BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC

– REMASTERED –

RULEBOOK

BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC
– REMASTERED –

SPACESHIP BATTLES IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

Many thanks to the original designers who worked on this game.
You created something wonderful.

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Created by Simon Saier

Many thanks to all the great people of the BFG Discord server which are constantly providing error reports and feedback to improve this book further.

ATTENTION: As more and more people read it and provide feedback, we noted several cases of poorly worded or contradicting rules which were never addressed before. Wherever this happened, we tried to solve it to the best of our possibilities, including contacting members of the old High Admiralty (which was responsible for the 2010 FAQ/Errata) and even Andy Chambers pitched in for an answer from time to time. As such, wording of this document may differ from the original sources. These changes are noted down in the FAQ runs of 2021-2022 and 2023-2024, maintained by Roy *'horizon'* Amkreutz

The goal of this project was to compile the 2007 digital rulebook and the 2010 Compendium into one document with updated layout and artwork, and without altering any rules. Additionally, it contains the campaigns from Battlefleet Gothic: Armada; but NOT any ships, as this would have exploded the page count, and would have caused constant page flipping from the rules to the ship profiles and back. You can find the rules for all fleets and ships in the Remastered *Fleets* book.

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It has been ten thousand years since Mankind returned to the stars to reclaim that which was lost in the cataclysmic wars of the Age of Strife. Led by the Immortal God-Emperor and his sacred Primarchs ten millennia ago Mankind rose again from the mire of barbarism and cast back the darkness in the legendary times of the Great Crusade. A new age was forged, the Age of the lmperium.

The glittering achievements of the Dark Age of Technology have been all but lost, obscured by uncounted centuries of superstition and fear. The worlds of Man are scattered across the galaxy with vast gulfs of wilderness space separating one from another. But the Age of the Imperium has cast the Emperor's Divine Light across a million worlds. It has established an iron regime only maintained through flesh and blood, endless toil, monumental sacrifice and unthinking loyalty to distant Terra. Man has learned to embrace war as its religion, billions take up arms against a galaxy of foes. Great ships sail the void, their guns charged to rain death upon the enemies of the God-Emperor.

Still it is not enough to guard the fragile worlds of Man from a cruel and uncaring universe.

Still it is not enough to guard against the unnumbered horrors which lurk upon forgotten worlds, the alien races which prey upon the scattered outposts of humanity and the heretics who dare to defy the Emperor's will.

And even these dire threats pale before the ancient and implacable hatred of the traitors who took up arms against the Emperor in the earliest days of the Imperium. Traitors who gave their worship to the dark and terrible gods which dwell in the Realm of Chaos.

Traitors who wounded the immortal Emperor unto death and forced him to seek solace upon the Golden Throne from where he rules still, his essence maintained only by the sacrifice of supplicants from across his vast realm. By the Emperor's supreme sacrifice these minions of evil were defeated and driven forth from the sight of Man to join with their foul masters in the outer dark. Ten thousand years has not slaked their thirst for vengeance and their plots to bring ruin upon Mankind are pursued with undimmed malice.

This the Age of the lmperium. A time of war and carnage among the stars, of great fleets and mighty armies, selfless heroism and blackest infamy.

If you dare enter these dark times, read on.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Battlefleet Gothic, the game of spaceship combat set during the Gothic War in the 41st millennium: a grim time when the Imperium of Mankind battles for survival in a hostile galaxy. Battlefield Gothic allows you to command fleets of warships in deadly combat among the stars, though whether as Mankind's saviour or its destroyer remains to be seen.

The Battlefleet Gothic book is divided into four sections:

The Galaxy of the 41st Millennium gives you a rough overview of the Warhammer 40,000 universe, mainly centred around the spaceships. After that, it goes into detail describing the name-giving conflict in the Gothic sector, that lasted 20 years.

The Rules give you rules for staging your own battles using miniatures and dice. Types of ships, leadership, special orders, movement, shooting, weaponry and damage are all covered.

The Scenarios Section contains ten mission scenarios for you to fight and sub-plots to add extra spice to your games.

The Campaign Rules tell you how to run an ongoing series of battles through the Gothic War, with rules for crews gaining experience, commanders winning (and losing) renown, repairs, refits, upgrades and capturing star systems. It also features two large campaigns in the Warhammer 40,000 universe for you to battle through; the Third Armageddon War and Abaddon's 13th Black Crusade.

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THE GALAXY OF THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

For ten thousand years the Imperium of Man has endured, under the rule and guidance of the Immortal Emperor of Terra. Humanity populates over a million worlds stretched across the entire galaxy, fighting for survival against hideous nether-entities, hostile aliens and rebellion from within. To live in the Age of the Imperium is to live in troubled times; wars are commonplace and millions die each day, as the Emperor's faithful servants lay down their lives for the future of Humanity.

The Imperium is so vast as to be beyond mortal comprehension. It is spread over tens of thousands of light years, its armies alone numbering many billions of soldiers. The mighty bureaucracy of the Adeptus Terra, known by many as the Priesthood, attempts to make sense of a seething mass of information from this gargantuan empire – reports of wars and battles, tithes from distant star systems, men and materials being shipped to far flung stars – but to try to truly understand such a massive realm is to invite insanity.

WARP SPACE

The human colonisation of the galaxy owes its accomplishment to one thing – the nightmarish alternate realm of warp space. Warp space lies alongside and around the material universe, a dimension comprised solely of shifting energies and formless consciousness. In warp space there is no time, no distances, only a constantly flowing stream of immaterium. A starship equipped with warp engines can break through the barrier that separates the real universe from the warp, thus removing itself from the normal flow of time. Only by travelling in the warp can the immense distances between stars be covered within a single lifetime, though even warp travel is not instantaneous. On board a ship in the warp a single month of perceived time may pass, yet in the material realm anything from six months to several years may have elapsed. This can mean that fleets and armies responding to calls for aid may turn up weeks, months or even years too late to help and this further adds to the anarchy and confusion of conducting hundreds of wars across the whole galaxy.

NAVIGATING IN THE WARP

It is possible for a ship to make short warp jumps of about four to five light years with a certain degree of accuracy. However, over longer distances it is necessary to steer through warp space itself. The warp is like an ocean, with currents, storms and tides that must be used or avoided. For the Imperium, only the mutated Navigators are able to see the shifting eddies of the warp and direct a ship between them, thus steering the ship towards its ultimate destination.

Even the Navigators need a point of reference, and this is provided by the immensely powerful psychic beacon known as the Astronomican. Guided by the minds of ten thousand specially-trained human psykers on Terra, the Astronomican pulses outwards 70,000 light years to the furthest reaches of the galaxy. A Navigator can sense the beam of the Astronomican and use it to plot his course. Weaker, shorter-ranged astropathic ducts and beacons are also used to mark out shipping lanes and to aid navigation through treacherous areas of the warp.

THE IMPERIAL NAVY

Almost every ship in the Imperium is part of the Imperial fleet controlled by the Priesthood: the relative handful of vessels that are not, belong to a few special organisations such as the Adeptus Mechanicus, Space Marine Chapters and the Inquisition, or a small number of honoured and ancient merchant families. Even Imperial Guard regiments must rely upon the Imperial fleet to transport them to distant warzones. This fleet is divided into the civilian vessels of the Merchant fleet and the warships of the Imperial Navy.

To aid organisation, the Imperium is split into five Segmentae Majoris, each of which has its own merchant and naval fleet. The fleet stations for these vessels are on the Segmentum Fortress in each Segmentum – Mars for the Segmentum Solar, Kar Duniash in the Ultima Segmentum, Bakka in the Segmentum Tempestus, Hydraphur in the Segmentum Pacificus and Cypra Mundi in the Segmentum Obscuras. The Segmentum fleet commanders, the Lord High Admirals, are powerful individuals and sometimes may even be one of the fabled High Lords of Terra.

All human-inhabited space is further broken down into sectors, which are most usually cubes of space roughly 200 light years to a side. Each sector is comprised of a number of sub-sectors ranging from ten to twenty light years in diameter, centred on densely populated star clusters, important worlds, or meeting points of various trade routes through the warp. The areas between sub-sectors and sectors – unexplored or uninhabited regions, alien empires, areas inaccessible by the warp, etc. – are known as wilderness space or wilderness zones and make up a far greater proportion of the galaxy than that controlled by Humanity.

For all practical purposes, a sector's battlefleet is the largest operational naval organisation, under the command of a Lord Admiral. Each battlefleet is then divided into a number of battlegroups. Battlegroups are not permanent organisations, but are instead task forces, convoy escorts, patrol flotillas and other fleets that have been assembled to perform particular functions. A few battlegroups are almost permanent institutions, such as the famous 1st Terran Battlecruiser Armada, but most are gathered and then dispersed as necessity dictates. Depending on its size and role, a battlegroup may be commanded by an experienced ship's captain or commodore, a fleet admiral or admiral, or sometimes even the Lord Admiral himself.

WARSHIPS OF THE IMPERIUM

Each battlefleet normally consists of between 50 and 75 warships of varying size, although in some sectors this will be more or less, according to the importance of the sector and the number of enemies it must contend with. As well as these destroyers, frigates, cruisers and battleships, a battlefleet also has access to countless smaller vessels such as transports, shuttles, messenger craft and long-range patrol craft. In addition to interstellar vessels, a sector will also be protected by numerous ships incapable of warp travel, such as system patrol ships and defence monitors. These are backed up by stationary defences – space stations, orbital defence platforms, ground-based defence lasers and missile silos and orbital mines.

This may seem like a formidable armada, but the area they cover is huge and the navy must be ready to perform many varied and difficult tasks. An average sector, perhaps in one of the western spiral arms where humanity is most dense, can contain tens of thousands of stars and covers an area of 8,000,000 cubic light years. Within this vast wilderness, only a small fraction of systems will have planets and a small proportion of these will be inhabited, or indeed inhabitable. However, the ships of a battlefleet must constantly scour this area for enemies: protecting merchant shipping from pirates and alien attacks, transporting and escorting Imperial Guard armies, giving orbital support for planetary armies, not to mention providing exploration fleets and routine patrols.

THE EYE OF TERROR

Although the warp is a distinct dimension, generally separated from the material realm, there are a few areas in the galaxy where the boundaries of the warp and realspace are broken and the two intermingle with each other. These regions are roiling tempests of destructive energy, where the laws of physics are broken and the raw energy of the warp spills forth into our realm. The Eye of Terror is the largest of these, a tempestuous area where nature and nightmare are found side by side – worlds with seas of blood and skies of fire; moons that scream into the ether; stars that roam across the heavens, clashing together in gigantic supernovae. The Eye of Terror is the strongest fastness of the followers of Chaos, renegades who have turned from the Emperor and bargained their souls with ancient and evil gods in return for power and immortality. From the Eye of Terror these twisted traitors make forays and attacks, ever questing to bring about the downfall of the Imperium, to sweep away law and order and replace them with disorder and anarchy.

139-142.M41

OMENS OF DARKNESS

Many Imperial scholars believe the Gothic War to have started several years before the first invasion fleets actually entered the Gothic Sector. With hindsight, a number of seemingly unconnected events can be linked together, warning of the darkness and bloodshed that was to come.

THE ARXRAID

Although the bulk of the Imperium's defences around the Eye of Terror are based in the area known as the Cadian Gate, there are many monitoring stations throughout the Segmentum Obscurus. These outposts are constantly raided and attacked by the Emperor's foes, but during the mid-second century of the 41st millennium, the number of these attacks dramatically increased. Most important of all, in the eyes of scholars, is the attack on the watch station at Arx. Due to its low priority and importance, Arx was inhabited by only a skeleton garrison of Imperial Guard, whose duty it was to protect the few Tech-adepts required to maintain the station's observation equipment.

Early in 139.M41, the scout frigate *Ascendance* received a garbled plea for help from Arx station's ageing Astropath. The attackers were unknown and when reinforcements arrived four months later, there was no sign of those responsible. The Imperial Guardsmen stationed on the planet had been wiped out. As Captain Thetis of the 122nd Borlian Imperial Guard wrote in his journal:

"They had been horribly butchered, their mutilated bodies left to the ever present scavenging wild dogs that are Arx's only natural predators."

The Inquisition sent one of their agents, the experienced Inquisitor Horst, but there was little evidence for him to uncover.

If Arx had been the only outpost attacked in this way, the raid would have become just another intriguing riddle in a galaxy full of mysteries, soon to be forgotten. However, over the next three years a number of similar attacks were reported throughout the neighbouring systems and spreading into the adjacent sectors, and Inquisitor Horst began to suspect that some larger scheme was in motion. However, with no proof to support his instincts or identify the attackers, he decided to watch and wait for his enigmatic enemy to make another move.

A PLAGUE OF DAMNATION

Just over a year after the Arx raid, several patrol vessels made grisly discoveries in the Athena Sector. A number of Imperial merchant vessels and warships, one of them an Emperor class battleship, were found drifting uncontrolled through wilderness space. Upon being boarded, it was found that the crews of the ships were all dead,

their disease ridden corpses strewn along corridors and gantries, some found still at their workstations. Xebal Astolax, Magos Biologis of the Adeptus Mechanicus, listed the various symptoms he encountered on his examination of corpses from the merchant vessel *Shanxi*.

"The skin was blistered with many weeping sores, the blood thin and watery. Fungal growths were found within the brain cavity, which must have caused extreme pain and delirium when the victims were still alive."

Each ship also bore the scars of a brief space battle and signs of being boarded, though no enemy dead could be found.

As Inquisitor Horst puzzled over these new developments, his many agents and spies brought more news. A rumour was spreading amongst the captains of the Imperial Navy concerning an ancient, despised Chaos ship known as the *Plagueclaw*. Crewed by pestilential followers of the God of Decay, this ship had been the scourge of the Imperial Navy for four millennia. The infection of the ships' crews and the reappearance of the *Plagueclaw* must have been more than coincidence and when a force of Chaos Marines from the Death Guard Traitor Legion sacked the hive world of Morganghast, Horst was convinced that the forces of Chaos were planning another major incursion. The watchposts around the Cadian Gate were put on close alert and Navy ships from all over the Segmentum Obscurus were detailed on increased patrols around Cadia.

ANARCHY SPREADS

While Inquisitor Horst investigated the Chaos activity around Arx and its neighbouring systems, events began to take an even more sinister turn in the Gothic Sector, 2,500 light years away. The Navigators of the Navis Nobilite reported greater disturbance within the warp around the region, the incidence of warp storms gradually increasing as the year went on. On many worlds, this news was received with panic, a situation which was made more precarious by several religious fanatics declaring that the Emperor was displeased and was sending warp storms to purge the unholy.

This led to a number of sects forming, members stricken with feelings of impending doom. They were desperate for the Emperor's forgiveness and as the shocked preacher of Flexeberg noted:

"They spend their whole time flagellating themselves to purify their souls, decrying the excesses of their fellow men and driving their neighbours to cast out the sinful and purge their own blasphemies. Though very laudable behaviour in itself, they have forgotten their sacred duties to the Emperor – while they wail and gnash their teeth, the coffers rattle emptily!"

On many planets, the cults became very powerful, swelled by popular support to such a degree that the Ecclesiarchy (and sometimes even the planetary government), could do nothing to stop the rampaging hordes. As the hysteria spread, lynch mobs roamed hive cities and mining colonies seeking the impure. Impromptu burnings and hangings became commonplace as the desperate citizens threw themselves into a fervour of apocalyptic faith, scouring their friends and loved ones to atone for real or imagined sins against the Emperor. Yet it was to no avail. Fleet Admiral Bratha, when sending a message to the naval base at Port Maw, lamented:

"And still the warp swirls and rages and the situation becomes ever more desperate."

Under cover of widespread paranoia, secret cults and covens insinuated themselves into positions of power, subverting ever more people to their twisted causes. Misguided followers of the Dark Gods openly proclaimed that Chaos would save humanity when the Emperor had turned from them. Thousands, even millions, of Imperial citizens were deluded by false promises, flocking to these calls, and the Inquisition was hard pressed to root out every cult member, deviant and heretic. To make the situation worse, several naval vessels were destroyed in dock, by reactor overloads and magazine explosions. Though official reports declared the incidents the result of poor maintenance, faulty ammunition or other ordinary causes, many readily believed the tales of sabotage and rebellion within the Navy's own ranks.

THE HAND OF DARKNESS

While the Gothic Sector was being engulfed in anarchy and confusion, Horst was searching for more clues to the plans of the heretics. When he heard of a Chaos attack on the Imperial world of Purgatory, he demanded to accompany the investigating fleet. There was one thing which made Purgatory different from the dozens of other raids – the device known only as the Hand of Darkness. Its existence known only to a few of the most trusted members of the Inquisition, the Hand of Darkness was an incredibly ancient alien artefact located deep beneath the surface of Purgatory. All attempts to divine its purpose had proved fruitless, yet distant legends, from older races such as the Eldar, spoke of the Hand of Darkness with horror and revulsion. It was widely believed to be a weapon of immeasurable power, although its exact functioning was a mystery. When Horst arrived at Purgatory, the Inquisitor's deepest fears had come true – the Hand of Darkness was gone. If the followers of Chaos learned how to activate this unimaginably potent weapon, who could tell what destructive power they could unleash on the forces of the Imperium?

THE INVASION OF ORNSWORLD

Horst knew of another artefact connected to the Hand of Darkness in the old myths. Called the Eye of Night, it was located on the Ratling planet of Ornsworld. As Horst sped towards it on the fastest ship he could commandeer, a report came in of an attack on the Ratlings. A small force of renegades had landed close to where the Eye was embedded in an ancient statue, worshipped as a god by the Ratlings in pre-Imperial times. After a brief skirmish, an Imperial Guard recruiting force stationed near to the Chaos force's landing site drove off this initial foray. However, a month later Chaos ships blockaded Ornsworld and a full scale invasion began. The defenceless Ratlings stood no chance against the depraved Chaos Marines and the death toll reached millions as the hills and mountains were scoured with fire and shells by the followers of the Dark Gods. Lieutenant Compton-Hawkins, attached to the recruitment team, recorded the scenes that followed the attack:

"Piles of Ratling skulls towered over the plains, funeral pyres blackened the skies as the Traitors systematically wiped out everything in their path. The small settlement of Esmerelda's Dale is now but a smoking crater, the bones of its 4,000 inhabitants crushed to powder and scattered over the surrounding area. A powerful seismic detonator brought down the [mountainside of the] Great Belly, sweeping away seven towns and 82,000 Ratlings, in a tide of crushing boulders and boiling mud slides."

Amongst the carnage, the Eye of Night was torn from its mounting and the thief slipped away into the stars. The forces of Chaos now had both the Hand of Darkness and the Eye of Night and with them perhaps the power to overthrow the Imperium in its entirety. Inquisitor Horst was tormented by a single question: where would they strike first? The answer was to come all too soon.

THE STORM BREAKS

The old Inquisitor began compiling scattered reports of unusual activity in an ever widening area, and learned of the disruption engulfing the Gothic Sector. As he headed for the region, more reports of sightings of Chaos vessels came to Horst's attention, reinforcing his belief that the Gothic Sector was to be the arena of this latest incursion. A month after Horst arrived in the sector, three years after he had begun investigating the Arx raid, a cataclysmic shockwave passed through the warp. The massive storm engulfed the Gothic Sector in swirling tempests, cutting the area off from the rest of the Imperium. Whatever happened next, the ships and warriors of the Gothic Sector would face it alone.

143.M41

SURPRISE ATTACK

The first outright battles of the Gothic War were fought as the year 143.M41 came to a close. During the first few months of conflict, Chaos fleets launched a number of wide ranging all out attacks against Imperial Navy bases within the sector.

THE FIRST STRIKE

Reports of attacking Chaos fleets flooded in from all across the Gothic Sector. Much planning must have gone in to the all-important first strike, as the Chaos fleets targeted a dozen major Imperial bases in the Gothic Sector. With no warning, the renegades struck hard and fast, ambushing Imperial warships as they were in dock or orbiting around their stations. Caught unawares and already overstretched by the increasing tension within the sector, the Imperial Navy was poorly prepared to respond to this sudden offensive. At Bladen, the *Rhadamanthine* had her starboard flight decks blown clean off by torpedoes, while at Cherys, Doomfire bombers from the *Heartless Destroyer* damaged the warp engines of the *Lord Sylvanus* so severely that it took nearly two years of constant repairs for the ship to be able to make warp jumps greater than five light years.

Orbiting stations also fell to the Chaos invaders, destroyed or captured by the swiftness of the attack. The loss of many of these orbital shipyards, such as Tripol Docks, Port Imperial and Gathara Station, was doubly felt – not only were Imperial ships badly in need of refitting, but the means to do so were being put to use by the enemy. Captain Grove of the *Admiral Drake*, an old Relentless class cruiser used as a training vessel, was one of the few survivors of the attack at Halemnet Base in the Cyclops Cluster, which typified the style of attack used by the Chaos vessels. Grove and his crew were lucky to escape, as this log entry shows:

4th Watch, 3rd day of Euphistles. *Under attack from renegade vessels. They approached from starward, blinding our surveyors. Long range torpedo strikes have destroyed the* Vanguard *[a Dauntless class light cruiser] and crippled* Indomitus Imperious *[a Lunar class cruiser]. Broke from dock with the reactors still at 75% of operational capacity. Engaged in short ranged exchange with squadron of renegade escorts, disabling our starboard batteries and destroying the torpedo tubes.*

Fires broke out in the port quarter galleries; the emergency bulkheads had to be lowered. Casualties estimated at 5,000 or more, many of them gun crews on the starboard decks. We are attempting to disengage, trying to avoid a Slaughter class coming in around Halemnet's gravity well. Ordering all available power to the engines to outrun him. Time to visit the chapel and pray for the Emperor's protection.

Fortunately for the crew of the *Admiral Drake* and many others, the Chaos fleets were not normally disposed towards lengthy battles, preferring instead to hit hard and then retreat, leaving the Imperial Navy suffering heavy losses, with many capital ships destroyed or needing months of repairs and refitting.

THE DEFENCE OF ORAR

However, the Chaos fleets did not achieve total success. In a few battles the traitors suffered serious reversals, most notably during the defence of the hive world Orar. When one of the many Chaos warfleets, led by the Chaos Warmaster Malefica Arkham, ambushed the Imperial battlegroup which was stationed at Orar, they did not, on this occasion, find their enemy taken unawares and helpless.

Having just received orders to help put down a rebellion in a neighbouring system, the Imperial battlegroup, led by Captain Compel Bast on the battlecruiser *Imperious*, was just preparing to break orbit. Already at full alert status, the Imperial ships easily evaded the raiders' initial torpedo salvo and counter attacked. What happened next is best summed up by Bast himself:

"Unable to abort their attack, the Chaos ships swept onwards into a hail of torpedoes, gun deck fire and lance shots from Orar's orbital defences. Our nova cannon struck the reviled renegade Soulless *full on, crippling the vessel in a huge blast of gas and debris. Extra beverage rations to the gun crews that night. As we closed in for the kill, the other Chaos ships abandoned their fellow vessel to its fate and attempted to escape. With a torrent of fire pouring into its breached hull, the* Soulless *finally destroyed itself as its warp drives imploded under our continuous bombardment. Arkham's ship, the* Deathbane*, had its bridge smashed to pieces by a volley of fire from the* Iron Duke*, and rumours say that Arkham was the only man on the bridge to crawl from the wreckage, somehow protected by his Dark Masters.*

I cited our attack craft crews for their admirable performance of their duty. Several of our bomber wings were instrumental in reducing the Deathskull *to a hulk. Unfortunately, we were unable to claim our prize as the hulk was gripped by Orar's pull and broken asunder in the upper atmosphere."*

Only a handful of Chaos escorts escaped without damage and the *Deathbane* and its fleet was pursued out of the system by the vengeful Imperial commanders.

UNLIKELY ALLIES

Orar was not the only major set-back inflicted upon the forces of Darkness during the opening stages of the war. In one incident, a small Chaos fleet consisting of several Iconoclast and Infidel class escorts, bound for a raid on Denerair in the Cyclops Cluster, fell foul of the numerous bands of Ork pirates in the region. The garbled transmissions of the Chaos ships were intercepted, giving some idea of what happened.

Using their traditional tactic of lurking in an asteroid field for an unwary victim, the Orks leapt from hiding and plunged into the heart of the Chaos fleet. Unable to use their greater manoeuvrability in the swirl of asteroids, gas and dust clouds, the Chaos ships were mercilessly hammered by the Orks and not one Chaos vessel survived the battle.

Upon hearing this news, Lord Admiral Ravensburg was quoted as saying, *"If he wasn't damned green-skinned scum, I'd make their commander my Flag-Captain!"* although he later denied this statement. Such occurrences were however rare and the greenskins were as happy to continue attacking Imperial shipping as they were to fight against the invading warfleets.

THE BATTLE OF BLACKSTONE IV

The initial Chaos attacks struck at important installations such as Adeptus Mechanicus forge worlds and naval bases. Of the seventeen bases in the Gothic Sector, six of them were founded upon the Blackstone Fortresses. As the Liber Monumenta tells us:

"The architects of the edifices known as the Blackstone Fortresses remain unknown. All analysis of their materials and construction methods has proved inconclusive. Attempts to date them vary massively between seventeen thousand years old and three hundred thousand years. They have remained dormant since their discovery early in the second millennium of the Emperor's divine rule. Even with most of its systems inoperative, a Blackstone Fortress made an incomparable foundation for a naval base."

After extensive refitting by the Adeptus Mechanicus, with Imperium constructed defence turrets and primary weapons systems added, the Blackstone Fortresses' defensive capabilities rivalled those of the Naval Command stations at Port Maw itself. It was the pride of Battlefleet Gothic that no Blackstone Fortress had ever been taken in battle.

This was to change at Rebo system, where the naval base Blackstone IV orbited the system's fifth world. A Chaos fleet, probably led by Abaddon himself, struck at Rebo V. The Imperial ships on station put up a ferocious defence, but were overwhelmed by the size of the fleet facing them. Twenty capital ships, including two Despoiler class battleships and a score of escorting vessels, swept through Reba's outer defences and attacked Blackstone IV itself.

The battle was short and bloody – just as the Chaos fleet approached within range, the Blackstone Fortress' power systems shut down completely. With the energy grid dead, the guns were unable to fire, the armoured gates to the attack craft bays couldn't be opened and the personnel on board were defenceless. Soon after this information was projected by the station's Chief Astropath, Blackstone IV fell to invaders. There was no more news from Rebo and it was assumed there were no survivors. This was to be the first of a number of critical blows that shook the Imperial forces right from the outset of the war.

THE DEATH OF SAVAVEN

Even as Abaddon pushed home his attack at Rebo, more disaster was to befall the loyal defenders of Gothic Sector. At Savaven, a Cardinal world of the Ecclesiarchy, the few system defence ships could do little to protect their planet against a new and awesomely powerful vessel. Simply dubbed the *Planet Killer*, this monolithic ship bristled with gun decks, lance batteries and torpedo launch systems. As the defence monitors withdrew from its implacable advance, the *Planet Killer* achieved orbit over Savaven. Jeremiah Soldagen, commander of the orbital defence forces, was later to record the dreadful events to follow:

"Within [the Planet Killer's*] central cavity, we could detect a massive power surge. Energy crackled from a number of ports on the hull. Then, with a blast that blotted the sun from our scanners, it opened fire. The energy beam lasted for about a half hour. Emperor knows how they could generate that much energy. We linked in to the planetary surveyors to see what was happening on the surface. That bolt bored its way through miles of the planet's crust and seared through the mantle beneath. As the attack finished, the magma surged forth through this continent-sized wound, breaking apart Savaven from within. The seas boiled into the skies, the ice caps melted and whole continents sunk beneath the tidal wave. With such an unimaginable release of energy, Savaven was blown out of her natural orbit and flipped over on her axis. I guess nobody was alive by then, but if they were, they didn't last long. Like a rations pack crushed in your fist, Savaven just crumpled in on herself, then broke up into thousands of fragments. There's just an asteroid field there now, really dense, impossible to navigate. There were fourteen billion people living on Savaven. Fourteen billion dead in an hour."*

Soldagen and the other survivors were to suffer traumatic mental breakdowns from what they witnessed and three months later they all took their own lives in a mass suicide. The effect

on Imperial morale was devastating. All had heard of Exterminatus with fusion torpedoes, virus bombs and mass drivers, but to know the enemy had the ability to destroy an entire planet, not just all life on it, must have been the most chilling thought that any naval crewman had ever faced. As the Imperial Navy reeled at this news, Inquisitor Horst was left wondering if this was the power gained from possession of the Hand of Darkness and the Eye of Night. If it was something else, then perhaps even worse news was to come.

TROUBLE WITH THE ELDAR

A constant problem for Lord Admiral Ravensburg, commander of the entire Battlefleet Gothic, was the presence of a large number of Eldar in the sector, making swift forays from their hiding places within the Graildark nebula. It is even widely believed that an Eldar Craftworld was in the Gothic Sector during the war, though there were no confirmed sightings and its location was never determined.

Of the pirate forces plaguing the Imperium, the force called the Executioners became highly active as the Gothic War progressed, until the number of their raids and attacks had increased from three in 143.M41 to eight in 147.M41. Unable to track the sophisticated Eldar ships back to their base and strongly suspecting that they were connected in some way to the elusive Craftworld, Ravensburg could do little to defend against the aliens and it was up to individual battlegroup commanders how best to act against their slippery foes.

THE WOLF PACKS GATHER

Not only the Eldar preyed upon the transports and merchantmen of the Imperium. Bands of human pirates, renegades from the Eye of Terror and even the vessels of other alien races all increased their activity. Called Wolf Packs by the Naval officers who chased them, these roving bands of small vessels hunted the ships and convoys of anybody and everybody. Admiral Koburn, of the Second Battlecruiser Fleet, noted bitterly:

"If it came to a straight fight, they would be no match for our guns. But [the raiders] are canny,

and never risk open battle if they can avoid it. The packs nibble at the heels of our convoys, capturing a single transport here, a merchant vessel there. Their favourite tactic is to lurk in asteroid fields or to operate from deserted moons, where they are almost impossible to detect and even harder to root out. I even heard of one band that docked in a station in the upper atmosphere of a gas giant in the Fullam system. Every month brings more reports of their attacks, but we cannot spare more ships from the battle lines to escort the convoys."

The Imperial fleet was fighting two enemies at once: the Chaos battlefleets and the Ork, Human and Eldar pirates that had been a constant threat to Imperial shipping even before the Gothic War began. Everywhere the Imperial forces were on the defensive, driven from world upon world, system upon system. Losses were high and the shipyards and orbital stations fought an ever increasing battle for supplies and manpower. Darkness had descended upon the Gothic Sector and it looked as if the light would never return.

144.M41

THE BLACKSTONE FORTRESSES

The Imperium was beset by many Chaos fleets led by individual Warmasters (estimates vary from eight enemy fleets to twenty or more). Each was a rival to any battlegroup Lord Admiral Ravensburg could muster at the time. One in particular, led by the hateful Abaddon himself, was to pose the most serious threat of all.

