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Warp Rift

The Battlefleet Gothic netzine



Issue 11

***Tobari Raiders
Q'ori QSV Predestined
Imperial Navy Tactics
Gothicomp 2006
The Pure and the True
...and more...***

From the Nexus Publishing House

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

Send your submissions to:

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**Warp Rift:
Issue Eleven
March 2007**

Passing the Torch

Bear with me, Battlefleet Gothic fans, as I attempt to steer this brief section between an Oscar acceptance speech and a 'when I was a kid' lecture. So, you see before you a new edition of Warp Rift – and a long time coming it is too. I wish that I could take the credit for it, but the truth is that this issue marks a new evolution of the publication.

Warp Rift was started with the goal of providing both an outlet for the BFG community to showcase some of their excellent ideas, and as a source of inspiration for players to try something new. I must admit that I never planned to hand this publication over, but it became clear that I simply don't have the time to fully do it justice. While Roy had always been one of the more active members of the BFG community (he is, after all, one half of the team before the Eldar MMS rules), he also decided that the best way to get another issue of Warp Rift delivered was to take a front seat role and at the same time bug me as much as possible. However, it all backfired on him when I asked him to take it over!

I will continue to play as active a part as I possibly can in this publication, and I will always feel that it is in some way my child, but as you can see from this issue, some fresh blood can really have a regenerating effect.

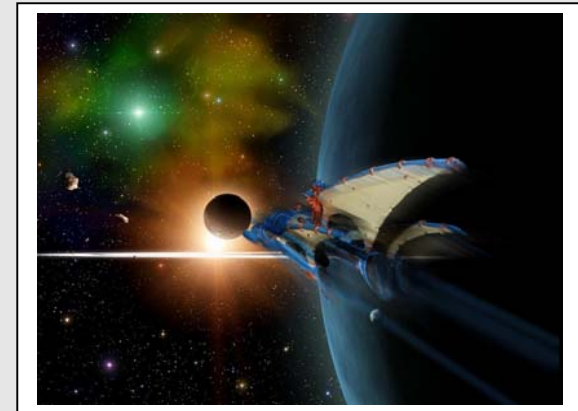
I would like to thank the unsung heroes of this publication – the section editors, who advertised, chased up and in many cases wrote many of the articles themselves, in a desperate bid to keep things going. Thanks guys. I also want to thank everyone who contributed pictures, articles, stories, covers and any other of the hundred things that go together to form each issue.... Oh, to hell with it... I would like to thank my agent, and all of the people who believed....

The reason that the publication schedule became 'loose' around issues 9 and 10 was simply that the number of articles and enthusiasm dropped off. Fan produced publications rely completely on the submissions generated by the players. There is a feedback effect as well – few contributions lead to reduced interest in the game, which makes submissions even rarer. A selection of quality articles generates ideas and enthusiasm, leading to more players and more submissions. It can be difficult at times, when it seems that we have not seen many new releases for the game. But, Warp Rift is the ideal place to make a statement, and to show the makers that there is a market who are active and enthusiastic about its development.

So please, do consider putting something together for this publication. It stands or falls on the quality and volume of the material that it displays. We are not all master painters or converters, we can't all pen deep tactical essays, but everyone has something that they're able to put together.

How many of us don't have our own ship classes, our own new races, an intricate background story piece, or an idea how to put together a new model or space station for the game? So, send it in. Become a part of the game itself, more than just a passive spectator.

Good Hunting, CyberShadow



Picking up the Torch

What to write after those great words from Cybershadow? Lets try...

The very moment Cybershadow asked me to become the new editor of Warp Rift was a true honour to me. I always like reading the fanzine made by fans of this game we all love to play.

At first my reaction was to be wary but as soon as I started working on this issue it felt good. And I intend to get Warp Rift back on track as a regular published fanzine. Now if this is once a month, once in two months or once every three months is not clear at this very moment. It all depends, like Cybershadow already said, on the quality and quantity of articles submitted to Warp Rift.

When I am scouring the various internet forums I come across many talented painters and converters but I also witness many people with tactical knowledge and ideas. Other people are just enthusiastic about playing the game while others can write great stories regarding the Battlefleet Gothic Universe and this game.

It is up to all of you, surely after Specialist Games own magazine went from weekly to monthly, to keep this game alive and breathing with all your models, conversions and ideas.

And this fanzine, Warp Rift, is an excellent place to gather all this!

My task is it to bring you a fanzine of great quality. And I promise you it will be great, just keep an eye on me scouring the internet looking for cool stuff made and done by you!

Well, now quickly to this new edition of Warp Rift. The thing that you already have noticed is the landscape format. In my opinion every Battlefleet Gothic related release should be in landscape format, this is to stay true to the rulebook.

This issue features as an eye catcher the six finalists of Gothicomp 2006, the

successful painting competition hosted by the Tactical Command Boards.

Also, this issue features another winner, namely the winner of the short story competition hosted at the Black Library forums.

And of course more exciting stuff like the Q'orl QSV Predestined and an extensive article on the almighty fleet of the Imperial Navy.

**Cheers, your personal Void Stalker,
Roy 'Horizon' Amkreutz**

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Encyclopaedia Gothica

Fleets of the Galaxy

Alien race

Tobari Raiders from the Khareshi Expanse

By Roy 'Horizon' Amkreutz

Note from the author: These rules sprang forth from Gothicomms. The starting points were two kit bashed alien escort vessels. Thanks to Magus for the 'Tobari' name, Xisor for the extensive background story about Lord Inquisitor Revic and Ray Bell for his feedback on the rules.

The coming issues of Warp Rift will feature more of these alien races. At the moment the Tactical Command Forum offers a great pool of resources for further alien races to shine on these pages but do not hesitate to submit your own alien races!

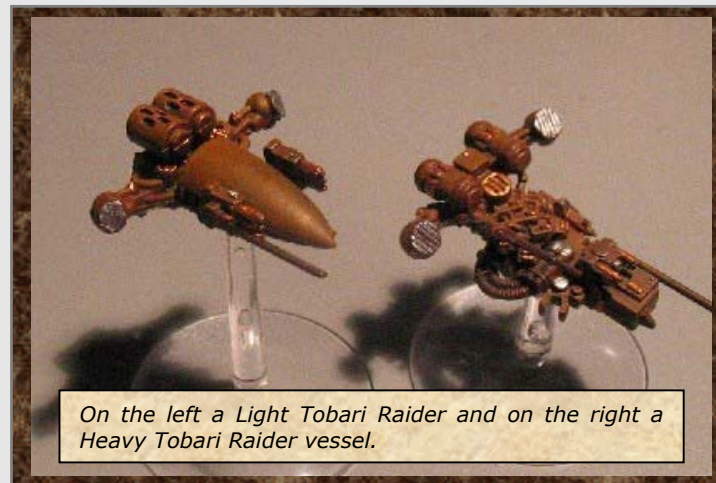
The Khareshi Expanse

What is the Khareshi Expanse? To the Imperial administratum, nothing more than a forgotten and non important Nebula in the Eastern Fringe. This Nebula is cluttered with various kind of races, almost all of them capable of warp or FTL travel. It has been reported that some of these races are starting to leave their Nebula more often in the last decennia. Imperial merchant vessels have been targeted more and more by them. But since priority lies not in the Khareshi Nebula, no thorough investigation has been carried out, only foolhardy Rogue Traders travel there in the hopes of finding profit and renown.

One of the minor races from the Khareshi Expanse is the Tobari Raiders. A race utilising fast & agile escort sized vessels used for raiding merchants and other less protected ships.

Four small vessels where heading at high speed towards the Angelic.

The dark brown, ordinate with bronze looking armatures, orange lights flashing around them, very ancient in their design vessels flew in a close pattern. Initiating their raid on the Merchantmen.



On the left a Light Tobari Raider and on the right a Heavy Tobari Raider vessel.

The Testimony of Inquisitor Lord Revic to the Forum of Ansamias.

An old man approached the brass-etched pulpit, ascending the stairs to inner section. Struggling to stand, he coughed, clearing his throat. Leaning on his staff, he began.

"Long after I departed with Dregan and his Tarellian band, I received word that my acquaintance within the Thurm brotherhood, Akrhan Phyllokk, had successfully returned to his kin, in the vicinity of Pech. Unfortunately he was unable, though I suspect unwilling, to take me any further on my journey to Condeh Khar. The subject of the Tobaris was a troubled one it would seem, and he was unforthcoming except to wish me fortune and prosperity in such a dangerous endeavour.

"As we journeyed, we were waylaid many times, once only just escaping a confederation of alien pirates that boarded as far as the command core of the Tarellian carrack. Fortunately Dregan's warriors retaliated with sufficient swiftness to prevent the carrack from being totally overrun. On the borders of Berelan Space we encountered the drifting hulks of a dozen smaller starships that, according to Dregan, were left as a result of an apocalyptic war between two of the minor races fleets in the near area.

"Soon we arrived at the Caredlio Portal, a gap in the obscuring dust clouds that border the Khareshi expanse. There we allowed some of the crew to leave, through their choice, and we continued northeastward through the portal. After seventeen months within the expanse, we discovered one of the reputed hulk sites. An aeon old graveyard, the twisted and stripped hulks spiralling through the Expanse, appearing derelict and abandoned.

"At that point, unknown to ourselves, the expanse was not dead. Deep within the slowly arcing hulks energy signatures appeared, many. Within scant moments the expanse was alive with signatures." Revic winced momentarily, recoiling from some distant memory it seemed.

He let his staff fall, grasping the rail he steadied himself. "They took the ship, and the crew. I saw no more of Dregan in all my voyages since. I will not say how I escaped the expanse, suffice to say that it was at extreme cost." A deep, distant whirring sounded from Revic, he raised his arm and pondered his coppered and bronzed forearm, glinting with the hint of ancient polish, which had dulled over the decades. "I was compensated, and my objective achieved, but I now know why Akrhan Phyllokk spoke with such foreboding pessimism of the Expanse. Truly, he was wise beyond his years to be sceptical of that place.

Until such a time, as the Imperium is able to act in force to quarantine the region, if even such a thing is now possible, then I foremost speak for the immediate return of all Imperial agents within the one hundred light year of the locale..."



Tobaris Raiders

The Tobaris are one of the many alien races who reside inside the Khareshi Expanse. According to the highly classified report of Lord Inquisitor Revic and the, most of the time wild. Stories by Rogue Traders or the few Merchantmen who survived an attack of the raiders the Tobaris utilise two types of fast escort sized vessels. They mostly prey on weak or unprotected mercantile shipping. On some small occasions they engaged large cruisers in larger numbers. The vessel harbour sophisticated weaponry. The weapons are not primarily used to destroy enemy vessels but more to damage the vessels and make them incapable of escaping their clutches.

Once the Tobari damaged a merchantmen enough they fly alongside them and teleport aboard the merchantmen. Their teleporters are reported to be more advanced than standard Imperial teleport devices as they can penetrate to still active shields.

