to assert his control over the machine spirit. Resistance (Psychic Powers) applies to this Test. If he succeeds, there is no effect. If he fails, roll 1d10 on Table 3-5: Thaumagramm Diode Effects. The bearer can make a new Willpower Test each Turn to try and regain control. Dahzak may use this ability on one item per Round as a Free Action, or 1d5+1 items as a Full Action.

If the Kill-team opened the doors with enemies still alive in the antechamber, then they must contend with those remnants as well.

Mission Consequences: If the Battle-Brothers found the thaumagramm diode schematic on Aurum and studied it, they gain a +10 to their Willpower rolls against the diodes.

Dahzak's connection to the thaumagramm diodes has unforeseen and catastrophic effects when he expires. Rather than calming, the putrid orange energies intensify. Any resurrected servitors explode, and huge glowing arcs of the corrupting power shoot out from the diode array into the lower level of the forge.

TABLE 3-5: THAUMAGRAMM DIODE EFFECTS

Roll	Result
1	Being bathed in the foul energies of the thaumagramm diodes is far from pleasant, but it appears to have no effect on the Battle-Brother's equipment.
2	The armour or weapon glows red-hot for a moment, and then erupts into sickly orange flames. (Treat this as being on Fire.)
3	The thaumagramm diodes momentarily sway the armour or weapon's machine spirit. Its surface twists into horrific visages that speak blasphemies. Treat the item as having Fear (3), which also impacts the wearer.
4	The armour or weapon is paralysed by the surging energy. power armour freezes; weapons do not fire.
5	The armour or weapon resists the taint but becomes moody and sluggish after the great effort. It performs as though in a Haywire Field result of Major Disruption.
6	The armour or weapon becomes so contaminated and dangerous that the bearer must rid himself of it, at least momentarily—lest he be infected next. The bearer drops weapons or begins immediately trying to remove affected power armour. If the contaminated item is power armour, the bearer may do nothing except remove it.
7	The energy bites into the armour or weapon, damaging it. Weapons become unusable until repaired. The effect on power armour is purely cosmetic.
8	The armour or weapon emits daemonic howls and shrieks. This has no statistical effect but is unsettling, particularly to Techmarines.
9	Warp energies infuse the item. It radiates an unstable aura. Any psychic power used within 20 metres treats its PR and chance of psychic phenomena as though it was Pushed. (However, the psyker does not take a level of Fatigue.)
0	The armour or weapon turns on its bearer. Power armour attempts to crush the person inside; weapons overheat or jam explosively. The bearer takes 1d10+5 Damage, ignoring AP but not TB.

ESCAPING THE CORRUPTED FORGE

As the Battle-Brothers leave the diode chamber, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Forge outside is madness. The orange lightning chains through the technologically rich environment. You hear screams and howls down the corridors that have no explicable source.

Dahzak's last act of infamy unleashes every peril that the Vinculum Proselytes have intentionally and unwittingly stocked in the Irradial Forge. The storm of warp energies interferes with the Kill-team's teleport beacons, as evidenced by their amber indicator runes. They must clear the Iris before the *Thunder's Word* can retrieve them. Their vox systems are likewise useless, meaning they must remove their helmets to communicate verbally with one another. One of the many effects triggered by the destruction of the diodes is the opening of the warp eye in Dahzak's sanctum. Therefore the Kill-team could encounter nearly any menace as they try to withdraw. Possibilities include:

- The Matrix of Truth is free of its binding. The chaotic sphere whirls through the lower complex, howling as the logic bindings slowly break. It assaults the minds of all it nears with its double-edged prophecies.
- The warp puncture in Dahzak's sanctum rips open into a full breach, unleashing all manner of horrors into the Irradial Forge. At the simplest, the GM can represent the results by adding a Mark of Chaos to one or more of the adversary types in the forge. At the most extreme, terrible daemons burst through from the warp. (See the Adversaries section of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook.)
- If the Venomthrope remained caged previously, the maelstrom releases it. It roams the halls preying on any living being it encounters.
- In one of their many expeditions for specimens and technology, the Vinculum Proselytes captured a Tau Crisis Battlesuit. The polluted energy of the thaumagramm diodes transforms it into a rampaging metal beast.

It is up to the GM whether destroying the thaumagramm diodes ends the ill effects on the Kill-team's gear, or if the arcing energies intensify it. He should make it clear that the danger in the lower level is only escalating with each passing moment. The Battle-Brothers could easily get caught up in combating the multitude of foes that suddenly emerge. However, a battle against an open warp breach is not one they can win. Their Objective is complete. The effects of the diode meltdown are meant to increase the drama of the climax, not drag the players into hours more combat. If a particular enemy is preventing the Kill-team from exiting in a timely manner, remember the new dangers can harm each other as well as the Battle-Brothers.

NO REST FOR THE WEARY

The *Thunder's Word* fares little better than the Irradial Forge. When they are at last extracted, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The **Thunder's Word** trembles beneath your feet. The lights flicker and you can hear several warning klaxons above the booming barrage of impacts on the hull. The ship shudders as the plasma drives flare to full thrust. Only moments later you feel the sinking sensation of translating into the warp.*

Injured but victorious, the Kill-team and the *Thunder's Word* put the Iron Pit behind them.



HEROIC SACRIFICE

If it hasn't happened already, this is certainly a key moment during which one of your players may ask about the Heroic Sacrifice rules in the Combat Chapter of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook. If a Battle-Brother chooses to sell his life in such a way (or perhaps throw himself at certain doom and survive anyway if he still has Fate Points), the event will be most memorable if the player and the GM collaborate to create the most dramatic circumstances. Some possible scenarios in this fight for fearless heroics include:

- Shedding his armour and weapons as they betray him to attack the sorcerer bare-handed, the Battle-Brother grapples Dahzak into the wall of thaumagramm diodes and they are both consumed in a blast of orange lightning and flames.
- The Battle-Brother sees the warp energies welling from the thaumagramm diodes as the Chaos sorcerer dies. He throws himself atop the altar of crystals, and cancels out the foul shockwave with the strength of his soul and the purity of the wards on his armour. His power armour is warped; his body singed and blackened, but he has saved his brothers from the hell about to be unleashed below the Forge.

