



WARP RIFT
THE BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC NETZINE





COVER CREDITS:

Imperial Entanglements by Jack Watling. This image is experimental since I have been having a long running discussion with Roy about how weapon batteries should be portrayed. I started by depicting them as lasers, but this appeared too lance like, so I have started looking further afield. All of a sudden Halley's Comet came to the rescue to give me bullet like trails of plasma blue light.

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NAVIS NOBILITE

Welcome back!

It's rather amazing at how quickly the time goes between issues of Warp Rift. In that time we've seen more progress on the High Admiralty FAQ and rules projects with addition of Battlefleet Bakka for the Imperial Navy. I look forward to the finished products for the fleets the High Admiralty have been pouring their time and energy into making. These lists and other updates should provide a fresh look at the fleets we have been playing for years and hopefully provide some fun, alternative builds. There also seems to be an uptick in activity on Warseer with an influx of new players showing up on the forums there and over on Bolter & Chainsword. For those of you who may be new to the game, now is a great time to get your models painted up in preparation for Gothicomp, the annual Battlefleet Gothic painting competition. It's a great way to show off your fleets and to see what everyone else has been working on over the course of the year so don't be afraid to enter even if you don't think your ships will have a chance of winning.

We've had a large number of submissions in the last couple of months and we have a lot of great stuff for you this time around. Tactical Command features a second article about using grand cruisers with a look at the Avenger.

Continuing the theme of ilder vessels, the Ships Database is delving into using the ancient Space Fleet models and covers rules for a wide array of ships from the Annihilator to the old-school Emperor and even the Ironclad battleship. For those of you who are looking to set up a campaign using BFG, Encyclopedia Gothica focuses on running a campaign with more than two players. There are a few twists in there to keep things fresh for veteran players too! Continuing the theme of grand cruisers, Zelnik has allowed us to use his great article about how to magnetize them to keep your weapons interchangeable. Its a great article for those who like the ship but don't want to shell out the cash for multiple expensive models.

For the fluff nuts around here, we've got several bits for you in this issue with the conclusion of "A Good Deed" and the start of what is a rather lengthy work on Battlefleet Limante in Void Stalker. It will probably take several issues to fully post the fluff and scenarios so watch for more on this fleet. Remember that Warp Rift is supported by your contributions, so please submit articles, battle reports, or photos of what you are working on to help keep this publication alive. We really do need you! Until next time, keep painting, keep playing, and most of all have fun.

Thanks for reading,
Aaron (Vaaish)



USING THE AVENGER CLASS GRAND CRUISER

by DAVID HSCOCKS

Recently on the Specialist Games forum website there has been some discussion about the future of the Avenger class Grand cruiser. Without recapping the debate here again, many people, myself included, believe that the Avenger requires an upgrade to its firepower to better fulfil its primary role as a line breaker, as described in its fluff.

Unlike most however, I believe that the Avenger in its current form is actually an ok ship, so the purpose of this tactica is to try and explain how I believe one can maximize the effectiveness of the Avenger. I have had limited success with my Avenger versus Eldar due to its short range, and have had no experience with it versus Necrons: so this tactica will be implicitly concerned with Tau and Chaos fleets, although I am not giving race-specific advice.

The Avenger, in contrast to its relative, the Vengeance, must operate in concert with other vessels to be effective, or even to survive. Therefore this will be my main focus. The fluff states that the Avenger is a line breaker, several of its class charging into the middle of the enemy fleet to take and dish out some heavy firepower, thereby crippling the enemy fleet. Unfortunately most of us do not have several Avengers to be able to do this so we need to do the next best thing.

At this point we should make it clear that the Avenger cannot afford to charge an enemy fleet under fire. It does have reasonable protection and structural strength, but with its 5+ prow armour any fleet worth its salt will badly damage it before it gets to fire its broadsides. This is especially true as it has no prow firepower. This is set to change in FAQ 2010 where it will receive the option of prow torpedoes, but the armour issue will remain the same, making the addition of torpedoes of minor concern.

To resolve the armour problem we need to protect the Avenger with the standard Imperial cruisers who have 6+ prow armour, and

torpedoes, for example, the Lunar class. This type of cruiser shall be henceforth known as our 'line cruiser'. The line cruisers take the fire of the enemy fleet as they advance towards the enemy, as they are designed to do. The Avenger stays behind the first line, making it unlikely it will come under significant fire. However, under the F&Q2010 changes, this will make using its torpedoes difficult. It is a trade-off between being protected, and exposing oneself to enemy fire just to fire torpedoes, the likely gain will not outweigh the risk of being hit hard, and potentially reducing its much needed firepower.

When the line cruisers are within 30cm they fire their torpedoes to disrupt the enemy fleet then they enter the standard brawling stage at close range. The Avenger can now be unleashed into the fray. Using its strength 16 weapon batteries to decimate the (hopefully) scattered enemy ships the Avenger can pick off and cripple, or even destroy individual ships. If required its toughness (when compared to a line cruiser of 8HP) will allow it to duel with the larger enemy Grand cruisers and even battleships, although it is not guaranteed a victory, it will put up a stiff fight until its smaller brethren can come and support it. Its lack of prow armour at close range is less of an issue as the enemy will be hitting you hard anyway! When it receives prow torpedoes in FAQ2010 this will give it another useful weapon, which at close range can be especially deadly as the enemy rarely have time to intercept a torpedo salvo with fighter squadrons; and enemy ships will be reluctant to 'cross its tee' to get a devastating barrage into its prow if they know that next turn it will unleash torpedoes at close range.

Its ability to duel virtually any other large vessel is very useful for the Imperial Navy as they lack a useful gunship battleship that can keep up with the main fleet. The Retribution can keep up, but it is very pricey and its weapon batteries are not ideal for close range

duels, it is designed to stand-off from a brawl at long range in order to justify the extra points spent for 60cm range if nothing else! The Avenger has similar broadside strength, yet it is 155points cheaper. This is the price of a light cruiser and a Sword frigate; or 4 Sword frigates (the latter will provide you with another 16 weapon batteries!). Therefore, just on the points front, taking an Avenger is a good move, if you need a short range gunship, as the ability to take another few escorts or light cruiser gives you greater flexibility and ability to place your firepower where it is most needed over several vessels, rather than sinking the same amount of points into one vessel which is not designed as a close range brawler.

Therefore, the Avenger, even in its current form before the upgrades of FAQ2010, can be, and should be, used as a fleet support ship to exploit the success of the line cruisers. But to do this it needs the protection the line cruisers provide in order to actually reach the enemy line intact. Taking an Avenger in your fleet can be seen to provide one with several benefits: it is a cheaper (in points alternative to the Retribution and therefore allows you to pack greater firepower in your fleet; and it lets you use one of the greatest looking models in BFG in the original role it was designed for. It is a simple ship to use and will pay dividends, if it is used correctly. I hope this article has gone some way to addressing the concerns raised on the forum, and inspires people to take a second look at this oft-criticised ship.

Editor's note: This article was written before the final version of the 2010 FAQ when the option for prow torpedoes on Imperial grand cruisers was under consideration. That option is not available in the final draft copies of the FAQ. Please ignore references to the prow torpedoes in this article.



SPACEFLEET SHIPS IN BFG by TOM MOSELEY

Some of you may remember the articles in early Battlefleet Gothic magazine detailing stats for some strange looking imperial merchant ships and the Siluria light cruiser. As an old git I was forced to wipe away a nostalgic tear for a game and ship designs that have passed into the pages of history.

Space Fleet was released in 1991, halfway between a board game and a true tabletop war game. Sadly it was very short lived, the first set of expanded rules was released in WD139 with the last in WD147, nine months of official support. During that time models and rules were released for 15 Imperial ships, ten Tyranid and two Eldar. There was also a huge amount of background information regarding Space travel and the Imperium as a whole as well as information on related topics such as the Navigators, astropaths, astronomicon, warp travel times etc.

Looking at the old designs you can see how some of them influenced the new models and I for one have a desire to pull these old warhorses out of retirement and let them see the field of battle again alongside their descendants. GW has done a couple of conversions in BFG magazine one and four but I wanted to make the vessels as close to their old selves as possible while still using BFG rules and fitting into the current 40K universe. Unfortunately the Space Fleet rules were quite different to BFG and the size of the models means that even the largest battleship models in Space Fleet are only about the size of a light cruiser model in BFG, but I'm not going to let that defeat me. These ancient and sacred relics will fight again for the glory of the Emperor of man!

I will divide this into three parts; part one covering Imperial warships, and hopefully part two covering Imperial support ships and Eldar ships and part three covering Tyranids. All

GOTHIC LIGHT CRUISER

135 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Light Cruiser/6	30cm	90°	2	5+	2

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Port Weapons Battery	45cm	6	Left
Starboard Weapons Battery	45cm	6	Right
Prow Torpedoes	30cm	6	Front

Notes: The design of the Gothic clearly shows its early Imperial origins. Similar to the Dauntless cruiser but dating from the time of the great crusade, the Gothic has superior range and firepower and good defences. Though not quite a match for a full sized cruiser it would be a foolish captain who did not consider the Gothic to be a very serious threat.

points values are based on the Smotherman formula although I have had to use my own very skewed judgement in a lot of places where things not covered by Smothermans pop up.

IMPERIAL SHIPS:

Imperial ships were protected by a number of shields on the front and both sides that once lost could not be raised again, the rear was unshielded. Weapons were either batteries or lasers with no functional difference between the two and most ships were armed with vortex torpedoes. This list deals solely with Imperial warships.

COMMON UPGRADES:

These vessels are very rare now and even rarer still are vessels with their original sensor arrays and targeting matrices. For an additional 15 pts for each upgrade the ships can gain:

- +1Ld,
- a +ve shift on the gunnery table,
- no -ve shift on gunnery over 30cm

Alternatively or additionally you could use the Imperial vessel age rules presented in WR 29.

GOTHIC BATTLESHIP

In Space Fleet this was the mainstay of the Imperial fleet. There is a reference to the combat cathedrals being a kilometre high, which would make these pretty vast. Although battleships in name and size they occupied a place in the Imperial fleet similar to that of cruisers i.e. the main ship of the line. The Gothic had 6 shields per side and had a powerful medium range broadside as well as a vortex torpedo attack.

Being about the same size as a Dauntless you could use it as such but giving it a different forge world pattern. However, I still want it to retain some of the characteristics of its space Fleet predecessor so I want it to be well shielded and having a good medium range broadside; I like to think of it as a hard hitting light cruiser built in the very early days of the Imperium, as it looks a lot closer to a chaos vessel than the later armoured prow loyalists and that also fits with the general ethos of early imperial/chaos designs.