LUKITAR STATION

With the threat of Abaddon's *Planet Killer* looming over them, many Imperial worlds surrendered without a fight. Sub-sector after sub-sector fell out of Imperial control and with them a number of shipyards and orbital docks. As the Imperium faced increasing difficulties in repairing its vessels, building new ones became ever more unlikely. With its critical early strikes, Chaos may well have won the war before it had even started.

There was some hope for the Imperial Navy. On a desolate moon orbiting a gas giant in the Lukitar system was an Adeptus Mechanicus facility. The Tech-Priests were already researching the wisdom of their predecessors to uncover knowledge of more powerful weapon systems, more efficient drives and better shield generators. A few Imperial ships were fitted out with these improved systems, but the results were never entirely satisfactory. A ship could only provide so much power and if gunnery was improved, communications would suffer; if the engine power was increased, the shield generators could not be sustained. The search continued, with each new development slightly more successful than the last.

Then the ships of Abaddon arrived. Commodore Vandez commanding 202 Red squadron, consisting of four Sword class frigates, was among the first Imperial vessels to sight Abaddon since his attack on Blackstone IV.

2nd Dog Watch, 19th day of Aphrodael, Lukitar system. *The reports from the guardian stations were correct. Our assayers have picked up an energy pulse of unimaginable magnitude. The crew are whispering fearfully of the* Planet

Killer, *but that was last sighted in Saviour, 65 light years away. We are proceeding at full power to investigate.*

9th Watch, 19th day of Aphrodael, Lukitar system. *Even seeing it with my own eyes, I do not believe it! Several renegade capital ships are heading in-system, with a dozen escorts. With them is a Blackstone Fortress! Damn my eyes, but it's true! It looks different, more organic; somehow alive, if that were possible. Our surveyors have picked up several weapon systems which are not Imperial in construction. How have they managed to wake the beast? Emperor's blood, they're building up energy to fire, even at this range.*

3rd Watch, 1st day of Sanacleus, Immaterium. *We have left behind what remains of Lukitar station. The captured Blackstone Fortress proved almost impregnable to our weapons, those few of us who could fight through to attack it. It has weapons the like of which I have never seen, even when fighting Eldar pirates, or chasing down Fra'al raiders in Bhein Morr. The Fortress has pummelled Lukitar station to rubble, taking only a few minutes with all its armaments brought to bear. It is only a seven light years jump from here to Brinaga where Blackstone VI is stationed. We are proceeding with all speed to Brinaga to warn them of the attack, for I believe the renegades will attempt to capture another of the Blackstones. I pray to the Emperor we can stop them.*

Even with Valdez's warning, there were few available ships left to defend Blackstone VI. As with the capture of the first Fortress, the Chaos followers had some means of controlling the Blackstone Fortresses from afar, able to shut down its power systems and turn it into a death trap for the tens of thousands of personnel aboard. Brinaga system fell to Abaddon four months after the attack on Lukitar.

IMMEASURABLE POWER

While Lord Admiral Ravensburg pondered the many military and logistical problems facing his isolated sector, he was visited by Inquisitor Horst. What passed between them was never recorded, though it is widely believed that the revered Inquisitor told Ravensburg of the Hand of Darkness and the Eye of Night. A plan was formulated to try to recapture the Blackstone Fortresses by covert means rather than open attack.

However, before this plan achieved any visible results, news came through of another assault by Abaddon's fleet, this time at Blackstone I in the Fularis system. The personal log of First Lieutenant Elijah Borgia of the *Vindictive* was recovered from the hulk of the ship, found floating towards the Fularis star:

"We are in luck today. [Abaddon's fleet] has attacked from the other side of Fularis II, which means they'll have to dare the orbital and planetary defence systems to get to Blackstone I. We have only just upgraded our weapons on Fularis II for just such an occurrence and I doubt that even with his two Fortresses, our enemy will survive."

Borgia's early optimism was to be cruelly shattered:

"The two Blackstones have taken up station five thousand leagues from each other, some seventy five thousand leagues from Fularis II and just out of range of the weapons platforms, except for the torpedo launchers. We are picking up an energy surge in the two Fortresses: they're powering up for something. Tech-Priest Flavix says there's some kind of energy exchange between them. Emperor's teeth, I can see it myself now, a column of shifting energy linking the two fortresses together. The surge is still rising, the power beam becoming more visible. The damned Astropath is screaming now, yelling something about a breach into warp space. What hell-spawned trick are they up to? Oh my ..."

Other recovered evidence points towards an energy beam being unleashed towards Fularis II. The *Vindictive* was caught full on, her shields overloaded instantly and outer hull vaporised as the energy wave passed over the ship. Fularis II was later found with its atmosphere stripped off and the surface scoured to a rocky plain. Of Blackstone I, there was no sign.

144-149.M41

THE WAR CONTINUES

Across the entire Gothic Sector the Chaos and Imperial fleets clashed. For five years the battles continued, with the death toll on both sides running into millions. Planets were invaded and recaptured, fleets ambushed, bases attacked and all the while the sector was isolated from any outside help.

SLAUGHTER AMONG THE STARS

From the Hammerhead Deeps to the Cyclops Cluster, Imperial ships fought desperately to hold back the Chaos ships that spilled into the Gothic Sector. In some areas, the Emperor's forces were hurled back by the ferocity of their foes, while other regions, protected by more skilled or experienced battlegroup commanders, held against the initial impetus of the Chaos attack. It is impossible to chart exactly the ebb and flow of battle and many worlds changed hands four, five or even six times during the period of fiercest fighting. By 147.M41, the Lysades sub-sector was almost entirely overrun and Chaos ships held sway in over a dozen systems surrounding Port Maw. However, in the Cyclops Cluster the Orks gave the Chaos vessels stiff resistance and from staging points in the Quinrox Sound, the Imperial fleet launched many counter-attacks, pushing back the spread of Chaos for months before being forced to turn their attention to incursions elsewhere.

While the Imperial Navy and the renegades duelled across the stars, the attacks from Orks, Eldar and Human pirates increased. With the watchful eye of the Imperial Navy elsewhere, these bandits had an almost free rein. Convoys were captured, raiding parties sacked cities and on dozens of worlds, millions died from disease and starvation. Those convoys that did get through safely often found enemy warships prowling through their destination system, blockading all craft entering and establishing a stranglehold on the worlds they

besieged. On the hive world of Stranivar three hive cities, with inhabitants running into a hundred billion souls, were overcome with rioting due to the shortages of drinkable water. With no incoming supplies, the world's own recycling centres were unable to cope and four fifths of the population died from dehydration before the next convoy managed to break through the Chaos blockade. The docks and shipyards were frequently starved of supplies and ships which put in for repairs and re-arming were often sent into battle with only makeshift refits and half-empty magazines.

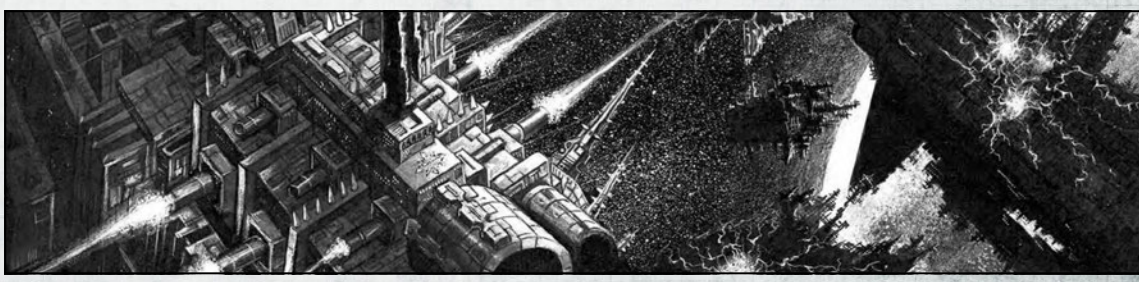
THE PIRATES' HAVEN

While Lord Ravensburg's forces struggled with the ships of the Chaos Warmasters, the Imperial fleet made significant progress against another deadly foe. A rough confederacy of nearly two dozen pirate bands had gathered in the Quinrox Sound. With over 50 escort-sized vessels, a captured Gothic class cruiser and two salvaged Lunar class cruisers, the marauders had become a serious threat to the security of shipping in the sub-sector. Lord Admiral Ravensburg, unable to turn his attention from stemming the Chaos incursion, ordered Fleet-Admiral Mourndark to deal with the pirates in any way he saw fit.

Mourndark drew ships from battlegroups across the sector, including the *Sword of Orion*, *Havock*, *Uziel*, *Fortitude* and the fearsome *Cypra Probatii*. Along with these capital ships, Mourndark also took command of the 24th Destroyer Squadron [*Widowmakers*], the 1st Frigate Echelon [*Eagle Claws*] and the Sword class frigates of the Anvil 206 Patrol Flotilla. With a large convoy of empty transports, Mourndark lured the pirates into attacking. When the Imperial ships counter-attacked, Mourndark ordered that at least one of the renegades be allowed to escape. With the aid of the Master Navigator Absalom Draal, Mourndark and his fleet were able to follow the surviving pirates back to their lair in the Barbarus Costa system. Confident in the knowledge that they were safe in their den, the pirates had given little thought to defences. The Imperial attack came as a total surprise, as Mourndark concluded in a report to Lord Ravensburg after the battle:

"We fell upon them like hounds at the chase. They tried to scurry and bolt for their holes, but my escorts were ready for them. The Cypra Probatii *herself claimed fifteen kills that day and their losses must have been in excess of thirty ships in total. Many fled to the surface of Barbarus III, thinking themselves safe from our guns. How wrong they were. Using plasma torpedoes modified by Magos Urilun of the Adeptus Mechanicus, we set fire to the atmosphere of the near-deserted world, burning them out. Only three vessels emerged from the conflagration, asking for clemency. Our guns showed them the mercy of the Emperor!"*

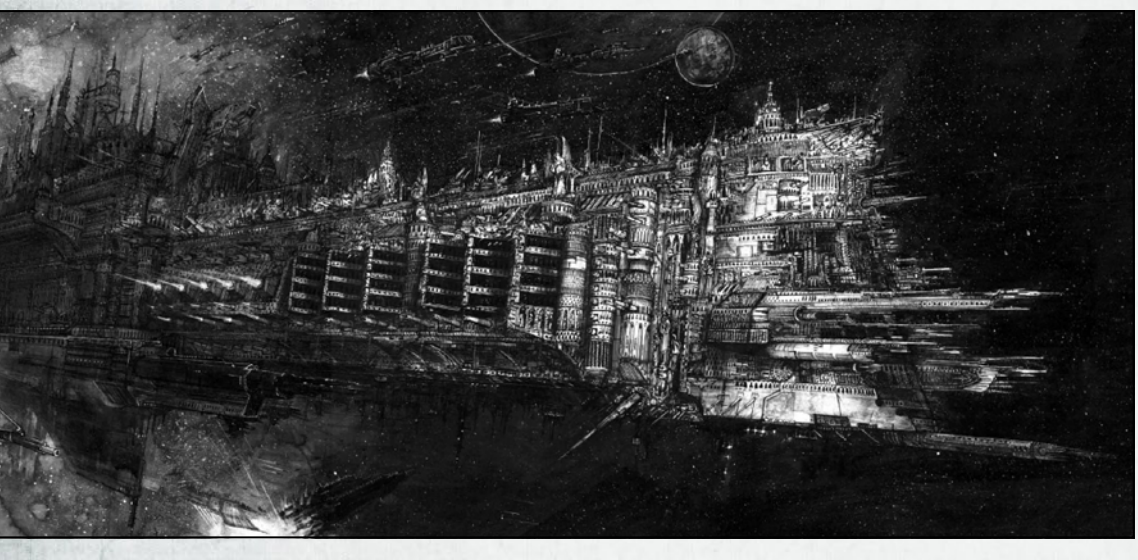
With a large proportion of the pirates dealt with in one blow, Ravensburg was able to concentrate his forces onto fighting back against the Chaos fleets once again.



150-151.M41

THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

For the first seven years of the Gothic War, the Imperium had been fighting defensively across an extended battlefront. As 150.M41 passed into the year 151.M41, Lord Admiral Ravensburg decided to take the fight to the enemy and claw back what had been taken.



THE BATTLE OF GETHSEMANE

Knowing that although the Chaos ships were more numerous overall, they were divided into many smaller fleets, it was Lord Ravensburg's hope that he could destroy his attackers if he could bring the weight of Battlefleet Gothic to bear against each of the Chaos fleets individually. This was a very risky ploy, because to amass the battlefleet in any strength meant weakening convoy escorts, system patrols and squadrons on anti-pirate duties. Ravensburg stated his reasons in a missive to Inquisitor Horst, saying:

"These are troubled times that require resolute action. If we do not act boldly and with the confidence of the Emperor we will be bled dry within ten years and we will have lost the whole sector to our enemies. Not only will a decisive blow eliminate enemy vessels, it will send a message to the Chaos fleets and the Imperial forces alike – the Imperium is not going to give up without a fight."

After numerous aborted attacks and false starts, Ravensburg saw his first real chance in mid 151.M41, when scout vessels reported a Chaos fleet moving en masse towards the Gethsemane system. Ordering his task force to get underway with all possible speed, Ravensburg took personal command aboard the *Divine Right*. With seventeen capital ships (including two battleships and two battlecruisers) and twenty escorts under his command, Ravensburg pursued the enemy fleet into the Gethsemane region. Suddenly becoming aware of their plight, the Chaos forces headed out-system again to try to get far enough from Gethsemane's star to make a warp jump. Ravensburg detached the fastest vessels in his fleet to pursue and a week-long sternchase ensued. What happened next was recorded in the memoirs of Captain Blythe of the *Guardian*:

"As we followed the fleeing foe, signals came in warning of another enemy fleet on a closing course. We had been lured into a trap!

Bolstered by a further twelve ships, the Chaos fleet turned on us and it was all we could do to evade the bulk of the enemy. Even in doing so, we lost three destroyers and four frigates in a series of small skirmishes. The enemy losses totalled at least five escorts and maybe as many as ten or more. With all of our big guns in Lord Ravensburg's command, there was little to do but run. The hunters had become the hunted!"

Blythe and his battlegroup headed back towards the vicinity of Ravensburg's main fleet, but even with Ravensburg's capital ships, the Imperial forces were still outgunned to a serious degree. For three days the two fleets circled and dodged each other through the system, neither fleet commander prepared to commit the bulk of his ships against an enemy whose exact position was unknown.

Three weeks after arriving in the system, Ravensburg's fleet and the Chaos ships clashed. Six Firestorm class frigates located the Chaos fleet near to Gethsemane II, using the cover of several dust clouds to avoid being detected themselves. Seizing the opportunity, the Lord Admiral moved his whole fleet in on the attack. Ravensburg's Cobra destroyers launched several torpedo salvoes at extreme range – although they had little hope of inflicting damage, the torpedo attacks forced the Chaos ships to alter their heading so that they were moving towards the Imperium's capital ships. Flag-Lieutenant Martyrn, aboard the *Divine Right*, related the battle's events:

"Forced into a head-on clash with our fleet, the Chaos vessels came off poorly in the initial exchange of fire. Salvoes of our torpedoes screamed into their fleet, some evaded, others hitting home with blossoms of explosions. With our forward shields and armoured prows, their return fire did little damage. Our escorts carefully kept the enemy herded in a compact mass as we passed through their lines. The ship shook as we fired both broadsides simultaneously. Then Lord Ravensburg gave the order and we poured a continuous fusillade into their ships. The stars were thick with the enemy, we could hardly miss at that range."

The Imperial fleet tore through their adversaries, crippling four capital ships and destroying eleven escorts in the initial pass. Rather than turning to fight, which with hindsight would have given him the greater chance of victory, the Chaos Warmaster ordered his fleet to continue on their course in a bid to escape.

THE EXECUTIONERS' BLOW

It looked as if the Chaos fleet would escape justice again, as the faster renegade vessels accelerated away from Ravensburg's pursuit. Even as the enemy drew away, more drama was to occur, as this account by Captain Drew of the *Fortitude* shows:

"They attacked without warning – one minute the screen was clear, the next a veritable armada of Eldar ships had appeared in front of the Chaos fleet. Recognising the colours of the Executioners amongst their vessels, we feared for our lives. Even as we attempted to haul onto a new heading, our dread became ecstatic happiness. The Eldar attacked the enemy, not us! I remember hearing cries of joy across the bridge as a pulse of lance shots burnt through the hull of one of their battleships, sending debris tumbling and flames crawling along its upper gun decks."

Caught between the attacking Eldar and Ravensburg's fleet, the Chaos ships were annihilated, although a dozen more of the Emperor's vessels were crippled or destroyed before victory was finally attained. Why the Eldar decided to lend their weight to the Imperial cause was never discovered, though it is a common belief that they had finally heard of Abaddon's capture of the Blackstone Fortresses and had seen an alliance as their only chance of survival.

THE TIDE TURNS

As the news of Ravensburg's great victory in the Battle of Gethsemane was spread throughout the fleet, even more promising tidings were to come. In the late months of 151.M41, the warp storms that had isolated the Gothic Sector began to abate and several ships from neighbouring battlefleets arrived to reinforce the Lord Admiral's bloodied fleets. The battle barges and strike cruisers of several Space Marine Chapters also arrived, bringing fresh, elite troops to the fighting. The Imperium's solid defence, though broken in places, had prevented the Chaos fleets from achieving swift victory, and with the help of the Eldar and ships from nearby sectors, the Emperor's servants could go on the offensive.

THE DESTRUCTION OF TARANTIS

Just as Ravensburg had never contemplated defeat, it seems that Abaddon was equally loth to give up what he had won. With two, possibly even three, Blackstone Fortresses under his command, it was Abaddon who was the greatest threat to Imperial worlds in the Gothic Sector. Just how much of a threat was not realised until the attack on the Tarantis system. On the edges of Gothic Sector, Tarantis was a common gathering ground for ships entering or leaving the region

from Tamahl Sector and so it was here that Abaddon tried to stem the flow of reinforcements coming in.

His main fleet, accompanied by all three of the missing Blackstone Fortresses, swept aside the few Imperial ships close to where it broke from the warp. Closing rapidly into the system, the cruisers and battleships of the Chaos armada punched a hole through the defenders to allow the Blackstone Fortresses to break through. Countless millions of navy personnel and Imperial Guard died, planets were destroyed and an uncountable number of innocents perished as the two mighty fleets clashed, but what happened next was to totally eclipse all the horrific events of the war so far.

Combining their power together in the same fashion as at Fularis, the Blackstones unleashed a massive energy wave into the Tarantis star. With their objective complete, the Chaos ships conducted a fighting withdrawal and then jumped into warp space once more.

For a whole month, the Tarantis star raged and boiled. Tortured storms moved across its surface, its corona expanding to engulf the two nearest worlds. Any that could leave fled the system, but to evacuate the populations of three worlds was an impossible task. Four weeks after Abaddon's attack, Tarantis' star went nova, wiping out everything for many thousands of billions of miles in every direction in a storm of gas and plasma. Tarantis, a whole star system, was no more and Abaddon had the power to unleash this destruction wherever he wished.

THE TRAP IS SPRUNG

Lord Ravensburg firmly believed that Abaddon would try to capture the other three Blackstone Fortresses, but he had no idea against which of the three the Chaos Warmaster would strike next. The hunt continued for six months, with Imperial and Eldar ships patrolling through long forgotten systems in a desperate bid to find Abaddon and his horrific weapons. Then the forces opposing Chaos achieved a breakthrough – the Eldar had located Abaddon's fleet in the Lower Lysades and were able to use their sophisticated ships to trail him through the warp.

From his course it was clear that the Warmaster was preparing to launch an attack on Schindlegeist, where Blackstone V floated in the depths of space. Leaving only a few vessels to deal with the other Chaos fleets, Ravensburg and the Eldar raced to reach

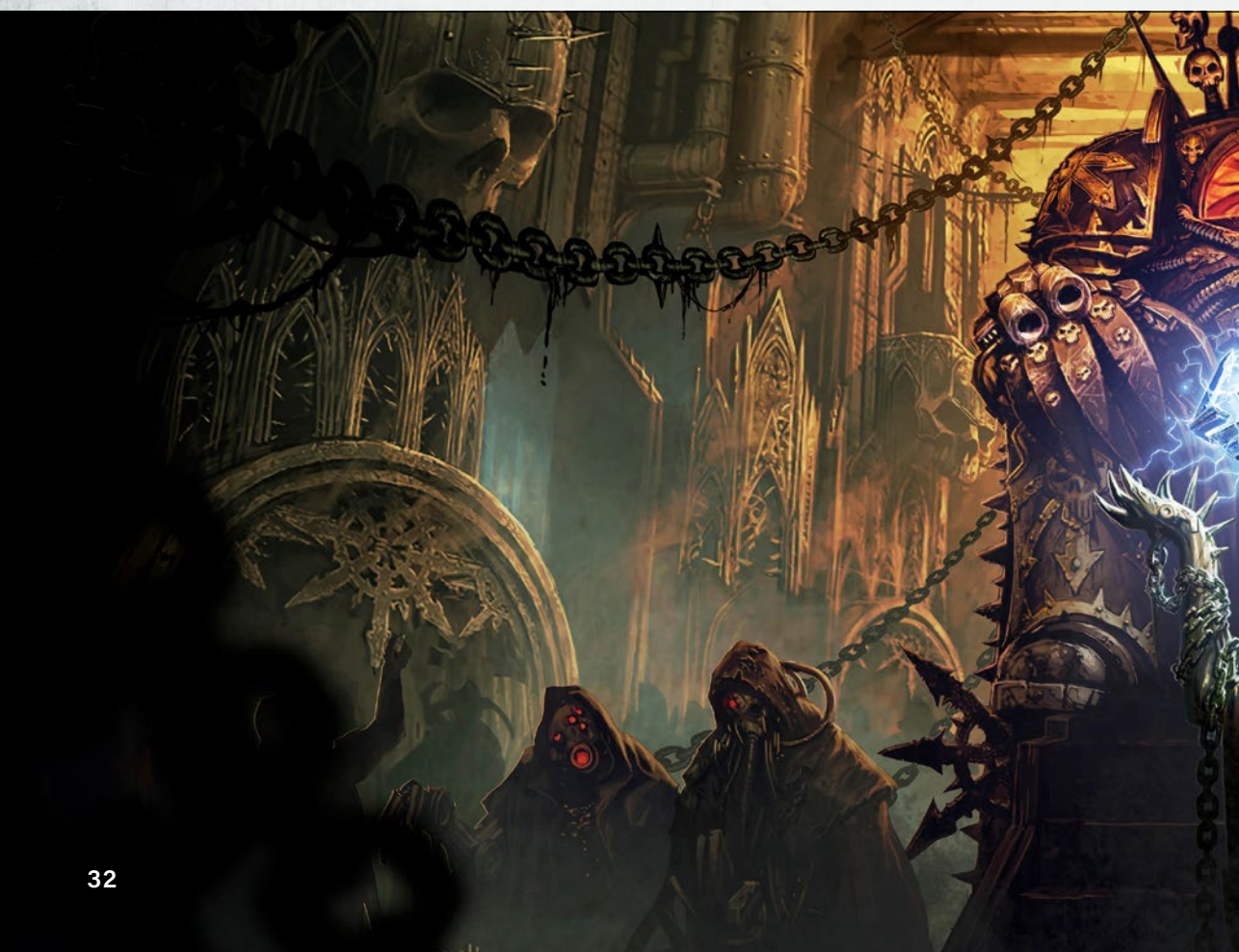
Schindlegeist before Abaddon. Using ancient warp gates shown to them by the Eldar, the Imperial Admirals sped across the sector and arrived five days before Abaddon was due to reach the area. With a constant stream of information concerning Abaddon's actions, the Imperial ships and Eldar lay in wait.

Outnumbered and caught by surprise, there was little the traitorous ship captains could do except die fighting. For three days the two mighty fleets battled, inflicting horrendous casualties on both sides. But for all their ferocity, the Chaos ships simply could not match the forces arranged against them. As the third day of fighting drew to its bloody conclusion, Abaddon once more broke the Blackstone Fortresses through the Imperial defence and headed towards the star. Ravensburg ordered all available ships to intercept them, though he knew there was little he could do to stop the behemoths. Only the *Flame of Purity* was close enough to attack, but the battlecruiser's weapons had little effect against the huge stations.

As the Fortresses built up power for their cataclysmic attack, they were again linked by powerful energy beams. Seeing only one chance, Captain Abridal ordered all power to the shields and drove the *Flame of Purity* into the middle of the converging energy waves. The ship was destroyed almost instantly, scattered into its constituent atoms. However, the detonation had expended the Fortresses' power and, as Abridal had hoped, the Blackstone Fortresses would take some time to accumulate the energy required for another attack. Luckily, time was something that Abaddon had run out of.

ABADDON'S DEFEAT

Their power systems drained, the Blackstone Fortresses could do little. Abaddon managed to escape into the warp with two of them, after a lengthy chase to the edges of the Schindlegeist system and a jump into warp space dangerously near to the gravity well. The Imperial fleet closed in on the third, unleashing all of their weapons, although still to little effect. Finally,



two strike cruisers from the Angels of Redemption Space Marine Chapter, combined with assault boats from the *Divine Right*, boarded the isolated Blackstone in an attempt to recapture it. Ensign Goldwyn was part of the Navy's boarding party and he later reported to his superiors:

"We were astounded to find no crew aboard the Blackstone Fortress. There was no opposition at all to our boarding and on entering I found it entirely unrecognisable from the base where I had been trained. The walls themselves pulsed with energy, the surface of which had become a deep-veined black – totally unlike the harsh white-painted corridors and rooms I had called home for six years. There was no sign at all of the modifications made by the Tech-Priests, as if our intrusion had been totally expunged. We had been aboard for perhaps an hour when suddenly a high pitched whine filled the air and the walls became ruddy in colour. A sense of panic filled our hearts and we hurried back to the Sharks [assault boats]. We were just in time, as no sooner had we left than the Fortress began to break up, slowly shattering into thousands of fragments. It should have been a happy moment to see our enemy destroyed but, although I cannot say why, my heart was filled with sorrow and I could not get over the feeling that something magnificent had died."

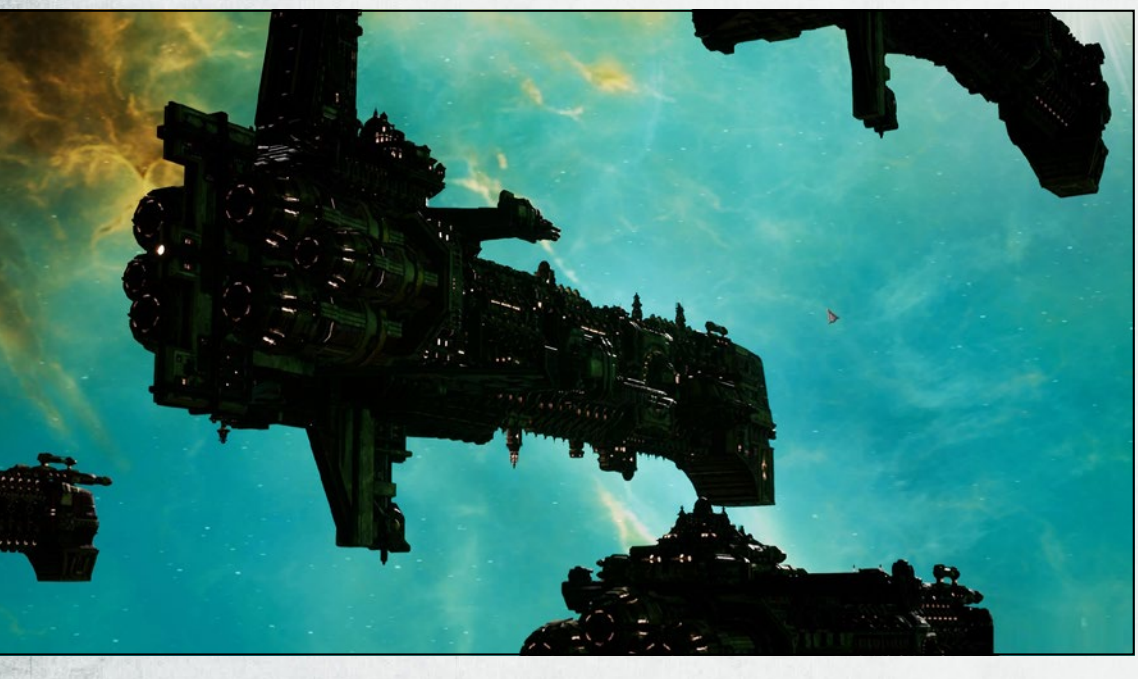
At about the same time that the recaptured Blackstone destroyed itself, the other Fortresses across the Gothic Sector also self-destructed. Nobody knows if the Fortresses under Abaddon's control destroyed themselves in a similar fashion: rumours have the Chaos Warmaster sighted both with and without the ancient engines of destruction. How or why the Blackstone Fortresses were obliterated remains a mystery, but Inquisitor Horst reportedly said to Lord Ravensburg:

"Who can tell what Abaddon could have done with all six? Some things are too dangerous to be allowed to exist and someone or something decided that the Blackstone Fortresses are amongst those things ..."

152-160.M41

THE CLOSING YEARS

With Abaddon's fleet gone, the attention of the Imperial Navy was turned on the other Chaos fleets. The warp storms had decreased to almost their normal level and scores of ships poured into the Gothic Sector.



OVERWHELMING FORCES

Many of the Chaos Warmasters followed Abaddon and fled back to the Eye of Terror, to nurse their hatred and bitterness until another opportunity to attack came. Four battlegroups, each consisting of several dozen capital ships and escorts, systematically engaged and destroyed many of those who remained, eradicating them each in turn. In the Port Maw sub-sector, titanic running battles between Admiral Storn's second cruiser battlegroup and the warfleet of Heinrich Bale lasted for two years, as the Chaos ships slipped from system to system, turning to fight when the odds were in their favour, fleeing before the Emperor's wrath at other times. The battle for Quinrox Sound claimed yet more lives as solitary Chaos vessels sped through the tangled debris, picking off the occasional Imperial escort or cruiser sent to hunt them down.

THE STAIN IS CLEANSED

Although the battles across the stars were drawing to a close, it took a further eight years to retake the worlds that had been captured by the forces of Chaos. Many of them were utterly devastated, their populations enslaved or sacrificed to the Dark Gods, the lands ravaged by war. Slowly but surely, the Imperial Guard scoured these planets of the taint of Chaos. The Missionaries and Confessors of the Ecclesiarchy set about restoring faith in the Emperor and the Inquisition hunted down those who had collaborated with the followers of the Dark Gods. However, the fight is never truly finished. There are worlds within the Graildark Nebula that still await the Emperor's fleets to free them; there are scattered Chaos ships, and even two or three fleets, that still roam the darkness between the stars of the Hammerhead Deeps and the Cyclops Cluster, waiting for their chance to strike again.