AFTERSHOCKS ON ERIOCH

The knowledge of how close the Jericho Reach came to another Age of Shadow weighs deeply on those who know about the Mission. Even if the Kill-team did succeed in the Primary Objectives, several of the Secondary Objectives deal with preventing history from repeating itself. If they failed to accomplish any of these objectives, the Deathwatch may find themselves facing other sabotage attempts or an antisonate-plated raider able to strike deep behind the Iron Collar at will.

A THREAT AVERTED

After the Battle-Brothers have had time to rest and debrief, the Chamber of Vigilance reconvenes. The Kill-team has saved the Crusade from being crushed beneath a tide of daemons. Even among the critical duties of the Deathwatch, this is a laudable victory, and the Chamber honours it with a short ceremony and the awarding of a heroic Distinction. Be sure to give the characters closure via an opportunity for follow up roleplay with anyone who opposed their bid to deploy to Samech.

REWARDS

Table 3–6 Mission Experience Rewards shows the value of completing each of the Objectives if you award experience using the detailed mission-based method. Furthermore, make an estimation of how much collateral damage the Kill-team caused to the forge and award between 50 and 200 XP based on the amount of destruction caused.

Every Battle-Brother who completes the Mission gains 1 Fate Point.

The following are worth 1 Renown each:

- Freeing the Titan from its existence as an enemy trophy
- Destroying the *Ruin Bringer*
- Doing massive damage to the forces of Samech
- Inciting the menials of the Irradial Forge slums to rebel

- Holding the orbital control station long enough to defend the *Thunder's Word*
- Defeating the Obliterators
- Defeating Dahzak is worth 2 Renown

The GM should reference page 270 in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook to see if the Kill-team qualifies for additional Renown for completing multiple Objectives. As always, he should also feel free to further reward clever plans and good roleplaying.

THE UNENDING WATCH

The threat from Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes may have been averted, but the Deathwatch's vigil is ceaseless. How many crates of tainted processor spores already made their way off Samech before the Battle-Brothers discovered them? What does the locus seeker from Dahzak's sanctum point at? Which visions in the Matrix of Truth were shadows of the future, and which were lies?

VINDICATOR OF THE IRON PIT

The twisted nightmare forge of Samech leaves its mark. Many men have lost their sanity when exposed to the depravity of the Charon Stars. However, in the case of a Space Marine, it may serve to harden his courage and resolve. He has faced the horrifying machines of the enemy and emerged victorious.

After the award ceremony, any character who survived the final Mission may purchase the Distinction "Vindicator of the Iron Pit" for 1000 Experience Points. From this point forward, the Battle-Brother halves any Insanity Points received (round down) and is completely immune to the effects of Fear. He also gains the Skill Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech). Further information on Distinctions and how to create your own can be found in future **DEATHWATCH** supplements.

TABLE 3-6: MISSION EXPERIENCE REWARDS

Objective	Experience Awarded
Stopping the assault on the warp gate	400 XP
Preventing the forces of Chaos from making more diodes to try again later	250 XP
Destroying the <i>Ruin Bringer</i>	200 XP
Defeating Dahzak	200 XP
Destroying the Paragelle	150 XP
Rescuing the Imperial Sympathisers	100 XP
Destroying the Defiler Foundry	100 XP
Destroying the Servitor Nursery	75 XP
Defeating Sethahar	100 XP
Identifying the trade in tainted cogitators	100 XP

APPENDIX: NPCs

ARCUS DYRE



On Imperially-held planets Dyre's prodigious power might have been put to use for Mankind's benefit. On Samech, he has been fortunate enough to learn to control his abilities before they destroyed him.

Arcus Dyre Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	35	32	40	44	50	35	55	45

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carousing (T) +10, Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel), Deceive (Fel)+10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Psykers, Warp) (Int), Invocation (WP) +10, Literacy (Int), Psyniscience (Per) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: †Psychic Alacrity, Favoured by the Warp, Jaded, Master Orator, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol

MISSION FAILED

If for some reason the Kill-team failed, all is not lost, although it is beyond the scope of this book. The Deathwatch and the Crusade know that the *Ruin Bringer* is coming; they have another chance to stop the corruption of the warp gate before it is enacted. One possibility is to deploy a Deathwatch Kill-team to the warp gate's control structure itself, and fend off the encroachers. If you also have the **ROGUE TRADER** Rulebook, another possibility is a pitched space battle around Altaire's Arrow or the Well of Night.

Weapon Training (Las, SP), **Psy Rating** (6), **Resistance** (Heat), **Swift Attack**, **Warp Conduit**.

Armour: Pilfered Flak Armour (AP 4).

Weapons: Scavenged 'Stormchild' Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full), Samech-Pattern Autopistol (30m; S/-/-6 1d10+2 I, Pen 0, Clip 18, Rld Full).

Psychic Powers: ††Regenerate, Quickening, Smite, Blood Boil, Crown of Lightning, Iron Arm.

Gear: None

†**Psychic Alacrity:** Surviving dozens of violent hit-and-run encounters on Samech have left Dyre with the ability to bring his powers to bear swiftly when required. Once per combat, he may use a psychic power that requires either a Full or Half Action as a Free Action. He may still only use one psychic power in his turn.

Regenerate:

Action: Full Action

Range: Psyker

Sustained: Yes

Description: This power allows the Psyker to knit his flesh back together at a phenomenal rate, even eventually regrowing lost limbs and organs. Each Round this power is active, the user removes 1d5 points of Damage (removing Critical Damage first) and removing all levels of Fatigue. Once all damage is removed, the Psyker begins to regrow lost organs, limbs and so on.