TYRANT BATTLESHIP

The tyrant was similar to the gothic but replaced the torpedoes with a prow laser and had a slightly more powerful broadside. It also had a power ram on the front, which I decided was worth 15 pts.

There is already an official GW ship for this model, the Siluria. However that misses out one of the main points of the Tyrant, the power ram, so I'm going to say that this is the earlier version prior to all the refits. The Siluria uses the same shell but has replaced most of the systems with current inferior technology. Evidently the power field on the power ram extended to the whole prow, giving it an armour value of 6+ compared to the Silurias' 5+, explaining the difference in armour value despite looking the same (putting a dedicated ram on a ship with poor frontal armour seemed a bit silly).

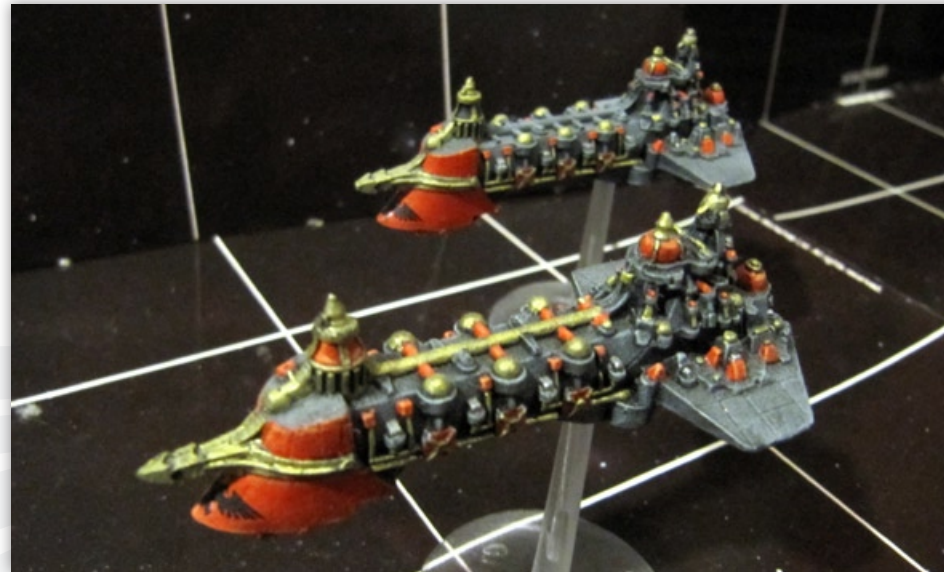
DOMINATOR BATTLESHIP:

This may well have been the original inspiration for the nova cannon; it covered 9 board squares and could wipe out an entire squadron of destroyers with a single shot and do huge amounts of damage to even cruisers and battleships. Not much firepower up close though.

I'm going to treat the Inferno cannon as a sort of giant nova cannon, it certainly looks a lot bigger. It effectively uses the same rules (you can use whichever version you like, I personally like the scatter dice option with lock on orders allowing

TYRANT LIGHT CRUISER

170 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Light Cruiser/6	25cm	90°	2	5+/6+ Prow	2
Armament		Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc	
Port Weapons Battery		45cm	7	Left	
Starboard Weapons Battery		45cm	7	Right	
Prow Weapons Battery		45cm	2	Front	

Notes: A very early imperial design, perhaps from a forge world that was absorbed into the Imperium during the great crusade, whatever the truth the similarities between this and later imperial ships are obvious. The design fell out of favour early in imperial history but it influenced later designs when the armoured prow came back into fashion.

The prow has a small battery to soften up the opposition as it closes in to use its energy ram. The energy ram adds 1d6 to rams and counts enemy's armour as -1.

Few of these remain in service with their original fittings and any that do are kept in reserve as precious relics only brought out in the direst of emergencies, but many have been refitted with current Imperial technology and renamed the Siluria class.



a re-roll if you scatter and eldar holo fields forcing a re-roll if you hit). However, rather than using the standard template you use the 7.6cm blast template. A direct hit still does D6 hits regardless of armour, this will only happen if the very central point of the template is over the ships base. Any ship with part of its base within the first 3.8cm takes D3 damage, any ship with its base partly in the outer 3.8cm takes one hit. I'm going to make the Inferno cannon 55 points. It should clearly be more than a nova cannon but it's not as useful as two so 55 points sounds about right.

If anyone wants to complain about that being overpowered I really have toned it down, a lucky shot could take out a battleship in one go, a really lucky shot could theoretically take out two and there was no scatter, you just said which square the shot landed in and BOOM! Mind you, an unlucky shot might do no damage at all.

THE EMPEROR CLASS CAPITAL SHIP

The Emperor was the super battleship of the imperial navy, lots of hits and shields, massive broadsides and a more powerful ram than the tyrant. It was faster than the other battleships but could not manoeuvre well at speed. It was also to carry 4 squadrons of fighters, but the rules for them were never released.

It mounts one set of weapons above the other like a grand cruiser, as opposed to the side by side arrangement of the standard cruiser, so for BFG I'm going to make it a transition between the Grand Cruiser and the prow armoured cruiser as it's just about big enough to justify making it a cruiser. I have also included stats for a downgraded version using current imperial technology in the same vein as the Siluria. The lance version is 175 points or 150 for the battery model. Although a Lunar is a better choice than the lance version the battery model is quite economical. It retains the energy ram but loses the extra D6 on AAF.



DOMINATOR LIGHT CRUISER

140 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Light Cruiser/6	20cm	45°	2	5+	2
Armament		Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc	
Port Weapons Battery		30cm	3	Left	
Starboard Weapons Battery		30cm	3	Right	
Inferno Cannon		30-200cm	Special	Front	

Notes: The Dominator mounts the Inferno cannon, the nova cannons big brother, on the same hull as the Tyrant. The weapon is the length of an entire frigate and causes carnage over an even wider area. Like its cousin the Dominator has turrets to deal with ordnance but it lacks the same frontal protection and its batteries are really only a last ditch defence, it's best to think of this ship as a monitor rather than a ship of the line, once the enemy gets close to the dominator you'd better have a good escort squadron to help you out or you'll be toast pretty quickly.



EMPEROR

215 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Cruiser/8	25cm	45°	3	5+/6+ Prow	3
Armament		Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc	
Prow Weapons Battery		45cm	2	Front	
Port Weapons Battery		45cm	6	Left	
Starboard Weapons Battery		45cm	6	Right	
Port Weapons Battery		45cm	4	Left	
Starboard Weapons Battery		45cm	4	Right	

Notes: This is the "missing link" between Grand Cruisers and later cruiser types. The armoured prow is present but the weapons retain the stacked configuration and the wings are absent. Some had weapons batteries complimented by lance arrays on the lower decks although these were never common even at the time of production; most were armed with 2 sets of batteries. Even without lances the Emperor is a formidable opponent thanks to its heavy shielding.

The energy ram adds 1d6 to rams and counts enemy's armour as -1. The ship also gets an extra D6 on AAF orders.

The Port and Starboard strength 4 batteries may be upgraded to strength 4 Port and Starboard Lances with 45cm range for a cost of 65 points.

Additionally, the ship may be downgraded to current Imperial technology by reducing all weapons ranges to 30cm and the following profile:

Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Cruiser/8	20cm	45°	2	5+/6+ Prow	2

If this option is taken the cost of the ship is reduced to 150 points with an option to upgrade the strength 4 batteries for strength two lances for +25 points.



THE IRONCLAD BATTLESHIP

According to Space Fleet these were built before humanity had a decent understanding of force field technology. Whether they meant before it was rediscovered after the Age of Strife or whether it means the thing is over 30,000 years old I'm not sure. Whatever its age it had no shields but was very heavily armoured, however the way armour works in BFG even if I give it max armour all round it is still very vulnerable whereas in Space fleet it could shrug off a good 50% of the hits. I'm going to give it eight hits and make it a cruiser due to its heavy construction rather than its size in order to give it a bit more survivability rather than start messing around with the armour rules.

The main weapon was the fusion cannon, a short range but potentially devastating weapon that could destroy a battleship in a single shot, the spaceship equivalent of a multimelta. It also has very powerful short range broadsides that drop off rapidly at medium to longer ranges, but again that's not something represented in BFG so I'm going to have to improvise. I have decided to make the fusion cannon cost the same as an Eldar pulsar lance and 65 points for the 6+ all round armour.

THE ANNIHILATOR BATTLESHIP

The Annihilator is a design from Cypra Mundi that instead of having fixed weaponry has a rotating turret. In Space Fleet these were 2 long range cannons. For BFG I think making it twin nova cannon would be appropriate, although it will mean a change from the original to include weapons for close quarter's battles.

I like the idea of it as a monitor, but if you wanted a version closer to the original it could be a twin high powered lance turret instead, each lance being strength 4 and 60cm range with no laser batteries for 170 points. If you think that's a bit much for Imperial technology on a small ship then maybe reduce the range to 45cm and have it cost 155 points, the original representing the ship when first built and the reduced range version being what the Imperium can currently maintain.

IRONCLAD CRUISER

200 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Cruiser/8	25cm	45°	N/A	6+	3

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Port Weapons Battery	45cm	3	Left
Starboard Weapons Battery	45cm	3	Right
Port Weapons Battery	30cm	4	Left
Starboard Weapons Battery	30cm	4	Right
Prow Fusion Cannon	30cm	3	Front

Notes: Ironclads date from before mankind had mastered force field tech they were built very heavily armoured, simple and robust. As a result a few have survived to the 41st millennium and provide a welcome addition to imperial fleets. They are particularly vulnerable to lance strikes though and having very little long range weaponry the careful commander will make sure they are well protected until they get in close where they can let rip with their devastating fusion cannons.

The fusion cannon counts as a short range lance and may only fire at a single target. However each successful hit does D6 hits

If using the lance version then the ship goes from vulnerable artillery piece to "tank hunter" and although vulnerable can be devastating against larger vessels, however it cannot split the firepower of its lances, each barrel may only engage one target so fares poorly against escort squadrons. The turret may not turn on lock on orders.

DICTATOR BATTLESHIP

Ok, now it gets really weird. I don't know what they'd been drinking when they came up with this one but whatever it was they must have drunk a lot of it.

The Dictator has two gigantic claws that stick out towards the front and a huge drill on its prow. The idea being to grab enemy ships and then drill inside, allowing boarding teams into the heart of the enemy ship.