THE WOLVES SCATTER

As more warships of the followers of Chaos departed or were destroyed, Ravensburg ordered two of the large battlegroups to concentrate on the pirates who had grown powerful during the carnage. Like the Chaos fleets, they were each hunted down in turn, many of the bands breaking up and seeking sanctuary in forgotten star systems and in uncharted asteroid fields. The Orks of the Cyclops Cluster became the target of extensive pogroms, forced from worlds where they had enslaved millions, smashed from star systems where their crude ships had preyed upon Imperial shipping.

Twenty years of war had left deep scars and it will still take centuries of blood, sweat and toil to repair the harm, both physical and spiritual, that has been wreaked by Abaddon and his minions.

THE REWARDS OF VICTORY

For the Imperial Navy, and Battlefleet Gothic in particular, the cost had been high, both in human life and in numbers of ships. Great sacrifices had been made and great heroes had met the challenge. Through the determination, courage and loyalty of every man in the Navy, the war had been won.

The High Lords of Terra recognised the efforts of the entire sector fleet and the name of each crewman who served in the war, from Lord Admiral Ravensburg to the lowliest rating on the smallest merchant ship, was engraved upon a specially constructed monolith, which stands ten times the height of a man in the Chambers of Heroes in the Imperial Palace itself. Inquisitor Horst slipped away to pursue his duties elsewhere and it is rumoured that he spent the rest of his life hunting Abaddon, questing to find out what had become of the Blackstone Fortresses Abaddon may have escaped with. Of the success of his self-imposed mission, no report has ever been made and he has not been seen since the end of the Gothic War.

Through those dark times, the Gothic Sector had survived and life would eventually return to normal for the brave men of the Imperial Navy – the running battles with Eldar pirates, the constant search for traitorous smugglers, the crushing of heretics and rebels and the thousand other jobs for which Humanity owes the Imperial Navy its eternal thanks.

THE RULES

This section of Battlefleet Gothic details the rules of the game – the nuts 'n' bolts of how different ships move and fight in space. You will learn how to move your ships, shoot all your weapons with devastating effect and how to navigate through the environmental dangers of space.

You don't really need to have learned all of the rules to start playing; in fact, if you try to learn everything at once, you may end up getting a bit confused. Very few games, especially if you're just starting out as a Battlefleet Gothic player, will involve all of the rules detailed over the entire book. Our advice is to have a quick look through the rules once. You don't have to read every word, just get an idea of what's going on and where different rules can be found. After that, the best idea is to get stuck in and play a few games! As you come across situations that you're not sure how to deal with, look up the relevant section and read the rules as you are playing.

In particular, the sections on Unit Types, Leadership Tests, The Turn, The Movement Phase, The Shooting Phase, The Ordnance Phase and The End Phase contain all the core rules you need to play and it is there you will find most of the information you'll need. If you start in this way you will find that you pick up the basic rules in a few games and will be able to play for much of the time using just the information on the playsheets.

As you introduce other elements into your games, such as squadrons and lumbering battleships, read through the appropriate rules to refresh your memory and refer to them during play.

The very first part of the rules, the bit you're reading now, is given over to discussing common conventions used in Battlefleet Gothic, model scale, what you will need to play and so on. Even if you are familiar with wargaming in general you may find it useful to read over this section before going on to the rest of the book.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

As well as the Battlefleet Gothic rulebook, there are a number of other things you'll require to be able to play. For a start, you will need two or more players, with models to represent their ships. You will also need a battlefield to fight over. Any firm, level surface will do, such as a tabletop or an area of floor – most kitchen tables will do fine! It's a good idea to use an old sheet or blanket to protect the table from scratches and chips. Some players make a special gaming board from chipboard or other similar material, which they can place on top of a table to extend their playing area. Onto this surface, you can then place the celestial objects around which the battle is fought, such as planets, moons, asteroid fields and dust clouds. You can find out more about fleets and the battlefield later on.

As well as players, ships and a battlefield there are a few other things you will need. At least one measuring device marked in centimetres (such as a retractable tape measure or ruler). All distances in this book are given in centimetres. You will also need some ordinary six-sided dice and a pen and some paper for noting down damage to ships and other details.

'You are expected at all times and in all situations to conduct yourself in a manner appropriate to, and mindful of, the great duties and traditions of the Emperor's Most Glorious and Honourable Navy.'

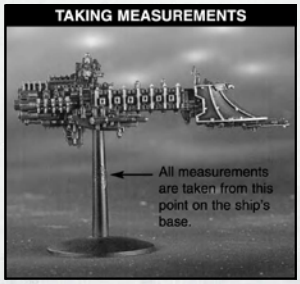
– Opening line of the Imperial Navy Articles of War

FIRST PRINCIPLES

At this early stage in the book it's worth establishing some initial principles about the Battlefleet Gothic game.

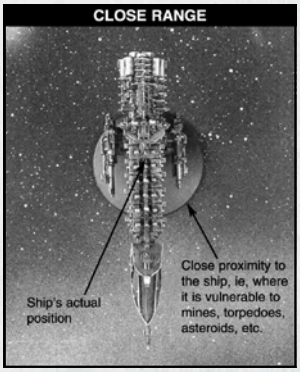
SCALE

First of all – space is big! Very, very big. Take your conception of a long way (i.e. down to the shops when it's raining hard) and multiply it by a million, then by another million ... and then by another million and you're still not even close to how far apart things are in space. In order to include interesting and exciting features such as planets and moons on the battlefield and have ship models which are not the size of molecules, Battlefleet Gothic takes some liberties with scale. In short, the ship models are designed to look good and be nice to paint, but they are not intended to be in scale with planets. To prevent this becoming a problem in the game it is assumed that the ships actually occupy the point in space shown by the stem of their base.



In keeping with this principle, movement distances are measured from the stem on the ship's base and distances for firing are measured from the stem of the ship's base to the stem of the target model.

The actual base of a ship model represents very close range around the ship, no more than a few thousand kilometres. At this distance all kinds of dangers can affect the ship itself such as torpedoes, deep space bomber squadrons, other ships exploding or asteroids striking. Hence, for the purposes of the game, if something affects an area of the battlefield, like the markers used to represent torpedo salvoes or the boundaries of an asteroid field, a ship is affected if its base is touched, or if a ship moves so that its base comes into contact with the hazard.



3D OR NOT 3D?

As well as being very big, space is also infinitely wide, high, deep etc. Despite this, Battlefleet Gothic is played on a flat tabletop. To allow for the vagaries of three dimensions and the vast distances involved, ships can move and fire past each other without any risks. It's easy to imagine that individual ships are just a few hundred kilometres higher or lower than each other and so have plenty of clear space to manoeuvre in.

The reason for the lack of 3D movement is twofold. Firstly, making the game work in three dimensions would add little to the tactics of it, because unlike aircraft combat, where the force of gravity means whoever is highest has an advantage, combat in the zero gravity of space would turn fighting in three dimensions into little more than a range modifier. Secondly, for the practical mechanics of the game, working in 3D would complicate the rules immensely.

DICE ROLLS

There are lots of occasions in a battle when you have to roll dice to see how a ship's actions turn out – how effective shooting is, what damage is done to an enemy ship, how well captains and their crews react to the stress of battle and so on.

All dice rolls in Battlefleet Gothic use a standard six-sided dice (usually shortened to D6). Sometimes you will need to modify the result of the dice roll. This is noted as D6 plus or minus a number, such as D6+1 or D6-2. Roll the dice and add or subtract the number indicated to get the final result.

For example, D6+ 2 means roll a dice and add 2 to the score, giving a total between 3 and 8.

You may also be told to roll a number of dice together, which is written as 2D6, 3D6 and so on. Roll the indicated number of dice and add the scores together, so that with a 2D6 roll, two dice are rolled and added together for a score between 2-12, 3D6 adds together the scores of three dice for a total between 3 and 18 and so on.

For example, a 2D6 roll of a 5 and a 3 are added together to score 8.

Another method used is to multiply a dice by a certain amount. Thus, D6×5 means the result of a D6 roll multiplied by 5, giving a total between 5 and 30.

Sometimes a combination of these methods may be used, such as 2D6+5 giving a score between 7 and 17, or 3D6-3 which will total 0-15.

In a few rare circumstances you may be told to roll a D3. Since there's no such thing as a three-sided dice, use the following method for determining a score between 1 and 3. Roll a D6 and halve the score, rounding up. Thus a 1 or 2 equals 1, a 3 or 4 equals 2 and a 5 or 6 equals 3.

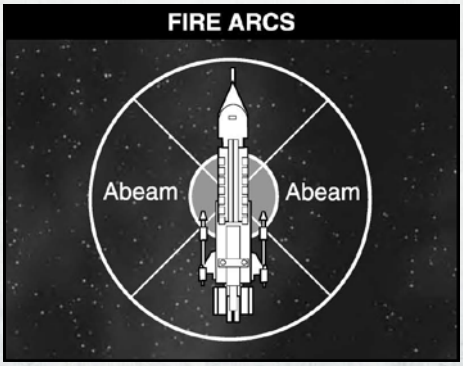
Re-rolls

In some situations the rules allow you a re-roll of the dice. This is exactly as it sounds – pick up the dice you wish to re-roll and roll it/them again. The second score counts with a re-roll, even if it means a worse result than the first. No single Special Order or other leadership test can be re-rolled more than once, regardless of the source of the re-roll.

THE BEARING COMPASS

A vital instrument in the game is the bearing compass, a circular card template with a hole punched through the middle. It is used for two purposes. Firstly to check the fire arcs of your own ships to see which weapons they can bring to bear against the enemy. Doing so is simple: place the template over your ship so that the hole in the centre is above the centre of the flying stand and the two arrows are pointing along the length of the ship: This places the 90° quadrants so that one is in front, one is behind and one is to each side of the ship. Fire arcs and ship's gunnery are explained in more detail in the Shooting Phase section.

Secondly, it is used to find out what aspect a target is presenting to a ship firing at it. In this case the bearing compass is placed over the target in the same way as described above. The aspect of the target is shown by which quadrant faces the firer.



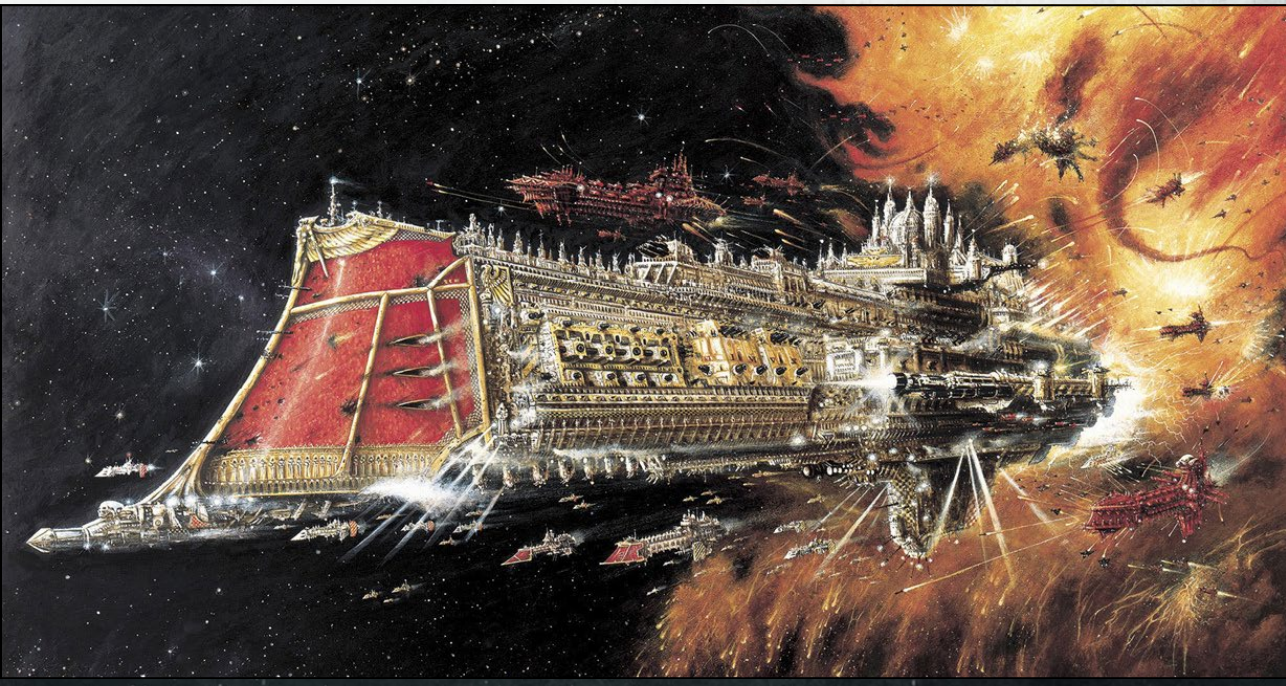
SET-UP

Definition of Game Turns: A game turn is both player turns, so a game that lasts eight turns has sixteen player turns.

Pre-measurement: You may pre-measure movement and range unless all players agree not to. Note: To aid in pre-measuring, use a couple of empty flying bases with bearing compasses dropped over the stems.

Secrecy of Fleet Lists: Fleet lists are not normally secret. However, to add a degree of subtlety to a campaign, fleet lists may be kept secret until the end of the game (or campaign) if both players agree. However, it must be written down, complete with all refits and point totals. If at any time your opponent wishes to see your fleet list, both players must then immediately reveal their fleet lists to each other.

Secrecy of Sub-plots: Sub-plots are normally rolled for in front of both players at the beginning of the game. However, sub-plots may be kept secret in the same manner as described previously for fleet lists if both players agree. However, they must be written down at the beginning of the game, and if at any time your opponent wishes to see your sub-plot(s), both players must then immediately reveal them to each other. If kept secret, they must nonetheless be revealed at the end of the game.



'The whole principle of naval fighting is to be free to go anywhere with every damned thing the navy possesses.'

– Captain Grenfeld of the Hammer of Justice

SHIP TYPES

Battlefleet Gothic allows you to fight space battles amidst the cold, bright stars of the Gothic Sector during the period of raging war and unbridled destruction heralded by the ninth Black Crusade of Abaddon early in the 41st millennium. At this time Imperial, Chaos, Ork and Eldar ships of all sizes clashed in deadly conflict. Massive beweaponed battlecruisers joust with lances of fusion fire, lumbering battleships duel with coruscating salvoes of destruction while their agile escort ships dart through the fray to slash at the battling leviathans.

The Citadel miniatures used to play Battlefleet Gothic are referred to as ships (or sometimes vessels) in the rules that follow. Each ship is an individual playing piece with its own capabilities.

Different ships can have very different capabilities, so they are separated into the following types: battleships, cruisers and escorts.

Battleships are the largest fighting ships in space. They can absorb a tremendous amount of damage and mount weapon batteries capable of laying waste to entire continents. These vessels are so huge that they are comparatively slow and ponderous to manoeuvre, so they need support from other vessels to bring the enemy to battle.

Cruisers are the workhorses of any fleet. They are manoeuvrable, well-armed ships, capable of operating away from a base for extended periods. This means that cruisers are used for extended patrols, blockades and raiding deep into enemy held space. In a major battle, cruisers screen the approach of the fleet in support of the escorts and form the gun line once battle begins.

Escort Ships are the commonest warships in any fleet. They are fast, lightly armed and capable of running rings around heavier ships, which they accompany to protect them against torpedo attacks and to fight off enemy escorts. They are also used for independent actions such as scouting, raiding, protecting transport ships, and chasing pirates.

Note that for reasons of brevity, battleships and cruisers are often grouped together under the general heading of capital ships, a term which applies to all ships of both types.

'There is nothing better that a man can do than lay down his life in the service of the Emperor.'

– Inscription at the top of the Gothic Monolith in the Chamber of Heroes

SHIP DATA SHEETS

Each vessel available in Battlefleet Gothic has a complete set of characteristics. These characteristics will tell you how fast, manoeuvrable, well-armoured and hideously armed they are.

The table to the right represents the characteristics for an Imperial Lunar class cruiser and a Murder class Chaos cruiser.

NAME: AGRIPPA CLASS: LUNAR LEADERSHIP: 7

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	20 cm	45°	2	6+ front / 5+	2

ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC
Port lance battery	30 cm	2	Left
Starboard lance battery	30 cm	2	Right
Port weapons battery	30 cm	6	Left
Starboard weapons battery	30 cm	6	Right
Prow torpedoes	30 cm	6	Front

NAME: UNCLEAN CLASS: MURDER LEADERSHIP: 7

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	25 cm	45°	2	5+	2

ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC
Port weapons battery	45 cm	10	Left
Starboard weapons battery	45 cm	10	Right
Prow lance battery	60 cm	2	Front

Name: All ships deserve a name! Well, except escorts maybe. Ship entries often have a list of some of the most famous ships that fought in the Gothic War, so feel free to use those or make up your own.

Class: Ships are not all the same, so they are listed as belonging to a particular class. Different classes may be approximately the same in terms of size and weight but vary a lot in details. What is basically the same hull may carry different weapons, bigger engines, more or less armour, etc. Ships may even be converted from one class to another in the course of a major refit. The two ships shown on the previous page are a Lunar class Imperial cruiser and a Murder class Chaos cruiser. You will notice that while they are the same type their actual characteristics are different.

Leadership: A ship's Leadership value indicates how experienced and well trained its crew are and/or how clever and decisive its captain is in combat. In a one-off game of Battlefleet Gothic the Leadership value of ships is randomly generated. If the ship fights in an ongoing campaign its Leadership can improve or worsen depending on how well the ship performs.

Type/Hits: A ship's Type tells you if it is a battleship, cruiser or escort. Its number of Hits indicates how big and strongly built its hull is and how large a crew it has. In Battlefleet Gothic, a ship's Hits represents how many times it can be hit and damaged before it is reduced to a floating wreck (note that Hits are also referred to as damage points: don't be confused – both mean the same thing). Both cruisers in our example have 8 Hits, which is average for a cruiser.

Speed: The Speed characteristic tells you how far a ship moves in one turn. Vessels can potentially move faster than this but the additional power output needed will divert energy from weapon systems. The Chaos cruiser has a slight edge over the Imperial one in terms of speed, which gives it an important advantage in combat.

Turns: Ships can usually turn just once during their move. This characteristic shows how sharply it can turn. In this case both ships can turn up to 45°, which is again about average for cruisers.

Shields: Nearly all ships are protected by powerful force field generators that can absorb or shunt aside incoming hits. Shields are rated according to how many hits they can absorb in a turn before they temporarily collapse. Both the ships shown have shields capable of absorbing two hits.

Armour: The ship's Armour rating shows how well protected it is and/or how difficult it is to damage. When the ship is fired upon, the attacker needs to roll equal to or over its Armour rating on a D6 in order to score a hit. The Chaos cruiser has Armour of 5+ all round, but the Imperial cruiser has a heavily armoured prow which makes its Armour 6+ against shots from its front.

Turrets: In addition to their main armament, most ships carry numerous small, quick-firing turrets. These are mounted over the length of their hull to shoot down incoming torpedoes and fighters. Both cruisers mount enough of these lighter weapons to have a Turrets value of 2.

Armament: This section lists the ship's main armament and its location.

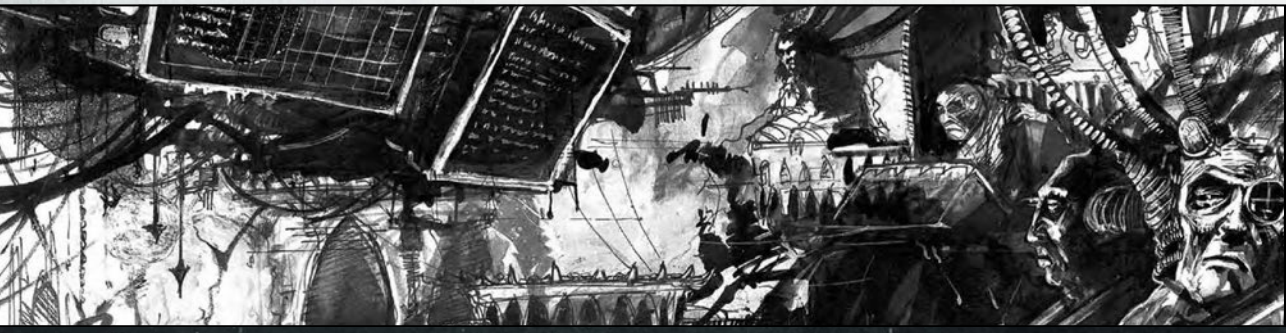
Range/Speed: The maximum range of weapons is shown in centimetres. In the case of ordnance weapons which move towards their target, such as torpedoes or fighters, the speed of the weapon is shown rather than its maximum range. As you can see, the Lunar class cruiser mounts more weapon systems than the Murder class but they all have a shorter range.

Firepower/Strength: This number represents how effective a weapons system is when it shoots – the higher the number the better. Special weapons systems like torpedoes and lances have a Strength rating instead of a Firepower value. In this case the greater firepower of the Murder class cruiser is counter-balanced by the lances and torpedoes of the Imperial ship.

Fire Arc: Weapon systems may only fire in particular directions depending on where they are mounted on the ship. Both the cruisers shown mount most of their weaponry in broadsides on either side of the ship. Few vessels mount any rear facing weapons – their engines are too massive and the thermal 'backwash' they create makes targeting almost impossible.

BASE SIZE

There are two base sizes: small (32 mm diameter) and large (60 mm diameter). Any ship or defence with either 3 or more shields OR greater than 10 Hits must use a large size base. However, any capital ship can elect to use a large base and is considered to have Tractor Fields for free. Tractor fields have no effect except making it easier for the ship to ram and/or board due to its larger base size, in exchange for being a larger ordnance target.



+++INCOMING.ORDERS+++FLEET.TO.ASSEMBLE.AT.GRID.586/A.[GETHSEMANE]+++LORD.RAVENSBURG.COMMANDING.DIVINE.RIGHT+++BATTLEGROUP.FEROCIOUS.TO.ATTEND+++BATTLEGROUP.IMPETUOUS.TO.ATTEND+++PATROL.FLEET.ERINYES.TO.ATTEND+++OPERATION:TOTAL.ERADICATION.OF.ENEMY.FORCES.BY.ALL.MEANS.NECESSARY+++MAY.THE.EMPEROR.GUIDE.YOUR.GUNS+++

+++BY.YOUR.COMMAND+++PRAISE.THE.EMPEROR+++

LEADERSHIP

Even the smallest stellar craft is a marvel of engineering, packed with machinery and technology of the highest sophistication. The truly massive stellar warships are almost impossible to comprehend in their complexity, with thousands of crew members performing millions of tasks to keep the whole vessel in working order. It is said that no single man could fully understand all of the machinery and systems that work together to make such a vessel function. Nonetheless, it is ultimately the captain and crew who will determine how well a ship performs in combat. A ship under the command of an inspiring captain with a dedicated, well-trained crew can consistently outrun or outgun enemy vessels.

In Battlefleet Gothic, the expertise of a captain and his crew is shown by the ship's Leadership value: the higher it is, the better the captain and crew. Leadership is very important, because ships must test against it if they wish to use special orders.

STARTING LEADERSHIP VALUES

As mentioned earlier, in one-off games you roll a D6 to determine each ship's Leadership value before the start of the game. Look up the result of the dice roll on the table below to see what Leadership value the ship has. Escorts roll once per squadron, with the whole squadron sharing the leadership value rolled. Each capital ship rolls individually for leadership, even if it is in a squadron. Squadrons are explained fully later in the rules.

D6 ROLL	LEADERSHIP
1	Untried (Ld 6)
2-3	Experienced (Ld 7)
4-5	Veteran (Ld 8)
6	Crack (Ld 9)

SPECIAL ORDERS

There are six different special orders and each one allows a vessel to perform better at something, such as gunnery or navigation, during its turn. A ship or squadron can only ever be on one special order at a time.

Special orders are declared during the Movement Phase by choosing a vessel or squadron, declaring the order and rolling leadership, then moving it.

All Ahead Full:
A ship going All Ahead Full directs more power to its engines to produce an extra burst of speed.

Effect: Increased speed, but must move the full movement distance. Requirement for attempting to ram.
Speed: Cruising speed +4D6 cm (make one roll for the whole squadron).
Turns: None.
Armament: Half effect. No Nova Cannon.
Ordnance: Full effect.

Come to New Heading:
The ship sacrifices opportunities to fire its weapons in order to turn more sharply.

Effect: Extra turn. All the normal restrictions for turning apply to the second turn. This means a cruiser that moves 10 cm before turning must move at least 10 cm more before turning again.
Speed: Half to full cruising speed.
Turns: Up to two.
Armament: Half effect. No Nova Cannon.
Ordnance: Full effect.

Burn Retros:
The ship directs additional energy to its retro thrusters in order to kill some of its forward momentum and hold position.

Effect: Decreased speed. Can make a single turn without having to move forward first.
Speed: Zero to half cruising speed.
Turns: Up to one.
Armament: Half effect. No Nova Cannon.
Ordnance: Full effect.

Lock On:
The ship maintains a steady course and draws additional energy from its engines to fire its armament in multiple salvoes.

Effect: Re-roll hit rolls for lances and weapon batteries during the Shooting Phase.
Speed: Half to full cruising speed.
Turns: None.
Armament: Full effect.
Ordnance: Full effect.

Reload Ordnance:
Ships start the game with their ordnance, such as torpedoes and attack craft, fully loaded and armed. However, once the ordnance has been fired or launched the vessel must reload before it can use its ordnance again.

Effect: All ordnance is reloaded.
Speed: Half to full cruising speed.
Turns: Up to one.
Armament: Full effect.
Ordnance: Full effect.

Brace For Impact!
The captain of the vessel orders his crew to brace for impact; power is redirected to the shields, blast doors are slammed shut and the crew hang onto something secure.

Brace For Impact special orders can be undertaken ANY time a ship faces taking damage before the actual to-hit result is rolled, including when ramming or being rammed or against damage from asteroid fields.

It may be used to protect against critical damage from any kind of Hit & Run attack.

Brace For Impact DOES NOT protect against critical damage caused by hits that were not saved against normally, nor any damage caused during a boarding action (including critical damage).

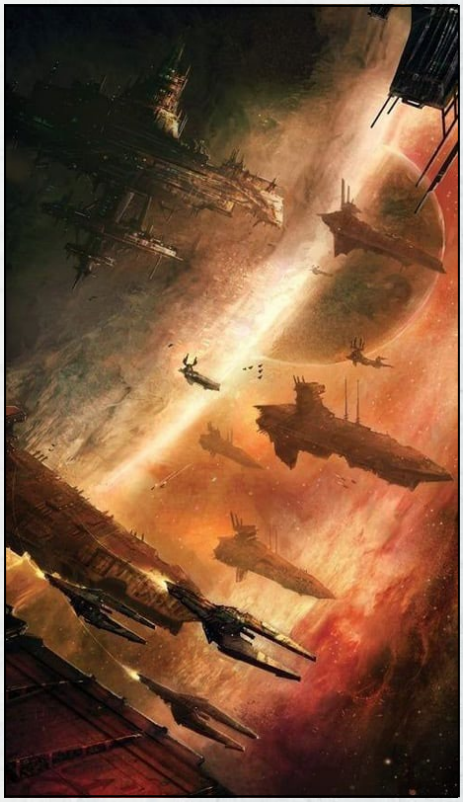
A ship is placed on *Brace For Impact!* orders until the end of its next turn, replacing any other special orders it may be on currently.

Effect: The ship gains a saving throw of 4+ on a D6 against any damage. Can't use any special orders at all in its next turn.
Speed: Half to full cruising speed.
Turns: Up to one.
Armament: Half effect. No Nova Cannon.
Ordnance: Half effect.

If a ship fails to take *Brace For Impact!* orders, it cannot attempt to take them again until the ship, squadron or ordnance wave currently attacking has completed its attacks.

'A magnificent ship no doubt, but I would rather have a crew who knew their airlaps from their transons.'

– Admiral Rath on receiving command of the Emperor class battleship Dominus Astra



TAKING COMMAND CHECKS

In the midst of battle a captain may order his ships to perform special manoeuvres or direct more of his ship's power to weapons or engines. However, in order to do this the ship undertaking special orders must first pass a Command check.

To make a Command check, roll 2D6 and compare it to the ship's Leadership value (Ld). If the roll is equal to or under the ship's Ld value it has passed the check and goes onto special orders. Then move the ship or squadron as appropriate before moving on to place your next special order. Place a special order dice next to the model with the appropriate symbol face uppermost as a reminder. A ship or defence can never be on more than one special order at a time unless specifically described otherwise in its special rules, such as a Ramilies Star Fort.

With all of the orders except *Brace For Impact!* you must make the check in the Movement Phase before moving the ship. Each ship or squadron may make a Special Order until all are under Special Orders or a Command Check fails.

If the roll is higher than the ship's Ld value, it fails the test and may not go onto special orders. Furthermore, once you have failed a Command check for one ship in your fleet you may not make any further Command checks to use special orders in the same turn. It can be imagined that the delays and confusion in trying to get that particular ship to perform special orders means that the opportunity has passed for any further special orders to be issued.

When rolling special orders, a decision to use free command checks (such as with an Elite Command Crew or when Orks use *All Ahead Full* special orders) must be taken before a special order is failed. Once special orders are failed, no more special orders can be declared except *Brace For Impact!*

Only one re-roll can be spent on a vessel or squadron per leadership check. In other words, if a vessel or squadron fails a leadership check and then fails a re-roll, another re-roll cannot be expended on it for the same leadership check or special orders on that vessel, even if more re-rolls are available.

> ***'The Emperor is master of the galaxy, but the captain is master of his ship.'***
>
> *– Popular naval saying*

Command check modifiers

Some circumstances will make it easier or harder for a vessel to use special orders. To represent this, there are two modifiers that can apply to Command checks, one positive and one negative. Under no circumstance can a ship's Leadership be modified higher than Leadership 10. A leadership check roll of 11 or 12 always fails unless SPECIFICALLY stated otherwise.

Under Fire -1

If a ship has Blast Markers in contact with its base, it is under fire and suffers a -1 modifier to its Leadership. Blast Markers are described more fully in the Shooting section of the rules. For now it's simply worth knowing that they represent weapon impacts, debris clouds, and other impediments to calm and orderly ship operation.

Enemy Contacts + 1

Enemy ships on special orders create anomalous energy emissions which make it much easier for the ship to detect them and react quickly. For this reason the ship gains a +1 modifier to its Leadership value if any enemy ships are on special orders.

For example, the Imperial cruiser Agrippa *(Leadership 7) wants to use* All Ahead Full *orders to catch up with the Chaos cruiser* Unclean. *The Chaos cruiser used* Lock On *orders last turn so the* Agrippa *gets a +1 modifier to its Leadership value. Rolling 2D6 the Imperial player gets a 2 and 6 for a total of 8 and passes its Command check by equalling its modified Leadership value.*

Other Leadership Tests
Sometimes a ship will have to test against its Leadership value for something other than using special orders. In these cases the test is for the captain and his crew to pull off a courageous or difficult undertaking.

For example, a successful test against Leadership is required for a ship to ram an enemy, safely navigate an asteroid field or target a specific vessel. These tests are taken like Command checks by rolling a number of dice and comparing the total score to the ship's Leadership value. If the score is equal to or less than the ship's Leadership, the test is passed.