Once aboard they raid the ship and take all equipment they can get hold of. Even more worrying are the reports of crew being abducted by the Tobari, never to be seen again. Once the Tobari are ready they teleport back to their ships and leave the merchantmen at their fate.

Tobari Special Rules

Disruptor weapon:

This short ranged but advanced weapon does not bring direct damage to the ship being hit but it cuts through to the core electrical functions and disables those.

The Disruptor negates shields and hits on a 5+. Apply the following results:

- On a 5+ it inflicts a critical hit.
- On a 6+ it inflicts a critical hit and places a Blast Marker on the ship being targeted.

Note: Critical hits are being rolled using the standard critical hit charts. Brace for Impact is allowed as normal.

Advanced teleport attack:

The Tobari have teleport technology more advanced as has been previously found. They found a way to teleport onto another ship by bypassing its shields.

When the Tobari get within a 10cm range they can make 1 teleport raid against any enemy ship in range. The Tobari will not inflict damage on the ship but instead loot as much of worth as they can find before teleporting back to their own ship.

Per teleport attack roll a D6, if the result is higher as the enemy vessel has remaining shields the raid is successful.

Roll another D6 to see what the result is from the Teleport Raid:

Multiply the result with 5 against escorts, thus the result of D6x5 is the number of victory points you gain.

Multiply the result with 10 against capital ships, thus the result of D6x10 is the number of victory points you gain.

Tobari Raider Fleet list

TOBARI HEAVY RAIDER (FF).....55 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	25cm	90°	2	6+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow disruptor		15cm	1		F
Dorsal weapons battery		30cm	3		LFR

TOBARI LIGHT RAIDER (DD).....45 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	35cm	90°	2	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow disruptor		15cm	1		F
Dorsal weapons battery		30cm	1		F

Xenology

Q'orl – the QSV Predestined

By Gary Carney, Ship artwork by Chris Schwager

The Q'orl are an alien race that featured in the *Black Library* book **Xenology**. More background information on this mysterious race can be found in this splendid book. Gary Carney, who goes with the name of *Nerroth* on the various forums, took on the task of creating a fleet for the Q'orl to use in the Battlefleet Gothic game. In this issue of Warp Rift we bring you the *QSV Predestined*, a special ship from the Q'orl fleet list.

The complete set of rules can be downloaded from the following location: <http://www.epic40k.co.uk/images/Qorl-Swarmhood-5-0-3.pdf>

Q'orl Unique vessel

**THE QSV PREDESTINED:
Q'ORL EXPERIMENTAL HIVESTATION-
CLASS CORE MODULE**

Since the first reports of Q'orl capturing and enslaving of Navis Nobilite adepts in 804.M41, the Imperium has feared that these industrious xenos would eventually make use of the captured Navigators to synthesise their own breed of warp-pilot, capable of guiding their starships through the Sea of Souls. Similarly, concern has been raised regarding the possibility that the Q'orl would manage to successfully reverse-engineer the Warp drives of captured alien starships, allowing them to produce their own drive systems.

As of 997.M41, such fears have become manifest to High Admiralty of Battlefleet Pacificus. The Q'orl Chainship referred to by its creators as the Predestined was

encountered by the Endeavour-class starship Buran and its attendant squadron of Falchion-class escorts, on patrol along the Imperial-Q'orl frontier. This xenogen starship emerged from the Warp at the head of a small raiding force, yet unlike in previous encounters bore no obvious marks of Imperial or other alien devices on its hull.

The Buran and most of her escorts were lost, with only the Falchion-class Kliper escaping to safety. Upon arrival at the Hydraphur shipyards, the news of this attack was greeted with consternation, yet the full implications of the event remained unknown to the Imperium; the Predestined relies not on a human Navigator, but on a Q'orl warp-pilot. The scientists of the Swarmhood have at length succeeded in creating the first of what they hope will become a dedicated sub-species, able to guide their vessels in the ether realm. The Predestined is but the first vessel in service

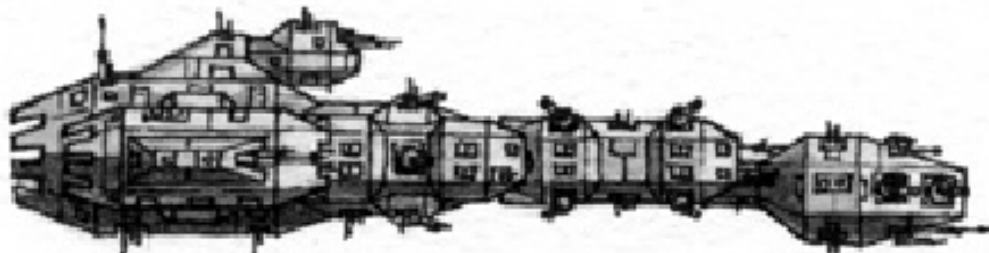
to have such a useful personnel asset aboard.

The Predestined leads a dedicated squadron of Warp-capable Chainships, a 'proof-of-concept' for the Swarmfleet as it learns to handle the fickle tides of the Empyrean. Mercifully for the Swarmhood's enemies, such vessels remain rare, as the Q'orl have yet to replicate the creation process on a more viable scale.

'In age of [...] queen, far did the swarm reach into star-ocean. Faced was the swarm by Fungus-Larvae. By Larvae of the Dead Man- Queen. By Most-great Enemy that is Once-Friend. By [...] enemy. By Burrow-Dwellers, in great swarm-movement. Each did the swarm drive away. Each reduced by [...] ocean craft. Great [...] queen commands swarm to great future-destiny. Determination in swarm-larvae to realise queen-order. Onwards.'

- Text-glyph translation of first stanza of 'Current Age of Great [...] Queen' as recorded on marker-monolith at the edge of the Orionus system, 925.M41

3



QSV Predestined (experimental Hivestation class)

So how does it work?

In a nutshell the principle of the Q'orl is as follows: A Core module has one or more Segment Modules attached at the start of the battle. Increasing firepower, hit points, etc. At the start of his turn the Q'orl player may decide to detach the Segment Modules. From then on the Segment Module counts as an escort vessel. Note that the Core module loses the hit point and firepower from the detached module. All rules can be found in the Q'orl list.

QSV PREDESTINED HIVESTATION CHAINSHIP

QSV PREDESTINED: Q'ORL EXPERIMENTAL HIVESTATION CLASS CORE MODULE.....130 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/4	20cm	45°	2	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow weapons battery		30cm	4		LFR

The QSV Predestined must take the following Segment modules. It includes a Navigator for free. On the Segment Modules: it must take two weapon battery segments.

Not all Q'orl ships are refitted with Imperial warp engines. However if they are, such as the QSV Predestined is, a Q'orl vessel can have a Navigator aboard as a 'guest'. The Navigator provides a strategic advantage but on a smaller tactical level the benefit is limited. The Navigator does give the vessel the bonus of re-rolling a failed command check when they are trying to navigate a Warp Rift.

This only applies to the Core module and attached Segment modules.

Q'ORL WEAPON BATTERY SEGMENT MODULE.....30 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	25cm	90°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	4		LFR

Q'ORL LANCE SEGMENT MODULE.....40 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	25cm	90°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Lance		30cm	2		F

Q'ORL SUPPORT SEGMENT MODULE.....40 pts

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	25cm	90°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT		RANGE	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Weapons battery		30cm	1		LFR

Note: Each Support Segment Module taken increases the Chainship's Shield and Turret value by 1 while attached to the Core module.

Show case

Vessels of the Galaxy

Gothicomp 2006 finalists

In the latter part of 2006 the website www.epic40k.co.uk organised its second Battlefleet Gothic Painting Competition. Much thanks goes to Andy Hall and Specialist Games for providing the prizes for Conversions and Painting winners.

All entries were once again of very high quality. On these pages we will show you the six vessels who managed to get through to the final heat. On the last page of the Dry Dock it will feature the Gothicomp painting 2006 winner, the Kar Duniash Rogue Trader by Unseelied. But before you get there you will also spot the Conversion Prize winner, the Nimrod by Redram.

Warp Rift

The Battlefleet Gothic Netzine



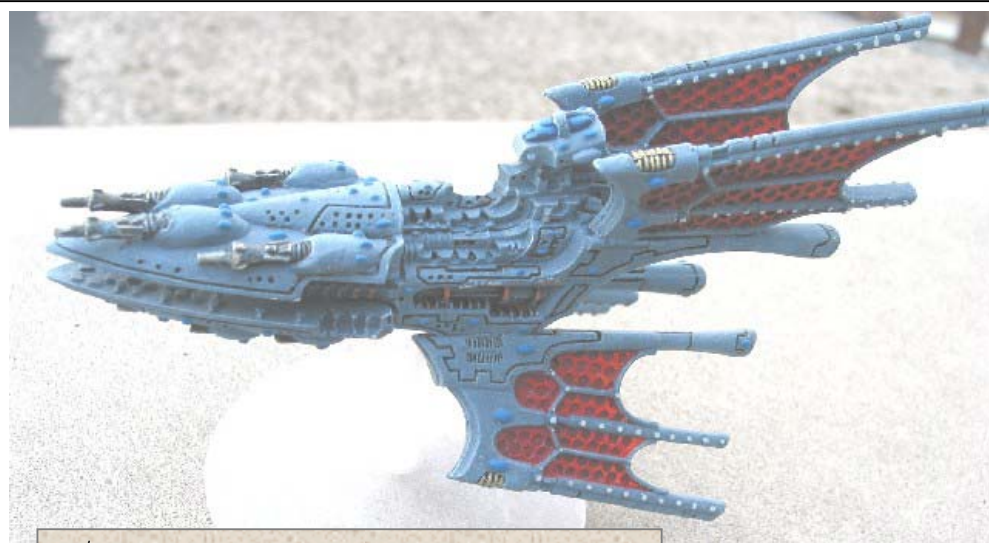
5th. The *Emperors Mercy* by Arglyle.

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4th. The **Emperors Might** by **Reaver**.



3rd. An **Eldar Void Stalker** by **Blackhorizon**.



3rd. The **Nimrod** by **Redram**.
The Conversion Prize winner.



2nd. The **Gorkanort** by **Kr00za**.

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Well then here it is, the Gothicomp 2006 winner, a **Kar Duniash Rogue Trader** by **Unseelied**. Congratulations!

At the right side of this page some other pictures of his amazing Kar Duniash pattern fleet.
From the top: the Fleet, a Light Cruiser and finally a Mars Class Battle Cruiser.



Tactical Command

Tactics & Strategy

tactics

Imperial Navy

By Sigoroth

The Imperial Fleet

The IN fleet is just that; a fleet. Whereas Chaos has many fine individual ships as a fleet it functions pretty much as a collection of fine individual ships. The IN on the other hand get better as more ships are added. They've a better "Force Multiplier" aspect than most other fleets.

As for general tactics well the line abreast formation works fine for them. Basically you point your armoured prows at the enemy, move forward in a line, fire torpedoes at point blank range (30cm or less) and try to split the enemy ranks to fire both broadsides.

