

The Light Bringer

BFG 'Character Ship' Competition Finalist

By Andrew Jenkin

Following a period of severe warp-storms in the Korrrangar system, long-range sensors detected a space-hulk drifting towards one of the more heavily-populated planets. The local Imperial governor dispatched a salvage team to investigate the wreck, who transmitted a single message : "Ship is marked Light Bringer MV252. Signs of Chaos activity. We are turning about." The salvage crew and their launch then vanished without trace.

A request for help was made to an Adeptus Astartes strike-cruiser, the *Divinity Manifest*, which was passing through the system at the time. Supported by two Imperial frigates, the strike-cruiser closed rapidly with the Chaos hulk, which appeared unmanned and drifting.

A squad of Terminators from the Blood Ravens chapter managed to teleport directly onto the deserted ship's bridge and immediately set about restarting the power systems. An oppressive gloom hung about the vast room, and a live vidi-feed back to the strike-cruiser showed scenes of terrible desecration. Having accessed the archaic ship's computer, the Terminators began transmitting data from the log-book back to their mother-ship. Ten minutes later, with a growing hiss of feedback the transmissions abruptly ended, and the *Divinity Manifest* lost all contact with the squad.

Suddenly, a crackle of raw energy heralded a huge rift in the warp, consuming the entire ship which melted away in a blinding halo of light.

The three Imperial ships were undamaged, and after reporting the incident to the Inquisition, the *Divinity Manifest* continued on its way, leaving the two frigates to search the area. These were later attacked and destroyed by an unknown enemy fleet, possibly linked to the *Light Bringer*, operating from an adjacent system. The Blood Ravens still consider their Terminators to be missing in action.

The ship's log, transmitted by the Terminators before their disappearance, was sent to the Inquisition, who delved into the Imperial records to find any mention of the ship *Light Bringer*. It took several weeks of research to find an entry in an ancient Terran shipping list, giving the date that the ship was built.

Records from the era showed that the *Light Bringer* was commissioned long before the Horus Heresy by the shipping company Magnusson Voyages. Built as a luxury cruise-liner with an innovative 'observatorium' running from prow to bridge, her construction was jinxed with accidents and even several deaths at the Terran Orbital Shipyard. The ship's launch was widely celebrated, and many of the galaxy's noblest families vied for a place on her maiden voyage.

