



The Black Avenger

BFG 'Character Ship' Competition Finalist

By Richard Galvez

To: ++ Inquisition Clearance Insufficient ++
From: ++ Inquisition Clearance Insufficient ++
Date: 999.M41
Subject: Adeptus Astartes, ++ Inquisition Clearance Insufficient++ Chapter
Thought for the day: Only In Death Does Duty End.

Revered Lord, it is my duty to inform you of matters which may have relevance to your ongoing investigation. Throughout the defense of Armageddon there have been several reports of an unidentified vessel fighting alongside the coalition Imperial fleet.

The first report comes from what has come to be known as the Battle of the Outer Gate. It describes the intervention of an unidentified vessel exhibiting characteristics consistent with those vessels typically used as Space Marine Battlebarges. When greenskin vessels on the outskirts of the Armageddon system attacked the transports carrying the 3rd Semtexian Regiment and several Imperial Navy cruisers had little effect, the battlebarge appeared suddenly, engaged and destroyed two of the xenos vessels before disappearing. The sudden intervention of the vessel allowed the transports to disengage and complete the journey to Armageddon without further incident. Though no pict-captures of the battlebarge were made, it was described as being dark and showing significant battle damage. It arrived on the scene undetected as if from nowhere, answered no communications throughout the engagement, and disappeared following the engagement. The description of the ship matches many particulars of the Cift Report 3628987.M41.

One element of the report throws into question the conclusion that the vessel is manned by Space Marines. The tactics utilized by the vessel diverge from the standard Adeptus Astartes tactics. While Space Marine vessels typically close with enemy craft under heavy cover of Thunderhawks and torpedoes, the ship described did not appear to utilize either. Instead, the vessel simply closed with the Ork ships at full speed, fired broadsides as it came abreast of the Ork vessels, and then disengaged once the crude Ork ships were destroyed. No boarding torpedoes appear to have been used, either, though it is possible that boarding actions were carried out during this period through the use of teleportation. The reporting crews of the transports described the exchange of fire between the two ships as short, but brutal, with the destruction of the Ork ship appearing to have been initiated from within. Though the combat experience of the transport crews was limited, their observations support the hypothesis that Space Marine boarding parties were responsible for the destruction of the greenskin vessel. Despite this observed inconsistency, the amount of enemy fire that the vessel withstood and the close range firefights with the Ork vessels are consistent with recorded Adeptus Astartes vessel tactics and capabilities.

Later Imperial patrols in the area recovered only a few pieces of debris that may have come from the unidentified vessel, although we have as yet been unable to determine their source of origin. All recovered debris will be transferred to your location at the first opportunity for further study.

There are several subsequent reports of an unidentified Space Marine vessel suddenly appearing near Armageddon and remaining for a short period before disappearing without a trace. Each of the reports is remarkably similar to the first, although the vessel doesn't appear to have engaged Ork ships in these instances. The battlebarge does not appear to be working in a coordinated effort with the rest of the Imperial Fleet, nor does it match any of the battlebarges from Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes known to be involved in the campaign. Despite this, it appears that the mysterious ship is aiding the Imperium in the defense of Armageddon.

There have been several reports of mysterious power-armoured figures involved in the ground campaign. These warriors exhibit none of the markings from the Chapters known to be on Armageddon, and the few coherent reports of them describe strange markings upon the armour, predominantly flames and bones, consistent with previous reports [Ref: Jakol-tal Incident 9967986.M41 and the report of Ultramarines Chief Librarian Tigurius 990122494.M41]. Each of these reports coincides with sightings of the unknown vessel in the vicinity of Armageddon. Where possible, I've examined the battlefields upon which this mysterious force has allegedly fought, although I've found no trace of these Space Marines, nor has there been evidence of the air or ground craft used by the Adeptus Astartes.

Suppression of these reports has proven difficult although the heavy losses suffered by the Imperial forces have taken care of most of the witnesses. Despite this, word of the unidentified vessel has spread and it has come to be known as "The Black Avenger". My agents have successfully spread information to the effect that the Black Avenger is actually one of the infamous black ships of the Inquisition. Though some senior ranking Imperial Navy officers have refuted this, the rumor has persisted among the rank and file.