Leadership tests can be undertaken even if a Command check for special orders has been failed earlier in the turn. No modifiers apply to leadership tests – such modifiers are unique to command checks for special orders.

THE TURN

A game of Battlefleet Gothic is unlike many other games such as chess or draughts where you only move one piece at a time. A tremendous amount of action takes place in a real battle: ships manoeuvre and fire at each other, fighters and bombers are launched in vast waves and torpedoes scream towards their targets.

In a real battle, this all happens at once amidst the chaos of combat. A Battlefleet Gothic game represents the ebb and flow of battle, but in order for us to decide its outcome players alternate taking turns moving and fighting with their ships. So in a battle, player A will move and fight with his ships first, then player B will move and fight and then player A will move and fight again, etc.

In his turn a player can move and fight with all of his ships. For convenience, moving and shooting are dealt with one after the other. This means that you move all your ships first and then all your ships, that are able to, fire. This helps everyone keep track of what's going on and makes it easier to know when each player's actions are finished.

In a turn the player performs his actions in the appropriate phases – the move, shoot and Ordnance Phases to be precise. Exactly what happens in each phase is described in The Turn Sequence later.

WHO GETS THE FIRST TURN

Which player gets the first turn of the game can be determined in a number of different ways. Normally both players roll a D6 and the player with the highest score can decide to move either first or second. Sometimes the kind of game you are fighting will decide it for you. For example, in an ambush the attacking side will always get the first turn.

Fighting all sorts of different battles is covered in more detail in the Scenarios section later.

ENDING THE BATTLE

A battle can end in a number of different ways. Most commonly in Battlefleet Gothic fighting continues until either one side surrenders, or has no ships remaining on the tabletop. However, in certain kinds of battles, players might be able to win a "sudden death" victory which ends the game immediately – eg, if they destroy the enemy flagship.

Alternatively you might decide to end a battle at a preset time if you only have a limited amount of time to play in.

Different ways of ending the battle are discussed in more detail in the Scenarios section.

EXCEPTIONS

There are times when a player will perform certain actions when it is not their turn, such as *Brace for Impact!* for example. It may also be convenient to interrupt a player's turn because of some event occurring, such as an enemy ship being detected. The thing to remember is that the turn sequence will always continue after the interruption as normal.

TURN SEQUENCE

1. THE MOVEMENT PHASE

This is when a player moves his ships.

The player begins by removing any special order dice he placed last turn (except for ships on *Brace for Impact!* orders. They are stuck with them for this turn).

Next, the player moves his ships and squadrons one at a time. In this phase he may also take Command checks to institute special orders before moving a ship or squadron. If any Command check is failed no further checks may be made in the same turn. Note that ships must always move at least half their speed unless they wish to use the *Burn Retros* special order in order to hold position. See the Movement rules for more details about how to move your ships.

2. THE SHOOTING PHASE

Players may fire at each other's vessels during this part of the turn.

The player can shoot with any of his ships that are within range of enemy vessels. See the Shooting rules for more details about how to resolve shooting.

3. THE ORDNANCE PHASE

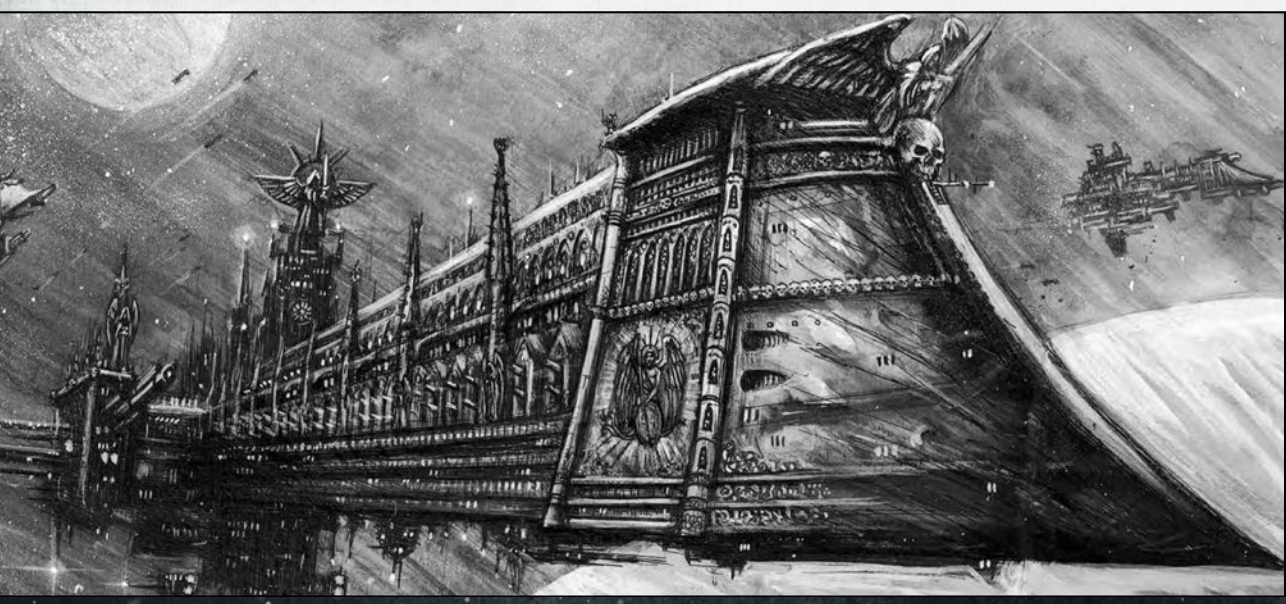
Both players may move any Ordnance markers (such as torpedoes or fighter squadrons) which are still on the tabletop, having been launched in a previous turn. See the Ordnance rules for more details.

4. THE END PHASE

Both players may attempt to repair critical damage which has been inflicted on their ships: D6 Blast Markers are also removed by the player whose turn it is. See the End Phase rules for more about repairs and removing Blast Markers.

THE MOVEMENT PHASE

During the Movement Phase, vessels manoeuvre into position to begin battle. Moving your battlefleet into the right position to rain destruction upon your opponent is vital – some ships need to keep their distance while others need to come to grips at close quarters. The Movement Phase is filled with opportunities. By moving your ships you can surround a target and destroy it, smash through the heart of an opposing fleet, lurk behind planets and moons, flee from powerful enemies, even set traps to lure unwary foes to their destruction. A wise admiral can achieve all this and more in the Movement Phase.



'Blessed be the coruscating plasma of the engine room,
Spiritus Machina protect us from thy burning doom.
Harness unto our will the power of light,
Let conduit and coil work alright.'

– Catechism of the Engin-near

BASIC MOVES

A player may move each ship up to its standard move distance each turn. Once one ship has completed its movement, the player selects another and moves that one and so on until he has moved all the ships he wishes to move.

This can be summarised as:

1. Choose a ship to move.
2. Move the ship up to its maximum move distance.
3. Choose another ship to move.

Note that a player has to move his ships unless they use the *Burn Retros* special order to remain stationary. A ship has to move at least 5 cm to not count as defences against the Gunnery Table.

MOVE DISTANCE

Ships are pushed through the firmament by the most powerful engines anywhere in the galaxy. In space combat, the thrust available to a vessel can mean the difference between survival and destruction.

All ships can move at up to their normal speed. Speed varies from one ship to another, but by way of example, an Imperial Lunar class cruiser has a speed of 20 cm.

A ship's normal move may be increased by using the *All Ahead Full* special order that follows. A vessel's move can also be decreased in some circumstances during a battle. Damage to the ship may inhibit the efficiency of its engines and reduce its top speed, and a ship which moves through Blast Markers will be slowed slightly by the shockwaves and explosions.

Minimum Move Distance

Ships moving under engines retain enormous amounts of momentum. If a vessel slows down without the correct preparations, it is so big that there is a very real chance that its structure will be damaged because the whole of its vast length isn't moving at the same speed. Because of this, ships must always move at least half of their speed unless they use the *Burn Retros* special order, detailed below. Ships who are unable to move half their speed (due to damage, Blast Markers, etc.) must move the maximum possible distance instead.

Special Order:
All Ahead Full
A ship can move faster than its basic cruising speed by using the *All Ahead Full* special order. Using *All Ahead Full* orders means that a ship cannot turn and its firing ability is less effective, as explained in the Shooting rules. *All Ahead Full* orders are most useful for closing in on a distant foe or escaping from a deadly situation.

See pg. 46 for all effects.

Special Order:
Burn Retros
A ship can move slower than half its basic cruising speed by using the *Burn Retros* special order, or even remain stationary (hold station). A ship can make a single turn without having to move forward first but its firing is less effective. *Burn Retros* orders are handy for holding back, when moving at full speed would bring you within range of an enemy's guns, or would cause a ship to crash into asteroids.

See pg. 46 for all effects.

TURNING

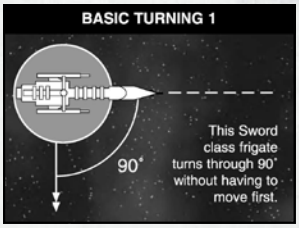
The bigger a ship, the slower it will turn. While light escort ships are quite agile, larger cruisers are ponderous beasts. The time lag between a cruiser applying thrust and turning is considerable. Battleships take even longer to manoeuvre.

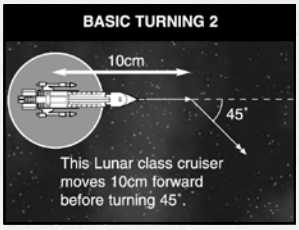
When ships move they have to travel in a straight line, directly ahead. However, ships may make one turn as part of their movement unless they are using special orders which prevent them from doing so.

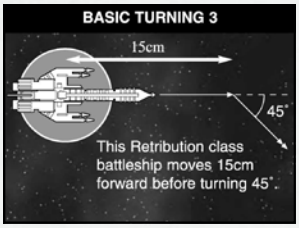
A ship can turn by a maximum of either 45° or 90°, how sharp a turn it can make is included in the ship's characteristics. A ship can only count forward movement made in the current Movement Phase as part of its minimum movement before turning. By way of example, the Imperial Lunar class cruiser is able to make turns of up to 45°.

Large ships have to move a certain distance before they are allowed to make a turn. The distance they must travel depends on their type:

- A battleship must move 15 cm before it can execute a turn.
- A cruiser must move 10 cm before it can execute a turn.
- An escort ship can execute a turn at any point in its move.

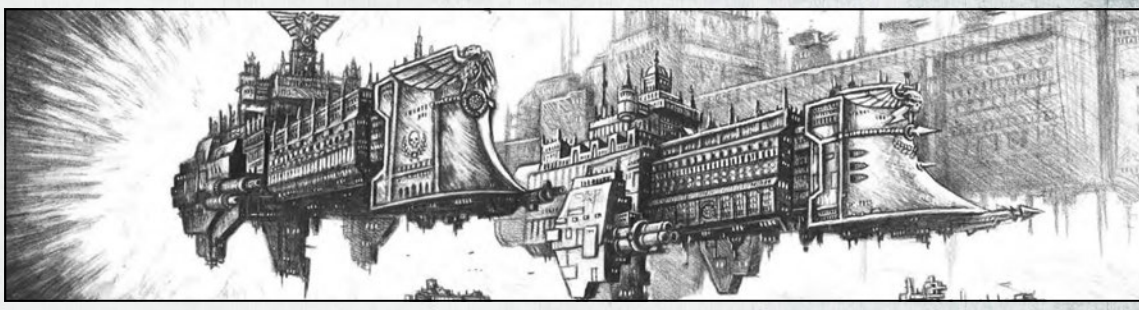






Special Order:
Come To New Heading
A ship can turn more sharply by using the *Come To New Heading* special order. It may make an extra turn during its movement. Using *Come To New Heading* means that a ship is less effective in the Shooting Phase as explained in the Shooting rules. *Come To New Heading* orders are best used either for turning to get a more favourable attack angle on an enemy as it attempts to escape, or to outmanoeuvre a larger enemy ship.

See pg. 46 for all effects.



ALL AHEAD FULL – RAMMING SPEED!

A ship moving at *All Ahead Full* may attempt to ram an enemy vessel. As Battlefleet Gothic is a 2D representation of 3D space, a ship cannot attempt to ram more than one ship per Movement Phase, even if multiple enemy vessels are in its range of movement.

When the *All Ahead Full* command check is passed, the owning player must declare which ship it is attempting to ram and make the appropriate leadership test to do so before rolling the number of additional D6 cm it will move *All Ahead Full*. This choice cannot be changed if the ramming ship ends its movement in base contact with more than one vessel or does not reach the intended vessel. The number of ships it "moves through" or ends in contact with does not change or alter this.

Take a Leadership test for the ramming ship: if the test is passed, the captain skillfully manoeuvres his ship into a ramming position. If the test is failed, the would-be rammer misses the target and continues its move.

Obviously, it's easier for an escort to ram a battleship than the other way round.

There are four sizes concerning the separate leadership check to ram. From biggest to smallest:
Defence > Battleship > Cruiser > Escort

If the target vessel is of a smaller type than the ramming one, the Leadership test is taken on 3D6.

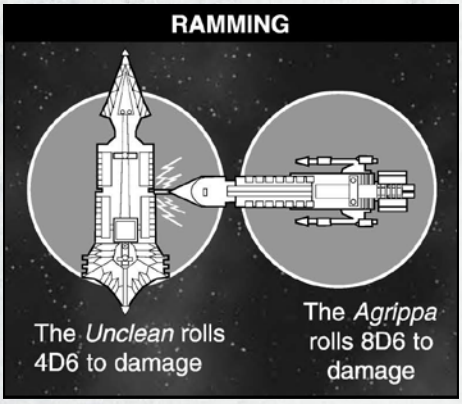
If the target vessel is of the same type than the ramming one, the Leadership test is taken on 2D6.

If the target vessel is of a larger type than the ramming one, the Leadership test is taken on 1D6.

A ship cannot attempt to ram more than one ship per Movement Phase, even if multiple enemy vessels are in its range of movement. A ship does not have to make a separate leadership check to ignore closer targets to ram one further away. When ramming, a ship must move its FULL distance, including any extra distance moved for being *All Ahead Full*.

For example, the Imperial Lunar class cruiser Agrippa *would take a Leadership test on 2D6 to ram another cruiser, on 3D6 to ram an escort or 1D6 to ram a battleship.*

Ramming is determined by base-to-base contact. If any part of the ramming ship's base contacts any part of the rammed ship's base in the course of its movement, the ram is considered to be successful. If the ramming ship hits, roll 1D6 for each point of its starting damage capacity (not the damage capacity it has left). Any dice that equal or beat the target's armour value score a point of damage on it. Damage from rams is not deflected by shields. The ramming ship may well suffer damage too, so the vessel being rammed rolls a number of D6 equal to half its starting damage. Any dice which equal or beat the ramming ship's front armour rating score a point of damage. If the vessels are hitting head on (i.e. front to front) the rammed or defence vessel rolls a number of dice equal to its full starting damage capacity. Once the ram attempt is resolved, the ramming ship continues its movement.



***Ramming example**: The* Agrippa*, a Lunar class cruiser, rams the* Unclean*, a Murder class Chaos cruiser in the starboard side. The* Agrippa *had a starting damage capacity of 8 so it rolls 8D6 to damage the* Unclean *(which has Armour 5), rolling 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6 and scoring 3 points of damage. By way of return the* Unclean *(with a starting damage capacity of 8) rolls 4D6 to damage the* Agrippa *(which has armour 6 on the front thanks to its armoured prow) rolling 3, 3, 5, 6 and scoring 1 point of damage.*

If either ship is destroyed and explodes due to ramming, the explosion (and any subsequent hits) is resolved at that moment. The ramming and rammed ship will both always be in the explosion. If it was the rammed ship that exploded it is easier to finish the ramming ships movement as normal, but unless it has special rules to navigate Blast Markers it will be slowed by Blast Markers from the explosion.

While a ramming vessel may later attempt to board or shoot, it may only attempt to board a vessel if it ends up in base contact with one at the end of its full movement. This does not necessarily have to be the same vessel it just rammed.

When ramming defences, they always roll their full number of starting damage capacity to damage the ramming ship as if prow-on, as defences are more solidly built than ships are.

RAMMING SUMMARY

Ramming ship: Roll a number of D6 equal to its starting damage.

Rammed ship hit from the side or rear: Roll a number of D6 equal to half its starting damage.

Rammed ship hit from the front or Defence: Roll a number of D6 equal to its starting damage.

DISENGAGING FROM COMBAT

Sometimes it's better to run away and fight another day. A ship may be crippled with no hope of defeating its attackers, or just outnumbered so heavily that its captain decides that it's hopeless to fight on. The classic approach to disengaging is to make a sudden course alteration and then cut all power so that the ship cannot be detected by its energy emissions. With luck the vessel will simply drift out of the immediate battle area and can set course for home once it's clear of the fighting. Sometimes it even works ...

A vessel that moves off of the table edge during play for any reason counts as being disengaged. Or, in order to disengage, a ship or escort squadron must pass a Leadership test at the end of its Movement Phase with the following modifiers:

CIRCUMSTANCE	MODIFIER
Each Blast Marker within 5 cm	+1
Any celestial phenomena within 15 cm	+3*
Each enemy ship or Ordnance marker within 15 cm	-1

** This is for a tabletop feature such as an asteroid field or planet. If a tabletop effect such as a radiation burst or solar flare is taking place this bonus applies anywhere on the tabletop.*

All positive and negative modifiers must be added together before determining the leadership check, even though check rolls of 11 or 12 still automatically fail.

For instance, a ship or escort squadron with Ld9 attempts to disengage after moving within 5 cm of three Blast Markers and an asteroid field (+4Ld) with no enemy ships or ordnance markers within 15 cm (no negative modifier). Even though the effective leadership to disengage is now Ld13 because these must all be added together BEFORE the roll, the player must still roll no higher than 10 to not fail the check.

If the test is passed, the disengaging ship is removed from the tabletop and may not return during the game. If the test is failed the ship remains in play but may not fire, launch ordnance or attempt to use special orders (except *Brace for Impact!*) during the turn.

Any ship or squadron that, through a combination of effects, is reduced to Leadership 1 or less must attempt to disengage or move toward the closest table edge.

A vessel not hulked that moves off of the table edge during play for any reason counts as being disengaged.

An escort squadron that successfully disengages only counts as being 10% destroyed against the full value of all the escorts in the squadron. It counts as 25% destroyed if the squadron was crippled before disengaging, as in if at least half the escorts in the squadron were destroyed (rounding down) before the squadron disengaged.

If any single ship in an escort squadron disengages, the whole escort squadron must then immediately and in subsequent turns attempt to disengage following normal rules. This prevents an escort squadron from disengaging one or two vessels to keep leadership or victory point benefits, then pushing the rest of them in a suicide run at the enemy.

Capital ships in a squadron may disengage separately, relying on their individual base leadership to do so, not the highest leadership in the squadron. If it attempts to disengage and fails, it falls out of the squadron and may not attempt to re-join it. This is in addition to all other effects for ships that fail to disengage when attempting to do so.

A ship that disengages successfully counts as 10% of its point value for the enemy, or 25% if it is crippled before it disengages. This is NOT in addition to the 25% victory point value if it remains on the table at the end of the game but is crippled.

FLYING BASES OVERLAPPING

As ships can overlap by flying over/under one another it is possible to stack ships. When ships overlap it is common practice to remove the models from their flying bases. To keep things clear, it is usually best to have a few stemless flying bases around with a straight line drawn from the central hole to the bases edge to indicate direction. If desired, numbered contact markers can be used for this as well. The drastic weakening of their shield strength usually discourages this as described in the section on Blast Markers, but it is completely legal.

STACKING SHIPS AND ESCORT SQUADRONS

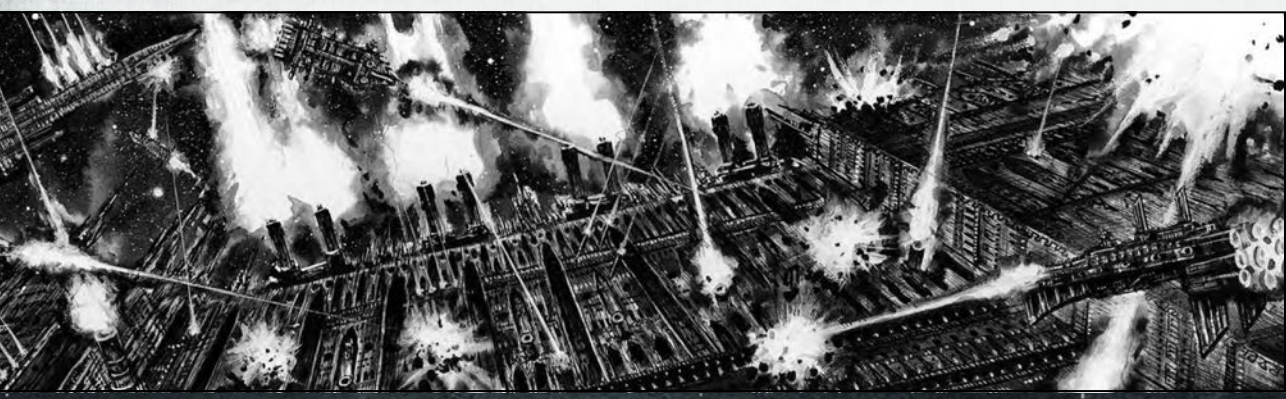
Cruisers and escorts can be stacked to follow the movement of battleships and other models that use a large base. If the models do not physically fit where they should be located, a contact marker or similar can be used for this purpose. As a rule, ships should only be stacked or overlap as an unavoidable consequence of movement or to attain a particular shooting solution and should not be used solely because it is allowed.

When a ship is forced to stand still, it counts as being targeted as Defences. Minimum move distance to not count as defences is at least 5 cm.

At no time do ships count as moving simultaneously (even if in a squadron) and must always be moved one at a time, in any order desired by the owning player.

THE SHOOTING PHASE

In the Shooting Phase, your ships get to unleash their weaponry against the enemy. The attacks that ships make are divided into two sorts: direct firing and ordnance attacks. Direct fire attacks include weapons such as lasers, fusion beams and plasma launchers which when fired hit almost immediately, even across tens of thousands of kilometres. Ordnance attacks include torpedoes and fighters, which are launched during the Shooting Phase but are not resolved until they hit their target in a subsequent Ordnance Phase.



'The Incendrius shuddered as the fire from our gun-decks continued. Broadside after broadside was levelled into the grand cruiser's prow, smashing through their shields and making a ruin of her bow armour. The enemy tried to turn sharply to bring her own batteries to bear, but Captain Grendl was expecting this and we moved with them, still pouring a torrent of plasma into the twisted and wrecked prow. Flames were licking along the port side of the traitor's hull now, as ruptures in her armour sent pressurised air flooding into the ether, ignited by the plasma bolts that were continually raining down.'

– Extract from the log of Third Lieutenant Brass on the destruction of the Bringer of Despair by the Incendrius

DIRECT FIRE

Direct firing uses a ship's weapons batteries, lances and nova cannon. A player can make direct fire attacks with each of his ships during his turn.

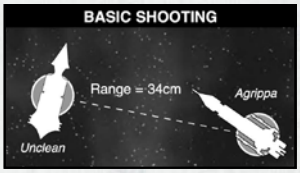
In order to make direct fire attacks, the firing ship must have at least some weapons within range and fire arc of the enemy. Once one ship has done all its firing, the player selects another and fires that one and so on until the player has fired all of the ships he wants to.

This can be summarised as:

1. Choose a ship to fire.
2. Check the ship has targets within range.
3. Check the ship has weapons within fire arc of the target.
4. Resolve firing.
5. Choose another ship to fire.

RANGE

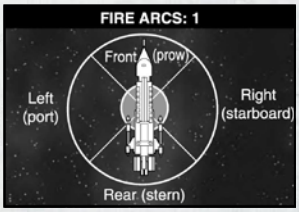
Measure the range from the firing ship to the target vessel. Then look up the range of the firing ship's weapons on its characteristics: any weapons which are out of range may not fire. Because ships vary immensely in size and shape, we use the stems of the models' bases as a pair of convenient centre points for checking range.



In the example above the Unclean *is firing on the* Agrippa. *The* Unclean *is 34 cm away so its weapons batteries (range 45 cm) are within range.*

FIRE ARCS

Weapons have a limited field of fire depending on where they are mounted on the vessel. The different fire arcs are: front, left, right and rear.



A weapons system must have a target ship within its fire arc in order to fire.

The Unclean has the Agrippa in its right fire arc, so it may fire at it with any of its weapons which can be brought to bear in that arc.

Some weapon systems can shoot into more than one fire arc. For example, many cruisers have weaponry in a dorsal mount (i.e. along the top of the vessel) and dorsal mounts can fire left, front or right. Some weapons can even fire all round. Some special weapon systems are area-effect weapons that do not aim nor are directed at a particular target. These weapons or effects always affect all around the firing vessel.

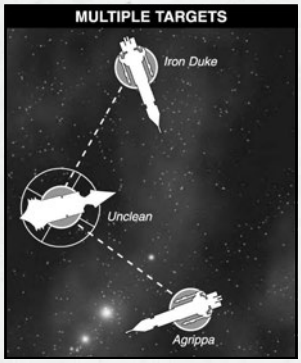
When shooting and the line of fire is on the line in-between arcs, the shooting player chooses which arcs to use, whether it is the attacking or defending ship.

TARGET PRIORITY

Enemies at close range pose a much greater threat than those thousands of kilometres away, so a ship will normally target the nearest enemy ship or squadron. However, a ship can always fire at whatever targets you like if it takes and passes a Leadership test on 2D6 first.

Multiple Targets

Normally a ship will be in a position where only some of its weapon systems can be brought to bear against the closest enemy. Unengaged weapons may still be fired at other targets, providing that the closest enemy is shot at as a matter of priority.



In the example above the Unclean *may fire its left arc weaponry against the* Iron Duke *and its right arc weaponry against the* Agrippa.

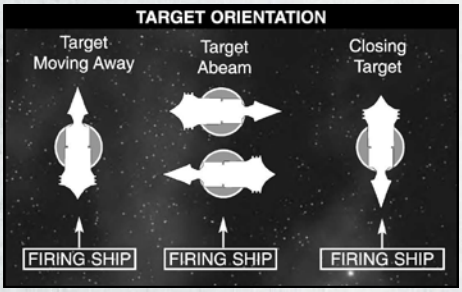
DIRECT FIRING: LANCES

Lances are incredibly high-powered energy weapons that are capable of burning straight through an armoured hull or cutting an escort ship in two. On Imperial and Chaos ships, lances are usually mounted in huge turrets with quad or triple energy projectors that focus into a concentrated beam of destruction.

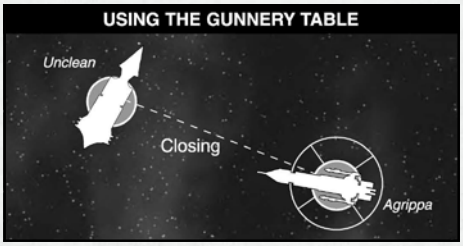
Lance Rules

If a lance weapon system is within range and fire arc of the target simply roll 1D6 per point of lance Strength. Any dice which score a 4, 5 or 6 hit the target regardless of the target's Armour value and cause 1 damage point. Ships with multiple lances in a given fire arc may split their weapon strength between targets but must still make a leadership check to fire on any target besides the closest.

For example, the Agrippa *has lances that have a Strength of 2. If the vessel were to fire them, it would roll 2D6 and score one hit for each dice which rolled a 4 or more.*



A target's orientation depends upon which fire arc the firing vessel is in, as shown in the diagram. Match this with the target's type to find out which column of the Gunnery table to use.



The Unclean *opens fire with its starboard (right) weapons batteries. The weapons have a firepower of 10 and the* Agrippa *is a closing capital ship which on the Gunnery table means that the* Unclean *rolls 7D6. The* Agrippa's *front armour rating is 6 so the* Unclean *needs to roll 6s to hit.*

DIRECT FIRING: WEAPONS BATTERIES

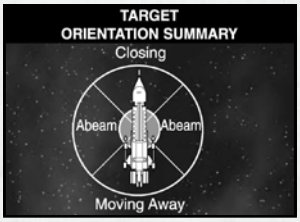
Weapons batteries form the main armament for most warships, ensuring that much of their hull is pock-marked by gun ports and weapon housings. Each battery consists of rank upon rank of weapons: plasma projectors, laser cannons, missile launchers, rail guns, fusion beamers and graviton pulsars. Weapons batteries fire by salvoes, using a coordinated pattern of shots to catch the target in the middle of a maelstrom of destruction.

Weapons Battery Rules

If a ship's weapons battery is within range and fire arc of the target, look up the battery's firepower on the ship's data sheet. Then look up the target's type and orientation on the Gunnery table that follows.

If a ship or squadron is firing multiple weapons that rely on the gunnery, they may be fired simultaneously. Calculate the dice on the gunnery table separately for each type of gunnery weapon. This means you do not suffer gunnery shifts due to Blast Markers caused by other members of the same squadron in the same Shooting Phase. The order in which these weapons hit is up to the shooting player, so Bombardment Cannons can hit after weapons batteries have taken down shields for instance, or vice versa if desired.

Find your total firepower on the column on the left of the table. Next look across the top of the table to find the target type you are shooting at.



The target's orientation is worked out by tracing the line of fire to its base and using the bearing compass to see which aspect is facing the firer.

Which way the target is travelling is important for gunnery purposes as it is much harder to hit a target moving across your sights (i.e. abeam) than one closing or moving away from you.

By cross referencing the total firepower of the attack with the target type and orientation you will find out how many dice to roll to hit. Each dice roll which equals or beats the target's Armour value scores a hit and inflicts 1 point of damage.

Any battery weapon that always counts targets as closing on the gunnery table still uses the far left column when targeting defences, applying any modifiers as applicable.

If a combination of ships in a squadron has a firepower value greater than 20, look up 20 and the remaining firepower values separately and add them together. For example, a squadron of two Carnages can have up to firepower 32 in one broadside, or firepower (20+12).

Gunnery Modifiers

Sometimes conditions will affect how difficult a target is to hit. Ships at very long range will be hard to hit and at close range they will be easy to hit. Debris, radiation, etc., can obscure a target and are represented by Blast Markers. These are described in more detail later, but for now it's worth knowing that they can make a target harder to hit. Even weapon batteries that always count as closing can be affected by these modifiers.

Modifiers are applied in the form of column shifts. A good modifier (such as being at close range) means that you move across the Gunnery table one column to the left when you work out how many Hit dice to roll. A bad modifier (such as being at long range) means you move across one column to the right. No target aspect or modifier can adjust shooting beyond the far left or right columns on the gunnery table. The gunnery modifiers are summarised as follows:

Modifiers:

Target within 15 cm – shift one column left

Target more than 30 cm away – shift one column right

Target behind intervening Blast Markers – shift one column right

For example, as shown earlier, the *Unclean* firing at the *Agrippa* rolls 7D6. If the *Agrippa* were within 15 cm you would shift one column left on the Gunnery table and the *Unclean* would roll 9D6 instead. If the *Agrippa* was over 30 cm away the column shift to the right would mean the *Unclean* rolled 5D6 instead.