To attack the Dictator initiates a ram with +1 to its leadership roll and does not need to be on AAF orders to do so, it only needs base to base contact during the movement phase. If the damage done by the Dictator exceeds the amount of damage done by the other vessel by two or more it has grabbed the ship. Neither ship may now move but the Dictator may fire at the grappled ship in the firing phase if its orders would normally allow that using the defence section of the gunnery table. A boarding action is fought in the end phase. Due to the specialised nature of the ship it counts double Boarding Value. The Dictator may release the enemy ship at any time but if the defender wishes to escape then in the movement phase another ram is resolved as if the dictator had rammed the defender again. If the defender does more damage than the dictator it has wrenched itself free and

may move as normal. I have given this ability a point value of 20, I haven't been able to test much on the battlefield so it may be way over or undervalued.

FIRESTORM CRUISER:

Using the same design principles as the gothic, the Firestorm cruiser is clearly the Gothic's little brother and played the same sort of role in Space Fleet as a light cruiser does in BFG.

You could just use these models as Forge world X pattern Firestorm or Sword frigates; however I want them to be closer to their predecessors so for want of a better name I'm going to call them the Firestorm Super Frigate make it a heavy escort in a similar way to the rules presented in WR 24. It moves as an escort and is not automatically destroyed by a critical hit from a hit and run attack, these just do one point of damage instead. A critical hit from a ships weapon system does an extra point of damage instead of normal critical damage and so destroys the Firestorm.

THUNDERBOLT CRUISER:

This odd looking thing was another experiment from Cypra Mundi with special engines and manoeuvrability widgets that made it as agile as an Eldar ship or destroyer despite being a cruiser size ship. It had all its weapons facing forward indicating its likely role was to chase down fast moving escorts or to harry large slow ships and was better shielded than the firestorm.

ANNIHILATOR MONITOR

145 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Light Cruiser/4	20cm	45°	2	5+	2

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Weapons Batteries	30cm	3	All Round
Twin Nova Cannon	30-150cm	2	Left/Front/Right

Notes: Experimental ship from Cypra Mundi mounting twin nova cannons. The Annihilator can turn its turret by one fire arc per turn either before its first shot, in between or after both. As such it can fire twice at targets on one heading or once at a target in each. If firing at the same target twice then on the second shot a "miss" on the scatter dice may be re-rolled. Use of "Lock on" special orders means that the turret cannot turn but means that the first shot gets 1 reroll and the second may well get 2! The Annihilator is best used as mobile artillery with a squadron of escorts to protect it. It is a great long range weapon but it is poorly equipped to deal with other ships directly.

If using the lance version then the ship goes from vulnerable artillery piece to "tank hunter" and although vulnerable can be devastating against larger vessels, however it cannot split the firepower of its lances, each barrel may only engage 1 target so fares poorly against escort squadrons. The turret may not turn on lock on orders.

DICTIONATOR LIGHT CRUISER

135 points



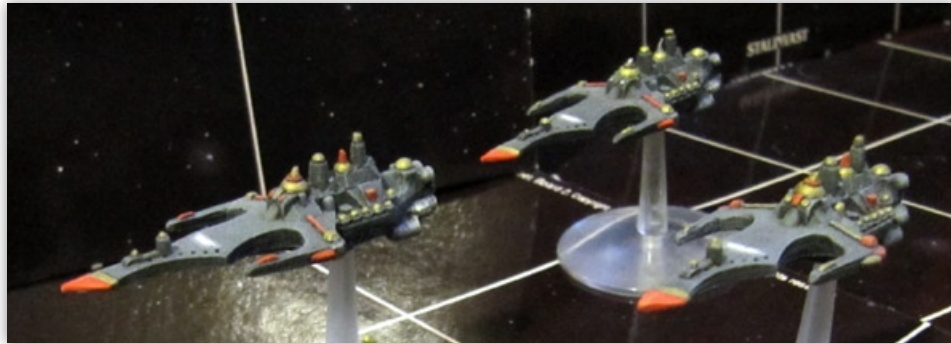
Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Light Cruiser/5	25cm	90°	3	5+/6+ Prow	2

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Weapons Batteries	30cm	2	Left/Front/Right

Notes: One of the weirdest ships ever built by human hands the Dictator was designed primarily to capture enemy vessels, however its small size means that it is only just about a match in boarding actions to a cruiser, even with the specially trained boarding parties battles could go either way and seeing that the boarding action is the vessels primary mode of attack the only real value of this ship would be to capture merchant ships or escorts, risking it against larger ships would be a waste. It is unsurprising that the ship was not in service for very long. They are however greatly prized by pirates and raiders and are more likely to be seen in action with them than the Imperial Navy.

FIRESTORM FRIGATE

60 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Escort/2	30cm	90°	1	5+	1
Armament		Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc	
Port Weapons Battery		45cm	3	Left	
Starboard Weapons Battery		45cm	3	Right	
Prow Torpedoes		30cm	3	Front	

Notes: Smaller cousin of the Gothic the Firestorm at half the cost of a light cruiser with almost as much firepower they do look attractive but have nowhere near the survivability. However as an escort hunter they excel, even if a lance would have been more appropriate than torpedoes, though at twice the cost of a cobra it is debatable if they are worth the cost in fleet actions as larger chaos ships outgun them at range.

THUNDERBOLT CORVETTE

100 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Escort/2	30cm	90°	2	5+	2
Armament		Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc	
Prow Weapons Battery		45cm	5	Front	
Prow Torpedoes		30cm	3	Front	

Notes: Experimental ship from Cyra Mundi, designed to be able to catch raiders and escorts and take them out with a single concentrated blast or to zip in and launch a torpedo strike against capital ships and then get out again before taking too much fire. Its exceptional speed and maneuverability help in this role and the heavy shielding give it extra staying power but it is still a fragile ship for the expense so care is advised when deploying these. Gains +2 Ld on AAF, CTNH & BR and +1d6 move on AAF.

This has been given an official conversion as the “fast clipper” but I want it to remain true to its origins as a proper warship. Evidently after the original systems proved too difficult to maintain for many fleets they were stripped of useful parts and the hulls sold on to commercial concerns as fast clippers.

To represent its speed and Space Fleet “super manoeuvrable” status in BFG it gets +2 to leadership for CTNH, BR, and AAF at a cost of 20 points as well as an extra D6 inches on AAF. As a heavy escort it has the same properties as the firestorm regarding movement, critical damage etc.

COBRA DESTROYER

The last of the true warships the Space Fleet cobra could quite easily be used as a version of the BFG Cobra Destroyer that was built in the early days of the Imperium in the same mould as the Gothic and Firestorm.

I’m going to use that premise but make it closer to its Space Fleet origins. The Cobra was massively fast in comparison to everything else, it would have to have a move of 60cm if I was using the speeds of the others as a guide but that’s way over the top so I’ll just give

it a speed of 35 like some of the marine ships with +d6 on AAF. It was also a super manoeuvrable craft so I will give it the same +2 Ld as the Thunderbolt but at a cost of 10 points this time as the craft is so vulnerable. Weapons wise it was very short range, not far off the current cobra. One interesting rule was it was so small that three vessels could occupy the same square and combine their shields and could not be rammed. It would have been nice to add something along these lines. Maybe allow cobras to fly in base to base contact and if so they share shields. It’s a thought that you could experiment with if you wish.

AUTHOR'S FINAL NOTE:

Obviously these are amateur rules designed by someone who has a slight bias for the old ship designs. Feel free to experiment with them and change points values etc. based on playtesting.

COBRA DESTROYER

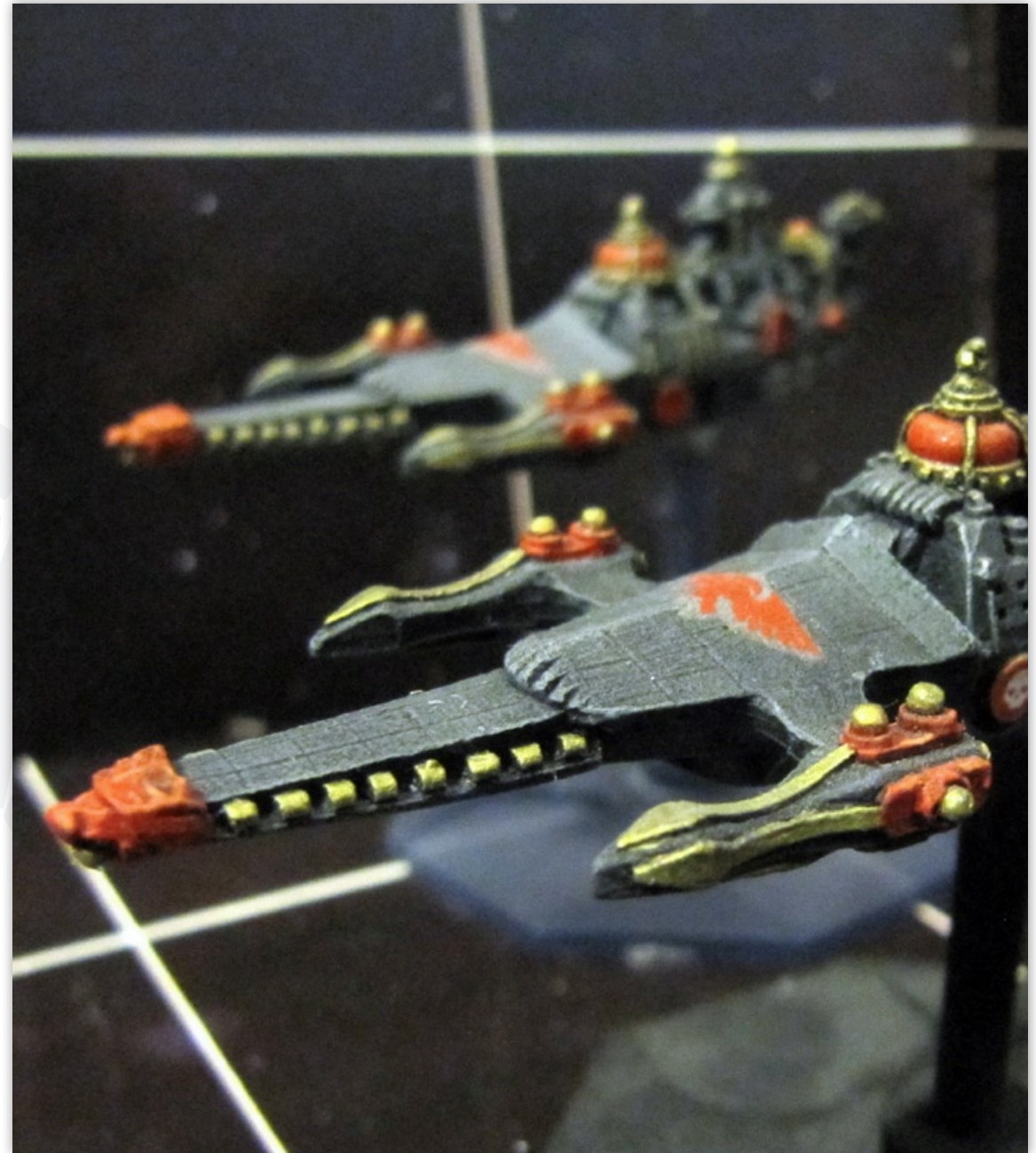
50 points



Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Escort/1	35cm	90°	1	4+	1

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Prow Weapons Battery	30cm	3	Front/Left/Right
Prow Torpedoes	30cm	2	Front