PSYCHIC RABBLE

The majority of psykers on Samech barely even realise they can touch the warp before they are sacrificed to the Magi's need for psychic life energy. What little power they can channel is largely subconscious.

Psychic Rabble Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	25	30	25	25	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Samech) (Int) +10, Common Lore (Technology) (Int), Psyniscience (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int),

Talents: Psy Rating (1), Resistance (Heat).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Scavenged Samech-Pattern Lasgun (100m; S/3/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 1; Clip 60; Rld Full; Reliable); Tool (1d10+1 I; Primitive, Unbalanced).

Psychic Powers: †Luck

Gear: Tattered Clothing.

Luck

Action: Full Action

Range: Psyker

Sustained: No

Description: The psyker alters the flow of probability around himself to improve his chances of success. When manifested, the psyker may re-roll any one dice roll at any time before the end of his next Turn.

MUTANT COMBAT SERVITOR

Mutant Combat Servitor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	35	(10) 50	(8) 40	10	10	30	45	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 25

Skills: Awareness (Per), Trade (any one) +10, Trade (Technomat) +10.

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits: Armour Plating, Dark Sight, Fear (1), Machine (4), Mutations†, Natural Weapons (Servo Fist), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength, Unnatural Toughness.

Armour: None (All 6)

Weapons: Servo-Fist (1d10+10 I, Pen 6) and Chainblade (1d10+14 R; Pen 2; Tearing) or Decapitator Blades (2d10+12 R; Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unwieldy) or Power Scythes (1d10+18 E; Pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced).

Gear: Internal vox (to receive/relay instructions only).

†**Mutations:** Each servitor has 2 of the following

- **Blood Substitution (Molten Metal):** +10 T; Any injury to the mutant causes a vent of hot molten metal to spray on its melee attackers. The damage is 2d10 E, Pen 5. If the mutant is killed it explodes as Blast (5), spraying its blood in all directions.
- **Iron Hard Skin:** What little flesh remains on the mutant has transmuted into a mesh of metallic scales. It gains Natural Armour (5).
- **Multiple Appendages:** The mutant gains the Ambidextrous talent and the Multiple Arms Trait. These additional limbs are often equipped with implanted weapons as well.
- **Regeneration:** The tainted flesh of the mutant knits itself together with unnatural speed. It gains Regeneration (5).
- **Scorpion Tail:** A sharp-barbed tail dripping with caustic venom protrudes from the mutant's back. It may be used to attack as a Reaction. Its profile is (1d10+5 R, Pen 2; Toxic, Unwieldy)

- **Skeletal Form:** A bony and macabre exoskeleton has formed around the mutant. It is lined with gristle and gore. This gives the mutant Natural Armour (2) and Fear (2).
- **Weapon-Beast:** The corrupted tools built into the mutant's flesh are imbued with a malice of their own and a desire to taste living flesh. The mutant has +20 WS.

SAMECH CORRUPTED SKITARII

The Skitarii are the cybernetically enhanced guardians of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Their emotions have been eliminated through hypno-indoctrination, leaving only utterly loyal warriors.

Samech Corrupted Skitarii Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	40	(5) 40	40	30	30	35	30	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Common Lore (Machine Cult, Tech) (Int), Dodge, Search +10 (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Techna-Lingua) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Bulging Biceps, Chem Geld, Heavy Weapon Training (Choose One: Flame, Las, Launcher, or SP), Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Resistance (Heat, Fear).

Armour: Skitarii Flak and Subskin Armour (All 6).

Augmentations: Synthetic Muscle Grafts, Augmented Senses (Eyes and Hearing), Subskin armour, Vox Implant.

Traits: Size (Hulking).

Weapons: The Skitarii has a single Basic or Heavy ranged weapon built into his arm or body. Choose:

- Augmented Las-weapon (Basic; 75m; S/3/5; 1d10+4 E; Pen 1; Clip 100; Rld 2Full)
- Precision Boltgun (Basic; 120m; S/2/—; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 30; Rld Full; Accurate, Reliable, Tearing)
- Heat Lance (Basic; 30m; S/—/—; 2d10+4 E; Pen 10; Clip 10; Rld 2Full; Recharge)
- Flamer (Basic; 15m; S/—/—; 1d10+5 E; Pen 2; Clip 10; Rld 2Full; Flame)
- Rotary Cannon (Heavy; 40m; —/—/6; 1d10+5 I; Pen 3; Clip 240; Rld 3Full; Storm)
- Automatic Grenade Launcher (Heavy; 60m; S/2/—; Fires either Frag or Krak Grenades; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Blast (4) or 2d10+4 X; Pen 6; Clip 20 of each type; Rld 3Full)

In addition, the Skitarii each have a personal sidearm—either a Hellpistol (Pistol; 35m; S/2/—; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2Full) or a Shotpistol (Pistol 10m; S/—/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Rld Full; Reliable, Scatter), and one melee weapon. This is either a Chainblade (1d10+7 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced) or Mono-Great Axe (2d10+5 R; Pen 2; Unbalanced)

Gear: Skitarii flak armour and robes, red-dot laser sight, extensive cybernetics, ammunition reloads.

CORRUPTED SKITARII TRIBUNE

Tribunes are minor officers in the Skitarii ranks. Samech has kept this traditional structure.

Corrupted Skitarii Tribune Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	40	(8)	35	30	35	35	40	35

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), Command +20 (Fel), Common Lore (Machine Cult, Tech) (Int), Dodge, Search +10 (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Techna-Lingua) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Bulging Biceps, Chem Geld, Heavy Weapon Training (Choose One), Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Resistance (Heat, Fear), Swift Attack.

Armour: Skitarii Flak and Subskin Armour (All 6).

Augmentations: Best-craftsmanship Synthetic Muscle Grafts, Augmented Senses (Eyes and Hearing), Subskin Armour, Vox Implant.

Traits: Size (Hulking).

Weapons: Hellpistol (Pistol; 35m; S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2Full) and Power Glaive (1d10+13 E; Pen 7; Power Field).