GUNNERY TABLE						
	CLOSING		CAPITAL SHIPS	ESCORTS		
	MOVING AWAY			CAPITAL SHIPS	ESCORTS	
	ABEAM				CAPITAL SHIPS	ESCORTS
	SPECIAL*	DEFENCES				ORDNANCE
FIREPOWER	1	1	1	1	0	0
	2	2	1	1	1	0
	3	3	2	2	1	1
	4	4	3	2	1	1
	5	5	4	3	2	1
	6	5	4	3	2	1
	7	6	5	4	2	1
	8	7	6	4	3	2
	9	8	6	5	3	2
	10	9	7	5	4	2
	11	10	8	6	4	2
	12	11	8	6	4	2
	13	12	9	7	5	3
	14	13	10	7	5	3
	15	14	11	8	5	3
	16	14	11	8	6	3
	17	15	12	9	6	3
	18	16	13	9	6	4
	19	17	13	10	7	4
	20	18	14	10	7	4

Notes: *To save space, both cruisers and battleships are referred to as capital ships on the Gunnery table. If a squadron has a firepower value greater than 20, look up 20 and the remaining value separately and add them together. For example, a squadron of two Carnage cruisers can have up to firepower 32 in one broadside, or firepower (20+12).*
**Defences (for example ground based defences and satellites) and ordnance targets are not affected by orientation. A ship must move at least 5 cm to not be targeted as defences.*

Splitting Fire

A ship can elect to split the firepower of its weapon batteries or lances between several enemy vessels, but only after halving the effect of the weaponry as a result of special orders, crippling damage and so on.

You cannot split weapons battery or lance fire of any type at a single target!

Ships with multiple weapons in a given fire arc may split their weapon strength between two or more targets but must still make a leadership check to fire on any target besides the closest.

Special Order: *Lock On*

A ship can increase the accuracy of its firing by using the *Lock On* special order. The ship may re-roll any dice to hit for lances and weapons batteries, during the Shooting Phase. Any dice which missed are simply picked up and rolled again. A ship using *Lock On* orders may not turn during its Movement Phase because it must maintain a steady course and direct additional power to its weapon systems. *Lock On* orders are really useful when an enemy vessel is within range and no course changes will be needed to bring weapons to bear.

See pg. 46 for all effects.

NOVA CANNON

A nova cannon is a huge weapon, normally mounted in the prow of a ship so that the recoil it generates can be compensated for by the vessel's engines. It fires a projectile at incredible velocity, using graviometric impellers to accelerate it to close to light speed. The projectile implodes at a preset distance after firing, unleashing a force more potent than a dozen plasma bombs.

Nova Cannon Rules

The correct dimensions of the Nova Cannon template are a 5 cm outer diameter with the hole's diameter at 1.2 cm. The Nova Cannon template's dimensions can be found on Games Workshop's small green blast template where the perimeter is marked with a 2; this does not include the width of the line. Use the larger hole in the centre of the template if there are two sizes.

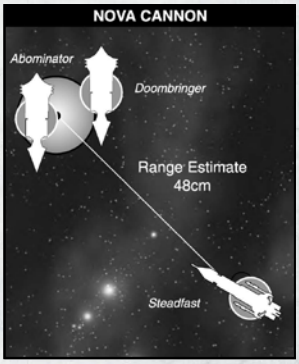
When firing, the template is placed anywhere desired so that its edge is between 30-150 cm from the firing vessel in its specified firing arc.

It does not have to be centred on a single enemy vessel and can be placed so that it touches more than one ship.

When the template is placed, check the range. If placed within 45 cm, roll a scatter die and 1D6. Roll 2D6 if the range is between 45 cm to 60 cm, and 3D6 if the range is beyond 60 cm. Move the template a number of cm rolled by the dice in the direction of the scatter die roll. If the scatter die rolls a "hit", the template remains where placed.

After the attacking player designates which target is being fired on, the defending player must decide whether or not to brace ships or squadrons BEFORE the weapon is fired. This includes targets the weapon may hit due to miss distance or scatter.

Any target that is in base contact of the template after it is moved takes one hit. Any target in base contact of the centre hole of the template takes D6 hits, regardless of its Armour value. Any ordnance touching the template is automatically removed. Replace the template with a single Blast Marker if it does not contact a target after being moved.



In the diagram above the Steadfast*, a Dominator class cruiser, fires its nova cannon at the* Abominator*, at a range of 48 cm. The hole in the nova cannon template partially covers the* Abominator's *base, inflicting D6 hits on it. The nearby* Doombringer *is also caught in the blast and suffers one automatic hit.*

Important Note:
The Nova Cannon is a line of sight weapon and cannot fire through obstacles or celestial phenomena that act as normal line of sight obstructions, such as planets, moons, asteroid fields, etc. If desired however, these can nonetheless be fired upon. If a direct hit is scored on the scatter dice, place D6 Blast Markers in contact with the planet or asteroid field edge.

Nova Cannon are unaffected in any way by *Lock On* or *Reload Ordnance* special orders.

Nova Cannon vs. Holofield
Holofields and similar systems save against the shell hit, not the subsequent damage rolls. For example, if an Eldar vessel is hit by a Nova Cannon round and fails to save, it must immediately take as many hits as the damage roll allocates unless it successfully braced beforehand.

Holofield saves are taken against a direct hit from a Nova Cannon where the hole is over the base as well as against the single automatic hit for coming in base contact with the blast template. If this save is successful the effect of the Nova Cannon is negated, and a Blast Marker is placed normally for the save. Being braced saves against any damage taken normally.

AREA EFFECTS AND SPECIAL WEAPONS

Some weapon systems such as the Necron Nightmare Field and Star Pulse Generator are area-effect weapons that do not aim nor are directed at a particular target. Such weapons or effects are not blocked by line of sight obstructions such as hulks, minefields or celestial phenomena, nor can they be saved against by holofields. See pg. 70 for more on catastrophic damage and exploding ships.

Chaos Marks that affect nearby ships based on area as well as catastrophic events such as Warp Drive implosions, Solar Flares, etc. are also not affected by celestial phenomena and other such line-of-sight obstructions. See pg. 110 concerning asteroid fields.

Exterminatus vessels used in scenarios that require them normally replace their standard prow weapon with an Exterminatus one. Vessels that do not normally have prow weapons (such as Vengeance grand cruisers) cannot be used as Exterminatus vessels.

Armageddon Gun and Holofields: Holofield saves are taken against a direct hit from the Armageddon Gun where the hole is over the base as well as against the single automatic hit for coming in base contact with the blast template. If this save is successful the effect of the Armageddon Gun is negated, and a Blast Marker is placed normally for the save. Being braced saves against any damage taken normally.

Special Order:
All Ahead Full / Burn Retros / Come to New Heading
A ship using *All Ahead Full*, *Burn Retros* or *Come to New Heading* special orders sacrifices firing opportunities in order to squeeze more performance out of its engines. In the Shooting Phase, ships on these orders halve their weapons batteries' Firepower and lance Strength, rounding up. Nova cannon may not be fired at all. Ordnance is unaffected.

See pg. 46 for all effects

DAMAGE

The weapons carried by some ships are powerful enough to reduce whole cities to plains of radioactive glass. Ships are armoured and shielded in order to resist their savage caress, hulls are heavily reinforced so that they can survive the horrific pounding of gigawatts of energy. But within every ship is a crew all too vulnerable to the fires of battle and the deadly cold of the void. Ships are often crippled by crew casualties long before hulls crack or drives explode.

TAKING HITS

When a ship is damaged, note the number of hits it has taken on your fleet roster.

Once a ship has lost half its damage points it is crippled. When a ship has lost all its hits, it is out of action and a roll needs to be made on the Catastrophic Damage table to see if it explodes in a spectacular fashion or simply drifts helplessly.

The Intolerance was surrounded by a seething sphere of plasma and missile detonations, held back by the bright coruscating arcs of its energy shields. With a blinding flash the shield generators collapsed under the onslaught, leaving the ship at the mercy of its enemies.

Crippled Ships

A ship which loses half its damage points is crippled.

Being crippled halves shields, turrets, ordnance, all weapons and affects boarding. This effect is cumulative if the ship is braced, meaning if a ship is both braced and crippled, its weapons and ordnance are halved (rounding up) again!

Crippled ships also reduce their move by 5 cm and will not be able to fire their nova cannon.

For example, a standard Lunar class cruiser has 8 hits and is therefore crippled when it has suffered 4 points of damage.

Special Order: *Brace For Impact!*
Brace For Impact! special orders can be undertaken ANY time a ship faces taking damage before the actual to-hit result is rolled, including when ramming or being rammed or against damage from asteroid fields. It may also be used to protect against critical damage from any kind of Hit-and-Run attack. A decision to brace for impact must be made before any attempt to shoot (rolling dice) by the opponent is made, including modifier rolls for variable weapons such as Ork Gunz. When being attacked by ordnance, the decision must be made before rolling turrets.

Brace For Impact! DOES NOT protect against critical damage caused by hits that were not saved against normally, nor any damage caused during a boarding action (including critical damage).

A ship is placed on *Brace For Impact!* orders until the end of its next turn, replacing any other special order it may be on currently. However, the special order previously in effect remains so, in that ships that reloaded ordnance are still reloaded, a ship or squadron moving *All Ahead Full* must continue to do so, etc. Ships and squadrons still cannot take special orders in the next turn.

A ship using *Brace For Impact!* orders gains a saving throw of 4+ on a D6 against actual damage taken by the ship itself, NOT hits absorbed by shields, reactive armour, holofields, etc.

A ship which uses this special order may not use special orders at all in its next turn and its Firepower, ordnance (this effect is cumulative if a capital ship is crippled) and armament Strength is halved, while Nova Cannons may not be fired at all. Turrets and shields are unaffected. *Brace For Impact!* only comes into effect against attacks whose Hit rolls are made after the special order has been declared. In other words, you cannot wait to see how accurate a salvo or Nova Cannon shot is before declaring *Brace For Impact!*

A ship that fails an attempt to *Brace For Impact!* cannot attempt to brace again until the ship, squadron, ordnance wave or other event causing damage to it completes its attacks, finishes causing damage, resolves its effects, etc. It can however again attempt to brace before the next ship, squadron or ordnance wave attacks it, it faces another potentially damaging event, etc.

CRITICAL HITS

The weapons used in space are so destructive that when a ship is hit there is a chance that a vital location will be critically damaged. Critical hits can temporarily knock out a ship's weapons and engines, start fires or even breach its hull.

Roll a D6 for each hit scored on a ship (but not against its shields). On a roll of 1-5 the hit causes no extra effects. On a roll of 6 the hit causes critical damage. Roll 2D6 on the table below to see what effect it has. Note that you do not roll for further critical hits for any damage caused by a critical hit.

Critical Hits on Escorts

Escort ships which suffer a critical hit for any reason, such as during a boarding action, are automatically destroyed.

Note: Whenever ships are damaged, there's a good chance that it will be serious. Therefore a check for critical damage is made for every point of damage scored on a ship, no matter what its source is.

Critical hits that can be repaired are cumulative; meaning ships that take a multiple number of the same critical damage must repair all incidences of that critical damage before the system is fully operational.

A ship's speed is only affected once by multiple Thrusters Damaged criticals. However, the number of times it takes effect are still cumulative, and all Thrusters Damaged criticals must be repaired for the ship to regain its normal speed.

Damage from multiple fire criticals is cumulative.

Example: if a ship had 3 fire criticals and failed to repair any of them in the End Phase, it would suffer 3 points of damage and all three fires would keep burning.

If a critical hit is rolled which cannot be applied, or multiple criticals are rolled for a location that cannot be repaired (such as Shields Collapse), apply the next highest critical hit instead. For example a ship with no dorsal weapons gets a Dorsal Armament Damaged critical hit. In this case the ship would suffer damage to its starboard armament.

CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	Extra Damage	Result
2	+0	**Dorsal Armament Damaged:** The ship's dorsal armament is badly damaged by the hit – power lines are severed, traverse mechanisms crippled and many gunners are killed. The ship's dorsal armament may not fire until it has been repaired.
3	+0	**Starboard Armament Damaged:** The starboard armament is taken off line by the hit. The ship's starboard armament (right) may not fire until it has been repaired.
4	+0	**Port Armament Damaged:** Heavy damage silences the port side weaponry. The ship's port armament (left) may not fire until it has been repaired.
5	+0	**Prow Armament Damaged:** The ship's prow is ripped open. Its prow armament may not fire until it has been repaired.
6	+1	**Engine Room Damaged:** The engine room is rocked by explosions, forcing all hands to tend to the reactors. The ship may not make any turns until the damage is repaired.
7	+0	**Fire!** Oxygen lines are broken, leading to fires in many compartments. Roll to repair (extinguish) the fire in the End Phase, if it is not put out it causes one point of extra damage and keeps burning.
8	+1	**Thrusters Damaged:** The ship's thruster assembly is disabled. Reduce the ship's speed by 10 cm until the damage is repaired.
9	+0	**Bridge Smashed:** The armoured fortress around the ship's captain and his officers is smashed. The ship's Leadership is reduced by 3. This damage may not be repaired. If this is the Fleet Commander's flagship, any remaining Fleet Commander re-rolls are lost for the remainder of the battle.
10	+0	**Shields Collapse:** The shield generators overload and burn out, leaving the ship virtually defenceless. The ship's shield Strength is reduced to zero. This damage may not be repaired.
11	+D3	**Hull Breach:** A huge gash is torn in the ship's hull, causing carnage among the crew.
12	+D6	**Bulkhead Collapse:** Internal pillars buckle and twist, whole compartments crumple with a scream of tortured metal. Just pray that some of the ship holds together!

BLAST MARKERS

When ships are fired on, some of the results are shown by Blast Markers. Blast Markers represent all kinds of events – huge explosions, expanding shockwaves, intense radiation clouds, tumbling debris, unexploded warheads, plasma bursts, etc.

Placing Blast Markers

Blast Markers are shown on the tabletop by placing counters where the event occurs. They remain in play until they are removed in a subsequent End Phase. Most Blast Markers are placed to show the hits taken on a vessel's shields as described later, but exploding ships and especially apocalyptic weapons can also cause Blast Markers to be placed. Blast Markers are placed in the following circumstances:

- For each hit absorbed by a ship's shields.
- For ships which are reduced to 0 damage as specified on the Catastrophic Damage table.
- For each missed nova cannon attack.

Blast Markers that are caused by shield impacts, the first Blast Marker is placed directly in the line of fire from the shooting vessel, with subsequent Blast Markers fanning out around it. Blast Markers cannot be stacked unless there is physically no more room to place Blast Markers around a target's base.

When a ship has multiple bases in contact when taking fire, the Blast Marker is placed between the base of the ship taking fire and the ship closest in the line of fire to the ship taking fire. In other words, a single round of shooting from a ship or squadron cannot place Blast Markers in base contact with more than one other vessel besides the vessel it is shooting at (for two in total) except in the following cases:

1. A ship with multiple shields (like a battleship) takes three or four Blast Markers that when fanned out normally contact more than one vessel in actual base contact (as opposed to "close to but not actually touching"). In other words, if a ship in base contact with the ship under fire comes in contact with Blast Markers being normally fanned around the base of the ship taking fire, then it comes in contact with a Blast Marker as well. When merely in base contact with the ship fired upon, the Blast Marker must physically touch the bases of the ships it is affecting in this manner.

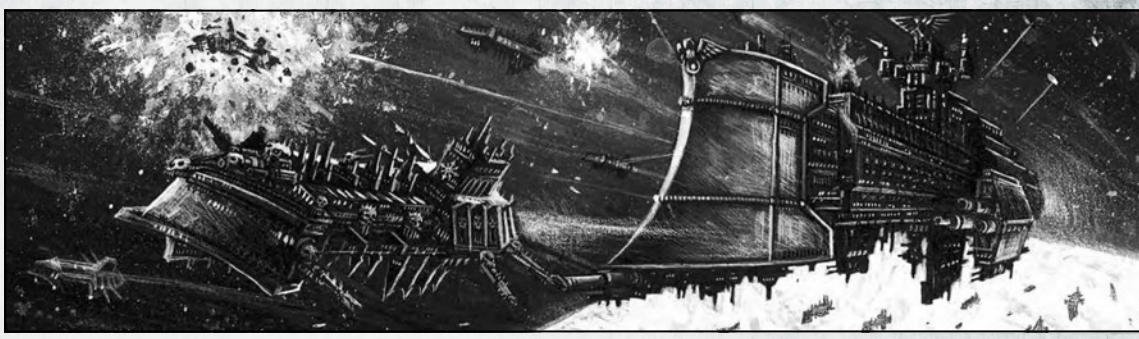
2. Any and all ships with bases that are actually stacked or are in any way overlap on the base of a ship in contact with Blast Markers, which is different from mere base contact and is explained separately.

A ship in base contact with a Blast Marker means the whole base is affected. It counts as being in contact all around it and in every arc for purposes of leadership, movement, shooting, ordnance attacks, being boarded, or every other respect where Blast Markers have an effect. This includes if it ended its movement in contact with a Blast Marker for any reason. A vessel is considered to be moving through Blast Markers even if it is moving away from Blast Markers it is in contact with at the beginning of the Movement Phase, such as Blast Markers in its rear arc or in base contact due to a previous round of shooting.

When ships have stacked or overlapping bases, there is no limitation to the number of ship's shields a Blast Marker can take down if one of them is in contact with Blast Markers. A ship overlapping a ship in contact with a Blast Marker also counts as being in contact with it. However, in situations where multiple ships are overlapping each other, this does not cascade to other vessels.

For example, Ship #2 overlaps on Ship #1, which has a Blast Marker in contact with it. Ship #3 overlaps on Ship #2 but not on Ship #1. Ship #2 counts as having a Blast Marker on it, but as long as the Blast Marker does not physically touch Ship #3, it does not count as being in contact with a Blast Marker.

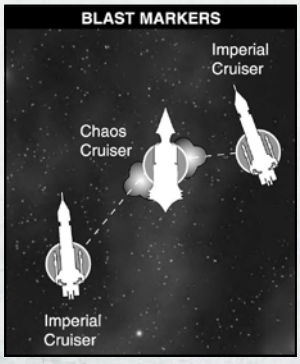
Blast Markers placed in base contact with a ship that took fire do not affect ships near to but not actually in base contact with that ship. Place Blast Markers so they do not touch the bases of ships nearby but not actually in base contact. This is not a "counts as" rule; one cannot declare a ship is actually not in base contact if it is making physical contact.



If a ship moves into base contact with another ship that already has a Blast Marker but the blast maker does not touch its own base, it does not count as having a Blast Marker in contact as well. In other words, a ship in contact with a Blast Marker does not in and of itself count as being a Blast Marker for purposes of being in base contact with other ships.

Note that Blast Markers do not move once they have been placed on the tabletop. They show an area of tumultuous, strife-torn space and temporarily become part of the battlefield once they are in play.

In the example below, two Imperial cruisers are firing on a Chaos cruiser. Each Imperial ship scores one hit, so a Blast Marker is placed in contact with the edge of the Chaos cruiser's base facing each of the Imperial ships.



Blast Marker Effects

Movement: If a ship moves through any Blast Markers, it reduces its speed that phase by 5 cm regardless of the number of markers actually moved through. This affects each separate Movement Phase for Eldar vessels.

A vessel is considered to be moving through Blast Markers even if it is moving away from Blast Markers it is in contact with at the beginning of the Movement Phase.

A ship with a Shield strength of 0 (i.e. Eldar or ships suffering the Shields Collapse critical) which moves through any Blast Markers also suffers a point of damage on a D6 roll of 6. This test only needs to be made once, regardless of how many Blast Markers they encounter in their movement. An Ordnance marker such as a torpedo salvo or bomber squadron is removed on a D6 roll of 6 if it moves over a Blast Marker.

If a ship cannot elect to slow down (such as when on *All Ahead Full* special orders) and comes into contact with a Blast Marker within the last 5 cm of its movement, it must instead stop no farther than the point it comes in contact with the Blast Marker (and not before).

Shooting: Blast Markers interfere with gunnery, as mentioned earlier, disrupting firing and causing plenty of 'ghost' images on the firing ship's sensors. Hence if a ship's line of fire passes through any Blast Markers (including those in contact with a ship's base) or it or its targets are in base contact with Blast Markers, it suffers a column shift to the right on the Gunnery table. Lances and nova cannon are unaffected. Note that Blast Markers come into effect immediately and so can affect subsequent shooting in the same turn in which they are placed.

Shields: If a ship's base is in contact with any Blast Markers when it is fired upon, its shield Strength is reduced by 1 per Blast Marker.

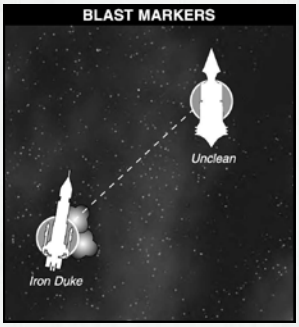
SHIELDS

Ships are protected by powerful energy shields, so that they can survive travelling through space. The shields form a wavering band of energy around the vessel, a teardrop of invisible force that can absorb or deflect the worst excesses of stellar radiation and meteor showers or a series of weapons hits. The amount of damage shields are able to absorb is limited and they will be overwhelmed by a sustained attack, forcing a temporary shutdown while the shield generators vent off the excess energy.

Each shield will block one point of damage from hitting the ship in a single Shooting Phase. A Blast Marker is placed touching the ship's base for each hit blocked by the shields, to show how much energy has been absorbed.

Once the number of Blast Markers in contact with a ship's base is equal to its number of shields, no further damage may be absorbed by the shields that turn. Any further hits will inflict damage on the ship itself. Once they have been overloaded the shields may not be raised again until the ship escapes the storm of energy blasts and shock waves represented by the Blast Markers. The shields remain down until the ship moves away from the Blast Markers in a subsequent Movement Phase.

Shields are only effective against lances, weapons batteries and nova cannon. Attacks made by ramming, bombers and torpedoes get inside a ship's shields, so they provide no protection.



In the example above the Iron Duke *(which has two shields) is fired on by the* Unclean *and receives three hits. Two hits are absorbed by the* Iron Duke's *shields so two Blast Markers are placed in contact with its base to show that it has already stopped two hits with its shields this turn. The third hit scores one point of damage on the ship itself. Any further hits against the* Iron Duke *this turn will score damage on the ship itself because its shields are down.*

CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE

A ship with no hits left is effectively out of action. There may be some crew left alive, trapped in compartments which have not been breached yet, there may even be power available in some sections of the ship, but the ship can no longer fight.

When an escort is destroyed, replace it with a Blast Marker placed as centrally as possible to where the escort was, to represent the expanding cloud of debris left by their passing. As a Blast Marker is smaller than a small flying base, the only way it is possible to take down a ship's shield with this Blast Marker is if their bases actually overlapped.

With a mighty capital ship, there is a chance that the vessel will be destroyed by catastrophic damage as its plasma drive overloads or its warpdrive triggers. Roll 2D6 on the Catastrophic Damage table to see what happens.

Blazing or drifting hulks will block lines of fire that pass over their base, due to the clouds of venting gasses and debris they produce.

Ships that are reduced to zero hits and become hulks no longer have shields, holofields or any other similar mechanism. The turret value of a hulk is reduced to zero. Bombers do not subtract the hulk's turret strength from their attack runs.

Hulks cannot be fired upon or boarded by friendly vessels or ordnance in an attempt to deny victory points to the enemy or induce catastrophic damage. Torpedoes that hit a friendly hulk still inflict hits normally, but torpedoes cannot be deliberately aimed at friendly hulks.

While enemy ships can choose to fire on a hulk, they do not have to pass a leadership check to ignore one if it is the closest target. A player can fire on an enemy hulk if it is not the closest target, but it must make a leadership check normally.

When shooting at hulked ships, use the destroyed ship's Armour value to roll for hits. Roll once on the catastrophic damage table each time hits are inflicted by shooting or ordnance from a given ship, squadron or ordnance wave (regardless of the number of hits inflicted), not once for each additional hit inflicted.

Exploding ships count as an area effect and cannot be saved against by holofields, though shields still work normally.

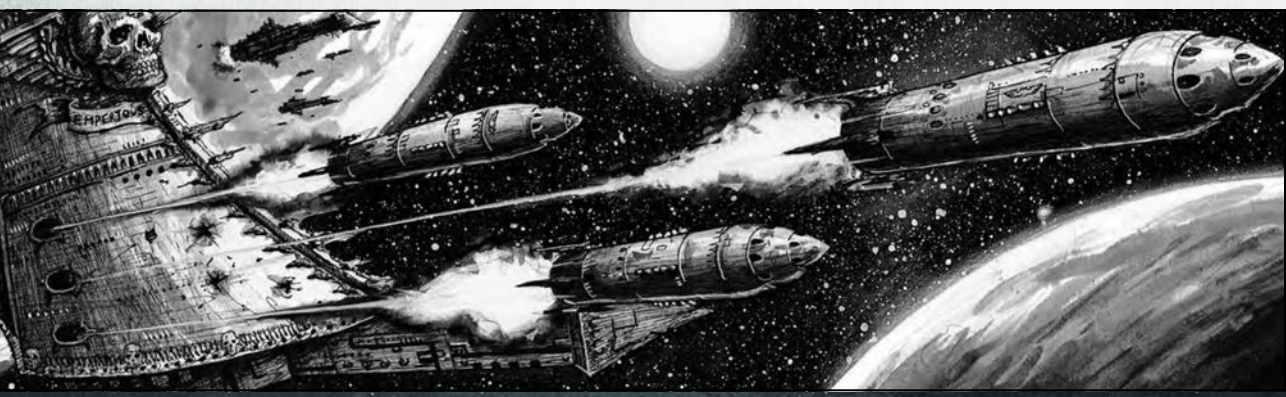
When placing an exploding ship's Blast Markers, place a single Blast Marker exactly where the ship was, and then place as many Blast Markers from the explosion as possible fanning around and in contact with it until the total number Blast Markers are placed without overlapping any Blast Markers.

CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE TABLE

2D6 Roll	Extra Blast Markers	Result
2-6	1	**Drifting Hulk:** The ship is reduced to a shattered hulk drifting in space. The wreck moves 4D6 cm forward in each of its subsequent Movement Phases. Place a Blast Marker in contact with the wreck's base after each move.
7-8	1	**Blazing Hulk:** The ship is reduced to a burning wreck with uncontrolled fires blazing on every deck. In time the fires will either burn out or trigger a cataclysmic explosion. The wreck moves 4D6 cm forward in each of its subsequent Movement Phases. Place a Blast Marker in contact with the wreck's base and roll on the Catastrophic Damage table again after its move.
9-11	Special	**Plasma Drive Overload:** The ship's plasma coils overload and explode in a blazing inferno of white hot plasma. Remove the ship from play, leaving behind a number of Blast Markers equal to half its starting number of hits. Every ship within 3D6 cm of the imploding wreck is struck by lance shots with a Strength equal to half the ship's starting Damage capacity. Roll to hit as normal.
12	Special	**Warp Drive Implosion:** The ship's warp drive implodes, ripping a hole in real space that tears at nearby vessels with horrific force. Remove the ship from play, leaving behind a number of Blast Markers equal to its starting number of hits. Every ship within 3D6 cm of the imploding wreck is struck by lance shots with a Strength equal to the wreck's starting Damage capacity. Roll to hit as normal.

THE ORDNANCE PHASE

Ordnance includes missiles the size of skyscrapers to swarms of small attack craft such as fighters and bombers.



'Against the inky blackness I could see the Heartless Destroyer drifting with a dull red glow illuminating the billowing clouds of gas spilled from the ruptured hull. Gazing through the opticon I saw another torpedo salvo arrowing in towards her. At around two thousand the turrets opened up with an impressive show of firing and knocked down some of the torps, but they were already splitting, each one spawning a swarm of a dozen smaller fireflies which plunged through the criss-cross of defensive fire like meteors. A half second later they struck and pillars of orange flame geysered up from the impacts. The fiery pillars died away, leaving more glowing red pocks in her surface, but to our amazement the Destroyer heeled slowly about and fired another salvo, weaker now but still blinding against the blackness. We increased our speed to maximum and as we turned to port to fire our torpedoes, we headed into the expanding pattern of shock waves left in her wake. We sliced into them, but our speed made the ship shake and rattle from bow to stern. One particularly solid impact struck the bridge, perhaps a piece of debris moving too slowly for the shields. By the time we had recovered, the opportunity to launch our torpedoes had gone. We couldn't have fired them anyway since the battering we had taken had jammed the tubes. The final minutes of the battle were like a melee as destroyers darted around from every quarter of the void. The Virago bore down on us from dead ahead after her torpedo run and we passed down her port side far too close for comfort.'

– Ensign Butler of the destroyer Opportune on the destruction of the Chaos cruiser Heartless Destroyer at the battle of Duran.

All ordnance attacks are represented by markers that are moved across the tabletop during each Ordnance Phase. If an Ordnance marker comes into contact with a ship or another Ordnance marker it will make an attack.

LAUNCHING ORDNANCE

Ships armed with torpedoes and/or launch bays can use ordnance.

Ordnance is declared, placed on the table and launched at the end of the Shooting Phase (the marker is put on the ship's base to show it has fired its ordnance) but the ordnance moves and attacks during the ordnance phase.

Launching ordnance of any amount expends ordnance for that turn and must be reloaded to launch again. For example, a carrier with four launch bays that due to ordnance limits cannot launch more than two attack craft cannot "save" the other two markers and must reload ordnance again before it can launch more attack craft. This same concept applies to torpedoes, though there are no launch limits for torpedoes. Launching only torpedoes does not affect launching attack craft later, and vice versa.

If a ship equipped with both torpedoes and attack craft launches only one or the other, it may still launch the other before having to reload again.

For example, if an Imperial Dictator launches its attack craft but not its torpedoes in a turn and in the subsequent turn fails to Reload Ordnance*, it may still launch its torpedoes in that turn.*

Any ship that has either never launched ordnance or has successfully reloaded ordnance is considered to have its ordnance reloaded for as many turns as it does not launch, regardless of what subsequent special orders it takes. Keep in mind that being crippled and/or braced still affect torpedo launchers and attack craft bays normally.

FLEET ORDNANCE LIMITS

No more attack craft markers can be put in play than the number of available launch bays, even if it has successfully reloaded. Any model or fleet described as not able to run out of ordnance (such as Ork Space Hulks, the Tyranid fleet, etc.) may launch up to twice this number and provide double their number of launch bays to the total amount of markers the fleet may have in play. This total limit applies to the fleet as a whole and not to individual ships in the fleet. Any individual carrier may launch attack craft if they have successfully reloaded (even a partial amount) as long as the total amount of attack craft in play does not exceed the number of available launch bays. This total must take into account reductions caused by ships being crippled or lost in battle.

If more attack craft remain in play than there are available launch bays, the owning player may not launch any ordnance that turn. However, ordnance in play may be "recalled" by immediately removing it from play in order to launch new markers from the ship's stem, if it has successfully reloaded ordnance. Attack craft recalled in this manner must be removed immediately and not expended on other targets, including enemy ordnance. This prevents a carrier from attacking a target to expend its attack craft in play and then launching a new attack craft wave in a single turn. This rule does not apply to torpedoes, which do not run out and do not have launch limits.