Notes: Early Imperial destroyer escort, later replaced with the current cobra when the demands of maintaining its advanced maneuvering cogitators and reactors that gave such high speed and weapon power in such a small ship. The Cobras fragility compared to its larger cousins means that surviving vessels of this type are rarely used in combat, the technologies on board too important to lose even if the vessel is superior to the current cobra. +2Ld for AAF, CTNH & BR. +d6 on AAF



CAMPAIGN RULES by UNKNOWN

This is a quick guide for how to run a map based campaign with multiple players. I have written this after running several campaigns to attempt to resolve the occasional hiccups we encountered when having more than two players.

At the beginning of the campaign, the starting system for each player is determined by drawing a system name out of a hat, an easy way of making a random selection. Any pirate players do this secretly.

At the start of each campaign 'turn', roll a D6 for each player. The highest moves their fleet (if they wish) into a neighbouring system to occupy it OR, they may attack an occupied neighbouring system OR, if their renown is over 21, they may attempt to locate a Pirate base using the official rules (if pirates are present in the campaign). Pirates may attack any system in the campaign map, even if it isn't connected to their base system. The player with the least number of systems gets a +1 bonus to their roll to see when they have their turn.

- **Pirate players do not count.** They have enough advantages already.

If a player elects to attack another, and the defending player does not wish to fight, they should roll a D6x10. If roll under their commander's renown they may escape, abandoning the system permanently with the loss of D6 renown points. The enemy player then occupies the system as if he had just won the battle. At this point determine what type of combat it would have been, i.e., a raid or a battle.

- **NB- if it was only a raid then the system becomes neutral after 1 turn, instead of returning to its former owner.**

If the defending player fails his test, then he must fight the battle anyway, but with no re-rolls, as he has lost some of his authority in the confusion surrounding his failed attempt to abandon the system!

Resolve any battles that occur, making sure the following are done and noted:

- **Ships that are damaged may be repaired or withdrawn for repairs.** Repair points include any systems just captured during the current campaign turn.

- **NB- Both sides may repair ships.** This may lead to the situation whereby a player plays several battles during the campaign turn so gets multiple opportunities to repair ships. Any ships may be repaired, even if they didn't take part in the battle.

- **Exception- the player's whose turn it isn't may only repair ships that took part in the battle.**

- **ALSO NB- damaged ships from previous campaign turns may not be repaired prior to a battle taking place in the owning players turn.** It's just tough!

- **Leadership changes to ships are made.**

- **Any ships that are permanently destroyed are removed from the roster, and are NOT automatically replaced.** Again, it's just tough luck. That's what being a commander is all about, dealing with awkward problems.

- **The player whose turn it is may appeal for reinforcements etc.** This can only be done in the turn of the appealing player, after any combats. Ships arrive immediately.

Once the first player has made his move, resolve the next player's move and so on and so forth.

Once all players have made a move make a note of end of campaign turn renown for each player.

Then start another campaign turn!

I hope people find these guidelines helpful for running a map campaign. In order to make it even more memorable, write up a campaign log for each turn, so that the course of the campaign can be seen afterwards, this is especially useful for reminding people of your bragging rights...



MAGNETIZING GRAND CRUISERS by ZELNIK

Hey folks, when the rules recently were changed, and allowed my ultimate dream of a double Avenger grand cruiser list, I ran out to my local battle bunker and ordered two Vengeance grand cruisers for immediate development. However, like most of us, we know that these ships are used to make five (six if you count the gov'nah) other cruisers, and I would be damned if I would just leave this opportunity to pass. I decided to magnetize the vessel, and make this how-to for the rest of you to enjoy.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Vengeance grand cruiser kit.

All the weapons bits you could desire

K&J Magnetics (kjmagnetics.com) magnets, specifically 2 BX041 or BX041-N52 (for super grip.. may be too strong, as I found out the hard way) AND you will need a ton of B8401 (I got 50, seemed to be enough for 2 grand cruisers). A word of caution, Neodymium is BRITTLE, and will crack and break if struck too hard, even by other magnets. I had a few shatter just from the force of their own magnetism, and some crack from the pressure! be careful and buy extras!

Super glue

A dremmel or drill press

A really mean file (the kind that can beat up Chuck Norris)

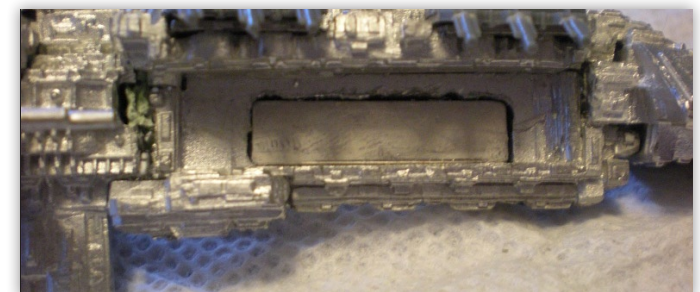
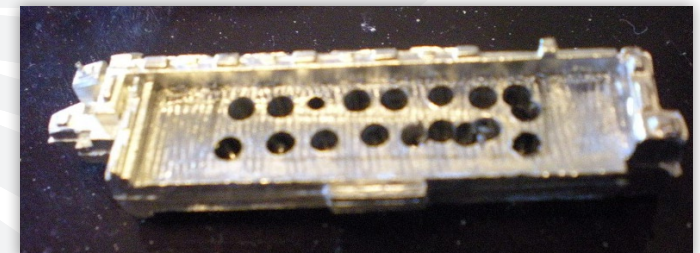
First things first, you need to clean the model bits of flash and mould lines, get all of that stuff done with *first*. Do not assemble the mini! this is critical!

Next. Observe the lower weapons deck (where the imperial bits sit), this is where 90% of the swearing is going. Two bx042's are JUST thinner than the width of the gun bay. Take your bx042 magnet and connect two together, then rest them in the gun bay, as centered as you can, then use a pencil to draw the outline of said magnet. If you want to be precise, drill a hole at the two upper corners, and stencil the other side.

This is the hard part. You need to CUT OUT that block, and it's about 1/4th of an inch of solid pewter. Dremmels and drill presses HATE pewter, because it binds with the bit. you do NOT need to be precise, I used a drill press and drilled holes along the stenciled line (just inside it so the top of the hole met the stencil). Do this ALL along the stencil, including the bottom (be careful not to cause too much damage to the mini here). Once you have a perforated square, use clippers to cut between the holes, eventually you should get the bulk of the metal out.

Once the bulk is out, get your "Chuck Norris Destroyer" file out, and get to it, using the BX042 as a guide for your filing, once it fits SNUGLY (you don't want it to be loose otherwise it will need green stuff to secure), take it out, apply superglue to the interior of the cut out segment, and put the magnet in, centering it as best you can. Add more superglue to large gaps if desired. The hard part is done.

Next, file down the inner borders of the bay, so you are sure that both weapon battery bits fit without bowing out (I had to do this for both of my ships). Double check with ALL imperial bits that they fit properly!



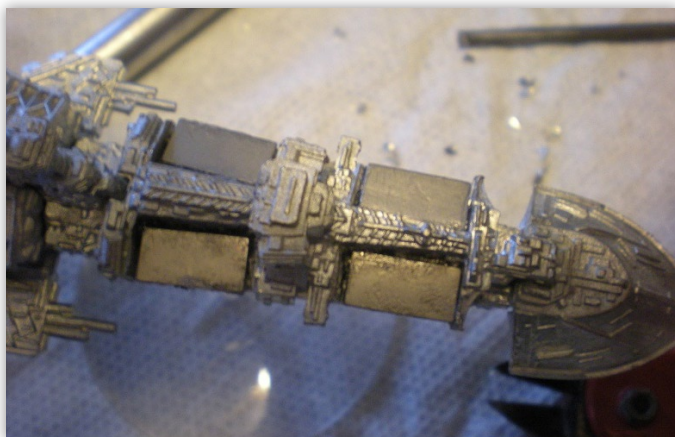


Next, take your smaller magnets (B8401) and carefully apply them to the back of imperial bits with superglue (make sure your magnetic poles are correct). Carrier bits are a little trickier, as they have no flat back to use, there is however, an inner border which will support these magnets just fine, and the magnetism is more than strong enough to hold them in place (trust me on this) I suggest you label your magnets with +'s and -'s to avoid confusion later.



The Upper bay. This is less labor intensive but trickier than the lower bay. You need to file or clip down the two lance bays set into the pewter, and clean out the edges as well so your B8401's will sit in the bay. If you don't do this, your ship will look like a hunchback. This is where sturdy clippers and "Chuck Norris Emasculator" come into play. **DO NOT APPLY MAGNETS YET!**

Go to your Chaos bits. The flat surface under the bits is PERFECT for the b8401. Glue it in, and place another magnet onto the glued magnet (do not glue magnets together! wait for the glue to dry completely!) Next, place it on the filed weapons bay, if it fits to



your desired level, apply some glue (not enough to overlap) to the bottom of the magnet and place it directly onto the mini (with the connected weapon bit). If you did this cleanly enough, after about 10 minutes, you should be able to remove the bit with no problem, and your magnet should be securely in place.

Think the hard part is over? Hardly. Right now you have huge magnetism forces running through your mini. You will have to use some significant force to glue down the top bay to the bottom bay. Once they are secured, you can complete the construction knowing that you have constructed a magnetic masterpiece!

Just be aware, Neodymium is EXTREMELY strong when it comes to magnetism, your bits will not come off without your permission, but you may want to be careful storing and transporting them.