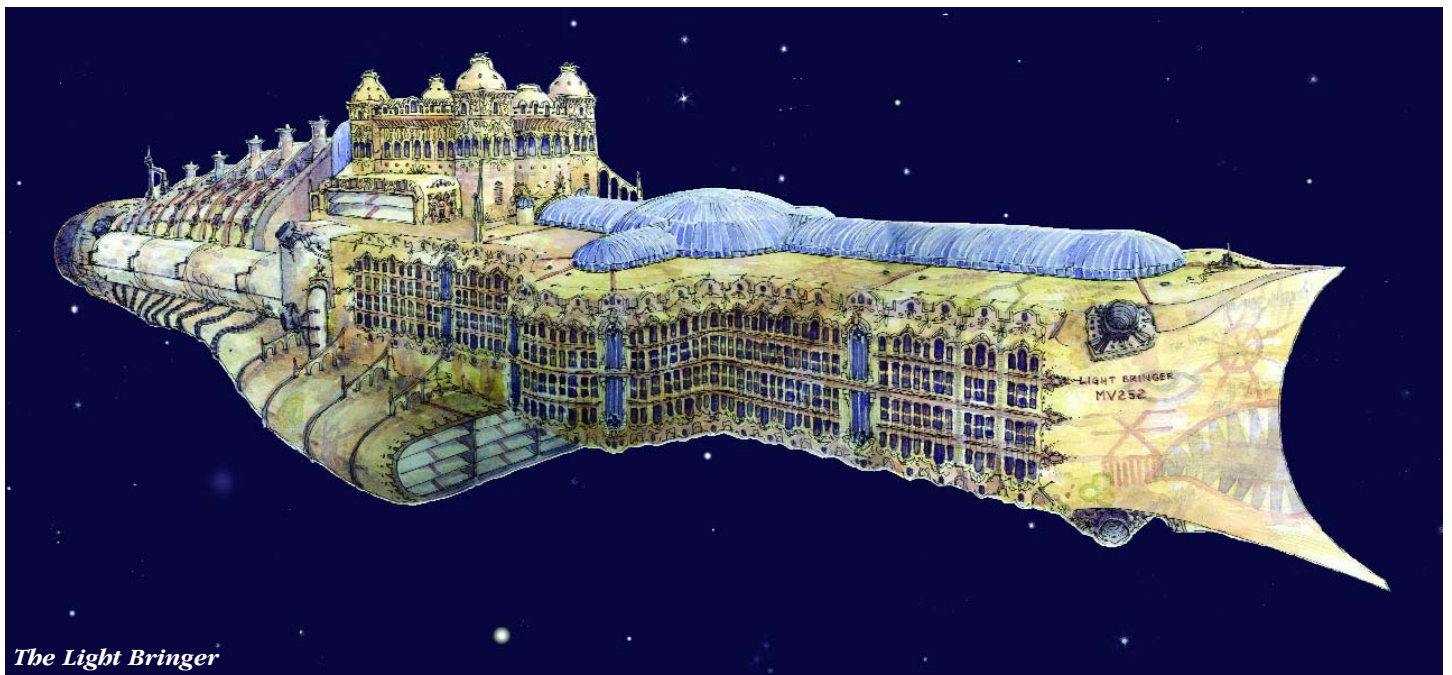
This voyage, undertaken by one Captain Johann Tetzl, was to be a spectacular adventure into the area of space now known as the Eye of Terror. At the time, the location was renowned for its amazing celestial phenomena and terrifying warp storms, but nothing was known about the lure of Chaos that resided there.

The cruise went well until the *Light Bringer* passed beyond the Pride system, close to the Eye of Terror, when it sailed into a warp-storm and disappeared. After several years the ship was recorded as 'lost in the warp', and it is noted that the insurance pay-out was a galaxy-wide scandal at the time.