SAMECH PRAETORIAN

Samech Praetorian Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	45	(10)	(10)	30	20	30	45	—

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 25

Skills: Awareness (Per)+10

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Heavy Weapon Training (Universal), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged).

Traits: Armour Plating, Auto-Stabilised, Dark Sight, Fear (1), Machine (5), Natural Weapons (Servo Fist), Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: None (All 7).

Weapons: Servo-Fist (1d10+10 I, Pen 6), and any two of the following: Industrial Chainblade (1d10+14 R; Pen 2; Tearing), Heavy Bolter (120m; -/-/10; 2d10 X; Pen 5; Clip 180; Rld X, Tearing); Lascannon (300m; S/-/-; 5d10+10 E; Pen 10; Clip 15, Rld X); Multi-Melta (60m; S/-/-; 4d10+12 E, Pen 12; Clip 30, Rld X, Blast (1)); Heavy Flamer (30m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 E; Pen 4, Clip 30; Rld X; Flame); Decapitator Blades (2d10+12 R; Pen 3; Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unwieldy).

Gear: Internal vox (to receive/relay instructions only), Ammo Hopper, Targeting System (equivalent to Red-dot laser sight).

CYLUK

This brutish overseer's only tasks are to keep the menials working and afraid, both of which he relishes.

Cyluk Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	20	(10)	(10)	20	18	30	25	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 30

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10.

Talents: Battle Rage, Berserk Charge, Command (Fel), Crushing Blow, Fearless, Furious Assault, Iron Jaw, Lightning Attack, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain), Resistance (Heat), Swift Attack.

Traits: Fear (2), Fiery Breath†, Size (Hulking), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: Piecemeal Flak and Leather Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Colossal Chainblade (1d10+20 R, Pen 5, Tearing, Unbalanced); Scourge (1d10+12 R, Pen 0; Tearing, Primitive, Flexible).

Gear: Leather Hooded Mask, Implements of punishment, chains and manacles.

†**Fiery Breath:** Cyluk can exhale a massive gout of flame upon his enemies. It has the following profile (20m; S/-/-; 2d10+2 E; Pen: 4; Flame, Recharge).

SAMECH IMPERIAL SYMPATHISERS

The sympathisers are little different from the other slaves to the Irradial Forge, except they have chosen to cling to hope. This profile can be used for Irradial Forge Menials as well.

Samech Imperial Sympathisers Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	30	25	25	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Samech) (Int) +10, Common Lore (Technology) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (any one) (varies).

Talents: Resistance (Heat).

Armour: Protective Gear (4 All, -10 to Agility) or None.

Weapons: Tool (1d10+1 I; Primitive, Unbalanced).

Gear: Work clothes, cognomen, multi-tool, trade tools.



MYRLAINE

Myrlaine Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	38	30	35	32

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Samech) (Int) +20, Common Lore (Technology) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Technomat) (Int).

Talents: Resistance (Heat), Unshakeable Faith.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Tool (1d10+1 I; Primitive, Unbalanced).

Gear: Devotional Icon, work clothes, cognomen, multi-tool.

THE BLACK ENGINE

The Black Engine is not a servitor nor is it daemon-possessed. Its only spirit is the machine's. However, that spirit is spiteful and violent. Its masters offer up a supply of menials for it to joyously rend with its bladed body at the end of each run. It furiously charges from one rail terminus to another, greedy for the next chance for blood.

The Black Engine Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	—	(18) 65	(18) 65	10	15	25	50	—

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 300

Skills: None.

Talents: None.

Traits: Armour Plating, Dark Sight, Fear (2), Improved Natural Weapons, Machine (5), Natural Weapons (Blades & Spikes), Phase, Size (Massive), Unnatural Speed, Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x3), Unstoppable[†].

Armour: None (All 7).

Weapons: Ramming Blades & Spikes (1d10+18 R, Pen 5; Concussive, Tearing); Crush (4d10+18 I, Pen 10, Concussive, Devastating).

Gear: None.

†Unstoppable: The Black Engine is a massive, pounding piece of metallic death. Its attacks cannot be Parried, only Dodged. Conversely, it cannot Dodge or Parry. Any target unfortunate enough to be in front of the Black Engine as it moves forward must pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** to avoid it or suffer its Crush attack. The Black Engine cannot be Grappled nor slowed by any mortal force that does not destroy it.

THE PARAGELLE

This warp entity has made Samech her hunting grounds ever since its immersion in the Hadex Anomaly.

The Paragelle Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	—	(18) 65	(18) 65	10	15	25	50	—

Movement: 7/14/21/42 (8/16/24/48)

Wounds: 68

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb(S), Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemons, Psykers, Warp) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Literacy (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Unholy Tongue) (Int) +10, Swim (S)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Battle Rage, Berserk Charge, Combat Master, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Dual Strike, Frenzy, Furious Assault, Heightened Senses (all), Lightning Attack, Preternatural Speed, Resistance (Heat, Psychic Powers), Two Weapon Wielder, Wall of Steel, Whirlwind of Death.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Daemonic, [†]Daemonic Aura, Dark Sight, Fear (4), Flyer (8), From Beyond, Mark of Khorne, ^{††}Mask of Seeming, Size (Enormous), The Stuff of Nightmares, Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: Brazen Chaos Armour (All 12).

Weapons: Bloodsong Axes (2d10+25 R, Pen 6; Balanced, Felling, Tearing).

Gear: None.

†Daemonic Aura: The Paragelle is surrounded by an unholy aura which saps the will from her enemies. The aura's range is 75m. All opponents within this area suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower. In addition, the first time any member of a Kill-team finds himself within the Daemonic Aura, he must take a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** (not taking into account the -10 penalty imposed by the aura). If he fails, the squad takes 1 point of cohesion damage. This means that the potential cohesion damage from the Daemonic Aura is equal to the number of Battle-Brothers in the squad. The Daemonic Aura is a mind-affecting fear-based effect, so any Talents, Traits, Equipment or other rules which offer resistance to Warp-based attacks or psychic powers apply.