Special Order: ***Reload Ordnance***
Ordnance needs to be loaded and armed in order to be launched. Ships are considered to start the game with torpedoes in tubes and attack craft fuelled and ready to go.

However, once the ship has launched its ordnance it must use the *Reload Ordnance* special order before it can launch ordnance again. If the ordnance is successfully reloaded and it may launch ordnance in the Shooting Phase, or keep the ordnance ready for launch in a later turn. Use the fleet roster to keep track of which vessels have ordnance loaded.

MOVING ORDNANCE

In the Ordnance Phase players move and attack with any ordnance they have launched including ordnance launched on previous turns. Sometimes both players will have to move ordnance so it's important to know who moves first. In this case the player whose turn it is moves all their ordnance first.

All ordnance has a speed value that dictates how far it moves during each Ordnance Phase. Ordnance attacks are represented by markers which are moved on the tabletop. Ordnance markers in a wave or salvo must be spread in contact with each other and cannot be stacked.

Ordnance and Blast Markers

Ordnance weapons are not shielded like larger ships, so they may be destroyed if they pass through Blast Markers. If an Ordnance marker passes through Blast Markers during its movement, roll a D6. The Ordnance marker is removed from play on a roll of 6.

Ordnance attacking ships with Blast Markers in base contact must also pass this test, as the ship's base is under the effect of the Blast Marker touching its base (as described earlier).

Only one roll is made regardless of the number of Blast Markers passed through. Ordnance waves or salvoes only need to make this test once per movement, regardless of the number of Blast Markers moved through.

SHOOTING AT ORDNANCE

Ordnance may be fired at in the Shooting Phase with direct fire weapons. A ship firing at ordnance does not have to make a leadership check to ignore closer targets, nor does it have to make a leadership check to ignore enemy ordnance if it is the closest target. It must still make a leadership check to split its fire between ordnance targets, just as it would have to split fire normally. It also must make a leadership check to fire on an enemy ordnance marker, wave or salvo if it is not the closest enemy ordnance marker in range.

Weapon batteries firing at ordnance use the Ordnance column on the Gunnery table. This is because ordnance targets are relatively small and fast moving. Target aspects are not taken into account, but column shifts for range and Blast Markers do apply. Lances and weapons batteries both need 6s to hit ordnance because they are such difficult targets. If an Ordnance marker is hit it is removed from play. Any Ordnance markers caught in a nova cannon detonation are also removed from play.

ORDNANCE ATTACKS

If an Ordnance marker comes into contact with a ship's base or another Ordnance marker the effect is resolved immediately, including in the Movement Phase when a ship moves into enemy ordnance.

All Ordnance attacks ignore the target's shields.

Ordnance markers must always attack the first ordnance or vessels they come in contact with (when applicable). They are not required to attack the closest target.

For example, a fighter squadron marker may not ignore a small torpedo salvo it is actually in contact with to attack a larger one nearby, or an attack craft wave may not ignore an escort it is in contact with to attack a nearby cruiser. This also allows small torpedo salvoes from escorts to be used to clear the way of enemy fighters in the Ordnance Phase so that larger salvoes can get through, etc.

If two ships with the same base size are so aligned that they for all intents and purposes are occupying the same 2D position on the table when they are attacked by ordnance, the attacking player can pick which ship he or she is attacking. Put simply, if there is no way to visually identify which of two stacked or overlapping ships is actually closer to attacking ordnance, the attacker decides which target is being attacked.

TYPES OF ORDNANCE

TORPEDOES

The term 'torpedo' has always been used to describe any long-range missile carried by a spaceship. A typical anti-ship torpedo is over 200 feet long and powered by a plasma reactor, which also acts as a sizeable portion of its warhead, turning it into a devastating plasma bomb. The area of a ship given over to the torpedo tubes is a massive space criss-crossed by lifts, hoists and gantry cranes for moving the huge missiles from the armoured magazine silos where they are stored to the launch tubes.

Once a torpedo is launched, the plasma drive propels the torpedo forward at high speed, whilst beginning an energy build-up which will culminate in its detonation. Torpedoes have a limited ability to detect a target and will alter course to intercept if they pass within a few thousand kilometres of a vessel.

Torpedo Rules

Torpedoes may be launched by a ship with torpedo tubes. These are normally fitted to the prow of a ship. In Battlefleet Gothic, torpedo salvoes have a Strength value and a Speed value, which are shown on the ship's characteristics. The higher the Strength, the more torpedoes there are in a salvo. The higher the speed, the faster the torpedoes travel.

A torpedo salvo (regardless of strength) is represented with a the original Strength 3 marker with one or more D6 indicating the actual salvo strength. For specific dimensions, this marker should be no more than 2.5 cm wide.

Place the torpedo marker at the end of its movement in the turn of launch so that it is completely within the correct fire arc. Now retrace the markers movement, reducing its strength and conducting ordnance interactions as appropriate to prevent targeting vessels out of fire arc due to proximity, etc.

Standard torpedoes move in a straight line once they have been launched, travelling a distance equal to their speed each Ordnance Phase until they have detonated or leave the playing area. Unlike ships, torpedoes may not vary their speed and must make their full move in each Ordnance Phase.

If the Torpedo marker contacts a ship's base (friend or foe) it attacks. Roll a D6 for every point of Strength in the torpedo salvo. Each dice which equals or beats

the ship's Armour value scores one point of damage. Torpedoes will pass through shields before they impact, so ignore any shields when applying damage. The torpedo salvo continues moving after the attack but its Strength is reduced by 1 for every hit it inflicted. Torpedoes that can re-roll misses must do so, even if the target is already destroyed.

In the diagram above, a Strength 6 torpedo salvo moves in the Ordnance Phase and hits a ship. 6D6 are rolled to attack and three dice score hits on the target. The salvo is reduced to Strength 3 and continues moving up to its full move of 30 cm. If any other ships were in its path they would also be attacked.

Premature detonation

An entire salvo of torpedoes can be triggered prematurely by the following circumstances:

- On a D6 roll of 6 if it moves through any Blast Markers.
- If the salvo is fired on by direct fire weapons and any hits are scored.
- If it comes into contact with another Torpedo or Fighter marker.

If a Torpedo marker is prematurely detonated it is removed from play.

No torpedo marker can attack a target more than once per full turn, even if they are already in contact with it at the start of the Movement or Ordnance Phase. For example, a torpedo marker is launched toward a battleship with a large base, ending its movement just inside base contact with the battleship. The attack is resolved immediately, with turrets rolled and hits allocated. While any surviving markers remain in play, they do not once again attack the same ship at the beginning of that ship's Movement Phase, and that ship is allowed to assume the torpedoes have flown off behind it and move off the torpedo marker. The marker will however immediately attack any other ship that comes in contact with it, even if the other ship is moved before the ship that was attacked originally.

When launching torpedoes, the torpedo marker will technically be in all arcs and may be in multiple arcs until its final position this movement, especially when targeting ships in close proximity. However, it may not interact with anything out of the torpedoes' actual firing arc, no matter how close the target vessel is to the shooting vessel.

When moving a torpedo salvo the centre must always be in the same point along the line of fire.

When launched, torpedoes do not normally ignore any targets in front of them, including friendly units! However, a ship that is actually in base contact with another friendly vessel may "shoot through" the friendly ship's base, even if they are not in a squadron. Ships not in a squadron cannot use this effect to combine torpedo salvoes in any way and must always launch torpedoes separately.

Torpedoes that have an automatic re-roll to hit MUST use their re-roll to hit a target, even if that target was already destroyed by other hits generated in the same salvo.

Splitting Torpedo Salvoes

Single ships capable of launching six or less torpedoes cannot split torpedo salvoes at all. Single ships capable of launching salvoes larger than six may split their salvoes in two, representing them with two separate markers. If this option is taken, the salvoes must go in different directions (no double-attacks on the same target or in the same direction), and no single salvo can contain less than three torpedoes. Squadrons of capital ships or escorts are not obligated to fire their torpedoes in a single salvo.

Torpedoes do not normally ignore hulks in their line of movement. Boarding torpedoes may do so if desired, and guided torpedoes may be steered away from them but will still attack if they make contact.

Turning Torpedoes:
When turning torpedoes (that are allowed to do so), turn from the centre of the marker at the beginning of the Ordnance Phase. Under no circumstances can torpedoes turn in the same Ordnance Phase they were launched. This means they can only be launched in the same arc normal torpedoes would be. If a salvo turns, it must be turned so that no edge moves more than the salvo's maximum speed in any way. This also means the side facing the inside edge of the turn may end up moving less than the maximum allowed distance.

BOARDING TORPEDOES

Boarding torpedoes are designed to punch through the outer hull of an enemy vessel and plunge a squad of heavily armed troops inside to sabotage the target ship's systems.

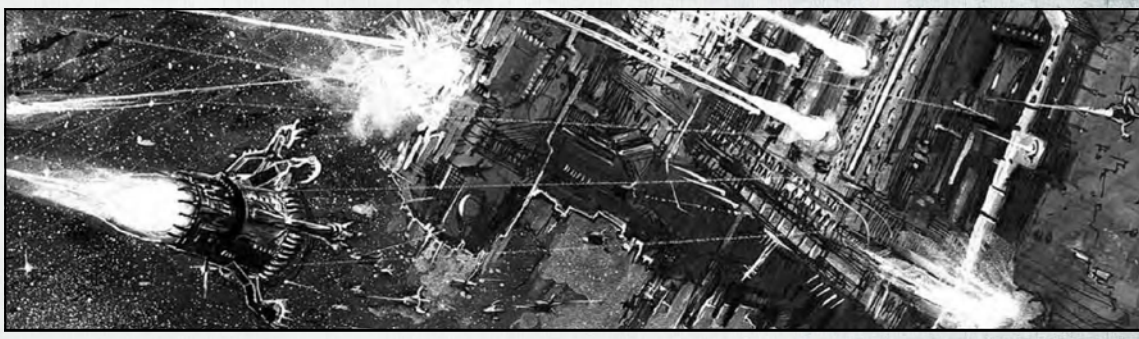
Boarding torpedoes are launched like ordinary torpedoes and ships that can carry them are noted in the fleet lists. It is not possible to launch ordinary torpedoes and boarding torpedoes from a ship in the same turn. Unlike ordinary torpedoes, boarding torpedoes can make a single 45° turn at the start of every Ordnance Phase, measured from the centre of the marker.

They cannot turn 45° in the same turn they are launched. They may elect to ignore hulks.

If boarding torpedoes move into contact with a ship's base, they attack just like ordinary torpedoes (roll for turrets and to hit). Each one that hits makes a Hit-and-Run attack in the Ordnance Phase rather than inflicting a point of damage. Hit-and-Run attacks are discussed in the End Phase section.

When boarding torpedoes come in contact with any other torpedoes except other friendly boarding torpedoes, they will be removed as normal.

Boarding torpedoes do not attack friendly ships (including hulks) they come in contact with, nor are they removed by friendly fighters in contact.



ATTACK CRAFT

Attack craft are launched from a ship's launch bays and may include any mix of fighters, bombers or assault boats. In combat, they are launched to assist their mother ship or make long range strikes against the enemy.

Attack craft vary in size from sleek one-man fighters to lumbering heavy bombers. Attack craft make difficult targets for warships: their small size and high speed enables them to evade the worst fire. However, all attack craft have an extremely limited endurance and can only operate away from their mothership for a short time before they must return to rearm and refuel.

Attack craft are represented by 20 mm square markers.

Attack Craft Rules

Attack craft are launched from a ship's launch bays and may include fighters, bombers or assault boats. Launch bays are rated by the number of squadrons they can launch at once, for example a Dictator class cruiser with four bays can launch four squadrons. Each squadron is represented by a single marker.

At the time of launch, the player may select which attack craft to use from amongst those available to his ship. The launch could include fighters and bombers, or be made exclusively of one type. Each type is represented by a different marker.

Unlike torpedoes, attack craft can turn freely and move in any direction, up to the distance indicated by their speed on the ship's profile.

Any attack craft that come into contact with enemy Ordnance markers or ships, or Fighters coming in contact with any torpedo marker, must attack as explained in their relevant sections that follow. They are assumed to be able to avoid or ignore closer targets or obstructions unless the course of their movement unavoidably brings them in contact, such as Blast Markers, other ordnance or celestial phenomena.

Attack craft can ignore any targets they are not actually in contact with, but they cannot "fly through" enemy ship bases to attack a desired target behind them. However, attack craft can choose to target vessels with small bases "hiding" inside the footprint of a large ship base as long as the attack craft actually have the range to reach the smaller base (this is the only manner in which attack craft may ignore the first ship's base they come in contact with). Torpedoes still behave normally and cannot select targets in this manner (this includes boarding torpedoes or any other "special" torpedo type). Ships with bases stacked in this manner may mass turrets against ordnance as described in the relevant section.

When attacking ships, an assault boat or bomber wave that destroys a ship expends the entire wave to do so and is removed, even if individual markers have not yet rolled their attacks.

TURRETS

Ordnance Defences

Most fighting ships mount numerous weapon systems and turrets for shooting down torpedoes and attack craft during their final attack run. A ship's main armament is simply too huge and slow to track ordnance at such close ranges. However turrets will fire immediately when Ordnance touches the ship's base.

Vs Torpedo salvoes: Roll a D6 for each turret: each dice that scores a 4, 5 or 6 reduces the salvo's strength by 1.

Vs Attack craft squadrons: Roll a D6 for each turret: each dice that scores a 4, 5 or 6 destroys one squadron.

A ship's turrets can fire against every torpedo salvo that attacks it in an Ordnance Phase. Alternatively the turrets may fire at every attack craft wave that attacks it in an Ordnance Phase. Note that turrets can be used to defend against torpedoes or attack craft but not both in the same phase. This makes it possible to overwhelm a target with combined attacks.

Massing turrets

Ships in base contact may mass turrets together, each increasing the turret strength of a ship under attack by 1. Regardless of how many ships are in base contact with each other, no single ship can mass turrets with more than three others, providing a maximum of +3 dice when rolling turrets. The ships that mass turrets with a ship under attack take on the same ordnance restrictions as the ship under attack, such as using turrets to defend against either attack craft or torpedoes (not both) in a given Ordnance Phase. Only the ship actually being attacked can apply its own turret value as a negative modifier to bomber attack dice rolls. Ships that are braced can mass turrets and have turrets from other ships massed to defend it. Ships that are crippled cannot mass turrets but can have turrets from other ships massed to defend it.

A ship with 0 turret strength (such as Eldar or hulked vessels) cannot offer a bonus to massed turrets, but may itself benefit from massed turrets from a ship with turret strength 1 or more. This applies both to ships desiring to defend a friendly hulk or a fleet defending an allied Eldar vessel.

No more than one ship can be moved at a time for any reason; ships will only be able to benefit from massed turrets after or before the Movement Phase is complete but not during. This does not affect how and in what order ships escorted by CAP are moved. An extremely unusual circumstance may occur where a ship extremely near to but not actually touching an enemy ordnance marker has a friendly ship move in base contact with it while it simultaneously contacts the ordnance marker. In this and ONLY this case can it then mass turrets while moving!

FIGHTERS

Fighters are small, fast and extremely agile. They are only armed with weapons suitable for destroying ordnance, including other attack craft. In combat, the fighter's job is to intercept enemy ordnance and protect the vulnerable bombers and assault craft on their way to and from their target.

Fighter Rules

Fighter attacks have the following effects when they come into contact:

Vs Ordnance Markers: The defenders are scattered or destroyed in the fighting. The victorious fighters return to their mother ship for rearming and refuelling. Remove both the defending and attacking markers from play. Fighters must always interact with ordnance they come in contact with for any reason. This includes attack craft that behave as fighters but fulfil other roles, such as Space Marine Thunderhawks or Ork fighta-bommas. Fighters ignore friendly ordnance, but will destroy any torpedoes, unless otherwise noted (e.g. friendly boarding torpedoes).

Vs Ships. The fighter squadron's puny weapons make no impression on the ship at all, but they steer clear of the ship's turret defences. Leave the Squadron marker in play. Fighters in base contact with friendly ships may move with them to screen against enemy ordnance. If they do so, they go on Combat Air Patrol.

> ***'Blessed be the coruscating plasma of the engine room, Spiritus Machina protect us from thy burning doom. Harness unto our will the power of light, Let conduit and coil work alright.'***
>
> *– Catechism of the Engin-near*

COMBAT AIR PATROL (CAP)

Fighters in base contact with friendly ships may elect to screen them against enemy ordnance. If they choose to do so, they go on Combat Air Patrol (CAP).

One or more fighter markers on CAP move with its ship in the Movement Phase (thus remaining in base contact), but it may NOT then move in the Ordnance Phase. In other words, no double moves. Fighters on CAP then stay on CAP for that turn unless removed. If when doing so they move farther than the attack craft can move normally in a single Ordnance Phase (such as 20 cm Thunderhawks escorting a Cobra that moves 30 cm), they then cannot move in the opposing player's Ordnance Phase as well, though they are still capable of defending the ship they are in base contact with normally.

An ordnance marker or wave is considered to move with the ship it is escorting and will protect the ship against enemy ordnance it encounters even in the midst of the ship's movement.

Multiple fighters on CAP in base contact with a single ship function as independent markers in all respects and are not a wave. When encountering Blast Markers, roll once per squadron marker. This includes if the ship is subsequently destroyed, at which time the fighter markers roll separately against the effects of the explosion. Any markers that survive subsequently act as separate ordnance markers and may move again in the subsequent Ordnance Phase.

Only fighters and ordnance markers that behave as fighters can be used as CAP. Bombers and attack craft cannot be used as CAP to protect against ramming or Hit-and-Run attacks by other ships the escorted ship encounters in its own Movement Phase. For example, a bomber can't be placed on CAP to escort a cruiser so that it immediately

makes attacks upon an enemy ship the cruiser moves in base contact with. This includes resilient bombers such as Mantas.

Multi-role ordnance markers that can still act as fighters on CAP are capable of attacking ships (such as Fighta-Bommas and Thunderhawks) can only attack ships during the Ordnance Phase unless an attacking ship moves into contact with them during the enemy's Movement Phase. They may not otherwise attack a ship until they leave CAP first. See the following two examples:

An Ork Terror Ship with two fighta-bommas in base contact serving as CAP rams and/or boards an Imperial cruiser. The fighta-bommas it dragged along in the course of its movement do not automatically attack the Imperial cruiser as well but must wait until the Ordnance Phase, and even then may only do so if the attacking ship ends its movement in base contact with the target vessel because attack craft that escort a ship in the Movement Phase cannot also move in the Ordnance Phase. If engaged in a boarding action and the Terror Ship ends its movement in base contact with the Imperial cruiser, the fighta-bommas may attack it in the Ordnance Phase before the boarding action takes place in the End Phase.

An Imperial cruiser rams and/or boards an Ork Terror Ship that has two fighta-bommas in base contact serving as CAP. In this case the Imperial cruiser must follow all rules for moving in contact with enemy ordnance. After resolving the ram attack (if successful), the fighta-bommas immediately attack the Imperial cruiser and are removed. If engaged in a boarding action and the Imperial cruiser ends its movement in base contact with the Terror Ship, the fighta-bommas still resolve their attack immediately, before the boarding action takes place in the End Phase.

Note: The same example would apply for other multi-role attack craft that behave as fighters on CAP, such as Thunderhawks. Note that because the markers are not in a wave, if a ship is destroyed by markers in CAP, no further markers are lost to attacking the destroyed ship.

Fighters and attack craft that behave as fighters can, at any time in their normal movement, be placed on a friendly ship as CAP. However, only these types of attack craft can behave as CAP. Fighter-type attack craft must be split from attack craft in a mixed wave of ordnance that don't have the fighter rule before they can subsequently serve as CAP.

There are only two situations where fighters can leave CAP excluding their destruction.

1. At the beginning of the owning player's Movement Phase.

2. During the owning player's part of their opponent's Ordnance Phase. Note: If the attack craft on CAP is resilient, it still moves with the ship even if it has made a save.

Fighters on CAP and Other Friendly Attack Craft: It is possible to defend friendly attack craft by putting them within the perimeter of a ship's base that has fighters on CAP. Note: If enemy fighters intercept attack craft that are 'hiding' on a ship's base in this manner, they will not be repelled by turrets.

Fighters on CAP don't attack torpedoes or mines being launched from a friendly ship it is protecting or from friendly ships in base contact including when launching a massed torpedo salvo. However, they will defend against torpedoes and enemy mines in any other instance.

Resilient attack craft such as Manta bombers and Thunderhawks that end their movement in base contact with a ship escorted by CAP (meaning they are already in base contact with a ship when stopped by the fighter), use their 4+ save to survive the attack and subsequently survive against turrets may no longer move or attack other ordnance markers. However, they may complete their attack run against the target vessel normally as long as they do not have to move any more to do so. For example, two Mantas attack an Ork Terror Ship with a fighta-bomma in base contact serving as CAP.

TURRET SUPPRESSION

Each fighter in a wave of bombers actually attacking a ship will add +1 attack to the **total** attack run of the wave, regardless of whether they are shot down by turrets or not. The maximum number of bonus attacks that can be added in this way cannot exceed the number of surviving bombers in the wave. There must be at least one surviving bomber in the wave after turret fire to gain these bonus attacks, and fighters are removed before any other type of ordnance. Fighters that never made it because they were intercepted by defending fighters (even those on CAP) don't add to this suppression bonus. See the following examples:

An Emperor battleship (foolishly) launches a single wave of three bombers and five fighters against a Devastation cruiser with three turrets and no CAP. The Devastation's turrets roll 4, 5, 6 to knock down three fighters. The three bombers now each roll 1D6-3 (minimum zero) attacks regardless of whether or not any of the fighters survived against turrets. Now only three of the five fighters that escorted the bombers provide an additional +1 attack because there are only three bombers in the wave, for a single total addition of +3 attacks.

An Emperor battleship launches a single wave of four bombers and four fighters against a Devastation cruiser with three turrets and no CAP. The Devastation's turrets roll 4, 5, 6 to knock down three fighters. The four bombers now each roll 1D6-3 (minimum zero) attacks regardless of whether or not any of the fighters survived against turrets. Now all four of the fighters that escorted the bombers provide an additional +1 attack because there are four bombers in the wave, for a single total addition of +4 attacks.

BOMBERS

Bombers are slower, heavier craft with destructive anti-ship weapons. Though vulnerable to enemy fighters, bombers can be a serious threat to ships.

Bomber Rules

Bomber attacks have the following effects when they move into contact:

Vs Enemy Fighters: The fighters quickly eliminate the lumbering bombers before returning to their mother ship for rearming and refuelling. Remove the defending and attacking markers from play.

Vs Other Ordnance Markers: The bombers succeed in getting out of the way but nothing more. Leave both markers in play. These include bombers with a 4+ save.

Vs Enemy Ships: The bombers make an attack run on the ship. Make D6 rolls to hit against the ship's lowest Armour value for each attacking bomber squadron. The number of attacks the squadron makes reduces by one for each turret on the ship. Remove the Squadron markers once the attack has been made.

Turrets always reduce bomber attack runs, even if they have been used to defend against torpedoes and thus cannot be used against attack craft.

Ships massing turrets with the one under attack do not affect this number.

For example, a wave of two bomber squadrons attack a Murder class cruiser that has two turrets. The cruiser gets two dice rolls to shoot at the incoming bombers with, and any that survive will make D6-2 attacks and then be removed from play.

TORPEDO BOMBERS

Torpedo bombers are ordinary bombers reconfigured to carry a payload of (relatively) small anti-ship torpedoes. This gives them the ability to stand off from their target at greater range and launch an attack.

Launching

Torpedo bomber squadrons are launched just like other attack craft squadrons, they are simply differently armed. Torpedo bombers have a speed of 20 cm and count as bombers for interception purposes.

Attacks

A torpedo bomber squadron can be replaced with a Strength 2 torpedo salvo at the beginning of any ordnance phase. The torpedoes function according to the standard torpedo rules once launched but have a more limited fuel supply, so they are removed at the end of the same ordnance phase they are launched in. A wave of torpedo bombers can combine their salvoes together in the same way as a squadron of ships.

Torpedo bombers may not launch their torpedoes (convert to a torpedo salvo marker) in the same Ordnance Phase they were launched from their parent carrier. This includes if they make contact with their target in the same turn they were launched. In such cases, use normal bombers instead if desiring to attack an enemy ship in close range.

ASSAULT BOATS

Assault boats are designed to clamp on to a target vessel and breach its outer hull, allowing squads of elite warriors to storm on board. Once aboard, the boarders plant demolition charges, massacre the crew, poison the air and generally cause as much damage as possible before retreating.

Assault Boat Rules

Assault boat attacks have the following effects when they move into contact:

Vs Enemy Fighters: The fighters overwhelm the assault boats and then return to their mother ship for rearming and refuelling. Remove both the defending and attacking markers from play.

Vs Other Ordnance Markers: The assault boats simply manoeuvre around the enemy ordnance. Leave both markers in play.

Vs Enemy Ships: The assault boats make an attack run on the ship. Immediately conduct a Hit-and-Run raid against the ship for each assault boat squadron. Hit-and-Run raids are detailed in the End Phase section. After the attack the assault boats return to their ship to be reloaded with troops and refuelled. Remove the Squadron marker from play when the attack is made in the End Phase.

LAUNCHING WAVES OF ATTACK CRAFT

When a ship launches its attack craft squadrons it can despatch them as individual squadrons or combine them into waves of squadrons. Regardless of the choice, attack craft interactions are always resolved marker to marker.

To show a wave place the Attack Craft markers so they're touching (they cannot be stacked) and keep them together as they move. If a wave contains attack craft moving at different speeds, they move at the speed of the slowest.

Attack craft waves must be assembled into the smallest circumference possible, such as a block of four, two rows of three, etc. For example, a single wave of eight ordnance markers cannot be stretched out into a single-file line eight markers long.

If enemy fighters/turrets attack a wave they must remove any fighter squadrons before moving onto the bigger ships. You can use this rule to put your wave together so that it contains fighters who will defend the vulnerable bombers or assault boats, sacrificing themselves to save the bigger vessels.

Waves of attack craft can split up during their move if you wish. However, once squadrons have split up they may not recombine into waves. A wave may only be formed when the craft are launched from their mother ship.

The greatest benefit of attacking in a wave is that a defending ship's turrets only fire once at the whole wave, so there is a better chance of the ships in the wave surviving the defences than individual squadrons have. On the downside, if a wave of attack craft is hit by long-range gunnery or lances, the whole wave is destroyed. Likewise, if the wave rolls a 6 while moving through Blast Markers, the entire wave is removed. An entire wave is removed after attacking a ship, even if the target is destroyed before all ordnance markers complete their attacks.

RESILIENT ATTACK CRAFT

Some attack craft such as Thunderhawks or Eldar fighters are "resilient", meaning they have a 4+ save against other ordnance.

They can only attempt this save once per Ordnance Phase, regardless of attacking or being attacked.

If they roll a 4+ to remain in play, they have to stop movement where the ordnance interaction took place and cannot move further for that Ordnance Phase, and they lose their 4+ save for the rest of that phase as well (or Movement Phase if save is made while in CAP). In all cases, resilient attack craft that fail to make their save are immediately removed.

Ordnance that use this save and end their movement in contact with an enemy vessel may attack it normally.

Resilient attack craft that behave as fighters must always do so when in contact with other ordnance, even if they may serve another function as well, such as Thunderhawks.

Attack craft that do not function as fighters but have a save against fighter attacks, such as Tau Manta bombers, ignore any other type of ordnance except fighters in the same manner other bombers or assault boats do.

Multiple attacks

Any second interaction in the same Ordnance Phase such as attacking multiple markers in the same phase will cause the marker to be automatically removed, as normal fighters would be were they not resilient. The attacking player always decides the order of the ordnance interaction.

For example, if two Thunderhawks move in contact with two Chaos Swiftdeath fighters, the Space Marine player decides in which order the ordnance interacts. He can decide Thunderhawk #1 removes one fighter, makes its 4+ save and remains in play, then decide Thunderhawk #1 removes the second Swiftdeath, in which case Thunderhawk #1 is automatically removed but Thunderhawk #2 remains in play without using its save and can thus move full distance. Conversely, the Space Marine player may decide to engage the Swiftdeaths one apiece, in which case

both Thunderhawks remain in play if they both make their saves, but both expend their saves for that Ordnance Phase in the process. In this case, both Thunderhawks end their movement where they came in contact with the Swiftdeaths and may not continue to move full distance.

Opposing resilient ordnance

If two markers that both have a 4+ save attack each other and both remain in play by successfully rolling their saves, they stop movement and remain in contact until the next turn's Ordnance Phase. However, if any marker that saves is attacked again in the same phase, it (along with the marker that attacked it) is automatically removed.

Resilient saves in attack craft waves

If a wave containing resilient attack craft attacks or is attacked and a save is made, ordnance markers that make saves may no longer move. However it may be split from the wave to allow the rest of the wave to continue its movement. Attack craft in the wave that were not attacked (and thus didn't use their 4+ save) complete their movement normally.

For example, instead of ignoring it, a wave of four Thunderhawks in the course of their movement attacks a single Ork Fighta-bomma not in base contact with a ship (rules for attacking ships with fighters on CAP remain unchanged). One Thunderhawk attacks the fighta-bomma, removing it. If it rolls its 4+ save it may remain in play, but it must stop where it made contact with the fighta-bomma and not move until the next Ordnance Phase. The remainder of the Thunderhawk wave may continue to move its full distance. In essence, the Thunderhawk marker that engaged the fighta-bomma peeled off the wave to engage it while the rest of the wave continued on to its target.

THE END PHASE

During the End Phase, players sort out any events which have been set into action during the turn, such as repairing any critical damage. Some of the Blast Markers are removed from the table, as the energy and debris they represent is naturally dissipated. The End Phase is also a good opportunity to tidy up the table top, count victory points, check up on scenario victory conditions and break out the biscuits. The End Phase works in the following order:

1. Conduct Boarding Actions/ Hit-and-Run attacks

2. Attempt to repair critical damage.

3. Remove D6 Blast Markers from the tabletop.

DAMAGE CONTROL

Both players can attempt to repair critical damage during the End Phase. Repair crews will be working continuously of course, welding up hull breaches, re-routing power conduits, putting out fires and generally trying to keep the ship functioning. To represent this, capital ships roll 1D6 per Damage point remaining in the End Phase. Each roll of a 6 enables the ship to repair one critically damaged system or put out one fire. If the ship has any Blast Markers in contact, the player only rolls half as many dice as usual (rounding up).

BLAST MARKER REMOVAL

With time, the debris and shock waves represented by Blast Markers will dissipate sufficiently to be of no further impediment to ships or their weapons. To represent this, the player whose turn it is rolls a D6 and removes that many Blast Markers. Blast Markers in contact with ships' bases may not be removed, but otherwise the player is free to choose which ones will go.

'A ship's a fool to fight a space station.'