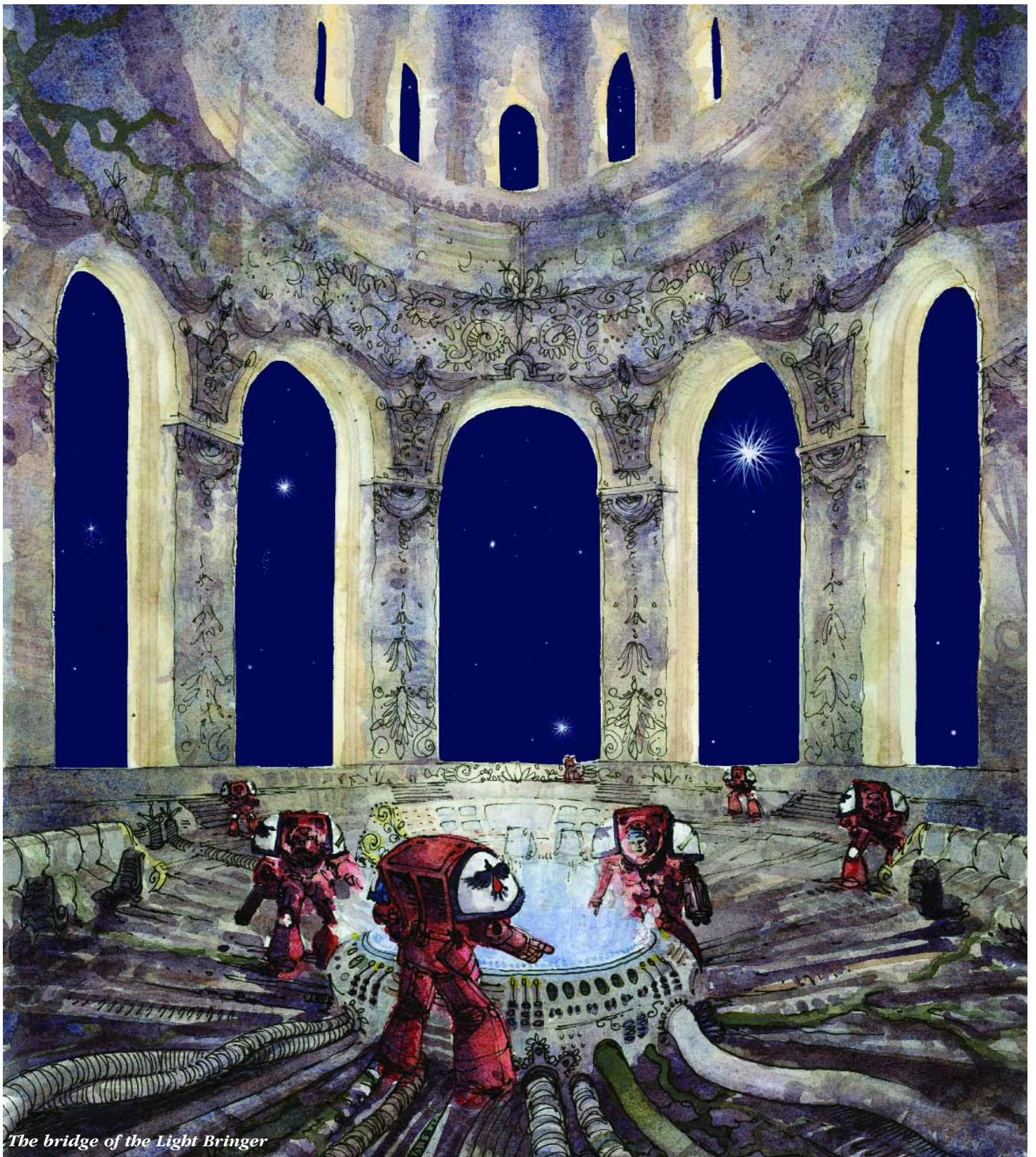
Over time the *Light Bringer* was forgotten, until centuries later she was encountered by the *Divinity Manifest* and her secrets were uncovered.

The ship's log, recorded by Captain Tetzl and transmitted by the Blood Ravens, sheds light onto the fate of the *Light Bringer* [extracts censored – Ord.Inq.878390/RSF/D9] :

Day 12 [from departure] – 0517hrs – I was woken to be told the ship has passed through a brief warp-storm that lasted no



The Light Bringer



The bridge of the Light Bringer

more than thirty seconds. Our navigational systems have gone haywire, and we have lost contact with the Circel Research Station [only habitation in Pride system and last known contact with the *Light Bringer* before its disappearance – Ord.Inq.878512/RSE/D4]. My navigator has had some sort of seizure, and is comatose in the medical centre.

Day 12 [from departure] – 1030hrs – Our navi-computer is now working as normal, but seems to think we are heading back into the Pride system; a visual check tells me this is incorrect. The navigator has worsened; he regained consciousness, but was screaming and feverish until sedated. Still no contact with Circel.

Day 13 – 0104hrs – Our navigator is dead. We have lost the Light of the Emperor.

Day 13 – 0815hrs – We are drifting aimlessly. With no navigational aids and no contact with the Circel station, I ordered the ship to turn about. The star I was following, which should have led us back into the Pride system, has gone. There is a strange mood amongst the crew; some say we are already doomed to starvation. I have a greater faith in the Emperor's Will.

Day 15 – 2155hrs – We have cut engines and launched distress beacons. The bridge-crew is fatigued and our eyes are playing tricks on us. I and eight other crew-members saw a black figure at the helm of the ship, which stood motionless for several minutes before fading away.

Day 18 – 1525hrs – There have been several spectral visions and weird apparitions reported by passengers. An oppressive atmosphere permeates the ship, as if we are waiting for something terrible to happen. Air supply and filters have been double-checked, and the medical centre is testing food and water for contaminants.