††Mask of Seeming: The Paragelle is able to take on an unassuming guise to deal with mortal creatures. In this form, she is immune to Scrutiny Tests or other abilities that counter her Deceive attempts. While in this form she does not cause Fear, nor does her Daemonic Aura function. Invoking or removing the mask of seeming is a Free Action, however, once removed it cannot be re-invoked in the same encounter against the same opponents. This is a mind-affecting ability, so any Talents, Traits, Equipment or other rules which negate Warp-based attacks or psychic powers apply. This effect automatically ends if the Paragelle attacks.

RUST DECAPOD SWARM

These crab-like creatures roam Samech in large swarms, breaking down metal to feed upon. The acid-coated chelae of a decapod can shear through metal better than any power sword. Aggressive but also mindless. An **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test** detects the unnatural nature of creatures spawned in the aura of warp space.

Rust Decapod Swarm Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	—	10	20	50	10	25	20	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 20 per Swarm

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S), +10, Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag).

Talents: None.

Traits: Bestial, Crawler, †Highly Acidic, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (carapace), Natural Weapons (Acidic mandibles), Size (Puny), Strange Physiology, ††Swarm Creature.

Armour: Carapace (All 2).

Weapons: Mandibles (1d10+1 R; Pen 4).

Gear: None.

†**Highly Acidic:** Rust Decapods secrete an incredibly potent organic acid that dissolves metal very quickly. Any wounding melee attack by a Decapod swarm against an armoured opponent has a 50% chance of dissolving part of the armour. This reduces the Armour value by 1. Subsequent attacks are cumulative. Battle-Brothers can counter the effect with an application of repair cement, removing 1 AP of damage per application. Excessive damage (3 or more untreated lost points) may require the assistance of a Techmarine to repair at the GM's discretion.

††**Swarm Creature:** Any attack from a weapon that does not have the Blast, Flame, or Scatter qualities can only inflict ½ rolled damage. A swarm creature cannot be grappled, knocked down, or pinned in most circumstances.

SETHAHAR

Sethahar's psychic powers are tainted sorcery with similar effects to the Librarian powers listed in his profile. They are not actually those powers.

Sethahar Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	55	(12) 62	(12) 45	50	48	42	(10) 55	35

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 24

Skills: Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Chapter Runes) (Int), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Drive

(Ground Vehicles, Skimmer), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, Psykers, Traitor Legions, Warp) (Int) +10, Interrogation (Fel), Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int) +10, Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag), Psyniscience (Per) +10, Scholastic Lore (Cryptology, Occult) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Unholy Tongue) (Int), Survival (Int), Tactics (Int) +10, Tracking (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bolter Drill, Die Hard, Favoured by the Warp, Fearless, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Improved Warp Sense, Psy Rating (7), Warp Conduit, Warp Sense, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Resistance (Heat), Swift Attack, True Grit

Traits: Daemonic, Mark of Tzeentch, Size (Hulking), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

Psychic Powers: Avenger, Compel, Dominate, Psychic Scream, Smite, Shackle Soul, Hellfire.

Armour: Astartes Power Armour (Head 8, Arms 8, Body 10, Legs 8).

Weapons: Astartes Bolt Pistol w/ Inferno Bolts†† (30m; S/3/-; 2d10+5 X; Pen 10; Clip 14; Rld Full, Tearing, Volatile) Astartes Force Sword (1d10+21 R; Pen 9; Balanced, Special).

Gear: 2 Inferno bolt reloads, Psy-focus.

†**Inferno Bolts:** These ritually inscribed bolt rounds writhe with sorcerous energy. A bolt weapon using Inferno bolts has a Pen 10 and the Volatile quality.

TOXIC DWELLER

The combination of chaotic energy, toxic chemicals, and the occasional escaped alien specimen means there is no fathoming this amphibious predator's origins. What is clear is that it hungers for fresh prey. It is most likely to remain in the polluted river, snaring victims and dragging them beneath the toxic waters.

Toxic Dweller Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	(10) 50	40	40	10	45	20	—

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 50

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag).

Talents: Ambidextrous.

Traits: Bestial, Crawler, Grasping Tentacles†, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour 1 (All), Size(Enormous), Sonar Sense, Unnatural Strength (x2).

Armour: Thick Slimy Skin (All 1).

Weapons: Grasping Tentacles (1d10+1 I; Pen 0, Flexible), Toothy Maw (1d10+10 R Pen 2).

Gear: None.

†**Grasping Tentacles:** This creature's suckered tentacles are designed to entrap its prey and drag them to the beast's maw. The toxic dweller may Grapple 1d5 opponents each Round, and may do so from up to 6 metres away. It gains +10 to Grapple Tests, which is cumulative with the effects of Snare.

FLESHLESS MAGOS

The high-ranking priests of the Vinculum Proselytes have completely abandoned their flesh. They are finally one with the machine, but it comes with a high price.

Fleshless Magos Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	55	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	⁽¹²⁾ 65	15	55	45	45	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 30

Skills: Ciphers (Apostate Machine Cult) (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Machine Cult) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology, Warp) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Cryptology, Occult) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna-Lingua, Unholy Tongue) (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Disturbing Voice, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Fearless, Feedback Screech, Infused Knowledge, Logis Implant, Luminen Blast, Luminen Charge, Machinator Array, Mechadendrite Use (servo-arm), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Paranoia, Rite of Fear, Swift Attack, Talented (Tech-Use).

Traits: †All is Dust, Armour Plated, Fear (2), Machine (5), Mechanicus Implants, Strange Physiology, The Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: None (All 7).

Weapons: Locke-Pattern Bolt Gun (90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 24; Rld Full; Tearing); Ommissian Axe (2d10+16 R; pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced), Hellpistol (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 40; Rld 2Full), Wickedly Clawed Servo-arm (2d10+16, Pen 10; +10 to Grapple Tests).

Gear: Dark robes inscribed with blasphemous sigils, numerous fleshless cybernetics.