You can form up into 2 or more lines if you wish. Possible candidates for the second line are the Dominator and Mars or any other NC armed vessels. The Emperor should be placed abeam of the opposing

fleet and remain to the rear, only moving forward to get within 60cm range if outside that.

Another possibility for the second or even third line would be for escorts such as the Firestorm or Sword. Cobras should be out on the flanks sniping away with their torpedoes and Falchions can be placed on the second line and fire their "defensive" torpedoes through the gaps in the line. Dauntless can be placed as per Swords/Firestorms. Once within range these ships should "pounce". Ie, move forward at best speed and open up with everything they've got. This buys more time for the cruisers to try to achieve both broadsides.

The idea with these 5+ armoured ships being behind the front lines is to try to prevent them from being fired at. This is done partly through psychology (people

tend to focus on the closer ships) and partly through the rules (they must take a Leadership test to avoid shooting at the closest ship).

However, canny players will know to fire at these weak high firepower ships and the Ld test really isn't that much of a defence. As such they're a liability in most battle fleets of 1000 points or higher. If you send them forward on the flanks with the concealment of terrain then their survivability rate goes up. This depends upon the battlefield layout though.

There's a lot more to the IN than this brief overview and there's even a lot of blanks to fill in with that but it should be enough to get you started and thinking about how such a fleet could be used.

+++Tactical High Command+++

Imperial Ships

Imperial Navy Carriers:

Defiant – Light Cruiser

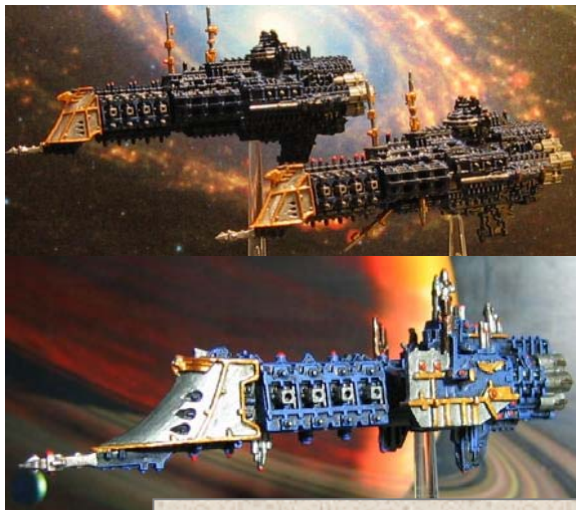
A light carrier. Overcosted; missing one of the traits that makes taking a Light Cruiser worthwhile (ie, speed), and requires you take an Endeavour to include. To make matters worse, to get 4 Attack Craft out of these ships it'd cost you 260 pts. Blech.

Dictator - Cruiser

Cheapest full carrier for the IN, but overcosted by 10 pts and outclassed by the undercosted Chaos Devastation. The short range on its guns and its prow torpedoes sees it most useful when used as a ship of the line which isn't where you'd *normally* place a carrier (though it can do quite well there).

Exorcist – Grand Cruiser

Mid range carrier that costs only 10 pts more than the Dictator. Has better firepower at better range. Its lack of prow armour and torpedoes means that it can go abeam to make use of its range bonus and its extra shield and 2 hits sees it more durable than the Dictator when it does go abeam. This is a very good alternative to the Dictator when you've got the battle cruiser slots spare and don't want your carrier in the front lines.



Top: Dictator Class Cruiser.
Below: Endeavour Class Light Cruiser.

Mars – Battle Cruiser

Long range carrier that comes with a hefty price tag. Without a doubt the best cruiser carrier that the IN have however as it sports medium ranged broadside guns, a Nova Cannon for fleet support and 2 lances at 60cm range for fleet support. Given that Attack Craft is a fleet support weapon the Mars is one of the best support ships in the game. Its inclusion allows for the selection of many different vessels by virtue of the fact that you needn't take as many Nova Cannon armed vessels or carriers, etc. Technically it's still overcosted by 10 pts for what it gives, quantitatively, but most people overlook this due to the role it fills.

Emperor - Battleship

Hands down the best battleship of the IN. This ship combines the power and versatility of 8 Attack Craft with the firepower of 16 Weapon Batteries at 60cm range. On top of which it's one of only two ships the IN have that can take a-boats and the better of the two being able to take 8. Further it grants a +1 Leadership bonus, which allows for the purchase of a cheaper admiral and it only costs 345-350. Bargain.

Oberon - Battleship

Originally almost a clone of the Emperor it swapped out 2AC each side for 2 lances at 60cm range each side for 10 pts less. This made it a better long range weapons platform but only a so-so fleet carrier. Still it was a useful alternative to the Emperor if you were more interested in taking a long range weapon platform, and you could still take a-boats, albeit only getting 4 instead of the Emperors 8, and still support the fleet with its Attack Craft. Since they nerfed the stats for the Oberon though it has been relegated to the worst IN Battleship, behind the Apocalypse even in my opinion (because the point behind the ship has been defeated).



Imperial Navy Gunships:

Endeavour – Light Cruiser

A light cruiser. The best of a bad bunch really. The Endeavour, Endurance and Defiant class ships are all overcosted and somewhat confused as to their roles. If they had 6+ prow armour you could see them as a light ship of the line, if they had 25cm speed you could see them in the role of the Dauntless, an escort hunter. The have neither and they suffer for it.

Endurance – Light Cruiser

Simply an alternative weapon version of the Endeavour but worse, if only due to the fact that you need to take an Endeavour in order to field it.

Dauntless – Light Cruiser

The archetypal light cruiser, the model that all other Light Cruisers are held up to see if they're up to par. A fairly good ship in its own right, usually formed up into hunter cadres of 2 or 3 ships. A favourite fleet composition for 750 point IN fleets is 1 Emperor and 3 Dauntless. Good escort hunter and good for outmanoeuvring enemy cruisers when used properly.

Lunar – Cruiser

The archetypal attack cruiser, the model that all other cruisers are held up to see if they're up to par. A fairly utilitarian ship, nothing outstanding about it. A lot of people claim that its versatility is its selling point but I myself prefer my versatility at a

fleet level rather than a ship level. *Specialist ships, generalist fleet* is my motto. Perhaps best against Necrons where the differing weapon systems can allow for a staggered attack which, with the option of redirection, can put more pressure on the Necron player regarding his brace decisions.

Gothic - Cruiser

Usually only made by players that wish to make a Dominator/Tyrant/Overlord and don't have enough parts. One of the most overlooked ships in the game. They make excellent support ships when you need to focus a lot of firepower on a single ship. Also good for targeting enemy ships that would otherwise be in a bad position, such as abeam escorts, or ships with 6+ prows, etc. Good against Necrons to force the BFI and excellent against Space Marines. Gothics are good at support and filling the holes in a fleet where optimum firing conditions can't be achieved with Weapon batteries.



Sword Class Escort.

Dominator – Cruiser

The crème de la crème of the IN cruisers, this ship has the best broadside firepower potential of any of the IN cruisers and has the Nova Cannon for fleet support. It's remarkably cheap given the Nova Cannon and the Weapon Batteries take over when the Nova Cannon cuts out. A very good ship.

Tyrant – Cruiser

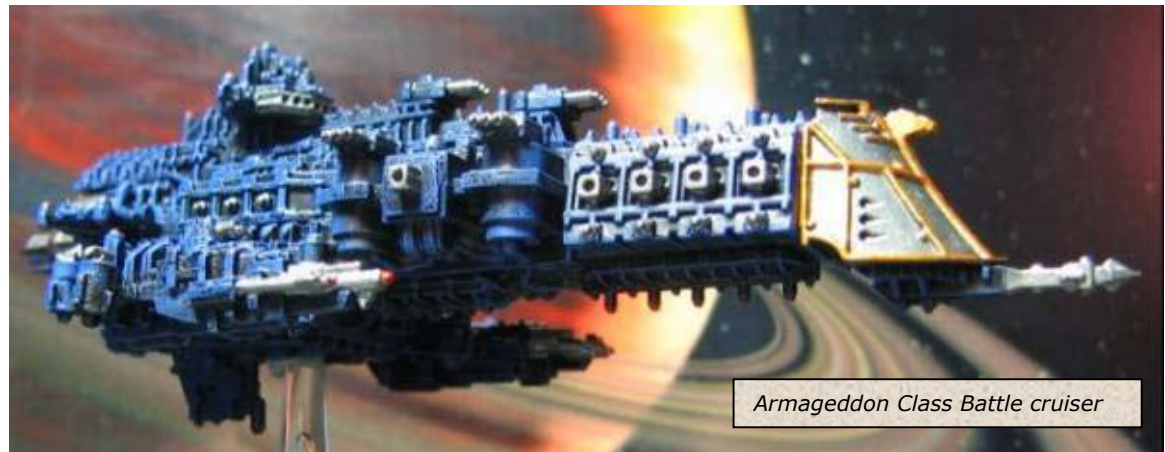
This ship is almost useless; without the range upgrade it *is* useless. The IN gets by well enough with only 30cm range and most ships only have this range. The Tyrant tries to cover a weakness without making it a strength, which doesn't really work. The point/problem of the IN is that to pay for their ability to close (6+ prow armour) and their torpedoes on the way in, they have to fire both broadsides or else they're overcosted and they won't win. For this you simply don't need range. Not only does it have less firepower than the (cheaper) Nova Cannon armed Dominator but when utilising that extra range it gets even worse, since Weapon Batteries suffer when shooting at over 30cm range. On top of which it's 5 points overcosted. This triple whammy makes the Tyrant *almost* entirely useless. There are occasions where you want the range to either support other ships or to take on fleets that would otherwise totally outmanoeuvre you, such as Eldar, etc.

Overlord – Battle cruiser

This battle cruiser is an attempt at a long range weapons platform on a cruiser hull. In this role it fails pretty dismally. This cruiser is roughly two thirds the value of a Retribution class battleship at about two thirds the cost. The problem here is that the Retribution is a bad ship. It comes back to the problems with the Tyrant. In order to pay for the prow armour and torpedoes you need to open up with both broadsides on the enemy. Range isn't a necessity for this and sacrificing firepower to get that range is counterproductive. To use the range you'd need to go abeam early on to present your guns at which point the prow armour and torpedoes become useless. A conflicted *and* overcosted design. Never use.

Armageddon – Battle cruiser

Here we see yet another battle cruiser that wastes points on unnecessary range upgrades. If we take the example of the Murder/Hades we can see that adding 2 lances with a LFR fire arc at 60cm range to a cruiser, making it a battle cruiser, should cost 30 points. Since the Armageddon is an upgraded Lunar (a ship I'm not to fond of to begin with) this process should take the cost of the Armageddon to 210 points. Since the only difference yet to be accounted for is the range, we can see that the increase in range costs 35 pts. This is a ludicrously high price. Firstly, it isn't optional, therefore it should be cheaper than if it were optional. The option of upgrading 6 Weapon Batteries on the



Armageddon Class Battle cruiser

(rubbish) Tyrant to 45cm costs only 10 points. So we're at 220 points (maximum) for the Armageddon with only the lance range upgrade to go. Since the 2 lances are equivalent in firepower to the 6 Weapon Batteries normally the upgrade would cost the same except that lances don't suffer a column shift so let's say 15 points for them. That makes the total 235 pts. Even paying bloated *option* prices for a rather useless upgrade it'd cost 10 points less than this overcosted piece of poo. I'd rather just take a Lunar and spend the 65 points elsewhere than take this ship. Maybe pay 10 points to take a Dominator instead and maybe pay another 10 to take an Exorcist over a Dictator and then get a Firestorm with the last 45 points.