SPECIAL NOTE: The Vengeance weapon battery bit has a raised border on its back, the lower side requires filing and/or clipping down so a magnet will sit flat.



GOTHICOMP 2010 SHIP CATEGORY WINNER: ELДАР VOID STALKER

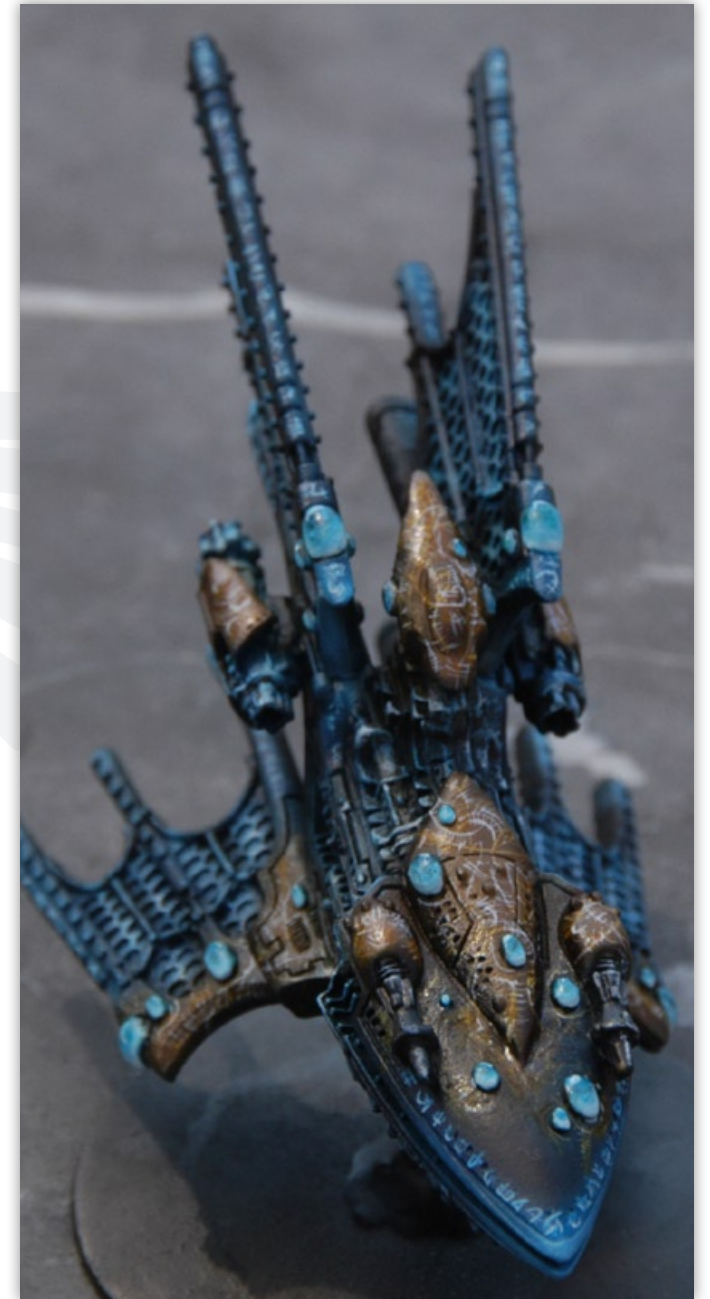
ABOUT THE ARTIST:

I was very flattered to be approached by Warp Rift to feature my modified void stalker in this showcase! I've been building and painting miniatures for about ten years, although I'm only usually able to finish about a couple pieces per year due to time. Originally, I started painting just to have some nice gaming pieces for epic 40k, BFG, et cetera. However, I've found that entering contests such as Gothicomp are now the best part of the hobby for me. As a dentist, I enjoy using dental materials, drills, and other instruments to make my conversions.

This Eldar void stalker draws its inspiration from Yellow One's work at Coolminiornot.com. Unfortunately, it hasn't been named yet, as I'm currently working on some sister ships, and will name them together. To build it, the prow guns and detail was sanded off, and dental composite added to both bridges to give a smoother surface for the freehand painting. The jewels are all made from greenstuff. The sponson cannons were made from the epic 40k era phantom titan arms. Painting wise, I used an iwata custom micron airbrush to give the blue transitions, and golden browns. By airbrushing lighter and darker browns in strategic areas, a non-metallic metal effect is achieved. All the jewels and freehands were hand painted. Thanks for your interest, and hope to see you in the next Gothicomp!

Canucks Fan





BATTLEFLEET LIMANTE, PART I

by BRYAN MCMACHO

Located at the very edge of the Ultima Segmentum, Battle fleet Limante is last on the list for nearly every request and refit you can imagine. Their job is not atypical of any other Imperial fleet commands; pirate hunting, xeno's purging, and trade lane protecting. However, they make do without equipment readily available in other sectors. Anyone who volunteers to serve in this sector of Emperor forsaken space can expect no glory or recognition except from those with whom they serve. The lack of regular support and control from any higher commands means discipline and rigid adherence to orders is less common than elsewhere in the Imperium. In fact, they encourage their ship commanders to use their own initiative to decide how to proceed in a battle. This can produce spectacular results, though not always helpful.

The sector is divided up into seven sub-sectors. The largest is called Prime. The smallest is called Omega with Trian, Oilia, Riame, Polia, and Wedgm falling in between. Each is named for a planetary system or local hero of days long past, and have changed names several times since the formation of the Imperium.

The local commanders still believe that the Emperor and the rest of the Imperium are fighting against Horus and the Traitor legions, a fact the Inquisition would like to keep quiet. They execute any who would tell them differently as heretics attempting to sow dissent among the populace during a time of war. Because of this, the main color scheme of the sector is gold with blood red prow and blue lighting for the observation decks. Grey and black as trim are not uncommon but green and blue are almost never used. Those who enter this sector rarely leave and those who enter leave their past behind them to embrace the mindset of this forgotten sector with a reckless abandon lest they be branded as heretics and shot. Why Gulliman and the Inquisition deigned to keep them in the dark about events form so long ago, none can fathom.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BATTLEFLEET LIMANTE

M29.89765411.

Sector incorporated into the growing expanse of space under the dominion of Humanity. Regular trade routes with outlying Eldar Exodite worlds and stout humanoid colonies.

M30.11873114.

Segmentum command orders cessation of all trade routes with outlying xenos species. Boarder disputes soon erupt into open conflict.

M30.13659817.

Space Marines from the Ultramarine's Legion arrive and help thwart xenos incursions against Human occupied worlds. News of the Heresy brought to light to the populace. Martial law instituted on all worlds within jurisdiction of Sector fleet command.

M31.56403411.

No news as to the outcome of the Heresy so it is assumed the battle still rages. No new ships or supplies from Segmentum command reinforced this idea and the local Sector command instituted flexible combat doctrines to allow for more rapid response to imminent threats but at the expense of being able to muster larger capital ship fleets.

M33.48710013.

Inquisitor Fregh arrives to quell an uprising of cultists of a strange and unknown power. Symbol of an eight point star at the sight of cultist operations base unconfirmed as the area was subsequently bombarded from orbit by the Inquisitor's personal vessel.

M33.98120031.

Inquisitor Fregh returns with fervent pleas for the sector's populace to contribute to the Imperium's continued survival against the arch enemy and his traitor legions. Fully half of the Sector's capitol and escort ships are pulled into service for Segmentum command. The remaining ships coordinate for overlapping areas of responsibility.

M36.56190811.

Sector command receives the go ahead for a plan to institute open selections for officer positions and do away with the Class selection system prevalent previously in place. Several wide spread riots occur but are quickly quieted by local forces.

M36.87314900.

Candidate positions are overflowing with likely captains but due to a lack of vessels to command many are assigned training ships as their own vessels and are encouraged to become inventive in renovating them back into active service.

M36.91830132.

Ship captains Sector wide have reinstated enough ships to almost double the active listings. Following this resurgent, the local fleets were strong enough to counter growing pirate activities and incorporate yet more vessels into their depleted ranks allowing yet more operations to occur.

M38.41973601.

Inquisitor Tiuo arrives and gives more impassioned pleas to help their fellow man against the arch enemy, fleet command surrenders their last two remaining battleships, the Tia's Fury and Gulliman's Eye, to Segmentum control along with all active grand cruiser analogs and redraws battle strategy to cover for their loss.

M39.11091101.

Ultramarine's Captain Marneus Calgar arrives and helps to crush a growing rebel insurrection and gives renewed praises to their support of the Imperium and its fight against the traitor and his defective legions.

M40.55917091.

First Sector encounter with xenos species classified as Ork's by Segmentum command. Full retreat initialized on 5 worlds. Defensive tactics are ineffective against tough and rugged capital ships. Ground forces fail to halt enemy advance or even slow it down. Ultramarine's under command of Chaplain Finius arrives to crush the xenos incursion and repel them from the Sector.

M40.87918211.

Ork forces sighted within local Nebula after they raid a listening post and fail to disable all surveillance monitors. Sector command issues new orders for patrolling fleets to concentrate their routes into that area of space to root out any potential resurgence of invasion.

M40.89192751.

Ork forces defeated at the battle of Hipieros IIX. Wreckage of large vessel of unknown configuration burns up in atmosphere only slightly before impacting and wiping out all life on world. After radiation levels dropped to acceptable limits investigation teams discovered the vessel was actually several salvaged vessels put together within a large rock formation that allowed them all to function in concert with one another. The battleship Tia's Fury was discovered to be a part of the wreckage but beyond all attempts to salvage it.

M41.0010115.

Ork forces routed on planet Femel II when an intrepid band of soldiers sneaks past enemy lines to reactivate several defense laser weapons and destroy several capital ships before shields could be raised. Ork counter attacks eliminate the soldiers but the damage was done, this morale boost to the defenders was enough to inspire a counter attack strong enough to overwhelm the enemy forces.

Present day.

Ork raiding parties sighted fighting ancient Eldar trading partners from Exodite world Khane's Garden. Orks shown to be no match against the superior mobility of the Eldar escort fleet and were quickly routed. Sector command made secret arrangements with Exodite worlds to assist in protection in exchange for upgraded propulsion designs. Implementation of schematics is scheduled to be incorporated into escort vessels starting in two standard years slowing construction due to unfamiliar techniques.



The training regimens are varied depending on the applicants' skill and ability to learn. There are no predominant naval families in this area of space. It is the capacity to command that weeds out the weak and puts only the most skillful into positions of authority. The Sector command has some control over who is in charge, but usually find out after changes have been implemented.