– Attr. Lord Admiral Ravensburg

BOARDING ACTIONS

Boarding actions are bloody, desperate battles between ships at very close range. The boarding vessel manoeuvres close to an enemy ship and sends a wave of armed crewmen across via teleporters, shuttles, life pods and in pressure suits to grab a foothold on the outer hull of the enemy vessel. The attackers then blow breaches in the hull and swarm in to try to overcome the defending crew in vicious firefights and hand-to-hand combat. Boarding actions are dangerous for both sides: even a victorious ship may suffer critical damage in the fighting or a prospective victim may explode with catastrophic results.

Moving in for Boarding

A ship may attempt a boarding action if it's in base contact with an enemy vessel in the End Phase before damage control has been attempted or Blast Markers are removed. If a vessel is going to attempt a boarding action it must be declared in the Movement Phase when contact is made. Vessels attempting to board an enemy ship may not fire weapons or launch ordnance in the same turn because their crews are too busy participating in the boarding action.

Under no circumstances may a player initiate a ship-to-ship boarding action during the enemy's turn, though it may defend against an enemy boarding action normally.

Boarding Value

A ship's boarding value is equal to the number of damage points it has remaining, modified by any special rules that apply to your ship or race, such as the Mark of Khorne doubling its boarding value, or Tau Kor'vattra vessels which have their value cut in half.

The ship being boarded then adds its number of remaining turrets.

This is the final boarding value which translates directly to the corresponding modifier in the table on the next page (i.e. this is this value, that grants the +1, +2, +3, or +4 boarding modifier with an asterisk *).

Resolving the Boarding Action

To resolve the action, both players roll a D6 and add the appropriate modifiers from the following list.

BOARDING MODIFIERS	
Condition	**Modifier**
Own boarding value higher*	+1
Own boarding value is twice the enemy's*	+2
Own boarding value is three times the enemy's*	+3
Own boarding value is four or more times the enemy's*	+4
Enemy ship has Blast Markers in direct base contact	+1
Enemy ship is crippled	+2
Enemy ship is on special orders	+1
Orks or Chaos	+1
Space Marines	+2

**Only apply highest modifier.*

Boarding Action Results

The player with the highest total score is the winner. The losing ship suffers 1 point of damage for each point it lost the combat by. The total score is NOT limited to 6 and can potentially result in a roll of up to 12 or more.

There is also a chance of each ship suffering a critical hit during the fighting as shown on the table below. If a ship is reduced to 0 damage by a boarding action do not roll on the Catastrophic Damage table, instead the ship automatically becomes a drifting hulk (exception: if a ship is reduced to 0 damage by a critical hit, roll for catastrophic damage as normal). Ships which survive being boarded may move off normally in their next Movement Phase.

RESULTS TABLE		
Difference in scores	**Boarding result**	**Winners/Losers Score Critical Hit on**
1	Stalemate	5+/5+
2	Heavy Fighting	4+/5+
3	Driven Back	3+/6+
4	Stormed	2+/6+
5+	Overwhelmed	Auto/None

For example the Hyperion *(remaining damage 3) is boarded by the* Plagueclaw *(remaining damage 6). After modifiers, the* Plagueclaw *scores a 6 while the* Hyperion *scores a 4. The* Hyperion *has lost by 2 so it loses 2 damage points. In addition, the result of Heavy Fighting means that the* Hyperion *will suffer a critical hit on a D6 roll of 4, 5 or 6. The* Plagueclaw *will also suffer a critical hit on a D6 roll of 5 or 6.*

Drawn Combats

If both players have the same score after modifiers the combat is a draw. In this case the ships grapple together and continue fighting in each subsequent End Phase. Neither ship may move, shoot or launch ordnance until the boarding action results in one of the ships being reduced to zero damage. The victorious (i.e. surviving) ship can then move off and continue to fight in its next turn.

Multi-Ship Boarding Actions

When several ships attempt to board an enemy vessel the attacking player may elect to let them board together or separately.

If they board together, add their boarding values together and a single dice roll is made to work out the boarding results.

Race and other modifiers are only counted once, so if both a Chaos Murder class cruiser with a normal Chaos crew and a Devastation class cruiser with a Chaos Space Marine crew boarded an Imperial cruiser together they would get a +2 race modifier, the +1 from being Chaos being superseded by the +2 for having a ship with a Chaos Space Marine crew. This is in addition to the +1 for the two ships having a higher boarding value than the ship being boarded (it is not twice the boarding value because the ship being boarded gets to count its turret value) for a total of +3 for the Chaos player.

This is also not taking into account whether or not any of the ships have any other modifiers that must be added or subtracted into the total or effects that either halve or double their respective boarding values, whether or not ships are braced, crippled, etc.

Any damage points inflicted are distributed amongst the attacking ships by the attacker himself, but the chance of critical damage being caused applies to each and every ship attempting to board.

In the case of separate boarding, roll for each capital ship or escort squadron separately.

In this case the defending ship must roll separately against each attacker and the damage it takes is cumulative, but each attacking ship or escort squadron must modify its boarding roll based only on its own value, not on the values of the other ships and escort squadrons it is combining with in the action.

Escorts Ships Boarding
Escort ships can attempt to board other ships using the rules above. They can even attempt to board capital ships if they wish, although escorts will only stand a chance against a badly damaged vessel. Remember that when escorts are boarding or being boarded a successful critical hit will destroy them, so it is quite possible for an escort to win a boarding action but be destroyed in the process.

HIT-AND-RUN ATTACKS

In a Hit-and-Run attack, a select force of warriors is dispatched to attempt to attack a specific location on an enemy ship, planting charges to take it out of action. An enemy vessel can be left helpless from damage inflicted by a Hit-and-Run raid, leaving it to be finished off with conventional gunnery at leisure.

Hit-and-Run attacks can be made by assault craft and torpedoes, or by ships teleporting troops onto nearby enemy vessels.

Ships that cannot be boarded (such as Chaos vessels with the Mark of Nurgle) are NOT automatically immune from Hit-and-Run attacks.

Fleets that benefit from a +1 bonus to their Hit-and-Run attacks roll a 2 to 7 on a D6, meaning they will never fail to inflict some critical damage on their target.

Assault Boats
Assault boats attack by clamping onto the outer hull of an enemy ship and then cutting their way through to allow their crew to attack inside. Assault boats can be launched just like any other ordnance from flight decks and move 30 cm in any direction in every Ordnance Phase. The ships which may be loaded with assault boats are noted in the fleet lists.

If an assault boat marker comes into contact with a ship's base, it can be shot at by turrets in the same way as bombers. If it survives, it makes a single Hit-and-Run attack in the Ordnance Phase and is then removed from play.

Boarding Torpedoes
Boarding torpedoes carry dedicated assault troops and can be partially guided while in flight. They punch through the armour of the target, disgorging their cargo of warriors into the midst of the enemy. If boarding torpedoes move into contact with a ship's base, they attack just like ordinary torpedoes (roll for turrets and to hit). Each one that hits makes a Hit-and-Run attack in the Ordnance Phase rather than inflicting a point of damage.

Teleport Attacks
Ships which are close to their enemies may attempt to initiate a small-scale boarding action using their teleporters. However, active shields interfere with the teleport beams, so such attacks can only be made against an enemy whose shields have been knocked down. Only the largest ships have the teleport capacity to move enough men onto their target to inflict the necessary amount of damage and such teleport attacks require prodigious amounts of energy from the ship's reactors.

A ship may make a teleport attack in the End Phase against an enemy ship, that has no shields, within 10 cm. Teleport attacks can be conducted by capital ships that are on *Lock On* or *Reload Ordnance* special orders. All other special orders preclude the use of teleport attacks. Necron Portals are not teleport attacks in the normal manner.

Crippled ships may not make teleport attacks.

As you can imagine, it takes a lot more manpower to disable the weapons batteries of a battleship than it does a destroyer's. Therefore, escorts and defences with only one damage point left cannot make teleport attacks. In addition, a ship can't make a teleport attack against a target with more hits at that point in the battle than it has itself.

A ship may only make one teleport attack each turn. For each teleport attack make one Hit-and-Run attack against the target ship.

Resolving a Hit-and-Run Attack
To resolve a Hit-and-Run attack, simply roll a D6. On a score of a 1 the attack has failed, on a 2 or more look up the score on the Critical Hits table and apply the result immediately. This critical damage can be repaired as normal.

Due to their much smaller size, escorts do not have a specialized critical table. Instead, all Hit-and-Run attacks (including assault boats and teleport attacks) destroy escorts on a roll of 4+ as opposed to 2+.

Fleets that enjoy a bonus to their Hit-and-Run rolls still benefit from this bonus, needing a 3+ to succeed in Hit-and-Run attacks against escorts. Fleets that enjoy a -1 modifier to enemy Hit-and-Run attacks benefit in this regard as well, meaning Hit-and-Run attacks require a 5+ to destroy their escorts. Anything that rolls 2D6 and adds the result during a Hit-and-Run attack still do so, such as Dark Eldar Impalers, in which case the added result still normally (before any modifiers) destroys an escort on a roll of 4+, though they must roll 2D6 twice and take the lowest roll against Tyranids.

Remember that an escort which has suffered critical damage is automatically destroyed, though they can *Brace for Impact!* to counter the effects of the attack.

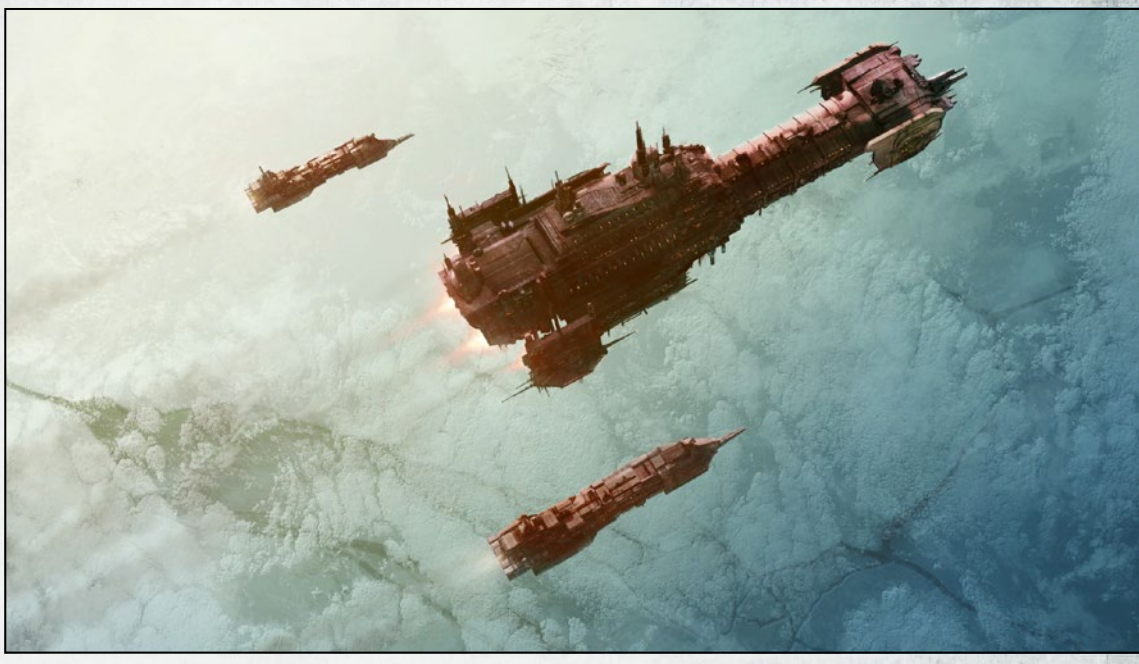
SQUADRONS

Small ships, such as escorts, stand little chance of damaging larger ships on their own, so they are normally grouped into squadrons. A squadron will manoeuvre closely together and mass its weaponry to attack more effectively. Although cruisers and battleships normally operate alone, they can also be grouped into squadrons for a major battle, where their awesome firepower can be put to good effect.

Squadrons may have all sorts of different names, such as formations, flotillas, packs, groups or forces, but they all work in the same way.

'Heave the line to and prepare for a fight, battle squadrons Secundus and Veritas form up on my port quarter. By the Emperor we've got them this time!'

– Admiral Grafton at the battle of Arunthal.



SQUADRON COMMAND CHECKS

Using squadrons enables the Admiral of the Fleet to give orders to groups of ships at the same time, instead of having to relay orders to each ship in his fleet individually. In Battlefleet Gothic this translates into the highly desirable advantage of only having to make a single Leadership test to place a whole squadron on special orders. Also, if the squadron is made up of capital ships with different Leadership values, the highest surviving Leadership value in the squadron is used for taking Command checks. Remember, in the case of escorts each squadron has a single Leadership value.

Normal Command check modifiers for enemy contacts and for being under fire apply to squadrons, even if only some of the ships in a squadron have Blast Markers in base contact.

Vessels in a squadron are all equally affected by special orders taken by **any one ship** in the squadron.

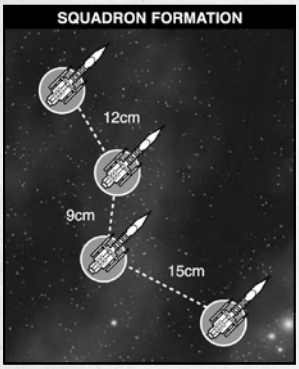
For instance, when on *All Ahead Full*, only one roll is made to determine additional move distance for all the vessels in the squadron. As is true for individual ships, squadrons can only undergo one special order per turn (including *Brace For Impact!*, which replaces any special order currently in effect). All ships in a squadron are affected by *Brace For Impact!*, not merely the ship actually taking fire. This includes capital ship squadrons!

SQUADRON COMPOSITION

Capital ship squadrons must be deployed and declared as such before the start of the game. Escort squadrons are selected as squadrons from the fleet list at the time you pick your forces. Unless described otherwise in its fleet list, an escort squadron can contain up to six ships. The ships in a squadron can be of different classes as long as they are all of the same type. For example, you could form an escort squadron of three Cobra class destroyers and three Firestorm class frigates. In practice, it's generally a good idea to form squadrons from ships of the same class because it makes manoeuvring and choosing special orders easier – but it's all a matter of taste.

SQUADRON FORMATION

To count as being part of a squadron, ships must remain close to at least one other vessel from the same squadron during the battle. Each ship must be no more than 15 cm from another ship in the squadron so that the whole squadron forms a continuous chain with 'links' of up to 15 cm between each ship.

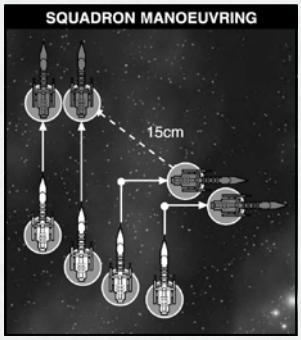


Note that as the ships above are all within 15 cm of another ship in the squadron, they are all in formation.

Sometimes ships will drop out of formation due to bad manoeuvring, ships being destroyed, etc. If a ship drops out of formation it no longer counts as part of the squadron until it moves back to within 15 cm of another ship in the squadron. A ship which is out of formation must be moved back into formation as soon as possible, and it may not use special orders the squadron uses until it has done so.

Manoeuvring Squadrons

Individual ships within a squadron can manoeuvre freely within the standard movement rules, as long as they stay in formation. If any ship in an escort squadron moves off the table edge, the entire squadron must immediately and in subsequent turns only attempt to disengage.



In the example above, the escorts in the squadron have manoeuvred individually so that two have made a turn to starboard while the other two have continued moving straight ahead. Note that they are still in formation at the end of their move.

SHOOTING AT SQUADRONS

When a squadron is targeted it is quite likely that some of its vessels will present different target aspects to the attacker. For example, some ships in the squadron may be closing targets while others are abeam.

In this case, the attacker can select which category of targets to go after but he cannot score hits on anything that is harder to target than the category he chose. For example, if a squadron has two ships closing and two abeam and the attacker fires at them as if they were all closing targets he can only score hits on the two closing ships.

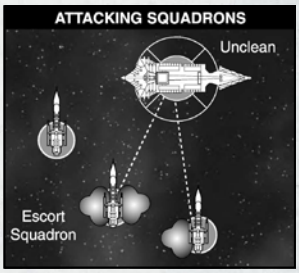
The only way to shoot at a more distant member of a squadron is with gunnery weapons if the ship has more left modifiers on the gunnery table; or has weaker armour where only the hits that could not hurt the closest target hit it. If because of weaker armour, armour ignoring weapons cannot exploit this rule.

Allocating Hits against Squadrons

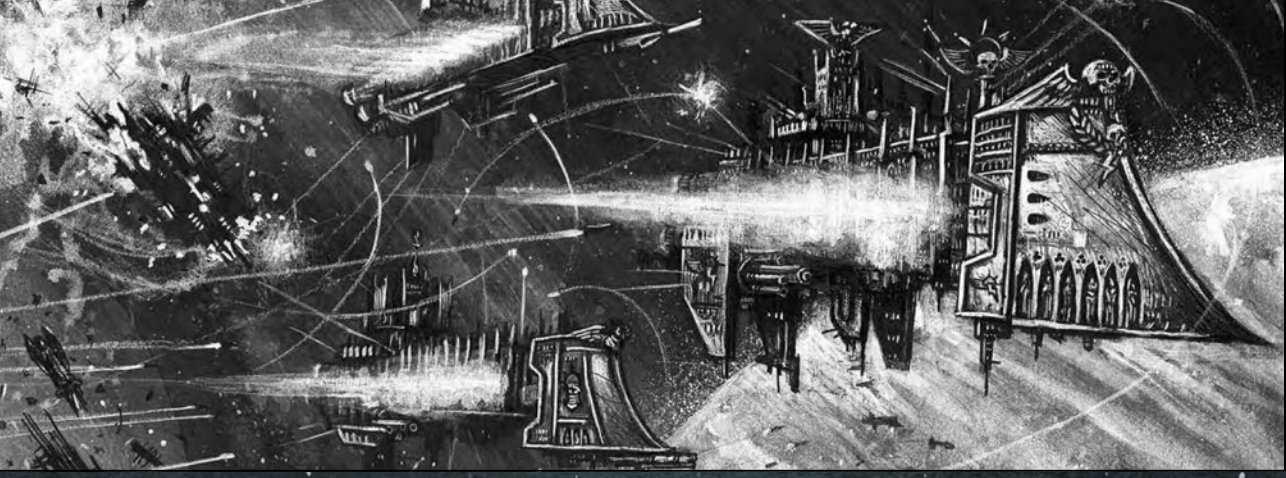
When a squadron is fired upon, any hits scored are allocated to the nearest eligible ship in the squadron until it is destroyed, then the next nearest eligible ship takes the remaining hits and so on. This only applies to shooting and does not apply to ordnance attacks, boarding actions, etc.

A leadership test cannot be taken to pick out individual ships within a squadron. This does not apply to ordnance attacks.

Hits taken by a squadron are only distributed among the vessels that actually took fire (such as in range and fire arc), regardless of how many hits the squadron actually took, though it affects ALL escorts within range and fire arc. This also applies to hits taken by an escort squadron negotiating an asteroid field, as well as hits delivered by ordnance or Nova Cannon, as those hits (regardless of how many) affect only the vessels directly contacted by the ordnance markers or Nova Cannon blast template. For example, if an escort squadron takes a total of ten hits from gunnery fire but only three escorts were actually in range and fire arc, no more than three escorts can be destroyed.



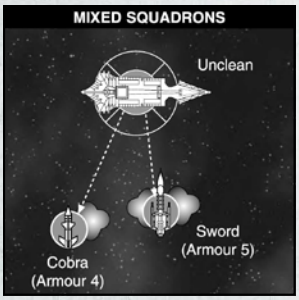
In the example above, the Chaos cruiser Unclean *targets an Imperial frigate squadron and scores 3 hits. The first hit knocks down the shield of the nearest frigate within the* Unclean's *fire arc and the second hit destroys it. The third hit is taken on the next nearest frigate, knocking down its shield. Note that there is a frigate closer to the* Unclean *than the one which was destroyed but it is out of the* Unclean's *fire arc and so cannot be hit.*



+++ASSUME.ATTACK.FORMATION.DELTA+++READY.TORPEDOES+++FIRE.SEQUENCE.DESTRUCTUS+++LAUNCH.450.5.FROM.ATTACK.SIGNAL+++LAUNCH.TRAJECTORY.45/67/90.5%+++LET.OUR.WEAPONS.BRING.THE.EMPEROR'S.VENGEANCE+++

Different Armour values

A mixed squadron of ships may include vessels with different armour values, or armour may vary because the ships have differing values on their front and sides. When attacking a squadron with a mix of armour values find out what the lowest armour is before rolling the dice. Any dice which equal or beat the lowest armour in the squadron will score hits: allocate the dice one at a time, starting with the lowest rolls against the nearest targets they can affect and work your way up.



In this example, the Unclean *is firing on a mixed squadron including a Sword class frigate and a Cobra class destroyer. Rolling three dice, it scores a 4, 5 and 6. The 4 is good enough to hit the Cobra and is allocated to it, the 5 and 6 can hit the Sword and both are allocated to that ship as it is a closer target.*

CAPITAL SHIP SQUADRONS

Capital ships in a squadron that are being fired upon to the point that one of the capital ships is destroyed must roll for and apply all critical damage before counting as destroyed. The easiest way to avoid confusion is to roll each D6 critical roll separately while recording damage.

For example, if a squadron of three Dauntless light cruisers is fired upon by a squadron of three Carnage cruisers and takes a total of 13 hits, all critical damage rolls must be made for the first Dauntless before declaring it destroyed. This means if while applying hits one at a time and the first Dauntless rolls a Thrusters Damaged (+1HP) and Engine Room Damaged (+1HP) criticals in the process of being destroyed, there remains a total eight remaining hits to be applied to the next closest Dauntless light cruiser, with shields, Blast Markers, etc. still taking effect normally, for a total of seven HP damage to the second Dauntless, against which it rolls a D6 to check for critical damage while applying hits one at a time (after the shield hit). This means at least one hit would pass to the third Dauntless even if the second rolled no critical damage.

This rule in particular applies to squadrons of ships that do not count critical damage normally and instead take an additional 1HP of damage, such as Ork Roks or Kroot Warspheres.

If a capital ship squadron disengages in its entirety, each capital ship calculates its percentage destroyed for victory points separately and not in the same manner as escorts.

SHOOTING BY SQUADRONS

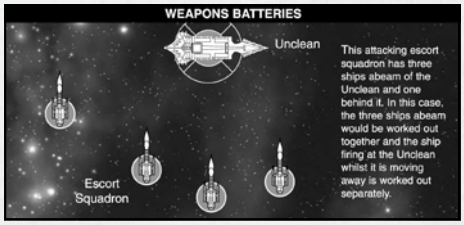
As mentioned earlier, squadrons combine their firing together.

Escort squadrons have their total firepower added up and halved (rounding up) when on special orders that affect weapons strength/ firepower. Capital ships have their firepower/ strength halved individually (rounding up), even if in a squadron. Escort squadrons do not have their weapon strength halved solely because the squadron is crippled (reduced to half its starting number).

When a squadron shoots, it is subject to the normal rules and restrictions for a single ship. So, for example, if a squadron wants to fire at a target other than its closest enemy it must pass a Leadership test to do so. Any ships in the squadron out of range or fire arc of the squadron's primary target may fire on another enemy.

Firing Weapons Batteries

Squadrons firing weapons batteries normally add their firepower together before working out how many dice they roll on the Gunnery chart. However, squadrons firing weapons batteries can throw up a few problems because ships may be in a position to fire at the target ship from different aspects, ranges, etc. Where this occurs calculate the ships' firepower individually.



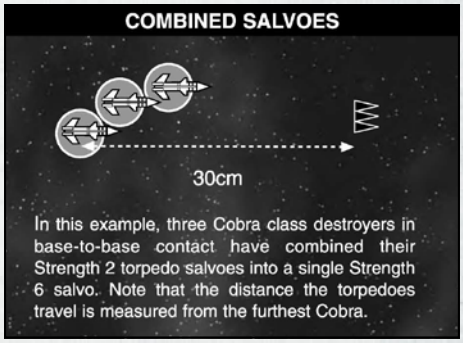
When calculating the ships' firepower individually, this only applies to ships firing at different firing arcs. To clarify the example, if a squadron of five Sword frigates are firing on a cruiser where two are in its rear arc and three are in its beam arc, the two escorts behind it would calculate their firepower together as Moving Away, and the three on the ship's beam would calculate their firepower together as Abeam. Then these two sums are added together before making the dice roll.

Launching Ordnance

Ships in a squadron launch ordnance individually unless they are in base-to-base contact. Any ships in base-to-base contact with other ships from the squadron can opt to combine their ordnance together into a bigger attack craft wave or torpedo salvo.

When launching a combined salvo from a squadron the salvo must be in ALL of the ships appropriate firing arcs and its furthermost edge at the limit of its speed from the furthest ship's stem. All the ships firing a combined salvo must be in base to base contact. Note that some ships (such as Ork Ravagers) cannot for any reason combine salvoes in this manner.

Measure the distance travelled by a combined ordnance attack from the ship furthest from the torpedo's final position, to ensure that it doesn't get a free speed boost due to being part of a combined force.



'Thank the Emperor, I have done my duty.'

– Lord Admiral Ravensburg at the Battle of Gethsemane.

PLANETARY DEFENCES

In certain scenarios, one player may be allowed to select planetary defences as part of their forces, generally to assist in defending a planet against an attacking enemy fleet. All races use some equivalent to planetary defences to form networks of armed satellites and ground installations to keep enemy ships at bay. Planetary defences also include system ships (vessels which have no warp drives and so are incapable of leaving the system they are stationed in), minefields, etc.

Two new unit types are introduced with planetary defences: *satellite* and *ground*.

Satellite units may not move as they are stationed in orbit around a planet or moon, or occasionally in deep space. Their weapons are able to fire all round so they don't worry about fire arcs at all.

Ground units protect planets from spaceships getting close enough to send troops down to the surface. These anti-ship weapons are unable to move because they are concealed in deep underground silos for their protection. Ground units are limited to a single 90° fire arc extending up from the planet's surface.

SPECIAL RULES

Orbital defences or ships that count as defences may be placed in squadrons, with 1HP defences grouped in up to six units and larger defences grouped in up to four. A Ramilies Star Fort cannot squadron with other orbital defences.

Stationary planetary defences may be placed in base contact if desired, but they can never be stacked or have their bases overlap other stationary planetary defences.

When desired, the defender in a scenario may spend up to one-third of his allocated point value on planetary defences, in addition to any planetary defences provided by the specific scenario. This allows for the use of larger planetary defences such as major fleet bases and the like, for which the profile and point cost of an Imperial Blackstone Fortress may be used. However, these additional defences come directly from the points allowed against his or her fleet list.

Stationary defences and vessels used as planetary defences such as Defence Monitors or system ships do not roll for leadership or have a leadership value just as other normal planetary defences do not, with the exception that they reload ordnance (where applicable) on a nominal leadership of 7 unless specifically stated otherwise in their fleet lists or special rules. This means that they cannot take on any special orders except *Reload Ordnance*, though they may also attempt to *Brace For Impact* against this same leadership. They also make all other leadership checks they may have to make against Ld 7, such as for navigating celestial phenomena and for ignoring closest targets.

Ships that are targeted as defences but otherwise are not normally restricted to planetary defences, such as Ork Roks, Kroot Warspheres, etc., are treated as ships and can make Special Orders normally.

When shooting at minefields, treat them as ordnance for purposes of target priority.

Notes: *If a critical hit is rolled which cannot be applied, for example a station with no lances gets a 'Lances damaged' critical hit, apply the next highest critical instead. In this case the station would suffer main armament damage instead. If a station suffers multiple critical hits to the same place they must all be repaired before the location functions again as normal.*

DEFENCES CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	Extra Damage	Result
2-3	+0	**Lances Damaged:** The station's lance array is taken off-line by the hit. The station may not fire until its lance armament has been repaired.
4	+0	**Main Armament Damaged:** Heavy damage silences the station's weapons batteries. They may not fire until it has been repaired.
5	+0	**Ordnance Bays Hit:** The station's ordnance bays are ravaged by explosions. No ordnance may be fired by the station until the bays have been repaired.
6	+1	**Reactors Damaged:** The reactors are damaged, shutting down the power to the defences. Until power is restored the station's shields and turrets are at half Strength.
7	0	**Fire!** Oxygen lines are broken, leading to fires in many compartments. Roll to repair (i.e. extinguish the fire) in the End Phase. If the fire is not put out it causes 1 point of extra damage and keeps burning.
8-9	+1	**Orbit Lost:** The defences' thruster assembly is disabled. The defence falls D6 cm towards the planet's surface in each of its Movement Phases until either the damage is repaired or it hits the planet and is destroyed.
10	+0	**Shields Collapse:** The shield generators overload, leaving the satellite virtually defenceless. The station's shield Strength is reduced to zero and cannot be repaired.
11	+D3	**Hull Breach:** A huge gash is torn in the station's hull, causing massive carnage.
12	+D6	**Bulkhead Collapse:** Explosions rip through the station as a series of pressure doors collapse.

Defences with Multiple Hits

Some large defensive platforms, such as space stations and the huge Blackstone Fortresses, have multiple hits. When it comes to taking damage, these work just like capital ships. They suffer critical hits just like capital ships and get crippled once they have lost half their damage points. If a defence with multiple hits is reduced to 0 damage, roll on the Catastrophic Damage table. However, defences never drift, they always remain in place.

Blast Marker Removal

You remove D6 Blast Markers from each defence with a speed of 0 cm in each End Phase after all other actions in the End Phase. This only applies to stationary defences, not planetary defences that behave as ships (such as monitors or system ships). This also does not apply to ships on standby or ships reduced to 0 cm due to movement effects but otherwise capable of movement.

