

BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC

The Fate of the Abhorrence

A Scenario from the Gothic War

By Nicholas Beach

The *Abhorrence*, a little known Chaos battleship, suddenly found herself the centre of a decisive battle between the Imperial Navy and a small group of Eldar pirates. After an unsuccessful raid in the Bhein Morr Sub-Sector, the traitors' flagship, *Abhorrence*, was left helpless. She drifted through space; her crew all but massacred, and quickly became a point of interest to the Imperial defenses. But there were others who valued the prize as well...



AN OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF

Throughout the vast expanses of space, when Abaddon's fleet constantly contested for systems with the beleaguered defenses of the Imperium, a small Chaos fleet had led an attack on the Stranivar system. Fortunately, a defensive force led by admiral Ivan Durke was positioned in the vicinity. Under Durke's command were three cruiser squadrons including the Vengeance class grand cruiser *Undeniable*. He was also responsible for escorting a group of trade vessels through Bhein Morr, which was taken care of by his escort squadrons. Admiral Durke had learned of the oncoming attack and was well prepared. The cruisers were positioned around the central planet, with a few scattered escorts, but the bulk of the escorts were with the approaching convoy.

During the battle, Durke's fleet annihilated the Chaos invaders, although the trade convoy had been mysteriously wiped out before arrival. The *Abhorrence* was crippled and left drifting towards the planet's surface. Durke's remaining ships consisted of only two cruiser squadrons and three escort squadrons. It wasn't much to go on. The drifting Chaos vessel was quickly picked up on the scanners. The admiral recognized it as a valuable prize and ordered it be recovered. A small number of ships broke off from the rest of the fleet to

tow it safely to the surface, preventing it from burning up in the atmosphere.

The detachment went around the planet and soon approached the enemy vessel. Upon arrival, the radar screen aboard the *Crown of Steel* suddenly lit up with multiple contacts. Her captain took a brief look at the readings and turned pale. An Eldar force was approaching rapidly, and without the rest of the Imperial fleet, they were a serious threat. The captain immediately ordered that a message be sent to Admiral Durke. Now he knew how the trade convoy had been destroyed.

Aboard the Shadow class cruiser, *Shrouded*, farseer Ithrail grinned again. With only a small enemy force, the Eldar would have their work cut out for them. Not only could they destroy the Imperials, but the *Abhorrence* could prove to be a prize on its own.

The Imperial escorts moved in the tow the Chaos ship, two cruisers moving alongside to protect them. A group of *Hellbores* loosed a torpedo salvo and swooped past them to tear the primitive escorts to shreds. Then, a squadron of *Nightshades* darted past the clumsy cruisers as they were avoiding the torpedoes. The *Nightshades* then proceeded to tow the ship in the opposite direction. As a wave of Eldar attack craft bombarded the two cruisers nearest the *Abhorrence*, the *Crown of Steel* let her weapons batteries fly, punching through the *Hellbores* with ease. She moved in the to pummel the *Nightshades* in the same manner, but to less effectiveness.

Farseer Ithrail took advantage of this and his ship, *Shrouded* moved in to attack. It swept past the *Crown of Steel*, firing its weapon batteries rapidly before unloading a barrage of torpedoes at point blank range. The torpedoes hit home and took out her starboard weapons.

More and more Eldar ships slashed at the Imperials, followed by the destruction of the *Crown of Steel*. By now, the Eldar thought they had won, but there was one thing they hadn't counted on: Admiral Ivan Durke.



TUG OF WAR

The admiral and his ships entered the battle as fast as they could, taking the Eldar by surprise. The Undeniable's long-range weapons crippled an Eclipse class cruiser, knocking down its holofields. Later, it was picked off by a few remaining escorts, with cobras punching a hole in its hull with a single torpedo salvo. The Undeniable used her used her weapon batteries to full effect, beating down the overtaking ships and evening the odds. Thus began a tug of war. An Imperial ship would tow the Abhorrence and an Eldar ship would beat it down and begin towing the crippled Chaos vessel itself. Then, the Eldar ship would be chased away by an Imperial vessel and it would start over.

Now there was a slight problem: Some of the *Abhorrence* ship's systems had become active. It began firing at minimal effect at anything that came close. It wasn't too big a threat, but it was a concern nonetheless. In one attempted attack, the Eldar lost the remainder of their Nightshades to the *Abhorrence*'s fire alone.

The prolonged fighting was not good for the Eldar and the bad circumstances soon led them to realize that all hope was lost. Their remaining fleet included only Shrouded and a few escorts. Ithrail knew at this point that the Eldar could not win. No matter what they did now, there were too few of them to carry on fighting after the battle. Ithrail issued one final order and three Hellbores rushed straight into the battle and unloaded all of their torpedoes directly at the *Abhorrence*. Its warp drive imploded, completely annihilating everything in the immediate vicinity, and causing two Imperial cruisers to be destroyed. They each exploded as well, causing one ore cruiser and the Undeniable to be crippled.

Admiral Durke and Ithrail lived through the battle, and the Undeniable was repaired at a nearby spaceport. What had started as a harmless looking salvage attempt had become an awful disaster.

REPLAYING THE BATTLE

This is the scenario for replaying the second part of the battle, namely the attempted recovery of the *Abhorrence*. There are some important rules that involve towing the *Abhorrence* that

are worth pointing out first. The *Abhorrence* can only be towed by ships in base contact with it. A battleship or grand cruiser can tow it at half speed. One cruiser may tow it at a quarter speed. Two cruisers may tow it at full speed, presuming they both have the same speed. Two escorts of the same type may tow it at half speed, or three may tow it at full speed. Four escorts may tow it at full speed as well. This never reduces the distance a ship must move before turning.

FORCES

On the Imperial side is the Undeniable, the Crown of Steel, a Gothic class cruiser, a Lunar class cruiser, a Dictator class cruiser, a Dauntless light cruiser, four cobras, three swords, and three firestorms. Undeniable is a vengeance class grand cruiser with LD9, and the Crown of Steel is a tyrant class cruiser with LD8.

The Eldar have Shrouded (A shadow class cruiser with LD9), and Eclipse class cruiser, six Hellbores, three Acconites, six Nightshades, and three Hemlocks.

SET UP

The battle takes place completely in low orbit. For the Imperials, the Crown of Steel, Gothic cruiser, Lunar cruiser, and Swords set up on the battlefield. The rest enter from any of the three table edges on turn five. The Eldar get the first turn.

SPECIAL RULES

The *Abhorrence* sets up opposite the planet edge. It is a desolator class battleship and suffers the following critical hits: port and starboard armaments damaged, prow armament damaged, shields collapse, engine room damaged, and thrusters damaged. She had four damage points and may not repair critical hits, except those received during the battle. Starting on the sixth turn, the *Abhorrence* fires at the closest ship within range after both Imperial and Eldar had their turns. If the *Abhorrence* drifts into the planet's surface, the game ends immediately. If you tow the *Abhorrence* off your table edge it's worth 500 VPs.

You can also play a points match, but you must include the *Abhorrence*. The game ends when the *Abhorrence* drifts into the planet or is towed away, or if either side is destroyed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicholas Beach is a big BFG fan. That's all we really know about him!