Recently sightings of Orks have increased along the borders of the Riame cluster (Five habitable systems all within ten light years of each other or less) and as a result reports of monthly raids are not uncommon. Because of the lack of cruiser sized salvage most the Ork ships follow the same doctrine as the local Imperial Navy squadrons. Why they would be extending to the rim of the galaxy instead of the core none can imagine just yet but some whisper of a ravenous all consuming race of xenos that can strip bare a world in weeks of all it once was, leaving a dried husk behind it. Such rumors are rooted out with extreme prejudice. Only time will tell the veracity of these rumors; the fate of this entire sector of space

rests upon the actions of those who patrol this distant area of the Imperium alone and without support.

SPECIAL SHIPS.

There are several famous escort squadrons and cruisers in Battlefleet Limante. The following list contains the ship type then the short history of each.

No pre-heresy vessels are in the famous ships roster or available to the list because they were cruisers requisitioned by Inquisitors or Space Marines in order to prevent the spread of corruption through the Sector's ranks via their strange construction methods. All subsequent captured vessels are turned over to Segementum command for decommissioning and salvage.

The *Tia's Fury* was a Desolator class battleship and a heavy sigh of relief was given at Segementum command when it was discovered to be beyond salvage since the Sector's command staff would spare no expense to bring it back into service otherwise. Whether

or not they will ever suspect sabotage is debatable, but for now the situation remains calm surrounding the subject.

Escort Carrier Groups:

Tia's Rangers: A small squadron of three escort carriers that made themselves famous after sending out the boarding parties that ended the threat from a massive Ork ship above Hipieros IIX. Upon rediscovery of the battleship *Tia's Fury* among the wreckage the group's captains immediately abandoned their former name and took up the name "Tia's Rangers" in honor of the fallen vessel.

Ragnarok's Renegades: A squadron with a reputation for wild and dangerous close encounters with enemy ships this escort carrier group has never been short of captains looking to volunteer their vessels for duty within its ranks. While the makeup of the group remains in flux due to mission demands and ships leaving to return to home ports at inconvenient times, two ships remain at its center. The *Terminus Diablos*, and the *Rear End*. These escort carriers have been modified to carry a larger compliment of attack craft and a larger thruster bank to quickly engage the enemy at the expense of weapons batteries and close support fire weapons.

Cobra Squadrons:

Far Reach Patrol: Credited with the first kill against the Ork menace in its opening advance. Cruiser analog WAAAAAGGGGHHH *Of doom* based on wreckage collected after sweep of battle zone discovered the side plate painted in glaringly harsh red.

Group 319A: A group of training ships that were ambushed on a routine patrol of the space lanes. Having only a minimal torpedo compliment and no weapons batteries, which had been switched out in favor of better sensor equipment capable of recording more data, they chose to take the fight in close and come upon their foe's rear where their torpedo's stood the best chance of inflicting damage to the enemy's engines and still allow for the squadron to escape. The Traitor Vessels of Murder and Carnage classifications *Nurgle's Blessing* and *Ill Fates* catastrophically imploded upon impact of torpedo volley resulting in the loss of training vessels *Rear Most* and *Center Pawn* in the blast waves. The remaining three vessels guarded salvage and rescue operations until relieved.

Transports:

Gamblers luck: This large contingent of trading vessels is famous for having refused to pull orbit in the face of Ork invasion to their home world of Tia. Stubbornly, they refused to abandon their position as the Orks took up position to drop Rok's onto the planet to facilitate their invasion. But with the transports blocking the way, the invasion could not proceed. The Ork vessels drew in closer and began firing on the transports in hopes of causing them to flee. Instead, the transports maintained formation and burned full ahead and engaged the Ork vessels in close quarters boarding actions crippling two cruiser analogs and sending the attendant Ork vessels into flight. Subsequent engagements by naval forces reduced the two cruisers to hulks in the following weeks.

Lunar:

Limante's Pride: Named for the famous explorer ship that discovered this sector's rich mineral deposits that led to its colonization and ultimate inclusion within the Imperium's domain. It has acquitted itself well in all engagements and has never been crippled by enemy fire. Kill records account for five Cruiser Analogs and a score of escort vessels. It is set to be decommissioned in early M42 due to lack of replacement Lance arrays.

Gothic:

Yearning Justice: Due to a lack of replacement Lance arrays, the captains of this vessel have become increasingly ingenious in their ad-hock repairs of broken system components. At one time they used giant polished mirrors to focus the radiation into a concentrated enough area to bring down an opposing cruiser of the Slaughter configuration and allow for boarding parties to cripple it before it fled the system. Currently they are using captured Eldar arrays to supplement their own dwindling reserve components.

Domminator:

Egad: This vessel was named for a famous saying recorded by the Exploritor Limante when he discovered the planet Tia. It has acquitted its self well against all opponents and has not been damaged by hostile fire, but has been crippled due to Ork boarding actions. Its Nova cannon has made it famous throughout the entire sector

for never having missed once since it was released from its trials in M 38.

Dictator:

Flambe: Due to the lack of attack craft parts and manufacturing abilities, this ship is of a rare breed these days. Used only in major actions that affect the fate of the entire Sector it has always been covetously guarded by the best Sector command has to offer. Even then, its captains have disregarded orders to avoid close action and nearly all have bloodied their hull against opposing capital ships by ramming them broadside and ripping them in two on more than one occasion. This has caused many in Sector command to consider decommissioning the ship and scraping it for parts that other cruiser's can use and distributing crew and attack craft to escort carrier flotillas.

Inquisition Black Ships:

Thon's Suspicion: This ship has made appearances where ever an Ork fleet has been engaged and driven back. Claiming to be assisting in sweeps for any remaining Ork vessels, this ship's motives remain unknown.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

Grand Admiral Firana Shae. She is the first female to gain the title of Captain and went on to gain the highest naval rank within the Sector. Famous for instituting the recruiting of commoners into officer positions within her command and maintaining higher success rates when compared to similar achievements by her fellows. This system was then introduced sector wide with some resistance but overall it was widely accepted and has proven to be the right choice for a fleet cut off from regular resupply and support from Segmentum command.

Upon attaining the rank of Grand Admiral she mandated that the succession of the title was to go to the most capable person within the fleet, not necessarily the one with the highest rank and status. This has lead to a score of Grand Admiral's fresh out of their first

command due to their brilliant tactics and unconventional thinking while somehow convincing others to obey their bizarre orders.

Flag Captain Marus: No one alive knows this man's last name. He only tells it to someone he intends to kill. Thankfully, he has yet to tell anyone loyal to the Imperium his last name. His reasoning behind this is said to be that if his enemies knew that part about him they could piece his whole life together and his element of surprise would vanish. This is unsubstantiated; however, he has been second to four captains rotating through the Timno's command and has repeatedly refused the position himself or any other for that matter. His reasoning is that he is in love with the ship and she would be deeply hurt if their current relationship advanced too quickly. After all when you're a being that measures time in millenium even after his serving for near to 60 years any change now would be seen as far too fast for her. This is assumed to be a poor attempt at humor.

Reginald Tanis: Group leader for the 451st Escort Carrier Squadron made famous by leading several raiding strikes against hardened pirate hideouts and capturing no less than fifteen orbital installations and half a dozen escorts while their crews were caught in airlock lifts attempting to board ships. He ordered his fighter wings to target the umbilical tubes connecting the station and its outlying vessels and static defenses, he succeeded by mere moments. He is also an outspoken critic of Segementum's lack of support for their efforts and the constant need to use increasingly dangerous tactics just to survive. He is gathering support for appealing above Segmentum to Holy Terra and the Emperor Himself in an attempt to get additional men and material where it is needed in the fight.

The Inquisition and Ultramarines keep a close watch on his popularity and there are rumors an "accident" may happen to ensure his ideas do not gain too much momentum and prevent knowledge of the Heresy's end. Since ships and crews from outside the sector would be needed to relieve beleaguered worlds from Ork incursions, Ordo Hereticus is prepared to move when Tanis' position threatens stability in the sector.

Commander Scott Tiniade: Commander of the space station orbiting Reain III. He is famous for having scrounged enough salvaged parts from captured enemy vessels to refit an entire flotilla in under a month. His quick turnaround times have led many patrols to detour from their assignments effect repairs under his command. Despite having trained several capable subordinates, people prefer to speak to him directly.

On two rare occasions he was asked to provide service to a stunted human-like race. They identified themselves as the Demiurg and made it known they had no political or territorial conflicts with the Imperium; they were simply passing through on a trade mission. The second time was on their return. Each time apparently they were set upon by pirates attempting to procure their goods and each time repairs were complicated by mysterious systems and unidentified components.

Brushing off comments he had become a xenos lover, his reply was simple and eloquent. "If you witnessed a beautiful painting and you were an artist, who or what painted it would matter less to you then the quality of its appearance and skill used to make it. I am the same with machines; I pay attention to the slightest details in every part of one. The quality and integrity of the systems matter more to me then the appearance of the race that built them. Anyone who should argue with me on this point can find a new port of call." No one has since raised concerns.

Editor's note: Be sure to check out the next issue of *Warp Rift* for the conclusion of Battlefleet Limante including scenarios and ships!



A GOOD DEED, PART II

by A. R. ASTON

Por'Kais watched the medical procedures with a keen interest borne partially of wonder. It was rare to witness the medical division of the Earth Caste at work, for each section of society had its role to place, and there was little need to understand the intricacies of each aspect of the Tau culture. Still, it was fascinating to watch them work upon the ruined gue'la.