I have shipped four hull fragments recovered from the area of the Battle of the Outer Gate. These fragments do not match the hull types of either the transports that carried the Semtexians or the Imperial cruisers Admiral Parol dispatched to escort the transports. The thickness of the fragments and devotional litanies that cover them support the argument that they came from a ship utilized by the Adeptus Astartes. Whether or not the vessel is the Absolute remains to be determined.

I remain,
Your obedient servant

BLACK AVENGER 440 points					
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/12	20cm	45'	3	6+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Port Weapons Battery		45cm	12		Left
Starboard Weapons Battery		45cm	12		Right
Dorsal Bombardment Cannon		30cm	8		180'

USING THE BLACK AVENGER

The Black Avenger is unique and may be used in any Imperial fleet or Space Marine fleet. The Black Avenger is not a member of the fleet, though, and follows its own special rules.

The Black Avenger follows the normal rules for a Space Marine battlebarge, except as noted below.

SPECIAL RULES

The Black Avenger may not be used by an Admiral or Master of the Fleet as a flagship.

Boarding Actions and Hit & Run Attacks

The Space Marines of the Legion of the Damned are especially potent at ship-to-ship hit and run teleport attacks. To represent this, when conducting hit and run teleport attacks from the Black Avenger, you may roll two dice and choose which one to use. Add one to the roll as normal for Space Marines.

Planetary Assaults and Exterminatus

In a Planetary Assault scenario, The Black Avenger earns 3 Assault points for every turn it spends landing troops, rather than 1 point as is normal, although it may only land troops for up to 2 turns. The Black Avenger earns 2 Assault points for every turn it spends bombarding the planet in a Planetary Assault scenario, rather than 1 point as is normal. The Black Avenger, cut off from Imperial refitting and rearmament, no longer has access to virus bombs and cyclotronic warheads and may not act as an Exterminator in an Exterminatus scenario.

Ordnance

No longer having access to Imperial refitting and rearmament, the Black Avenger has limited ordnance and may not use thunderhawk gunships, torpedoes, or drop pods.

The Black Avenger is not set up with the rest of the fleet when the game begins. Instead, The Black Avenger may enter the tabletop on any turn after the first if it rolls successfully on a D6 according to the following chart:

Turn	Enter On
1	6+
2	5+
3	4+
4	3+
5+	2+

The Black Avenger may enter the tabletop from any table edge outside of the enemy fleet deployment zone or up to 2D6x10cm away from any warp rift, as long as it is at least 40 cm from any enemy ships. The Black Avenger may be pointing in any direction and may move up to its full movement distance on the turn it appears.

The Black Avenger may disengage from combat as normal, or by entering any warp rift. The Black Avenger may not navigate warp rifts as normal, but is considered to automatically succeed in disengaging upon entering any warp rift.

HOW TO BUILD THE BLACK AVENGER

Here is a step by step guide to how I built the Black Avenger.

1. Construct the Space Marine battlebarge. Since battlebarges do not represent a single class of vessel, or a specific configuration of weapons and systems, but rather represent a broad range of different Space Marine vessels used for largely similar tasks, you can modify any suitably sized ship to represent your battlebarge.
2. Use a pin vice, hobby knife, and files to create battle damage. You might also choose to model the effects of extensive attacks by Warp entities.
3. Paint the ship predominantly black. I've limited the amount of color on my Black Avenger, restricting iconography to the flame design on a yellow field used by the Fire Hawks. I've given no other markings that might indicate the Chapter to which the vessel belongs. You might choose to include the skull and bone designs often used by the Legion of the Damned troopers.
4. Paint the battle damage so that it stands out. The weapons and engines should also be painted to show extensive use. I've discolored the muzzles of the weapons and the engine exhaust orifices. You might also choose to paint areas where the hull has become corroded.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard is a veteran BFG player. he appologises for the lack of pictures no visuals have been taken of the Black Avenger anyway. He says that it does look like a Space Marine Battlebarge should you still be curious!