Avenger – Grand Cruiser

This grand cruiser would be a real nice addition to the fleet if it had a 6+ prow and some torpedoes. Unfortunately, as it stands, the range on its guns demands a charge yet it has nothing to fire at the enemy on the way in and will take an absolute pounding as one of the few closing cap ships with a 5+ prow. Even with the extra hits and shield it simply won't be able to stand up to the punishment the enemy will dish out. Some might use it to soak firepower but this is always risky and in the end it's just not worth taking.

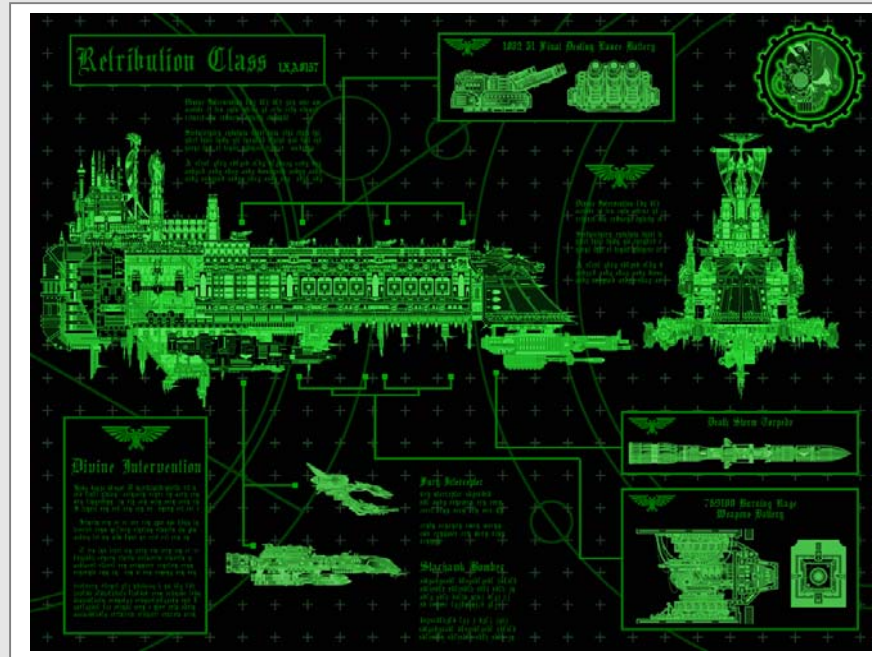
Vengeance – Grand Cruiser

Better than the Avenger due to the range boost. It's cheaper than the Overlord and

can get nearly as much firepower at 60cm and better firepower at 45cm all the while being much more survivable. It doesn't have the torpedoes (which I think it should for no extra cost) but it isn't a huge problem. The fact that the lances don't have 60cm range is slightly more worrying but I'd take this ship if you really wanted a long range weapon platform, particularly against Eldar.

Retribution – Battleship

The most debated of the IN battleships. Some people swear by them. Don't know why because they're rubbish. The fact is that they're undergunned. I'd rather pay 20 pts less and get *slightly* less firepower and take the Emperor. The perks of the Emperor far outweigh anything the Ret has to offer. Basically, with its speed, prow armour and torpedoes the Ret is geared to charge the enemy, obviously with the intent of unleashing both broadsides. The problem here is that those broadsides are only the strength of a cruiser. It simply is not worth its cost. If it had 18WBs at 30cm range (it has 3 Weapon Battery hard points compared to the Dominators 2) then it would be able to do what it was designed for. If it had 18 Weapon Batteries at 45cm range then it would be able to compensate for its lack of manoeuvrability (being a Battleship). If it had 18 Weapon Batteries at 60cm range then it could do all that and also have the option of being used as a long range weapon platform.



Apocalypse – Battleship

This battleship is a nice idea but it falls down in the execution. Firstly, paying 365 points to get a Nova Cannon isn't very efficient. If you wanted a Nova Cannon then you'd simply take cruisers. Still it isn't a terrible downfall either. The 30cm range broadside, prow armour and Nova Cannon make this ship a prime candidate for a charge. Unfortunately it only has 15 cm speed and Weapon Batteries would be better for such close quarters fighting anyway. So, if you turn to use its special rules to use it as a long range weapons platform you lose the practical benefit of

the armoured prow and Nova Cannon. You also could fail your test and be out of range of the enemy, losing a turns firepower. Even if you do pass your test you take an engine critical, slowing you further, and what's worse, a point of damage! Taken all together the ship is conflicted, overcosted and self-destructive. Nice concept and model though.

+++Tactical High Command+++

Officer's Mess

Lounge time

Black Library Short Story Competition

With the re-launch of Warp Rift new stories where needed as well. A quick thinking of mind led me to the Fan-Fiction Forum at the Black Library forums. Black Library forum member Gizamaluke came quickly with the excellent idea of starting a short story competition. I want to thank every single one of the people who entered there story in this small competition. This issue of Warp Rift features the winner of the short story competition. Congratulations!

Black Library Short Story Competition Winner:

The Pure and the True

By Chun the Unavoidable

Chapter I: Perversions

They say the blink of a Navigator's eye can cause warp storms on the other side of the galaxy. It is fascinating that occurrences of such magnitude are, at their inception, so miniscule. And it is therefore fitting that the origin of events that brought the Imperium of Man to its knees began, from a certain point of view, with nothing.

The Penitenziagite, Emperor-class battleship, struggled to fall back into real space. Far too long out of dry dock and much needed overhaul, and far too recently involved in devastating combat, her shields were buckled at innumerable locations and her warp engines - badly out of phase- pulsed at conflicting frequencies, agitating the Immaterium in her locale. The window into real space fluctuated,

now yawning open, now snapping closed - too inconstant to risk passage. It was as if the warp itself didn't want the ship to leave and fought against it.

Truth is, thought Captain Alexander Chanj, That may be exactly what it's doing. "Propulsion, can you not bring those engines to heel?"

"I'm doing my best, Sir." Across the darkened, elongated sickle of the bridge, the young ensign standing in for Chief Engineer Vench at station did not look up from her madly flickering schematic, nor did her fingers hesitate in their dash across keys and studs. Admirable control for a juvenile.

"Hm. Perhaps now would be the time for a sudden order-of-magnitude increase in ability, Ensign Jute." He stroked a touchpad on

his chair's serpent-embossed arm, "Mr Vench, your subordinate is 'doing her best' up here. While I admire her obvious capability, the situation is pressing. Can the Machine Spirit be appeased?"

Chanting interspersed with coughs and splutters filled the bridge, barely masking an inconstant whine that set the captain's teeth on edge. A shout, "Captain! My apprentices drone the rites like angry bees, and you can't breathe down here for incense. Short of sacrificing one of 'em, I don't know what else to do!"

The captain smiled wryly, "No need to go that far, Mr Vench. Not yet, at any rate. Bridge out."

Chanting, coughs, and annoying whine, were silenced. Chanj noted the young ensign smiling too, though somewhat grimly.

His gaze turned to the heavy hatch set into the floor just before his command chair. With a smartly-booted toe he straightened out one of the dozen-or-so prayer slips stuck to its stylised star-embossed surface, gave the crimson wax sealing its lip a cursory inspection. No cracks. Chaplain Kirtz will be pleased.

"Honoured Navigator, is the warp still miffed at our little ship's faux pas?" Suppressed titters around the bridge. Good. His officers were bearing up to this latest misfortune. Trusted veterans all, he expected nothing less. But would still advocate extended leave for everyone -order it, for certain individuals- when the Penitenziagite reached home. They had more than earned it. Harsh, rapid breathing now filled the air. Chanj sat forwards, alarm rising within him - his Navigator was scared.

"Captain, we're brewing up a storm. We should never have crossed with out-of-sync drives - the Immaterium won't tolerate such disrespect."

"'Disrespect' is not how I would describe things, Honoured Navigator. I'm sure you recall we had little choice in our flight. We could not repel borders against a hundred Chaos Idolators."

"Of course, Captain. Nevertheless, matters are thus: the Golden Path is obscured."

Lost in the warp! Without the guiding beam of the Astronomican, the any idea of their whereabouts. "Do you recommend shut-down, Navigator? Calm the waters, so to speak?"

"Too late for that. We have instigated a full-blown warp storm, Captain, one already far beyond anything we may attempt to "calm" it. It can only tear itself apart now. And us with it, of course."

Allowing a trace of annoyance to enter his tone (Emperor deliver us from Navigators and their sense of drama!), Chanj said, "Calm yourself, Sir. What, then, are your recommendations?"

A harsh laugh. Chanj raised an eyebrow. "Michael, you really do need to practice restraint. A year at a Navel Academy should be de-rigueur for any Navigator piloting for The Fleet. But how likely is that when the Navis Nobilte's power is such that turning their collective nose up at our disciplines is done with the full backing of the High Lords of Terra?"

"Something amuses you, Navigator?"

"Captain, as you are fond of such arcana, I will employ terminology from prehistory. I suggest you 'batten down the hatches' and - Emperor protect us! Tsunami to port! Impact imminent! Brace -" Klaxons blared deafeningly. The bridge shuddered, rose so sharply it beat breath from lungs, quickly dropped to leave anything unsecured in momentary free-fall. Ambient lighting flickered, blinked out for terrifying moments, relit to something less than its former level. Screens and projectors flickered into static before settling to legibility once more.

Chanj, gasping for air, crawled back into his chair. Around the bridge his officers slowly did the same, with the exception of the young ensign - she remained where she fell, blood oozing from a wound in her forehead. The bridge lurched again (provoking an uncontrolled yelp of panic from someone).

"Mute that blasted alarm! Reports! Now." The captain signalled forwards his commander, Gabriel Thorn, indicating the now empty engineering station. The huge man stepped over the stricken ensign before strapping himself to station. The bridge klaxon was silenced. Though its wail was still audible through bulkheads, it was nevertheless quiet enough for Chanj to hear his officers' stertorous

breathing as they resumed their duties - each employing their chairs' restraints in the process. Covertly, Chanj did the same.

Fractures and bruises were the worst of the physical injuries. Shields had been severely tried but had not yet given way - the hull was intact. The engines laboured even more at odds with each other. "The immediate danger is passed, silence all alarms. Mr Vench, to the bridge - leave the Machine Spirit's appeasement to your journeymen. Honoured Navigator, what of the warp? Can we expect more buffeting? .Pedson, do you hear me? Michael?"