†All is Dust: The Fleshless Magi are sentient spirits animating the mechanical remains of their heavily augmetic former bodies. This imparts the Traits Strange Physiology and The Stuff of Nightmares. In addition, the largely metaphysical nature of these beings makes them highly resistant to conventional injury. All damage with the I or R type is halved after reductions for Toughness and armour.

MAGOS VAYZE

For more information on Magos Vayze see page 6.



Magos Vayze Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	58	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	⁽¹²⁾ 65	18	⁽¹²⁾ 60	45	45	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 35

Skills: Ciphers (Apostate Machine Cult) (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Machine Cult) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology, Warp) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Literacy (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (All) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna-Lingua, Unholy Tongue) (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Universal), Binary Chatter, Disturbing Voice, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Fearless, Feedback Screech, Infused Knowledge, Logis Implant, Luminen Blast, Luminen Charge, Machinator Array, Mechadendrite Use (All), Melee Weapon Training (Universal), Pistol Weapon Training (Universal), Paranoia, Rite of Fear, Swift Attack, Talented (Tech-Use).

Traits: †All is Dust, Armour Plated, Fear (2), Machine (5), Mechanicus Implants, Strange Physiology, The Stuff of

Nightmares, Unnatural Intelligence (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Armour: None (All 7).

Weapons: Archeotech Rad-Cleanser (30m; S/-/-; 3d10+2 E; Pen 7; Clip 20; Rld --; Blast (2) Recharge, Toxic); Omnissian Axe (2d10+16 R; pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced); Chainblade Mechadendrites (1d10+4 R; Pen 2; Tearing).

Gear: Elaborate hooded robes of office, 4 weapon mechadendrites (tipped with chainblades), numerous fleshless cybernetics.

†**All is Dust:** Magos Vayze is a sentient spirit animating the mechanical remains of his heavily augmetic former body. This imparts the Traits Strange Physiology and The Stuff of Nightmares. In addition, his largely metaphysical nature of makes him highly resistant to conventional injury. All damage with the I or R type is halved after reductions for Toughness and armour.

OBLITERATOR

For more information on Obliterators see page 121.

Obliterator Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	50	(10) 50	(10) 55	35	30	40	45	—



Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 40

Skills: Awareness (Per), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Warp, Daemonology, Traitor Legions) (Int), Intimidate (S), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Independent Targeting, Mighty Shot, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee and Ranged).

Traits: Auto Stabilised, Daemonic, Fear (2), Natural Armour (Warped Mechanical Flesh), Regeneration (2), Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), †Walking Arsenal.

Armour: Warped Mechanical Flesh (12 All).

Weapons: Power Fist (2d10+22 E, Pen 9, Power Field, Unwieldy), Eviscerator Chainblade (1d10+22 R, Pen 5, Tearing, Unbalanced); Lascannon (300m; S/-/-; 6d10+12 E; Pen 10; Clip X, Rld X); Multi-Melta (60m; S/-/-; 4d10+8 E; Pen 13; Clip X, Rld X, Blast (1)); Plasma Cannon (150m; S/-/-; 2d10+13 E; Pen 10; Clip X, Rld X, Volatile, Blast (1)), Twin-Linked Plasma Gun (100m; S/2/-; 1d10+11 E; Pen 8; Clip X, Rld X, Volatile, Twin-Linked), Twin-Linked Meltagun (20m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 13; Clip X, Rld X, Twin-Linked), Twin-Linked Flamer (20m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 E; Pen 3; Clip X, Rld X, Flame, Twin-Linked).

Gear: None.

†**Walking Arsenal:** Obliterators can form a number of weapons from their bizarre flesh, which is an unholy fusion of the organic, the mechanical, and the daemonic. As a half action, an Obliterator may manifest a ranged weapon or melee weapon from the selection listed above. It is assumed to possess the necessary training to use any weapon it can create and its weapons have no need to be reloaded. The Obliterator may have 2 weapons formed at any given time and can fire a heavy weapon single-handed.

CAPTIVE VENOMTHROPE

Floating on throbbing gas-bladders and writhing with venomous tendrils, this specimen from the Orpheus Salient is a creature of nightmare. Within the choking spore cloud that obscures its form dwells a creature that drips with toxins so virulent that the merest touch can sicken and kill nearly any creature within moments. Its face is a mass of probing tentacles, eager to devour the liquefied remains of its poisoned prey. It drifts ponderously in search of new prey, leaving naught but toxic desolation in its wake.

Captive Venomthrope Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	—	(10) 55	(10) 55	40	20	35	40	—



Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 36

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag) +10

Talents: Ambidextrous, Swift Attack.

Traits: Dark Sight, Fear (3), Hoverer (6), Instinctive Behaviour (Feed), Multiple Arms, Natural Armour (Reinforced Chitin) (4), ††Spore Cloud, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), †Toxic Miasma, Tyrannid.

Armour: Reinforced Chitin (All 6).

Weapons: Lash Whips (1d10+13 R; Pen 3, Flexible, Snare).

Gear: None.

***Toxic Miasma:** The Venomthrope is an exceedingly toxic creature, its flesh and flailing tendrils dripping with the most virulent haemotoxins, neurotoxins, and deadly phage organisms. It counts as having the Toxic trait, but the damage is 2d10 ignoring Toughness and armour. The Toughness Test to resist the poison is Very Hard (–30).

****Spore Cloud:** Additionally, the Venomthrope emits a thick and choking spore cloud from gas bladders and vents in its carapace that cause all non-Tyranid beings within 10m of the creature to suffer from the Toxic Miasma as well. This cloying vapour partially obscures the Venomthrope, imposing a –30 penalty to all shooting attacks made against it.

DAHZAK

Dahzak's psychic powers are tainted sorcery with similar effects to the Librarian powers listed in his profile. They are not actually those powers.