Donated gue'vesa blood pumped into him from one of the medical drones, while a concoction of other chemicals and fluids were pumped into him from various implements of healing; needles, drips, carefully administered tablets in a veritable rainbow of hues. As the drones bobbed around the man like fretting wet-nurses, the pale-robed Earth Caste engineers worked on his wounds with glinting scalpels,

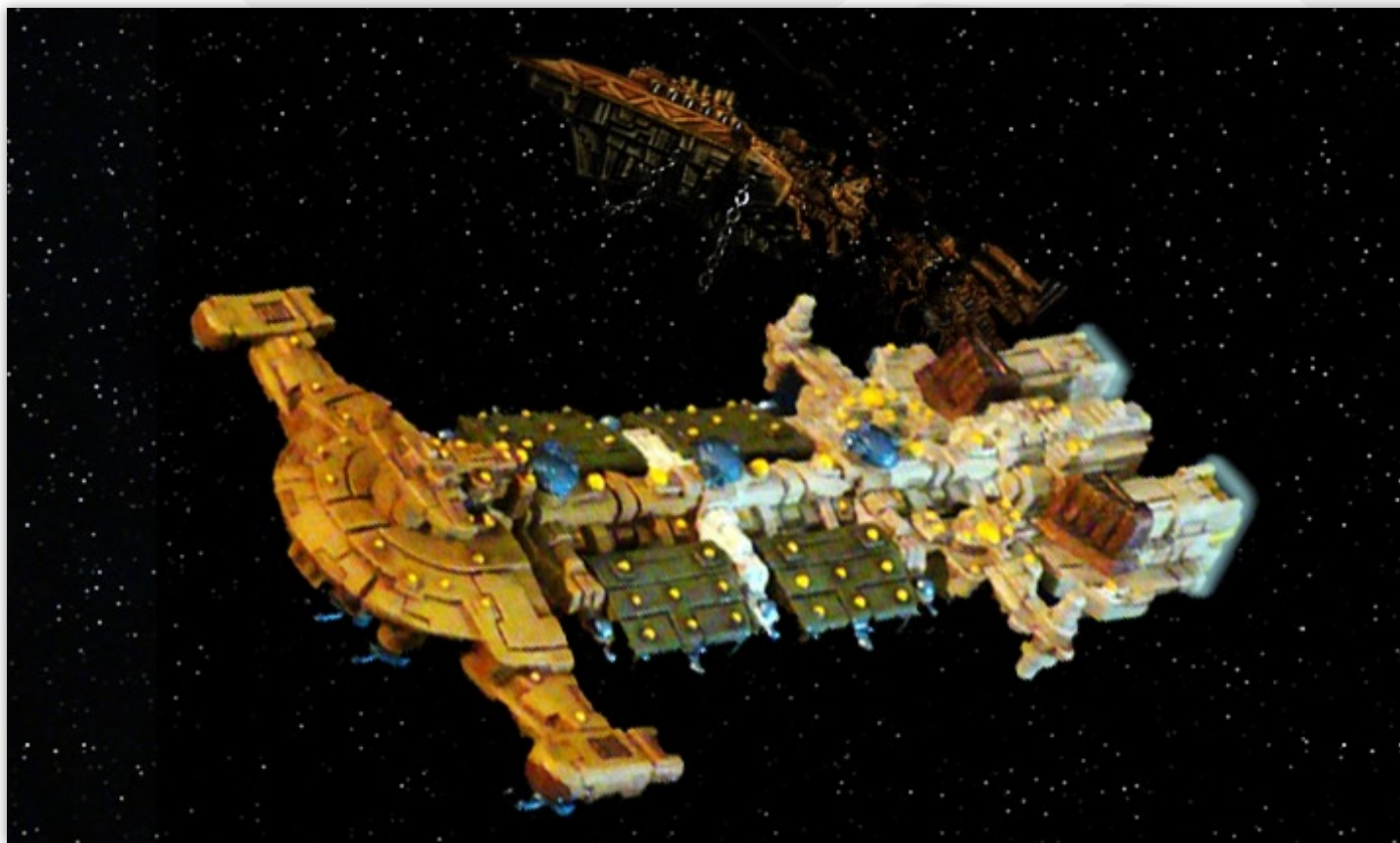
pressure cramps and flesh bonding agent for sealing wounds, and many pieces of equipment Por'Kais had never seen before.

The figure's blood-soaked rags had been cut away first, before they were deposited in a sealed hopper to the right of the operating table, the black and crimson tones quite at odds with the sterile white and cool blue illumination of the medical deck of the Explorer starship. A simple blue robe in the style of the gue'vesa was folded at the foot of the bed, ready to dress the gue'la once the procedure was complete. It was a wondrous sight, to witness the reconstruction of a living being, Por'Kais decided as he watched the man slowly taking shape once more, getting stronger and more distinct with every dec which passed by. It was like sculpting a new gue'la from an old wreck. How apt an image to go with the coming assimilation of these people into the Empire, Por'Kais grinned.

Soon, the gue'la leader would be fit enough to talk to. The water caste diplomat would give him little time to recover. Though he wished no harm upon the man, it was always best to go into negotiations from a position of power; and what greater position than that of a saviour to the survivor?

After two kai'rotaa, Por'Kais gently sat down at the man's bedside, smiling in his best approximation of the human facial cue of mercy. Now was the time to coerce the gue'la into giving into the Tau's philosophy at last. With a spoken command, he lowered the privacy screens. None of their conversation would be overheard by those caste members who it was not meant for. To be alone with an alien did not scare the experienced diplomat; uttering a single pass word would unlock the screen instantly, and summon his bodyguard detachment scant seconds later.

Slowly the man's youthful features turned to face the Tau, wiping a strand of his loose bedraggled hair from his face before he smiled



warmly at the Water Caste envoy. The man's teeth glinted silver, and Por'Kais folded his features in a Tau expression of mild surprise.

"I assume you are my hero then?" the man smirked, sitting up slightly.

"In a manner of speaking. We picked up your signal at our Waystation. What happened to your vessel?"

The gue'la sat back and smiled wistfully for a few moments. "A... difference of opinion. I don't know if you realise this, but my race does like to disagree."

"Yes, we have noted the disunity amongst your race. You are unfortunately like we were during the Mont'au, before we bettered ourselves."

"The Mont'au? I am not familiar with this term," the man replied with a wry smile.

"The Terror. A period of anarchy and destruction across our home world, before the coming of the Ethereals. It was a time of disunity and—"

"Chaos?"

The Water Caste envoy nodded simply. "But we overcame it through the greater good. We abandoned fear and distrust and hatred, in favour of enlightenment and the unity of all races. You seem, if I may say, rather permissive of me. Most Gue'la I have met despise us seemingly on principle."

The gue'la's silver teeth glistened as he licked them. "What does differences in species and creed matter to me? Yet, I am guessing you have not come to me for my politics?"

"Alas no," Por'Kais began, placing a blue hand upon the man's own scarred hands. "I have come to ask you to join us, and to share your culture with us, so we can assimilate and accommodate your people into our collective Empire. For the greater good you understand?"

The man shrugged. "Technology? I am more than happy to share our technology with you. What's mine is yours and... well..." He trailed off for a moment. "You are referring to the warp engine they managed to salvage in the bowels for the ship?"

Por'Kais smiled his inhuman smile. "Yes. We have loaded it aboard the ship already, but your cooperation in allowing us to access it is preferred."

"But not required?" the man chuckled, before coughing painfully as the sealant in his chest pulled slightly against the flesh.

"You are certainly a wise leader of your people," Por'Kais also chuckled, emulating the man as much as possible.

The silver-fanged figure leant forwards as he concluded his fit of retching coughs, his expression amused and conspiratorial. "Tell you what, I will make these men join your conclave or whatever your group is, and you can have all the secrets to that warp engine in your hold, on a single condition. Do you accept?"

"Well, tell me the condition first. It is only fair that I know what I am potentially giving up if I agree."

The man nodded. "Fair enough I suppose Tau. What I want is a simple thing; the most simple of things perhaps. Information. Ideas. An exchange of knowledge. I want to know more of this greater good," he replied, almost whispering in his gleeful excitement.

Por'Kais beamed. "Well, the first stage is governmental integration, where we match existing records of knowledge and logistics with Tau logs. Then comes the politi—"

The man interrupted the envoy's pre-prepared speech on the merits of the Empire's doctrines with a wave of his hand.

"No no. I want to know what is behind the Greater good. What makes it tick? Why do you follow it?"

The water envoy smiled. It was rare that he had a chance to discuss such things with a less enlightened species. "The Greater Good is about the collective good will and unity of all thinking, rational beings. Literally the best and most good for the most beings."

The gue'la frowned. "And your goal is to unify the galaxy?"

"Yes, all under the benevolent guidance of the Ethereals."

"So, a benevolent dictatorship would you say?"

The Tau sniffed. "Nothing so restricting as that. The Ethereals are not rulers, but guides. They inspire and direct our judgements and decisions. But we make those decisions ourselves. We simply know what is in the interest of altruism and utilitarianism."

"They guide you, but their guidance just so happens to be exactly what you were going to do anyway? Forgive me, but I think you may have your roles confused here," the man chuckled again.

Por'Kais was not amused. "What are you implying? That our race are dupes? This is offensive."

The man held up his hands in mock surrender. "So defensive! I just don't quite buy this."

"Buy' what? This is the truth. The only truth."

"Unity? As a goal? Unity is no goal. It is a means to an end. One forms alliances to gain something, to achieve something. What will you achieve, when you attain your 'unity'? When all the stars in the sky bend to your teachings, what then? What will you have?"

"We will have peace everlasting," Por'Kais replied coldly, his face setting defensively at the accusations of his guest.

The man seemed to sneer, his silvered fangs clashing together with a dull click. "Oh peace! Yes peace is a very noble goal isn't it? And then what? Without wars, what will become of your fire caste? With no one and nothing to coerce, what would become of your ilk? Nothing new to discover in the entire galaxy; how shallow a goal. You speak of stagnation Tau," he hissed.

"Maybe that is the price of peace and safety? Besides which, we are anything but stagnant. We are a dynamic species. Every kai'rotaa our Earth caste engineers discover new sciences that push back the boundaries of knowledge, the water caste develop the understanding of dozens of cultures every Tau'cyr, our military strategies mature and develop with every unfortunate foe our Fire Caste turns their gaze upon. Are you so arrogant to believe there is a limit to what we can know? What we can understand for the benefit of all?"

The man lay back. "I do not presume that all things are knowable. In fact, where is the fun in understanding? There were others before

you who thought to know the face of Gods and to usurp them," the man replied with a grin of such malevolence, that Por'Kais shuddered internally.

"There are no gods. Only the desperate and the ignorant trying to explain things they have not the skills to understand properly."

The gue'la genuinely laughed gleefully. He hopped down from his bed and grasped the Tau's shoulders lightly. "Oh you noseless beauty! The Irony! It is so very delicious!" he giggled, before kissing the Tau on the cheek. The blue alien shoved him backwards lightly.

"You are wrong gue'la. There are no gods but what people make themselves."

"Yes! Yes you are exactly right! Exactly! But does making a god negate its divinity? Why should it?"

The tau stepped back slightly. "If that were so, then a god is no longer a creature that governs and guides you. It is a tool, like a starship or a political structure."

"You have swayed me Tau. Gods are nothing but tools; a means to an end. They are a tool to achieve one's goal. Come, let us embrace as brothers!" the man smirked with almost condescension, raising his arms up for a hug from the Tau ambassador.