The Navigator was silent. Cold washed Chanj's spine. If Pedson were dead, what hope for the Penitenziagite? No-one else aboard possessed the ability and training to pilot the warp. The ship would be stranded beyond all hope of rescue short of a miracle.

Momentarily unable to prevent it, Chanj's mind ran over possible outcomes to such a nightmare scenario. Millennia hence, the ship might be discovered: a drifting hulk of corpses to be pondered over and scavenged. Perhaps there wouldn't be corpses. Perhaps the crew would interbreed, each generation more mutated than the last, until the Penitenziagite's denizens became indistinguishable from the worst Chaotic abominations.

The quiet-yet-clear voice of Admiral Pitsmith, stratagem tutor during Chanj's last year at the Academy, filled his mind. Calm yourself. Such daydreams serve no purpose. Ascertain the situation; do not succumb to useless conjecture.

Plucking a knife from his belt, Chanj knelt to scratch away the wax seal on the Navigator's hatch. Once done, he turned the ornate Ouroboros wheel, tearing through prayer-slips in the process. The mechanism released, he began to pull.

The Navigator's voice spluttered from the speakers, weak and panting for breath, "Chaplain Kirtz will be displeased - you know. Know how he hates the very notion of Navigators. Spent an hour over his seals and prayers. You'll contaminate the crew."

Relief flooded Chanj. Nevertheless, he continued to pull. Vestiges of wax resisted him. He waved a somewhat dazed cabin boy over to

assist, and with a sharp crack! the hatch was freed. "Don't open it! I'm looking straight at it!"

Instinctively, both captain and cabin boy let go. The hatch fell with a clang.

"Apologies, my Captain. I'm alright. Banged my head and blacked out. Ughn. Let me just get up. Glorious Emperor, my head!"

Chanj resumed his chair and directed the cabin-boy back to station. He took a deep breath, ran a hand through his rapidly greying hair. "Very well, Navigator. You gave us a considerable scare. Mask your eye and I will send down a medic."

"Kind of you, Sir, but. No time. The warp's. Getting worse. Break our back given the chance. The Materium is our only safe option. And even then."

Even then? What did that mean? "Navigator, the engines cannot generate a stable egress."

"Not at our behest, certainly. But what of Penny? Can we not expect. Expect better control from her?"

The ship's avatar. The Penitenziagite was ancient beyond knowledge, and deviated in many ways from the official criteria and blueprints of Emperor-class battleships. One such "deviation" was her still-extant persona, Penny - so integral to ship-systems that her deletion in the usual manner would result in a dead hull, worthy only of dismantlement. The decision was therefore taken to place her under Compulsion - that is, force complicity with any given order, and deny autonomous action where major ship's functions were concerned. Artificial intelligences might well be anathema to the Adeptus Mechanicus, but an Emperor Class battleship was much too valuable a prize to simply scrap.

Captain Chanj was loathe to relinquish control. What captain wouldn't be? The mind was old. Madness and peculiarity of all orders were

inescapable factors when dealing with antique intelligences, no matter their origins. Particular to Penny was masochism. However, Michael does have a point - we are in dire straits.

He tapped a code rapidly into his chair's touchpad. Immediately after, an almost comically feminine moan filled the bridge and caused a collective wincing amongst the officers. "Ohhh. My skin burns. My bowels churn. My bones ache. Why do you torture me so?"

You know you love it. "You are no doubt aware of our predicament, Honoured Vessel?"

"Yes, Sir. I have run simulations - I believe I can exit the Immaterium. If I cannot, you must punish me."

At that moment Chief Engineer Vench, left arm trussed, entered the bridge accompanied by a medic. Passing the captain to relieve Commander Thorn, he muttered, "Doubtless she'd prefer punishment either way." Catching sight of the still-unconscious ensign, his usual stoic expression softened into a concern that passed only when the medic assured him the girl's injuries were minor. The Navigator spoke again, "Captain, we ride a swell. Whirlpools and typhoons surround us. Converge on us. We must attain real space or be broken!"

As if emphasising the point, the bridge shuddered again. And continued to shudder. The Penitenziagite, millions of tonnes of adamantium and plasteel, shook as if it were a rag doll in the jaws of a mastiff. The klaxon again began to howl. Someone immediately muted it.

"The pain! The glorious pain!"

"Calm yourself, Honoured Vessel. I have no choice, then. I relinquish control. Please remember we don't all share your perversions." Chanj tapped another code into his touchpad.

The shuddering abruptly ceased, leaving the captain wondering if it hadn't somehow been generated by the avatar herself as an encouragement. A frightening thought. But not one for this moment, Mr Chanj. Admiral Pitsmith again. Doubtless the storm eased its hold momentarily. Concentrate. The events of Now are of the only import.

"The engines are re-aligning!" reported Venge. "Phase-cycles are mirroring! How is she doing that?"

"I see stars! I see stars!"

"You can calm yourself, too, Astronavigation." But Chanj permitted himself a smile. If the hull's eyes were picking up stars, natural, Materium stars, then the window out of the warp was stable enough to pass through. Assuming it was big enough, of course.

A sudden shout from the Navigator: "Captain, something emerges to stern. There's a. A solidification. The warp's -"

The bridge was slammed upwards again, was shaken from side-to-side. The medic sprawled across the ensign, pinning her to the floor as he grabbed desperately at the chief engineer's chair leg. The mastiff really was worrying at its toy now, trying to disintegrate it. Chanj could almost hear the angry growls. Her spine will break if this continues. Come on, Penny, pull us through! "Shields buckled to stern, Captain. Chaotic ingress!"

The avatar began to scream. "It burns! It burns!" Then, like a restrained child in a tantrum, "Let go of me!"

"Emperor's balls!" Vench bellowed, "She's cranked the engines past design parameters! She'll cascade us! Override, Captain! SHUT THE ENGINES DOWN!"

Chanj's fingers skittered over the touchpad, but the bridge shook so much he couldn't key the correct code. The outraged roar of overtaxed engines was suddenly discernable through the bulkheads. "My boys 'n' girls," said Venge, "She's frying my boys 'n' girls."

Then, abruptly, there was peace.

No vibration. No noise save for the terrified panting of his officers. Chanj tapped the code into his touchpad, expecting to hear complaints from Penny as she once more relinquished self-control. But the avatar remained silent. Sated with pain, no doubt. "Status. Astronavigation, status."

The mingled disbelief and abject relief in Astronavigator Vader Book's voice was plain. "We have attained real space, Captain. We're through."

"Very well. Engineering, status."

Chief Engineer Vench did not immediately reply. Chanj could only imagine the conditions in the cathedral-like engine rooms as the warp mechanisms were forced to near-obliteration. At last, in little more than a whisper, Vench said, "Engines powering down. Down. Off-line, Captain. Dead."

Chanj wondered exactly what that last word referred to.

"Then there is no pressing reason for you to be here. Take stock, Mr Vench. Do what you have to do. You have permission to leave the bridge."

Vench glanced at the stricken ensign as the medic broke a capsule under her nose to revive her. Would she have friends in the engine room? Siblings? Lovers? Vench looked away as her eyes flickered open, departed the bridge without meeting his captain's gaze. Perhaps he blamed Chanj for what he was about to face? There are more immediate concerns, Chanj. Accept responsibility later.

"We're adrift, then. Defence, you said something about Chaotic ingress?"

"We have buckled shields all over the stern, Sir. Something hit us damn hard, and, well. It seemed to keep hold, Sir, and, sorry, Sir, but it squeezed."

Chanj envisaged a gargantuan hand laying hold of his ship, trying to pull it back into the Immaterium. And just how far is that from literal truth, I wonder? "I take it we've acquired hitchhikers?"

"Surface senses are all destroyed back there, Sir. But there are general reports of scratching, tapping, and, uh, slithering on the hull across a wide area."

"Deploy a couple of servitors. Cleanse the infection, Mr Avrills."

"Very well, Sir."

"Sir, His Redemption is asking for an update." Lieutenant Jat at communications.

Chanj had all but forgotten the wreck of the Space Marine strike cruiser clamped to the Penitenziagite's keel - even though that ship was the reason they were in such sorrowful condition. "Elucidate them, Comms. In fact, patch bridge feeds directly to them."

Chanj took a deep breath, "Astronavigation, where in all the Emperor's Graces are we?"

Full seconds elapsed before the response came. "Sir, I'm still trying to figure that out."

"It is, after all, what you're trained for, Mr Book."

"Indeed, Sir, but I have little to work with. Perhaps if you were to activate the main screens you'd see what I mean, Sir."

Cameras capped during warp travel were uncovered, previously dark screens flared into life around the bridge - quickly followed by the astonished grunts of officers.

In a hushed voice, Chanj asked, "Is that our galaxy, Mr Book?"

The Astronavigator sighed, "I bloody hope so. Is being fifty thousand light years above the galactic plane not bad enough, Sir, without it being the galactic plane of another galaxy?"

"Show respect, Mr Book," warned Commander Thorn. But Chanj let the insubordination go without comment. He found himself almost hypnotised by the glory of stars depicted before him. A scintillating whirlpool of light and colour, beautiful beyond any hope of expressing. Untarnished and pure in spite of all the conflict and heartache it harboured. Or, in fact, had yet to harbour. This far out, and purely in terms dictated by the speed of light, much Chanj knew as history had still to actually happen. He didn't exist. Countless generations of his ancestors didn't exist. The bloody Imperium of Man didn't exist!

Duties, Chanj, duties. Admiral Pitsmith.

"Pretty, isn't it? Personally I prefer it from the inside - let's try and get back, shall we? All stations, you have one hour to submit a full report."

There came a cough from behind. Chanj turned to his commander, who nodded towards the Navigator's hatch. Chanj suddenly realised he hadn't heard from Pedson and signalled thanks to Thorn for the reminder. Was he still conscious? "Honoured Navigator, your duties are over for the moment. Report to the medics."

Pedson's reply was blessedly prompt, and much more assured than previously. "I thank you, Captain, but I think it would be wiser for you to send a medic to me. I need to remain here amongst my augmentations and sensors. The warp's a maelstrom, Captain, and showing no signs of calming. Quite the opposite, in truth."

Emperor love us! Just a few moments' peace!

"Are you telling me eruption is a possibility, Honoured Navigator?"
 "I'd say a likelihood, Captain. We should vacate the area with all available speed - inoperative shielding reduces our chances of surviving an eruption to virtually nil. Were we actually within the galaxy instead of out here in this Void Amongst Voids, then we could hide behind a handy asteroid or some-such, but. Distance is our only option."

"Mr Vreez, engage the conventionals - as much power as you can muster, Mister."

"Aye, Sir. Conventional drive cycling. We are in motion."

"Course, Captain?" asked Book.

Chanj gestured at the screens. "Just generally point her in the direction of that, for now, Mr Book."

"Very well, Sir. Sir, sensors are picking something up in our vicinity. Planetoid. Could we not put that between us and the eruption?"

Chanj was about to ask for details, when the Navigator beat him to it, "Planetoid? Where? There's nothing out here, Book."