Dahzak Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	58	(12) 65	(15) 50	53	60	55	65	45

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 32

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Ciphers (Chapter Runes) (Int) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Imperium) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Drive (Ground Vehicles, Skimmer), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, Psykers, Traitor Legions, Warp) (Int)+20, Interrogation (Fel) +10, Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int) +20, Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scholastic Lore (Cryptology, Occult) (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Security (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Unholy Tongue) (Int). +20, Survival (Int), Tactics (Int) +10, Tracking (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bolter Drill, Die Hard, Favoured by the Warp, Fearless, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Improved Warp Sense, Infused Knowledge, Psy Rating (10), Warp Conduit, Warp Sense, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Resistance (Heat), Swift Attack, True Grit.

Traits: Daemonic, Mark of Tzeentch, Size (Hulking), Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

Psychic Powers: Bolt of Change††, Augury, Avenger, Compel, Divination, Force Dome, Lifting the Veil, Mind Wrack, Mind Worm, Possibility Shield, Smite, Psychometry, Reading, Veil of Time.

Armour: Astartes Power Armour (Head 8, Arms 8, Body 10, Legs 8).

Weapons: Astartes Bolt Pistol w/ Inferno Bolts† (30m; S/3/–; 2d10+5 X; Pen 10; Clip 14; Rld Full, Tearing, Volatile) Astartes Force Staff (1d10+23 I; Pen 11; Balanced, Special).

Gear: 2 Inferno bolt reloads

***Inferno Bolts:** These ritually inscribed bolt rounds writhe with sorcerous energy. A bolt weapon using Inferno bolts has a Pen 10 and the Volatile quality.

Bolt of Change

Action: Half Action

Range: 50m x PR

Sustained: No

Description: The Sorcerer hurls a roiling ball of coruscating energy at the target. This blast is formed of the raw magic of primal Chaos, and its touch brings rapid mutation and death. Victims of the Bolt of Change are torn apart as their bodies rebel against the blasphemous energies that warp them. The bolt does 1d10 x Psy Rating E damage. Additionally, a victim of the Bolt of Change must pass a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. Failure by 5 degrees or more indicates that the victim is either violently torn apart by the uncontrolled power or mutated into a mewling spawn of Chaos that rapidly expires. (In either case, the victim instantly dies unless he burns a Fate Point, which also prevents mutation in the case of a Battle-Brother.) If the victim passes the Test, or fails by less than 5 degrees, there is no additional effect.



APPENDIX I: ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES

QUICK REFERENCE TABLES

THE PRICE OF HUBRIS ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES QUICK REFERENCE

Encounter	Circumstance	Mechanics
Grensvayl	The Battle-Brothers must cleanse the settlement swiftly and quietly to avoid having to fight the entire Brood at once.	An Arrival Counter starts at 2. When it reaches 0 more Genestealers start to arrive. The Leader may make a Silent Move Test to add to the Arrival Counter.
Celebration Turned to Slaughter	The hall is in turmoil with combat. Everyone must fight for their lives. The Genestealers are covered in promethium residue.	Each important group of NPCs forms a Combat Centre with different odds of the NPCs surviving. The Battle-Brothers can intervene wherever they choose. The Genestealers take additional Damage from fire.
Combat Centre: The Caele	The Auran's ruler leads his warriors against the fearsome Broodlord.	Both sides gain a +10 bonus while their leader lives.
Combat Centre: Heth and Alkedre	The Aurans adjust their combat style to make it easier for their allies to shoot past them.	No stray shots. Difficulty of firing into melee is -10 instead of -20.
Combat Centre: Father Marius	Father Marius has a flamer.	Father Marius does extra Damage to the Genestealers.
Combat Centre: Heydal and Lan	Lan and Heydal appear to be holding their own.	The Genestealers are secretly trying to infect Lan, not kill him.

A STONY SLEEP ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES QUICK REFERENCE

Encounter	Circumstance	Mechanics
Assault on the Prince	The Sons of Taeg dress as Imperial Guard to assault the Citadel. They carry explosives. Their goal is to assassinate the Prince-Prefect.	Picking out the rebels from the actual Guardsmen requires an Ordinary (+10) Test. Each can throw one charge that kills $(1d5+1) \times 2$ Guardsmen, unless a nearby Battle-Brother orders the men out of the way, throws them out of the way, or dives on the bomb. Any Son of Taeg that goes 14 Rounds without being stopped makes it to the Prince-Prefect to assassinate him.
The Cultist Chamber	The cultists break into multiple groups. They have access to a strange weapon.	The cultists form one Horde of Magnitude 32 and two Hordes of Magnitude 20. As long as both smaller Hordes remain unbroken, they can fire the lightning projector.
The Unfinished Basilica	Combat on the unfinished structure is precarious	Anyone moving in the upper levels who is not using magnetised boot soles must Test Agility or Acrobatics with a Difficulty based on what they were doing. (See chart on page 68.)
Kal'thane	Explosive charges must be placed at several points on the island that are difficult to reach.	Each task requires a different type of Test. The Kill-team must collectively finish in 4 minutes. See below.
Kal'thane Submerged Cavern	A Battle-Brother must place the charge in a submerged cave with a strong opposing current.	Must succeed on 4 difficult (-10) Swim Tests. Each Test represents 30 seconds.
Kal'thane Narrow Crevice	A Battle-Brother must make an impossible shot down a narrow crevice.	Requires an Arduous (-40) Ballistic Skill Test. Firer may aim but this increases the time.
Kal'thane Granite Slab	One or more Battle-Brothers must push a heavy boulder out of the way	Must succeed on 4 Arduous (-40) Strength Tests. Each Test represents 30 seconds. May have assistance.
Kal'thane Elevated Cave	A Battle-Brother must plant a charge deep in a collapsing cave.	The key attributes for success are a high Move and a good Dodge Skill.
Militant Xeno-Cultists	The Xeno-Cultists shield their leaders, who are armed with powerful alien technology.	Attacks on the leaders are at -30 until the Horde breaks.
Destroying the Power Matrix	The power matrix is protected by a powerful force field that makes it nearly impervious to conventional attacks.	The Kill-team can come up with another approach by combining their abilities using the Assistance rules.