Day 19 – 0945hrs – There is an air of licentiousness amongst the passengers, as if they no longer care what happens to them. Despicable, depraved acts have been reported, and I have noticed this shamelessness even amongst some of my crew. This corruption will not go unpunished.

Day 23 – 1130hrs – A plague has swept the ship without mercy. Even death will not bring peace to the sufferers, who seem to endure beyond their allotted time. We have sealed the afflicted in the brig to prevent the spread of the disease, although many more may secretly harbour the symptoms. May the Emperor save their souls.

Day 27 – 1415hrs – The severity of the plague seems to have died down, and those of us unaffected thank the Emperor for his Mercy. We survivors have changed, though, in many strange and subtle ways. The appearance of my crew seems somehow altered, and I myself have noticed what seem to be tiny feathers growing from the bones of my face; my hands feel stretched and hollow. Whatever new horror this is, I and my crew are thankful to be alive, and we are disposed to accept our fate without question.

Day 29 – 0613hrs – Mutiny. Some of the crew have rallied around Petty Officer Thomas Muntzer, and have threatened my life and the lives of those crew loyal to me. The mutineers have no stated aim, and offer no alternative to my own attempts to

save this accursed ship and those aboard her. I and thirty others have barricaded ourselves into the command centre, but it is only a matter of time before our water supplies run out.

Day 29 – 0934hrs – We have fallen back to the bridge. The mutineers over-ran our defences easily, crazed by a blood-lust I have never witnessed before. When they could no longer attack us, they started killing the sick and the weak amongst the passengers, the rest of whom have fallen in with the mutineers. The ship is no longer in my hands. The Emperor has forsaken me.

This is Tetzels last entry in the ship's log, although the Inquisition have reason to believe that the captain was not killed in the mutiny. They have suggested that he gave his soul to Chaos in return for his ship, and has become a Champion of Tzeentch, doomed to sail the warp forever.

Although she was originally built as a cruise-liner, the *Light Bringer* has spent centuries within the Eye of Terror, and several modifications have been made by the demented slaves of some infernal Chaos shipyard. An enormous powerhouse has been constructed at her stern, far larger than her original engines, and a massive launch-bay has been slung underneath the main body of the ship, large enough to send wave after wave of boarding-craft and fighters into the fray.

Since its encounter with the Divinity Manifest, the *Light Bringer* has been witnessed supporting traitor fleets across many sectors, and on the eve of battle, stories abound about a ghost-ship that lurks on the edge of the warp, waiting for a chance to launch her Dreadclaws teeming with the blood-thirsty abominations of Chaos.

LIGHT BRINGER..... Leadership 8 / 300 points					
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Grand Cruiser/10	25cm	45'	4	5+	4
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Prow Launch Bay		Swiftdeaths 30cm		6 Squadrons	
		Dreadclaws 30cm			
Starboard Launch Bay		Swiftdeaths 30cm		1 Squadron	
		Dreadclaws 30cm			
Port Launch Bay		Swiftdeaths 30cm		1 Squadron	
Dorsal Weapons Battery		30cm		4	
				360'	

SPECIAL RULES

The Light Bringer is a Daemonship and follows all Daemonship rules except

- she does not have to be 'upgraded' for an extra 30 points
- she cannot be given a Mark of Chaos (Captain Tetzels is a Champion of Tzeentch, but the ship's crew follow different Chaos gods)

Ready for the Fight The Light Bringer automatically passes all 'Reload Ordnance' tests.

Rivalry on Board At the start of each Chaos turn, the player controlling the Light Bringer must roll a D6. On the roll of a 1, the Captain loses control of his bridge-crew for that turn only with the following effects

- The ship drifts forward at half its speed and may not turn
- No special orders may be given
- The ship may still fire its weapons and launch ordnance
- The ship cannot become a 'spectral ship', materialise from the warp or disengage back into the warp

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I'm a freelance artist, and usually paint landscapes, but I thought I'd have a go at painting spaceships for a change! I was into Games Workshop from the late '80s to the early '90s, mainly Warhammer 40K, Space Marine and WFRP, and after a 10-year gap I've got back into it again.