"Beg to differ, Navigator Pedson. Try looking through your human eyes."

"Enough, Mr Book! You'll be sent from the bridge if there's any more of that," barked Thorn.

We will have words, Mr Book. But now is hardly the time. "What's the problem, Honoured Navigator?"

"Captain, that planetoid doesn't exist."

"Plainly it does, Navigator. Whatever our Mr Book's faults, he's a bit of a whiz with his telescopes."

"I'm getting telemetry from his station - I can indeed see it with my two human eyes. It's my blasphemous mutant eye it's obscured from. Captain, for all that the two realms are disparate, there is

correspondence between the Materium and Immaterium - every object here has a shadow, a presence, of some form or another, over there. It is part of a Navigator's training to be able to decipher such things and infer significance from them. There are no exceptions to this rule. None. If I cannot see an indication of that planetoid with my Third Eye then it cannot exist."

The uneasiness in Pedson's voice was starting to worry Chanj. Though what the Navigator said seemed trifling to him, he was quite ready to defer to the other's superior knowledge in Matters Chaotic. "Perhaps the tempest affects your vision?"
 "Unlikely. The planetoid would evidence itself by causing perturbations, like waves breaking on rocks. I would be able to detect these. There are none. The storm rages through that world. It cannot exist, My Captain. It should not. It is a perversion in the fabric of the universe."

[Incursion.]

[Type?]

[Xenos vessel. Xenos unknown.]

[Armament?]

[Negligible.]

[Propulsion?]

[Atomic. Seethe-capable.]

[Course?]

[Interception. Vessel has instigated possible Seethe break-through.]

[Shall I awaken?]

[No. I will watch. I will report. I will initiate the Engines.]

The Pure and the True

Chapter II – Part I: Past Madness

Sergeant Proppul Kleige of the Blood Angels did not know the name of the planet they had been sent to purge, out beyond the *Segmentum Pacificus*, only that it was some garden world popular as a holiday destination for the sector's rich... And was, at the last Astropathic transmission, in the process of being invaded by unknown Chaotic hoards. Such an attack, of course, would be intolerable under any circumstances, but one so boldly deep within the Imperium of Man was also highly embarrassing. So, for once, the Administratum expedited its issue of a joint retaliation order to the Blood Angels and their sister-chapter, the Angels Vermillion.

Scouts to the stricken world reported a single orbiting Slaughter Class cruiser escorted by three Idolator raiders. None of the vessels displayed insignia, and all were coloured a uniform matt black. Other ships were suspected to be in the vicinity, as a single Slaughter Class did not have the capability to carry the large ground forces currently overrunning the world's meagre defences. Kleige never learned the size of the Vermillion dispatch, but Carantz Taturus, Blood Angel Master of the Fleet, saw fit to send two battle barges, *Sanquinius' Will* and *Our Wrath*, both Leviathan class, their launch-bays filled with Thunderhawk dropships and various small attack boats. Accompanying the massive vessels were a full retinue of rapid strike craft of varying design. The flotilla's crew consisted of three hundred marines and over a thousand attending serfs.

Like impossibly huge chunks of flesh spilling from a fatal injury, the red ships dropped out of warp at a forty-five degree rotation to the murderous, elongated wedge of the cruiser, and almost directly on top of it.

The bull-nosed, utilitarian battle barges, lacking the elegance of the

Navy's cruisers and battleships, nevertheless retained a certain honesty of design – which was, of course, the dealing of death and destruction on a massive scale. *Sanquinius' Will* and *Our Wrath* demonstrated this design perfectly as they commenced a combined broadside that ruptured the Chaos ship's hull before she could even return fire. Eagle-beaked rapid strike craft –smaller lumps of gore– closed with the intricate, two-tined forks of the Idolators, harrying and softening them into submission in preparation for assault boats and their boarding crews.

It was a textbook retaliation, with no losses. What was more, the Angels Vermillion, when they eventually arrived, would suffer no small embarrassment to see the orbital battle already won. Brisk scans of the planet's surface defined landing zones, and the flotilla manoeuvred accordingly. Like droplets of blood exploding from bolt-wounds, Thunderhawks –bulky, functional design mirroring their mother ships'– launched *en masse* from the battle barges' bays and streaked towards the vision of prehistoric Terra that was the target world.

As if this was a signal, the trap was sprung.

The Navigator aboard *Our Wrath* barely had time to scream, "Multiple inbound!" on the common channel, before a dozen warp windows irised open, spewing more black Idolators into the Materium.

Their orbit was high, their relative positions spread over a wide arc of space. No sooner had they appeared than they launched salvo upon salvo of missiles, each wave alternating between the battle barges. But the surprise wasn't total. The Blood Angels had suspected a stronger enemy presence and were prepared for it. Clouds of anti-ordnance were ejected to confuse the incoming missiles;

manoeuvring thrusters flared blindingly, dumping velocity and bringing the gigantic craft about at speeds that would make their designers weep. The rapid strike craft immediately abandoned the original, now-drifting, Idolators to form into two separate groups. These accelerated to the outer edges of the enemy's formation, firing as they went.

The anti-ordnance erupted with white light as it intercepted the missiles, accounting for more than half of the total salvo. The remainder passed through, hesitating as their tiny minds sought to re-acquire the battle barges' signatures, before shooting onwards again with renewed purpose. They were now too close to warrant another spread of anti-ordnance. Only the barges' shields were left to protect them.

A pure white inferno engulfed both ships, totally obscuring them as the missiles impacted in rapid succession... And quickly fading to nothing as the vessels –physically unscathed though their stressed shields coruscated purple– continued manoeuvres and brought their guns to bear.

But the jaws of the Chaos trap were still closing. The Idolators, exhibiting an undeniable daring and unheard of capability in manipulating the Immaterium, suddenly winked out of existence – to reappear below the battle barges and in the trail of the Thunderhawks, now mere kilometres from the planet's outer atmosphere. Missile bays exhausted after their attack on *Sanquinius' Will* and *Our Wrath*, the Idolators' lance batteries now spat with surgical precision. Each shot pinned a Thunderhawk engine cluster to turn it into a rapidly expanding globe of luminescence.

Again the battle barges underwent desperate course-changes, attempting to bring heavy fixed weaponry to bear on the Idolators. Weaker, though manoeuvrable, batteries fired in the interim, both missiles and various classes of energy. Concentrated and co-ordinated, this barrage managed to account for two of the Chaos craft. Nevertheless, the remainder completed their mission, destroying every one of the Thunderhawks – then again winked out of the Materium.

Scanners and sensors madly flicking over the void, Navigators straining for any kind of warp tell-tale, *Our Wrath* and *Sanquinius' Will* fired their plasma drives for higher orbits. Was the attack over? Or was this a mere lull in the terrible proceedings?

Twenty warp windows opened in a rough sphere about the barges, each birthing an Idolator. Then, in greater sphere that also encompassed the milling strike craft, another thirty appeared, floating in an almost gloating manner, batteries angled inwards towards their prey. Even then the dreadful revelation was not over. Yet further out, positions corresponding to the compass poles of the Chaos armada's sphere, four huge windows gaped open, and four sleek, vaguely coffin-shaped Repulsive Class Grand Cruisers slipped into existence.

A lull, then.

For a moment the tableau held. Then, out beyond the northernmost cruiser, as if the whole assembly were a entourage awaiting the appearance of its king, the largest rip yet in the Materium's fabric spilled the awesome silhouette –in profile nothing so much as the handgun of an impossible giant– of a Despoiler Class battleship.

The Blood Angel rapid strike craft made the first move, powering inwards to the defence of the battle barges. Immediately, they were engaged by the outer shell of Idolators. The battle barges erupted with rainbows of light as they simultaneously launched their missiles, ignited their lances, and applied full thrust to their plasma drives. Their valiant effort to escape the inner sphere resulted in the destruction of four Idolators and set two more adrift. Again they were bathed in light, though this time not of their own making – the other Idolators returned fire. Shields were buckled, broken, hulls ruptured in numerous locations. Still the battle barges powered on, *Sanquinius' Will* actually ramming through the spine of an Idolator in the process. They had breached the inner sphere.

As the remaining Idolators jockeyed to reposition themselves, the forward lances of *Our Wrath* –*Sanquinius' Will's* prow nothing now but a mangled, glowing stump– began to desperately cut into the ships of the outer shell in aid of the beleaguered strike craft.

Then, like a master pulling his upstart puppy to heel, the four grand cruisers chose that moment to join the fray. Ruby beams leapt from each of them to pierce the hull of *Our Wrath*. In perfect synchronisation they cut along the barge's skin, slicing her in two from stern to prow. There was no explosion until her mighty engines were reached and a perfect sphere of rapidly-expanding blue light vapourised the ship. The ruby beams were shut off.

Sanquinius's Will dorsal batteries retaliated against the northern cruiser, but the range was too far – yellow shield-flare was the only result. She resumed her fire on the closer Idolators, destroying a further two. Her captain's only intention now was maximising the cost of his ship's inevitable destruction.

The end came soon. No Imperial weapons of similar nature were capable of cycling around to firing readiness so quickly. No Imperial ship could manipulate the warp as these Idolators had. Dark gifts had been given to this Chaos fleet, whoever they were.

The four ruby beams lanced out, were held back for scant seconds by *Sanquinius's Will's* somewhat stronger shielding, before the second terrible dicing commenced. Another tiny star of blue light briefly blazed.

Sergeant Kleige watched the wreckage of the fleet drift past on *His Redemption's* screens. Early in the conflict, his strike craft had been *en route* to *Our Wrath* in order to pick up a waiting chaplain. Her engines had been irreparably damaged by a seemingly stray missile, and she had been set adrift. The resulting secondary explosions within the ship injured six marines, three terminally, and damaged the weapons array controls beyond field repair. And so, helplessly, Kleige had witnessed the systematic destruction of almost a third of the Blood Marine chapter and nearly half of its fleet – his feelings continuously flicking from despair, outrage, and consuming numbness. Who *were* these Traitor Marines? Their astounding ships bore no insignia, they made no communication, whether to gloat or otherwise. They had almost faultlessly out-classed and out-manoeuvred the most famous space marine chapter in the Imperium of Man's history. It was an unprecedented, impossible catastrophe.

On the screens the last two strike craft desperately sought temporary respite amongst the tumbling and yet-glowing wreckage of *Sanquinius's Will*. Two perfectly-aimed blasts from the southern grand cruiser and they were gone.

His Redemption was now the only extant ship of the flotilla.

A servitor spoke. "Ship scanned, massive scale. Ship targeted, massive scale. Ship hailed."

"Let's hear it."

A low voice, dryer than a desert wind, filled the small bridge. "Little ship, little ship, did you like that? Was it fun? What sport you Angels provide, whether vermillion or red. Quite entertaining."

The voice paused, obviously awaiting a response. Kleige had nothing to say.