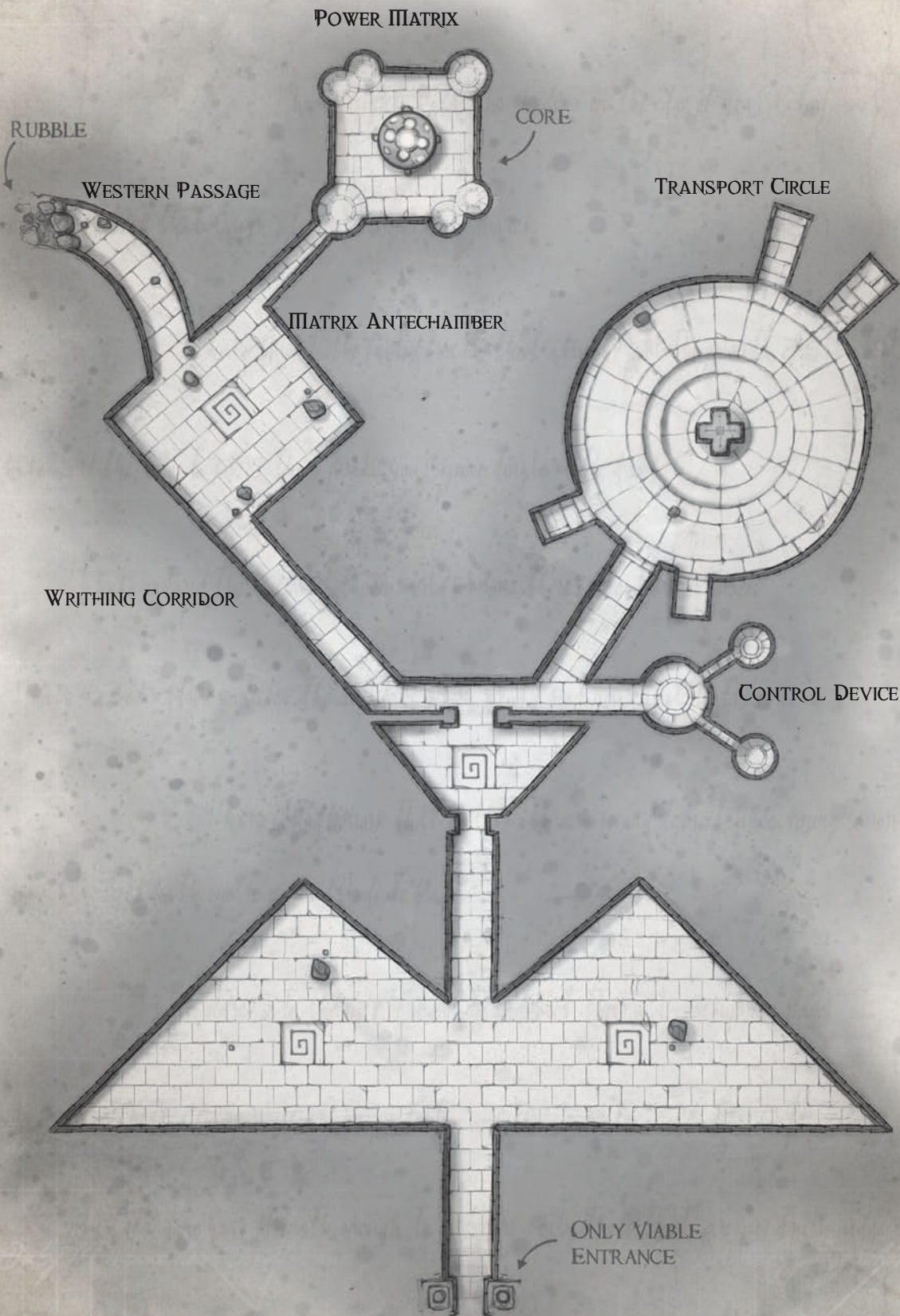
APPENDIX I: ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES QUICK REFERENCE TABLES (CONT.)

THE VIGILANT SWORD ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES QUICK REFERENCE

Encounter	Circumstance	Mechanics
Defiler Foundry	The Magi know they are outmatched. They focus on calling reinforcements, not fighting. They can slip through the narrow stone tunnels that the Space Marines cannot.	Magi can change locations in 1 Round; Battle-Brothers need 2 to change locations. Any time a Magos and Battle-Brothers are in the same location, Test Opposed Concealment vs. Awareness. Magos must spend 3 Full Rounds and succeed on a Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test to call for help.
Obliterator Guardians at the Wall	If the Battle-Brothers don't keep a low profile in the forge slums, the Vinculum Proselytes increase security. If Dahzak can foresee the Battle-Brothers' coming, he increases security. If other formidable foes are at large, the Vinculum Proselytes redirect resources to deal with them.	Obliterators begin at 1 less than the number of Space Marines. Increase number of Obliterators by 25% if the Battle-Brothers were not subtle. Increase number of Obliterators by 25% if the Battle-Brothers are not warded. Reduce the number of Obliterators by 25% if Arcus Dyre or the Alpha Legion assist. Reduce by 50% if both assist.
Orbital Battery / Assisting the <i>Thunder's Word</i>	This is an extended encounter taking place over several hours. One Battle-Brother can fire the batteries while the others hold off the incoming Skitarii.	Use Strategic Turns where each Turn represents 30 minutes of Action. One Battle-Brother uses Ballistics Skill to fire at the ships attacking the <i>Thunder's Word</i> while the others do combat with Skitarii. Their number grows by 4 each Strategic Round. They storm the tower if they reach 12 active soldiers.
The Diode Chamber	Dahzak has control of the corrupting power of the thaumagramm diodes.	Dahzak may affect the Battle-Brothers' armour and equipment using the table of malicious effects on page 130.



APPENDIX II: TOMB MAP



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