Por'Kais reluctantly accepted the hug. Perhaps this manic discourse was simply a cultural quirk of this branch of gue'la society? Maybe-

He felt the silver teeth close across his throat. In panic, the Tau screamed in shock, pulling backwards with a jerk. There was an awful tearing sound, and cyan gore splashed across the pristine sheets, and ran in a great gory mess down the chest of the grinning madman.

"A tool yes, but to what end?" the creature giggled, as he calmly painted patterns into the dying Tau's forehead. Por'Kais tried to rasp the pass word for the security screen, but only strangled gargles escaped his lips, followed by a torrent of blood.

"Oh dear, it would seem we are destined for no interruptions to our little chat aren't we? Well, I have decided to take your advice my friend. I am summoning my gods. You see, I know there are gods

dearest Tau. But I hate them all the same! Unity and peace? Who ever heard of such nonsense? Everything is driven by anarchy and uncertainty. Without your 'Terror', you'd be nothing but savages, peacefully sitting on your home world rock. You have never wanted peace. If you did you would have never thought to impose yourself onto every single other culture. You like to think you are fair, but your choices are nothing but weighted throws of the dice!" the man cackled as his alien companion began to pass out, and as the runes painted on the floor began to glow with infernal energies.

"But do you know what cannot be oppressive? What can't be cheated? Anarchy. Chaos. The pure, thrilling madness of doing anything! Wake up wake up!" the man muttered, gently slapping Por'Kais' face, who reacted by fluttering his eyes open once more. Gently, the man cupped the alien's face in his hands.

"If everything goes according to plan, what is imagination for? Thinking on your toes? The simple beauty of uncertainty. I imagine you all presumed that the warp engine you brought aboard was broken yes? Rather than say... waiting for the correct signal? In order to wake from its slumber?" the man smiled, eyes wild with mania. Por'kais' eyes widened in sickening realisation, before the man pressed a rag to the fallen Tau's throat, easily overcoming the defensive thrashing of the Tau.

"You're not a combatant so don't bother! Hold still silly or you'll bleed everywhere! Look you've ruined this shirt! Hold this and press it to your neck!" the gue'la monster laughed, leaving him to clutch at his neck desperately.

The man pulled off his robe, as he calmly began to chant, in a language Por'kais had never heard, nor was ever likely to hear again. A terrible, grinding language of sulphur and brimstone and pain and flowery honeyed perfection. A nightmare of a cadence, echoing unnaturally in his own skull.

As he chanted and painted the floor and bed with blood-runes, he fished out his old tattered jacket and hose from the hopper. "Oh cool! You cut holes in them and stuff! I prefer them like this you know."



The air grew thick with power and crackling unseen energies. "We're close now. I have just one question left to ask you..."

The man hopped down to Por'kais' level, and pressed his bloodied lips to his ear canal.

"You wanna see something cool? You want to see the gods?" he hissed.

###

"We're preparing for a jump!" a Kor'la muttered in disbelief at the helm.

Vanai swirled around in his globe. "What? Impossible. The drive is deactivated."

Another Kor'la piped up. "No Admiral it isn't the primary drive, a secondary drive has become active."

"Where? Where by Mont'au!" he yelled in mounting panic.

"The... the cargo hold sir. Also, we've lost signal with the gue'la holding bays."

The gue'la engine. It must be their engine! "Void the cargo bay!"

"I cannot sir! It has bonded itself to the hull somehow. Fire Teams have been mobilised to eliminate it Admiral. By any means necessary."

The Kor'O glared at the various sensor images flashing up before his eyes. "Where is the Aun? Get her off this ship! Protect the Ethereal! All hands must abandon ship!"

###

The human demagogue, Sparrod, slowly searched the pockets of battered jacket, as the wailing sirens of emergency evacuation sequence resounded throughout the ship. Amidst the confusion and panic, the Tau had barely noticed a single human escaping the infirmary. Those few Fire Warriors who did pursue him were easily lost amongst the crowds of fleeing Tau.

At last! He pulled free the two possessions he had hoped had survived being ransacked by the Tau engineers when they 'rescued' him; a necklace and a signet ring. He carefully placed the silver ring upon his finger carefully, before plucking the necklace from his grimy pocket with a smirk. The Tau were an open culture; he could picture them thinking 'why make a gun that doesn't look like a gun? Why disguise the purpose of a device? Are we not honest?'

He kept that thought in mind as he depressed the trigger button hidden inside the necklace. Though he was far too far away to hear it, he knew from the sudden jolt of the ship that his human charges had finally gone off. Each of his disciples knew their day of oblivion had come, and they smiled as their hidden explosives were detonated simultaneously across the holding pens of the vast explorer vessel.

Oh this was fun!

He heard alien bleating across the ship via the alien vox system. No matter the language, Sparrod knew the language of the retreat. They thought to spare their ethereal the fun.

No fair!

He hurried through the crowds, darting through the mass of aliens. He clutched a Gue'vesa robe across his shoulder, masking his passing at least partially as he surged through the corridors towards the escape pods. He turned sharply northwards up-ship.



The surge of people thinned as he neared the exclusive salvation pods, saved for only the most important Tau.

There! At last! He saw the unmistakable shape of a tall robed figure, clutching a staff of office. A leader in any culture, the Tau were no different. Just because they denied the influence of their lords and masters, didn't mean they were free from them. His gaggle of attendants were already clambering aboard the oval brown vessel, beckoning their master onwards. He coiled from his hiding place, raising his silver ring level with the target. There was a hum of power crackling all down his arm as the digi-weapon charged.

A howl of rage sundered the calm of the embarkation deck, followed by the loud crack of a pulse weapon firing. Sparrod barely managed to throw himself to the ground before the heavy pulse bolts ripped a dozen great smoking chunks from the wall behind him.

"I am Shas'Ui'Lox! You shall not touch her!" the alien soldier yelled from the doorway to the rear of the human lunatic. He scrambled to avoid another flurry of furious pulse blasts that threw up a cloud of vitrified resin and shattered plasti-glass. From his new hiding place, Sparrod could only watch as the Ethereal reached the escape pod, and burst from the flank of the vast Tau ship with a silent boom.

"You're very touchy... Lox is it?" he called out from the gloom, constantly shifting between recesses and hiding places, as the ship's power generations fluctuated, still trying desperately to recover from the vast internal detonations that had shuddered through the vessel. At the sound of his voice, Lox merely fired at the location, unwilling to say a single word to the traitorous fiend.

"You know it is true what they say about you Tau. Stubborn beyond reason; once set upon a path, you won't ever stop. Isn't it funny how you are all so resolute and determined, but can be swayed by a single word of your fifth caste?"

Another pulse blast, but Sparrod had already moved.

"They also say you are incorruptible. I can't accept that. Every species, every individual, has his tipping point. We'll see what yours is soon enough. I'd love to chat, but I'm afraid we're out of time now," he muttered, looking to a non-existent chrono on his wrist. "Time to learn the way the world works, my simple blue friend. I really hope, for your sake, this ship has a Gellar field."

Silence was the only response this time, before the noise of a coming warp translation began to build, like a growing growl in the throat of some heinous god.

"You don't? Well... this should be interesting then..." Sparrod grinned, as he drew a glo stick from his battered hose.

###

Reality rippled and fluctuated across the hull of the Explorer starship. Orca escort ships fled in all directions, picking up what salvation pods it could, before they abandoned their mothership to its fate.

For a brief instant, the ship seemed to stretch into infinity in a great narrow line, before it pierced the void itself, which bled a profusion of maddening colours. The wound puckered open, ethereal tendrils flexing from within, as the Explorer plunged through the wound like a lozenge down a throat. With a final, impossibly bright flash of darkness, the vessel was gone.

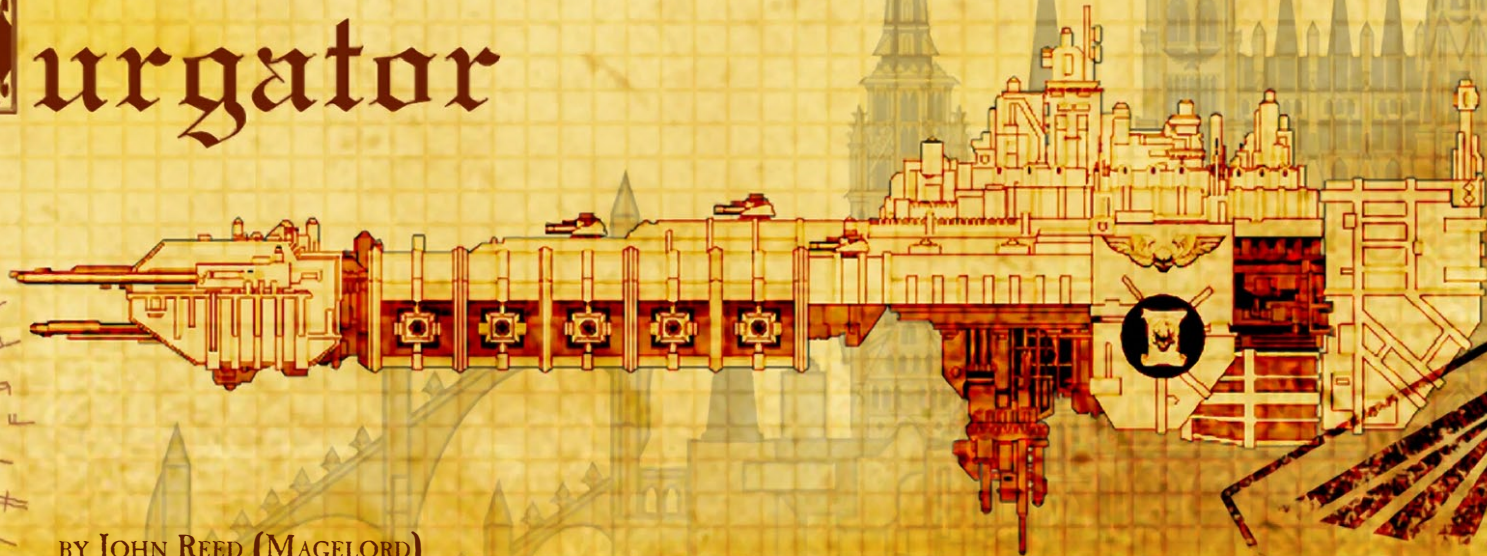
No good Deed went unpunished...

Denuncia Co.

Denunciator



Purgator



BY JOHN REED (MAGELORD)