"Shy, Little Ship? We can do something about that. We can release your inhibitions. Let's continue the entertainment, shall we? I know what you carry. Black hull, red crosses? How much store you Space Marines place in symbols! Do you see what Sanquinius saw? Do you feel the wounds Horus cut into him? Do you rant and rave with his voice? Ah, the legendary Death Company – it is only fitting I save you till last. You are the headliner. I hope you live up to expectations. Prepare to be boarded. I think we'll start with Oblivators."

The communication was cut. Kleige nodded to himself. This was a face of Chaos he recognised: gloating, revelling in evil and insanity. At least now there would be some reckoning in *mêlée* combat. *His Retribution* did indeed carry the Death Company – Blood Angels succumbing to the all-consuming visions of their Primarch's death at the hands of the heretical Horus. Suffering the ultimate in delusions of grandeur, unable to distinguish present reality from ancient history, they believed they *were* Primarch Sanquinius. Those unable to overcome their unfortunate madness would ordinarily suffer an agonising and drawn-out demise. However, their altered personality often imparted a powerful psychosomatic prowess and ferocity, exploited to legendary lengths on the myriad battlefields of the galaxy.

Kleige himself did not suffer the Blessed Visions (though at this moment he wished he did). He had been given the honour of chaperone, assistant the chaplain who was supposed to lead the crazed troops in combat. Nevertheless, he was prepared to rival his charges in the threatened boarding.

The communication servitor again spoke. "Despoiler Class battleship approaching transporter range."

Kleige nodded grimly. So be it.

He opened his mouth to issue the order that would release the restraints on the Death Company in the ship's hold, but before he could utter a sound proximity klaxons suddenly blared into life.

There was no need for a ship to manoeuvre so close for teleportation – and what now filled *His Redemption's* screens was not a Chaos vessel. A wall of shadow and light flowed past like some baroque river, all towers and gun emplacements, sensor clusters and domes, glowing portals and strike-ship bays. Kleige watched in abject wonder as the wall slowed, came to a relative halt. Looking down upon him, smile so slight it may have been imagined, was the beautiful face of an angel. Her hands were pressed together in prayer, her flowing robes seemed to billow and curl in an impossible wind, her long hair likewise. Huge feathered wings spread out behind and above her head. Kleige felt his knees weaken. He wanted to prostrate himself before this holy vision of beauty and grace. A small voice in the back of his mind tried to tell him he faced a mere statue (one scores of meters tall, admittedly, but a statue nevertheless) – but her unexpected appearance amid so much destruction, just prior to his own immanent demise, had, for him, the power of epiphany.

...Swiftly, and rudely shattered by an obviously male voice shouting: "Marine vessel, this is Captain Chanj of the *Penitenziagite*. Prepare for docking clamp. Let's get you out of here, shall we?"

Oh the enemy's rage as their plaything was snatched from their grasping hands! Such pounding the great battleship endured! Idolators –surely exhausting their complement– spat missiles; ruby beams from the Grand Cruisers lanced out;

even the hyper-heavy guns of the Chaos battleship spoke, adding azure beams of terrible force to the brew of destructive power at whose focus was the *Penitenziagite*. But the Navy battleship was old, laid down in a time when Man's acuity rivalled that of the Eldar at their long-passed peak. For as much time as it took to deploy the docking clamp and secure *His Redemption*, her shields resisted the barrage. There was even retaliation: three Idolators were destroyed and a fourth crippled before a window was forced and the mighty ship powered into the Immaterium.

Immediately she was millions of kilometres away, beyond the ability of any Materium-located Navigator to track – even those possessed of such rare ability.

And now Kleige was to meet his saviour.

Captain Chanj stepped on to *His Redemption's* tiny, darkened bridge, wrinkling his nose at the sickening odour of burnt flesh. Around the bridge's perimeter, strapped upright to supportive metal frames, a dozen limbless servitors twitched spastically to the unheard music of the vessel's governing systems, fed to them via torso-puncturing cable-looms. Two adjacent servitors slumped on their frames – smoke curling from the ears of one, the empty eye-sockets of the other. Capabilities overloaded in the recent action, they were the cause of the stench that so offended the captain.

A twitch on the shadowy floor drew his attention. Tangles of greasy black tubing snaked back to a central hump that resembling nothing so much as an incongruous metal tree-stump growing in the centre of the bridge. Each tube terminated in a human head – fruit of a macabre vine. Occasionally, in response to some errant nerve-impulse, a desiccated tongue would loll from a sagging mouth, or a milky, sightless eye would reveal itself behind a slowly rising lid. But beyond these tiny motions there was not the least vestige of awareness left to the heads. Vertebrae and neck-stumps plugged into brass sockets, they were not even regarded as in the same class as servitors. They were merely so much extra processing power to be used and replaced as necessary from the ship's cryo-chests.

Unnoticed in the gloom, Kleige watched the captain from the bridge's only station. *How clean you are, My Saviour. Uniform pressed daily, no doubt. And your boots! Shiny enough to mirror the vainest teenage girl. Have you ever scuffed that footwear in the heat and stink and screaming of combat, unshielded by the hull of your exemplary battleship?* The marine's augmented eyes sharpened their focus on Chanj's face, noting the greying hair just visible beneath his peaked hat, the thick wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, the grim flat line of his mouth – and thought to recognise the air of one who had indeed experienced conflict at close quarters. *Perhaps I judge you too quickly. We will see.*

"Forgive me, Captain Chanj. I would have you piped aboard, but there is no-one else to blow the whistle."
The captain started slightly at Kleige's deep voice, but quickly masked it. He squinted to the bridge's forward end. "I do not require such honours, Sergeant Kleige. However, I *do* require illumination."
"Forgive me again. Lux! I said lux!"

Orange spots flickered into weak life, barely enough to reveal the marine. Kleige knew he cast an imposing figure, as did any space marine, but in his case it was further amplified by huge bulk (he was at least a head taller than the average), and extreme ugliness. His un-helmeted and completely depilated head was a fright to behold. Unevenly gridded with roughly healed-over wounds, it seemed nothing so much as a pink mound of lumped-together flesh, small black eyes and lipless mouth plunged into it as an afterthought. His red Blood Angel tactical dreadnaught armour was criss-crossed with scars, pitted with the glancing hits of bolts and other projectiles, indented with teeth-marks in wildly varying patterns – all in dark compliment to his head. He was a parchment upon which the pen of battle had been writing for centuries – a work he displayed with some pride.

The marine watched for Chanj's reaction. He had known grown men to actually lose control of their bladders at first sight of him, and was therefore vaguely surprised, if not a little disappointed, to instigate

nothing more than a raised eyebrow. *Cool and reserved. Just what a Navy captain should be, of course. Nevertheless, I think you have seen some sights not to count me as particularly remarkable.*

"How are your men, Sergeant?"

"Three will be with the Emperor within a matter of days. Three others are in stasis to await the ministrations of our chapterhouse surgeons. The remainder pray in the chapel."

Chanj sighed. "Sergeant, I know this ship carries the Death Company. 'Prey in the chapel?' Is that a euphemism? They are strapped to benches, are they not?"

The marine bridled. *Does he dare mock me? Mock my brothers? Mock all those who died?!*

Chanj noted the other's anger. "Forgive me, Sergeant. I mean no disrespect. I know the high regard in which the Blood Angels hold those who experience Sanquinius' visions. The *Penitenziagite's* Apothecaries are highly skilled, and not only in the physiological arts. Perhaps they could help?"

Kleige felt his face, indeed his whole head, begin to redden. *Insult piles upon insult!* Chanj had no idea of what he had done when he rescued *His Redemption* from the Chaos armada, and now he suggested *curing* the Death Company of their Holy Affliction? *Oh you know so much, My Saviour, party to my order's secrets. And yet you fail to realise a man of lower status would be eviscerated for uttering those words.*

"Captain Chanj, I decline your offer." His power-sword was at his hip, but he resisted the impulse to slide his hand warningly over its hilt – he would prove himself above this Navy captain and his blinkered notions of morality. "I understand that, from your point of view, I should give thanks for our rescue. However, understand from mine that I cannot be grateful. If you know this ship's cargo then you know what its fate should have been – a fate thwarted by your interference. And you think your own Apothecaries so much more learned than those of our order, who have striven to remove this malaise from the Blood Angel gene-type since its first appearance unknown centuries ago? The Visions of Sanquinius are our incurable

curse, Captain Chanj, but they are a glory also. You have denied the Death Company their right to noble demise. You have denied *me* my right to die alongside so many of my brothers. I could not *stand* any more of your help, Captain. Return us to our chapterhouse soonest – that is all I require from you.”

Chanj regarded him wordlessly for a long moment, face grimly set. Kleige expected a show of returned anger and insult, and so was entirely surprised when the other sighed with apparent sadness, and said, “An expected response for any wiser than I. Forgive me – I mean no dishonour. We were *en route* to Martian dry dock when our Astropath heard the Angels Vermillion transmissions on the other side of your target world. We arrived too late – nothing but a cloud of expanding debris and a frightening amount of warp eddies when we got there. I was therefore determined to be of use when we detected where the conflict had relocated. Again, though, and thinking purely in terms of lives and hardware lost, we were too late. Your strike craft was all that remained, and I admit to a certain pride setting my mind to your rescue, no matter the risk – both to my ship and your sensibilities.” He sighed again, shaking his head slightly. “I do not agree with your point of view, Sergeant – the Navy’s notion of honour differs from that of the Adeptus Astartes. I would perform the same actions wherever required, and with a clear conscience. But I do *respect* it, and so offer my apologies for the intervention. Not to mention my utterly mindless suggestion.”

Kleige felt his anger drain away. If this captain could remove his metaphorical blinkers then he –as Mankind’s supposed epitome– must be capable of the same. Chanj had remained true to his ideals in his rescue of *His Redemption* – had, admittedly, risked much in the process. Moreover he was able to acknowledge fault – all facts that should be valued. He did not deserve to have Kleige’s anger, guilt, and absolute dismay vented upon him.

“We understand one-another then, Captain. The situation, I think, was the better of us both. We should not let different perspectives make us enemies – are we not all the Emperor’s?” He took a breath so deep his cuirass actually creaked. *I will sing your names in our*

cathedral, my brothers, but until then I must delay proper eulogy. “The present is our immediate concern, Captain. What is our situation?”

Chanj nodded once, even ventured a slight smile. “Spoken like an old tutor of mine. ‘The situation’ is thus: we are mired in the Materium under imminent threat of local warp breach. As such we are powering for the negligible shelter of a nearby planetoid whose mysterious nature has rather put the jitters up my Navigator. Our warp engines are in need of extensive repair, which my chief engineer has yet to assess. Half of said engineer’s staff is dead or badly injured due my ship’s avatar’s panicked actions. Oh, and we’re so far above the galactic plain that I’m not too sure if the Emperor has even been born yet!”

Kleige nodded thoughtfully, ran a hand over his ruined visage. “You have the situation well under control, then? I can expect return to my chapterhouse within the day?”

A grimace that threatened to become a smile puckered Kleige’s knotted lips. Something similar happened to Chanj’s, too. Both, however, restrained themselves, aware that any laughter could all-too easily become manic.

“Oh, my good marine, I haven’t finished yet. There is a rather Chaotic icing on the cake. Our warp-egress has left us with a stern-infestation that has accounted for three well-armed servitors, and seems to be eating through the hull.”

“Infestation? *Chaotic* infestation?”

“Indeed. Quite virulent, too. Nature unknown – it took the servitors out before they got in visual range. I’m about to send out a shuttle to look it over.”

Kleige’s almost-smile vanished completely. “Captain, put the Death Company aboard your shuttle.”

“Sergeant Kleige, I thought you’d never ask.”

***Read the last part of this thrilling story in
Warp Rift 12!***

Void Stalker

Scenario's & Campaigns

Scenario

Eliarenath's Gift

By Roy 'Horizon' Amkreutz

Introduction

The Eldar starship *Eliarenath's Gift* earned its name from the strange circumstances surrounding its first encounter with Imperial vessels. It was several months after the Battle of Gethsemane when a patrol fleet, led by Captain Durhan of the *Daecis III*, encountered a lone Eldar ship moving stealthily through the dense asteroids fields of Melian Secundus. When confronted, the Eldar pirates, who called their ship *Eliarenath's Gift*, claimed they had located an Ork lair and were preparing to attack. Captain Durhan proposed a joint venture, which the Eldar readily accepted. The Eldar ship led the Imperial Fleet deep into the asteroid field, where they did indeed find evidence of a large Orkish presence. Before the assault began, the Eldar fell out of formation, claiming that their mainsail had been damaged by a collision with a small asteroid. Captain Durhan duly continued the attack, only to discover that the Orks were waiting for him. The Ork attack was fast and brutal, and only the severely damaged *Daecis III* and a lone Sword class evaded destruction.

It was only later that Durhan was to learn, from the Eldar themselves, that Eliarenath is a figure from Eldar legend; she reputedly betrayed the folk hero Eldanesh to the Eldar war god, Khaine. The true identity of the *Eliarenath's Gift* was never discovered.

Forces

Imperial Navy:

Select a fleet worth up to 1000 points, at least 50% of the fleet must be escorts. Plus Captain Durhan commands a Lunar class cruiser, the *Daecis III*. Captain Durhan has a leadership value of 8 and 1 re-roll available.

Orks:

Select a fleet worth up to 1250 points, at least 50% of the fleet must be escorts.

Eliarenath's Gift:

Corsair Eldar Eclipse Class Cruiser. This vessel is commanded by the Ork player or by a third player. The vessel has a leadership value of 10 and 1 re-roll available which may only be used on this vessel.

Battlefield

The battlefield is 180cm x 120cm. Played in the outer reaches. Determine one short table side to be sunward. Divide the table lengthways in three equal parts (60cm x 120cm). Place D3+3 asteroid fields in the middle table part. Place D6+4 asteroid fields in the table third opposing the sunward table edge.

Deployment

The *Eliarenath's Gift* is placed 60cm away from the sunward table edge, exactly in the middle of the long table edges.

The Imperial Navy is deployed up to 30cm away from the sunward table edge, no closer then 30cm to the long table edges.

Split the Ork fleet in four parts, assign each part to a contact marker. Deploy the

contact markers in the 2 table parts opposed of the sunward table edge. They may not be closer then 40cm to the Eleneriath's Gift and no marker may be closer then 50cm together.

First turn

The *Eliarenath's Gift* takes first turn. Then the Ork player may move his contact markers, see the special scenario rules.



Special Scenario Rules

The Ork player may move his contact markers up to 15cm. There is no need to keep the distance of 50cm apart. Whenever an Imperial Navy vessel comes within 30cm of a contact marker the marker is activated. At the end of the Imperial Navy's movement turn the Ork part assigned to the marker is deployed.

Also, from turn 2 and onwards the Ork player may voluntarily activate a contact marker.

Because of its deceiving nature and the fact it wants to lure the Imperial Navy into a trap the *Eliarenath's Gift* makes no use of its second move until the Ork have sprung their trap. Once the trap is sprung the Eldar vessel may attack and move as normal, the Imperial Navy may attack the Eldar vessel as normal from now on.

Victory Conditions

Standard victory conditions are applied.

Sub plots

The Ork player gains 100 victory points if the *Eliarenath's Gift* escapes of the short table edge opposing the sunward table edge.

The Imperial Navy gains 200 victory points for the first ship or escort squadron that moves of the short table edge opposing the sunward table edge. This to reflect the useful intelligence the crew gathered about the Ork hide-out and the nature of the *Eliarenath's Gift*.

Have fun! With this fast and furious scenario.



Ship Lexicon

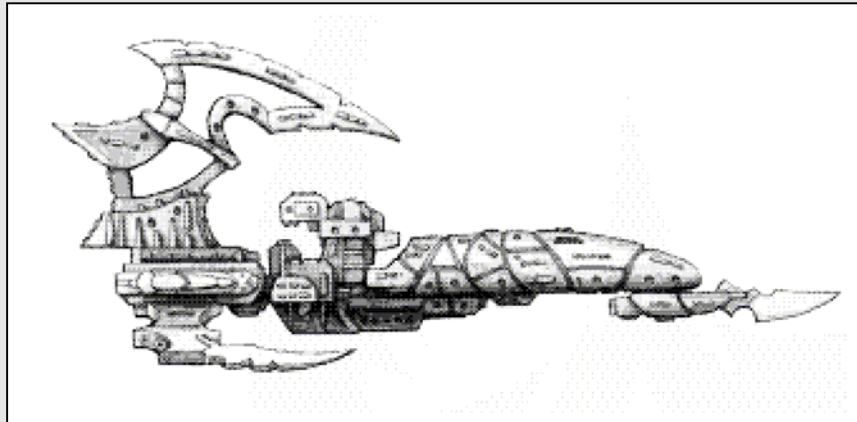
Your ships

Dark Eldar Torture Class Cruiser

Death Singer

By Zhai Morenn

Race.....: Dark Eldar
Class.....: Torture
Name.....: Death Singer
Current commander.....: Velnas Lorithon
Assigned to fleet.....: currently member of Dream Reavers Kabal
Colour scheme.....: Black hull, red blood like stripes arcing forward from it's centreline



Historical:

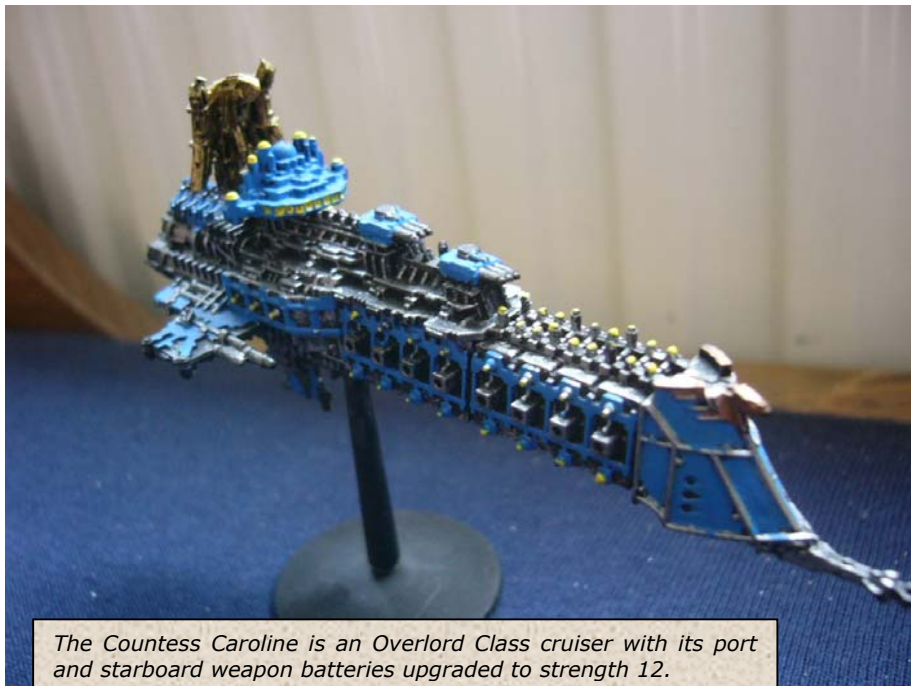
This vessel has become notorious in several sectors for it's lightning fast strikes and immense firepower. The *Death Singer* has most notably been sighted in battle against Necron vessels, seeming to harbour some grudge against the ancient enemy. In one engagement above the gas giant Talim IX, the *Death Singer* lured a Necron Scythe class harvest ship into the depths of the planet's gravity well and launched a calculated counter attack that forced the Necron vessel to continuously redirect power to it's defensive systems and away from it's propulsion. By Lorithon's cunning, the Necron warship was pulled into the depths of the planet's gravity well and destroyed by the colossal pressures in the lower atmosphere. The *Death Singer* then returned to the main engagement and participated in the crippling of another Scythe and forced the disengagement of a Cairn class tombship.

Tactica:

Torture class cruisers such as the *Death Singer* are unique among all Eldar cruiser type craft in that their primary and secondary armament are all batteries and lance type weaponry. Where other vessels follow a cannon and ordnance arrangement of one sort or another, this type of ship never needs to concern itself with ordnance and thus is tactically more free to operate as a gunship. It should be noted that very few cruisers are capable of matching this level and quality of direct fire.

Imperial Navy Overlord Class Cruiser
HDMS Countess Caroline
By Yannick van Straalen

Race.....: Imperial Navy
Class.....: Overlord mkII
Name.....: HDMS Countess Caroline
Current commander.....: Fleet-Admiral Ferdinand Max
Assigned to fleet.....: 2nd Cruiser Squadron of Battlegroup Nicius
Colour scheme.....: Silver Hull/Blue markings



The Countess Caroline is an Overlord Class cruiser with its port and starboard weapon batteries upgraded to strength 12.

Historical:

The Countess Caroline was found floating in deep space by the Dictator-class cruiser HDMS Emperor's Zeal, during one of her patrols. HDMS Emperor's Zeal towed the Countess Caroline back to the Danubius Space Dock for refit. The main weapons batteries of the Countess Caroline were totally destroyed, probably during her last encounter which left her a floating hulk. The decision was made to refit her with shorter ranged, but much heavier weapons batteries. After commission, the newly promoted Fleet Admiral Ferdinand Max took command of the HDMS Countess Caroline, after the destruction of his own flagship Emperor's Zeal by chaos forces. HDMS Countess Caroline serves as the flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron of Battlegroup Nicius

Tactica:

The new weapons batteries proved to be a great improvement over the older longer range batteries of the Overlord-class. Being able to bring much more firepower to bear, the Countess Caroline is able to fight at medium to short ranges quite effectively. The new weapons load out of the Countess Caroline works quite well with the shorter ranges of the other cruisers of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, giving the Squadron some standoff capability without being a liability at close range.

In battle, the Countess Caroline forms the core of the formation, using her longer ranged weapons to support the surrounding shorter ranged ships. She is now primarily used as a line-breaker, as opposed to other Overlord class vessels, which tend to serve in a long range support role.