Warp Rifts

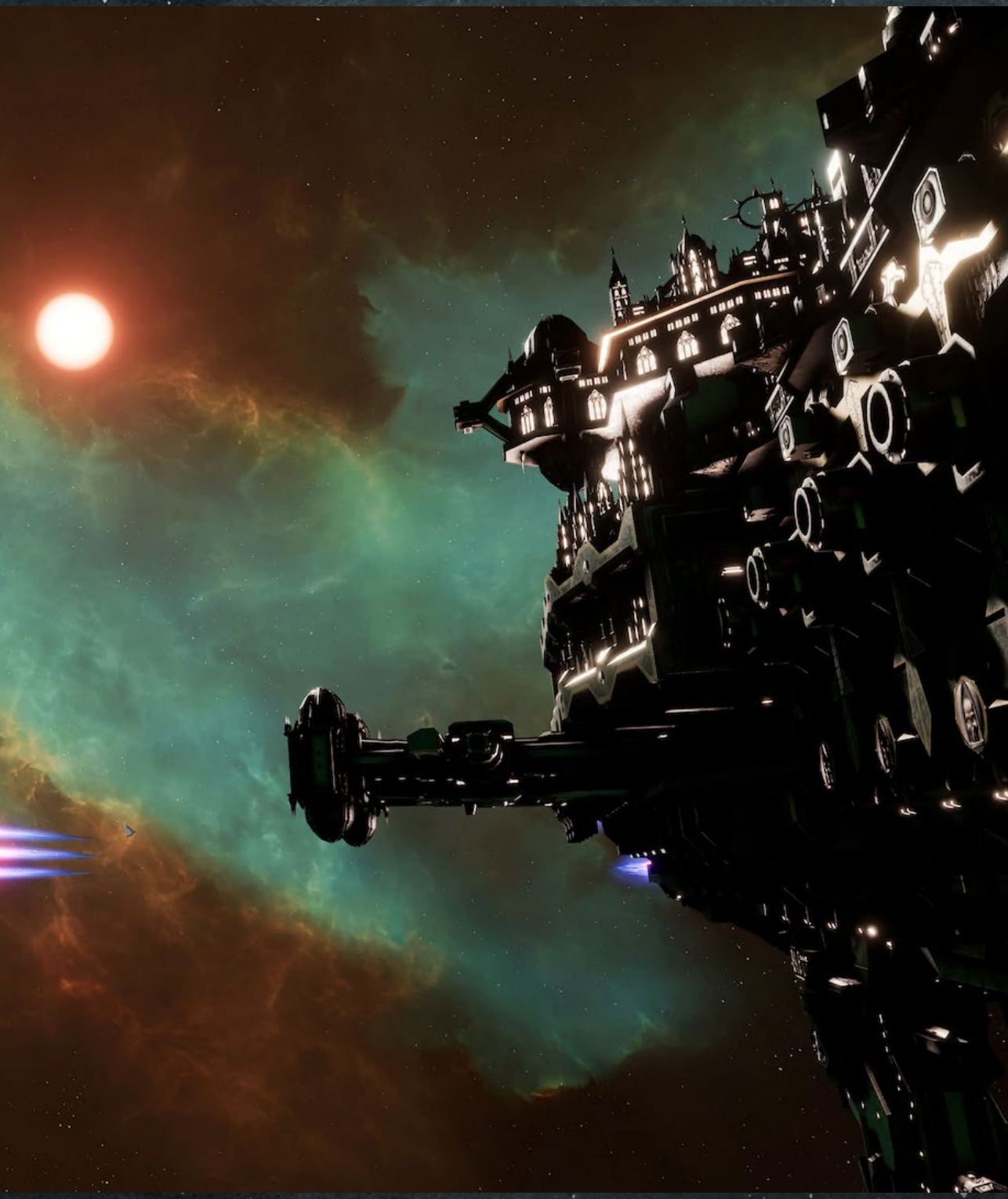
Warp rifts are especially unstable and dangerous forms of celestial phenomena, and planetary defences of any type cannot be placed closer than 30 cm to a warp rift, with all other rules still applying normally. This means if a particular defence must be placed within 15 cm of celestial phenomena, it still must be so placed, and it can't be placed within 30 cm of a warp rift.

THE BATTLEFIELD

In order to fight a battle you will need somewhere to set up your battlefield – any flat, stable area will do. Some people make do with a smooth bit of floor but most use a kitchen or dining table (preferably protected by a cloth or blanket).

By far the best option, if it's available, is to fight over a gaming board made up of sheets of chipboard, plywood or MDF laid over another table. Typically the battlefield should be between 6' to 8' long (around 1.8 metres to 2.4 metres) and 4' to 6' wide (1.2 to 1.8 metres).

You can play on a smaller area quite easily but you'll need to keep the forces that are fighting proportionately smaller to ensure that you've got some room to manoeuvre.



CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

Space, the void, vacuum. Sounds empty, but actually there's all kinds of stuff floating around between the stars. It's not exactly densely packed, of course, but it has its effects on navigation and combat, so, strategy being what it is, this means that battles will usually be fought around and over it. For example, dust clouds and asteroid fields are enough to force a ship to slow down as it passes through the area, making it an ideal spot for an ambush. Equally, capturing or raiding worlds will always be an objective of enemy ships, ensuring that space combat will often happen in close proximity to planets.

Incidentally this section is called *Celestial Phenomena* because terrain simply didn't seem like the right word. Nonetheless this is terrain for space battles and it forms an important part of the game – so don't skimp on it!

So you've got your battlefield, but it's a featureless, empty void. While this might be appropriate if you're in the depths of space it makes for a rather dull battle. Celestial phenomena are an important feature of every battlefield. A good commander will use them to his best advantage during a battle, blocking the enemy's lines of fire, getting his heavy ships into good firing positions and concealing his escorts until they are ready to strike.

Building up a collection of scenery to represent celestial phenomena is an important and enjoyable part of the hobby, as it enhances your games. Most types can be easily represented on the tabletop at minimal cost using sand, pebbles, etc. Beyond this there are almost limitless opportunities for making scenery easily and cheaply. With a little effort you will soon become an expert at constructing planets, moons and other phenomena out of the most mundane of household goods. You can find plenty of examples of home made scenery online and the White Dwarf magazine often contains articles about making scenery and can serve as an invaluable source of ideas and inspiration.

PLACING CELESTIAL PHENOMENA ON THE BATTLEFIELD

There are many ways to set up celestial phenomena and any method is perfectly acceptable as long as it creates a fair battlefield. Remember that the purpose of setting up celestial phenomena is to provide an entertaining and interesting battlefield, not to impede movement or lines of fire so much that it becomes almost impossible to actually fight the enemy. If a piece of scenery is going to be a major feature of the battle, such as a wide asteroid belt spanning the table, then you need to okay this with your opponent. This sort of battlefield is perfectly fine and might make for an enjoyable game but you and your opponent would have to agree upon it beforehand. Here are some different methods you might employ when setting up your battlefield.

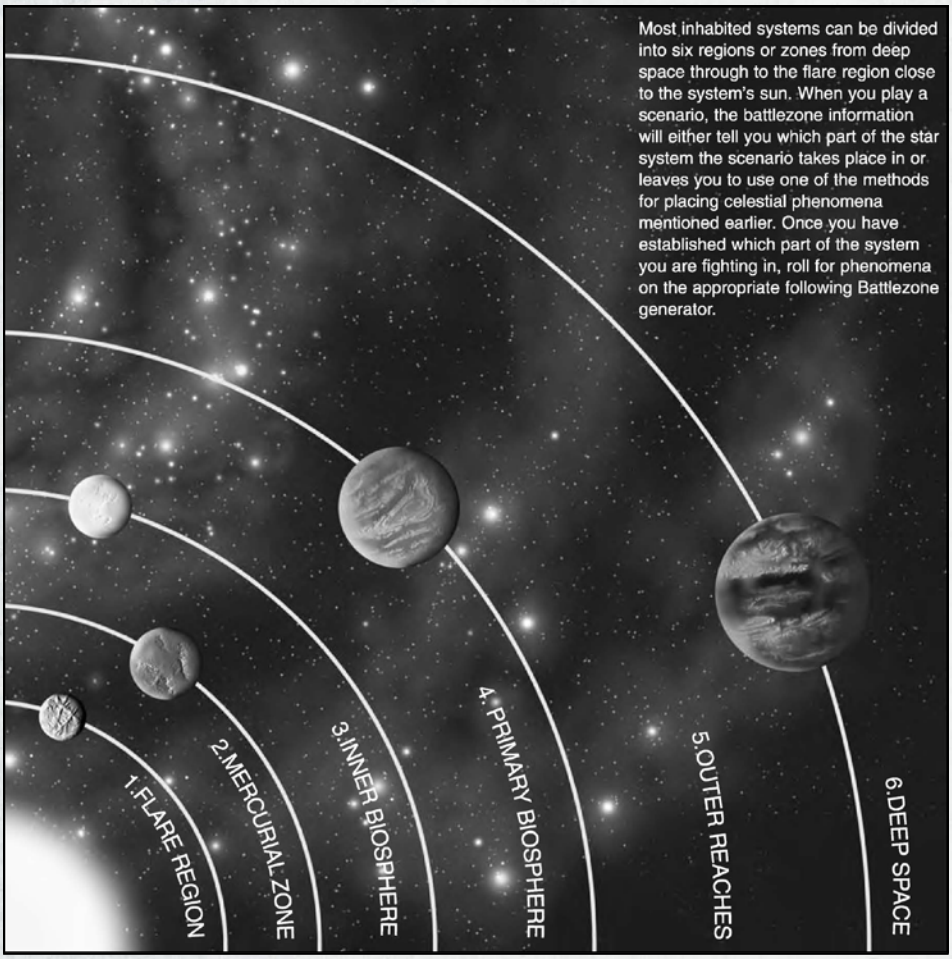
Cross the stars and fight for glory
But 'ware the heaven's wrath
Take yer salt and hear a shipman's story
Listen to tales of the gulf
Of stars that sing and worlds what lie
Beyond the ghosts of the rim
But remember, lads, there ain't no words
for every void-born thing

Setting Up Celestial Phenomena: Method 1
One of the players positions all the celestial phenomena on the table. His opponent can then pick which table edge to deploy from. Many of the scenarios require you to roll for choice of table edges, but if one player has set up the celestial phenomena then it is only fair that his opponent chooses which board edge to deploy from. This is a good method if you are playing a game at one player's house, as he can set up the celestial phenomena before his opponent arrives, allowing you to get straight on with the battle.

Setting Up Celestial Phenomena: Method 2
Divide the table into 60 cm square areas. Next roll a D6 for each area. On a 4 or more the area contains celestial phenomena which is determined using the appropriate battlezone generator. Roll a D6 to determine which of the generators to use for this battlefield (or agree on one with your opponent) and then roll on that generator for celestial phenomena in each area. Position the phenomena anywhere within the area, but don't place them on top of each other. We've included a set of sample battlezone generators over the following pages, but it's easy enough to come up with your own customised ones that include all the celestial phenomena in your own collection.

Setting Up Celestial Phenomena: Method 3
As a variant, you can use the fleets' attack ratings to determine which battlezone the battle is fought in. This represents the two fleets trying to pick their ground by offering battle where it suits them best. Each player secretly chooses a battlezone and adds the number of the battlezone to his fleet's attack rating. Both players then declare their total score. The player with the highest score wins and the battle is fought in the zone he chose.

BATTLEZONES



Most inhabited systems can be divided into six regions or zones from deep space through to the flare region close to the system's sun. When you play a scenario, the battlezone information will either tell you which part of the star system the scenario takes place in or leaves you to use one of the methods for placing celestial phenomena mentioned earlier. Once you have established which part of the system you are fighting in, roll for phenomena on the appropriate following Battlezone generator.

Some of the fiercest fighting of the Gothic War took place in and around Quinrox Sound. With a large proportion of hive worlds and mining colonies, the Quinrox Sound was a major source of materials for building and repairing ships, and both sides took heavy casualties attempting to control the sub-sector. In the Corilia system alone, known to many as the Hulk's Graveyard, there were the remains of at least thirteen Imperial and Chaos capital ships, and two dozen or more escorts, creating a field of debris and shattered hulls spreading across the inner system. The Hulk's Graveyard itself became a focal battlezone, as Imperial and Chaos forces tried to salvage as much as they could from the derelict vessels to be found there. Quinrox Sound became the scene for daring raids to capture prize ships and a gathering place for pirates and other renegades to steal whatever resources they could find. Enemy ships lay in wait amongst the drifting wrecks, waiting for the opportunity to ambush some unwary foe.

1. Flare Region Generator

The flare region is closest to the system's sun. It is an area scoured by incandescent flares of superheated gas from the surface of the sun and fierce radioactive winds. Planets this close to the star are almost always death worlds, places too ravaged by the sun's heat to be habitable to life.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	Solar flare
2	Solar flare
3	Radiation burst
4	Asteroid field
5	D3 gas/dust clouds (generally a solar flare remnant)
6	Planet (roll again: 1-5 = small, 6 = medium)*

2. Mercurial Zone Generator

At the mercurial zone the sun's ferocity is still awesome to behold, but solar flares less frequently reach out to burn everything in their path. Occasionally a planet can be found in the mercurial zone which can sustain limited life deep underground or constantly moving around its dark side to shelter from the sun's rays.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	Solar flare
2	Radiation burst
3	Asteroid field
4	D3 gas/dust clouds (solar filaments or flare remnants)
5	D3 gas/dust clouds (solar filaments or flare remnants)
6	Planet (roll again: 1-5 = small, 6 = medium)*

3. Inner Biosphere generator

As the inner biosphere is reached, planets become more hospitable, though often their atmospheres are a noxious soup of harmful gases. Nonetheless colonies and hive cities occur in the inner biosphere of certain systems.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	Roll again: 1-3 = Radiation burst; 4-6 = solar flare
2	Asteroid field
3	D3 asteroid fields
4	D3 gas/dust clouds
5	D3 gas/dust clouds
6	Planet (roll again: 1-5 = small, 6 = medium)*

4. Primary Biosphere generator

In the primary biosphere a balance is struck between the burning heat of the sun and the icy cold of the void. Most inhabited worlds lie within this biosphere and it's here that the bulk of a system's defences are built.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	Asteroid field
2	D3 asteroid fields
3	Gas/dust clouds
4	D3 gas/dust clouds
5	Planet (roll again: 1-5 = small, 6 = medium)*
6	Planet (roll again: 1-5 = small, 6 = medium)*

5. Outer Reaches Generator

The outer reaches of a system are the realm of gas giants and worlds generally too cold and harsh to support life. Many battles between ships occur here as the system's defenders attempt to prevent enemy ships reaching the primary biosphere.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	D3+1 asteroid fields
2	D3 asteroid fields
3	D3 gas/dust clouds
4	Gas/dust cloud
5	Planet (roll again: 1-3 = small, 4-6 = large)*
6	Planet (roll again: 1-3 = small, 4-6 = large)*

6. Deep Space Generator

Ships coming out of the warp must appear some distance away in deep space or risk destruction among the graviton surges in-system. Many civilised worlds have specific jump points marked by beacons to assist navigation. An ambushing fleet will often lurk near a jump point in the hope of catching an emerging foe unaware.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	D3 asteroid fields
2	Asteroid fields
3	D3 gas/dust clouds
4	Gas/dust cloud
5	Warp rift
6	Small planet (a rogue planet in a highly eccentric orbit)*

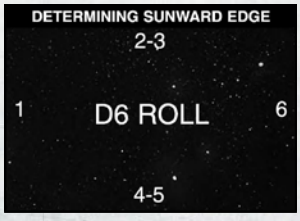
**In all cases a maximum of one planet will be present on the tabletop: if a second planet is generated roll again. Remember to roll to see whether a planet has any moons. If a large planet is generated, it will have rings around it on a D6 roll of 4 or more.*

TABLETOP FEATURES

The following features are celestial phenomena that are placed onto the tabletop. Remember to leave plenty of empty space between them.

Tabletop features are generally placed in relation to the nearest star. This is because nearly everything caught in the inconceivably gross gravitational pull of a star will be in some kind of orbit around it.

When placing these features, start by determining which table edge is closest to the nearest star, described as "sunward" in Battlefleet Gothic. To do so roll a D6.



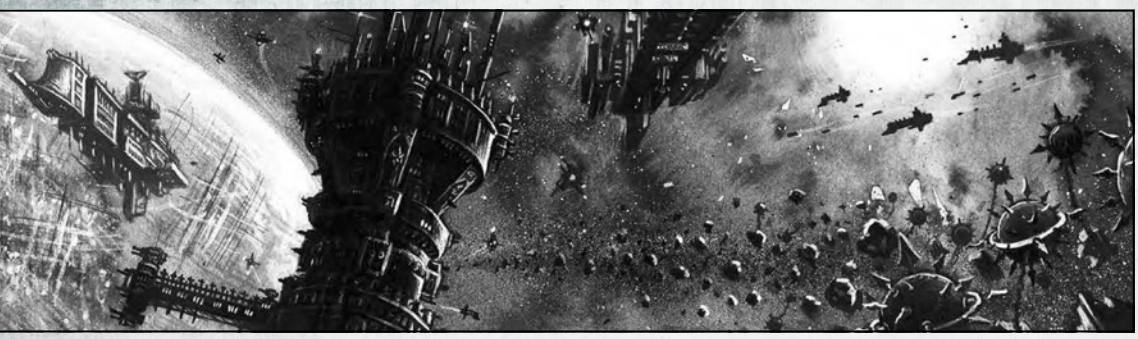
Once you have established which way is sunward, you can start to place celestial phenomena. Each of the types is listed as follows with suggested sizes and methods of placement. However, if you have phenomena made up on bases of a particular size or something similar just use them the way they are. Likewise, don't let the following suggestions stop you from doing something interesting or exciting: they are just there as guidelines to take some of the brain ache out of setting up the tabletop, not as definitive rules.

Any celestial phenomena affect a ship as soon as it contacts a ship's base. However, it does not block fields of fire unless it physically blocks line of sight from the stem of the shooting ship to the stem of the target ship.

As warp drive implosions are not affected by celestial phenomena for purposes of line of sight, this includes when it takes place inside celestial phenomena such as asteroid fields. Being inside, outside or the other side of an asteroid field from an exploding ship does not affect whether or not it is in the explosion's 3D6 cm blast radius.

GAS AND DUST CLOUDS

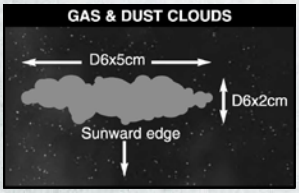
Gas and dust clouds represent areas of space with a notably greater density of (mostly) hydrogen gas or tiny particles of matter. These clouds may be fragments left over from the formation of stars and star systems, the outer fringes of nebulae or protostars, or even gasses ejected by solar flares. They represent a moderate navigational hazard to shipping: basic shielding



is sufficient to prevent damage occurring but ships are slowed somewhat by passing through them. Gas and dust clouds impair targeting by weapon batteries and may destroy ordnance which passes through them, making them potentially useful areas to exploit in ship-to-ship combat.

Effects
Gas and dust clouds have the same effect as a single Blast Marker in all respects (i.e. on firing, movement, shields, Leadership and ordnance). Eldar and their kin can make a leadership check to ignore all effects of gas clouds, and their escorts may re-roll this result for free. If passed, it will take no damage nor suffer any effects of being in contact with it.

If a ship having 0 shield strength explodes due to contact with a gas/dust cloud, the explosion will originate at the point the ship entered the cloud.



Placement
Use flock or cotton wool to show gas & dust clouds, usually found in bands or streamers running parallel to the sunward table edge. Each band is D6×2 cm wide and D6×5 cm long.

ASTEROID FIELDS

Asteroid fields orbit most stars at varying distances. They are generally thought to be debris fragments left over from collisions between planets during the formation of a star system. Asteroid fields may also be left over after the destruction of a planet or moon, or represent an area of wreckage resulting from a space battle.

Effects
An asteroid field blocks line of fire and any torpedoes that strike it are detonated.

Ships moving through an asteroid field, or coming into base contact with the edge of one, must pass a Leadership test on 2D6 to navigate it successfully.

Ships using *All Ahead Full* special orders make the test on 3D6 instead.

Escort ships may re-roll the Leadership test if they fail it, but the second roll stands whether it is successful or not. A ship that fails the Leadership test suffers D6 damage from asteroid impacts, but its shields will block damage as normal.

Escort and capital ship squadrons make this leadership test normally, once for the whole squadron. In the case of capital ship squadrons that fail this test, each ship that comes in base contact with the asteroid field in any way suffers D6 damage. Escort squadrons re-roll this leadership test for free. In the case of escort squadrons that still fail this re-roll, D6 damage is distributed among the escorts that actually contacted the asteroid field, in the order that the ships were moved. In all cases, shields (but not holofields) work normally against hits.

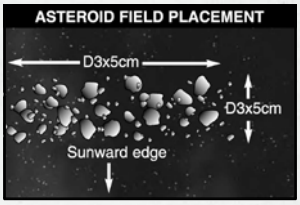
Blast Markers are not placed when asteroid impacts take shields down, however the ship will be slowed down 5 cm as if it has moved through Blast Markers that turn.

Hulks which drift into an asteroid field are destroyed.

Attack craft squadrons which move through an asteroid field are destroyed on a D6 roll of 6.

Ships cannot shoot into or out of an asteroid field. However, shooting between ships inside an asteroid field can take place only if both the shooting and target ships are both inside an asteroid field. Lances and weapons batteries have no more than 10 cm range, nova cannons don't work and torpedoes of any type cannot be used. Shooting at enemies within 10 cm range does not impart a left column shift when inside an asteroid field. Attack Craft work normally but must make a D6 roll every Ordnance Phase they remain in the field, with every wave or individual marker removed on a roll of 6. Ships that are braced or crippled may not shoot inside an asteroid field.

If you wish to shoot at an asteroid field, you must first pass a leadership test even if it is the only possible target. Treat it as an Ordnance marker. For every roll of 6, place a Blast Marker in contact with the asteroid field facing the direction the shooting came from. In each end phase, each asteroid field will lose D6 Blast Markers and these do not count towards the number of other Blast Markers that can be removed that turn.



Placement

Asteroid fields can be represented by an area of rocks, pebbles, gravel or kitty litter (unused!). Like gas and dust clouds, asteroid fields are placed so that they run parallel to the sunward table edge. Typically, asteroid fields are D3×5 cm wide and D3×5 cm long.

WARP RIFTS

Occasionally, a temporary rift can occur between normal space and warp space, particularly during a powerful warp storm or after a large fleet has dropped out of the warp. Moving into such a rift is highly dangerous, but may well provide an edge for a desperate or foolish captain.

Effects

A warp rift blocks line of fire and any torpedoes that strike it are detonated. Hulks which drift into a rift disappear, never to be seen again, so they may not be salvaged after the battle. Attack craft squadrons which move into a rift are destroyed.

Ships moving into a warp rift must pass a Leadership test on 3D6 to navigate it successfully. If the ship passes the test, it may be repositioned up to 2D6×10 cm away from

'And about Port Maw were ringed many defences. Fortresses in orbit and platforms bristling with weapons lay in wait for an unwary attack. Minefields in abundance were there to discourage the foolish.'

– Lexicus Planetarium. M.38

the rift, pointing in any direction. If it fails, the ship disappears from the battle altogether – lost in the warp!

Roll a D6 for each ship lost in the warp after the game: on a 1 it is lost in the warp forever, doomed to drift on the tides of the immaterium until its crew die, on a 2-6 it is only temporarily lost and will eventually find its way back to the fleet.

Placement
Use a strip of white paper, cloth or cotton wool to represent a warp rift. The rift is D3×5 cm wide and D3×10 cm long.

PLANETS

Less than 1% of systems have planets orbiting a solitary star in the manner of ancient Terra. Even so, there are millions of star systems containing billions of worlds scattered across the galaxy. Most planets are either desolate, empty and airless, or surrounded by an atmosphere too noxious to support life. In the Gothic sector there are over two hundred inhabited worlds and tens of thousands of other planets. Planets often become the focus of space battles as opposing fleets attempt to establish forward bases or extend their control throughout a contested system.

Effects
Planets are represented by a template or model (ball) placed on the tabletop.

When a ship's stem is actually on a planetary template (as opposed to behind it), the template does not block its line of sight or any ships line of sight to it. If multiple ships are on a planetary template, they can all see each other.

A ship counts as being upon a planetary template if its stem touches the template, not merely if it is in base contact or if its base partially overlaps the template.

Torpedoes are destroyed when they come into contact with the template's edge, either when launching them toward the planet or from it by ships in high orbit upon the template itself. It is possible to launch torpedoes while on a planetary template but they will be removed when they touch its edge.

Hulks which drift into a planet are also destroyed. Ships may move 'through' a planet (by passing over or under it).

Every planet is surrounded by an area of space where its gravitational pull is strong enough to affect shipping. This area is referred to as its gravity well. The gravity well extends out a set distance from the edge of the planet template and affects a ship's manoeuvring as follows.

Typical planetary templates:

- Small planet (eg the size of Mercury, Pluto or Mars) – up to 15 cm diameter.
- Medium planet (eg equivalent to Venus or Earth) – 16-25 cm diameter.
- Large planet (eg the size of Saturn or Jupiter) – 26-50 cm(!) diameter.

Typical gravity wells:

Small planet – up to 10 cm from template edge.

Medium planet – up to 15 cm from template edge.

Large planet – up to 30 cm from template edge.

Ships within the gravity well of a planet may make a free 45° turn at the beginning and end of their move, but the turn must always be made towards the planet. The ship does not have to move its minimum distance before it is able to make its free turn. Free turns provided by gravity wells can be used even when the ship cannot normally turn, such as when under *All Ahead Full* or *Lock On* special orders. They can also be combined with *Come To New Heading* special orders.

This does not change the fact that the free turn can only be used before the start of the move and again only at the end of the move. In either or both instance(s) the ship must actually be in the gravity well to use it, and the free turn is only toward the centre of the planet's or moon's gravity well or toward a space hulk's stem or no more than 45 degrees, whichever is less.

A ship within a planet's gravity well may elect to enter high or low orbit. A ship does not have to move whilst it is in high orbit, but such a stationary ship uses the defences column for gunnery purposes if it elects to remain stationary. A ship that enters low orbit, however, is removed from play and (where the scenario requires it) is placed on a separate low orbit table. Ships moving up from low orbit are placed touching the outer edge of the planet template.

Placement

Planets are usually so far apart that only one will be placed on the tabletop, although in spectacular 'When Planets Collide' scenarios you might want to place two planets in shockingly close proximity.

RINGED PLANETS

Occasionally planets (usually the larger ones) have rings made up of gas, dust and asteroids. These are represented by gas and dust clouds and/or asteroid fields placed in a ring around the planet.

Placement

If there is a large planet on the table roll a D6. On a 5 or 6 it has rings around it. Place D3 rings around the planet, then roll a D6 to see what sort each ring is: 1-4 = gas/dust, 5-6 = asteroid. Each ring is D6 cm wide and begins D6×5 cm away from the planet's edge. Note that some may end up merging into one another, but that's fine.

MOONS

Most planets have many small moons around them and most of these are no larger than generously sized asteroids. These rules are confined to dealing with larger moons several thousand kilometres in diameter.

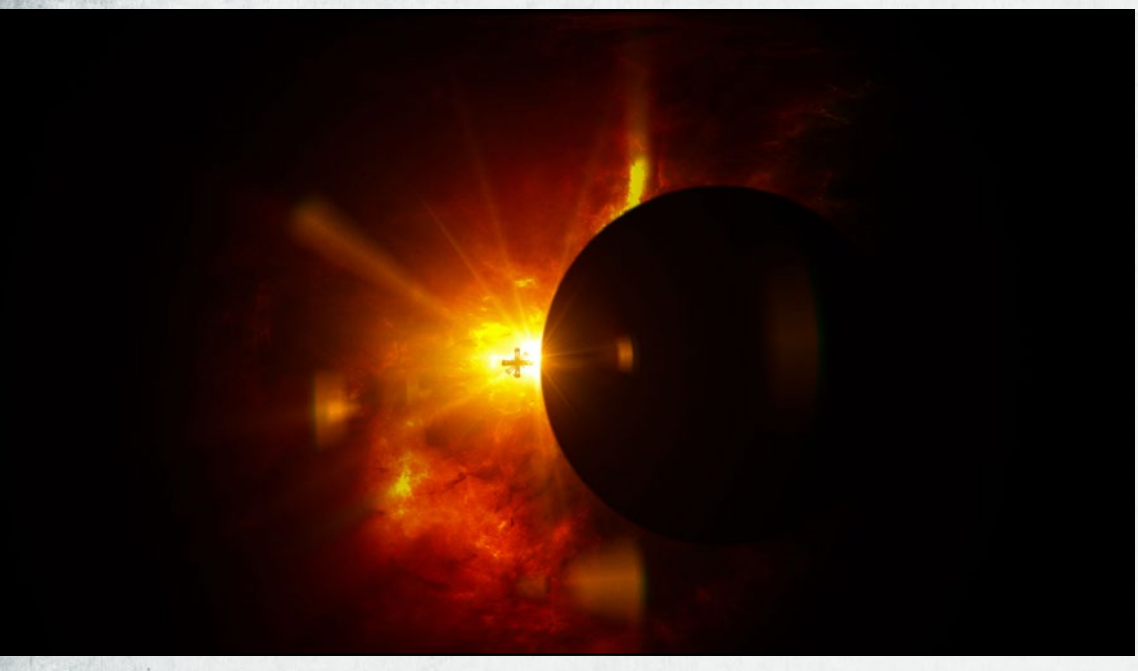
Effects

Moons count as small planets in all respects, including when deciding the effects of their gravity wells on turning ships.

Placement

Medium planets typically have D3-1 moons, large planets have D6-2 moons. Moons are up to 5 cm in diameter. A planet's moons are placed 2D6×10 cm from the planet: roll randomly to see which direction they are from the planet.

TABLETOP EFFECTS



The following features affect the entire battlefield. They may be combined with tabletop features to produce, for example, a battle around a planet close to a sun.

FIGHTING SUNWARD

In battles close to the centre of a system, the presence of the local star has powerful effects on the ship's ability to detect other vessels. At extreme ranges, the glare of the sun will tend to obscure the energy signature of enemy vessels, making them difficult to target accurately. In close proximity, an opposing ship with the sun behind it is easier to pick out and track using reflection surveyors and image capture devices.

Effects

In the outer reaches, deep space and the primary biosphere the light from the distant star has no effect on combat. Fighting sunward is only of consequence in the Flare Region, Mercurial Zone and Inner Biosphere, and has the following effects:

Any firing conducted towards the sunward table edge doubles the column shifts for long and short range.

To determine if you are shooting sunward place the bearing compass over the firing ship with the arrows parallel with the sunward edge (see pg. 109 for the sunward edge). If the target is within the arc facing the sunward edge you are shooting sunward.

At long range (over 30 cm) the powerful photosphere blinds long range sensors, so take two column shifts right on the Gunnery table instead of one. At short range (15 cm or under) targets are 'silhouetted' instead, so make two column shifts left instead of one.

SOLAR FLARES

Most stars periodically release explosive bursts of energy over small areas of their surface. Of course small, in solar terms, means areas hundreds of millions of kilometres across! These huge flares of energy

rush outward at tremendous speeds, flooding the vicinity with highly charged particles and magnetic shock waves. A shielded vessel can find its protection virtually overwhelmed by these events and a vessel without shields is sure to suffer damage.

Effects

Roll a D6 at the start of each turn. If more than one flare was generated as part of the celestial phenomena roll a D6 per flare generated. On any roll of a 6 a flare occurs, but a flare will only manifest itself once per game. Once a flare occurs, this roll no longer needs to be rolled. Each ship on the tabletop has one Blast Marker placed sunward of them. Any ship without shields will suffer one hit and will take critical damage on a roll of 4 or more on a D6. Roll a D6 for each Ordnance marker – on a 4 or more it is removed from play. Eldar and their kin can make a leadership check to ignore all effects of solar flares, and their escorts may re-roll this result for free. If passed, it will take no damage but instead turn directly away from the solar flare and move 2D6 cm.

RADIATION BURSTS

As well as solar flares and often in conjunction with them, a sun will frequently emit bursts of radiation, including electromagnetic and radio waves. These temporarily scramble any communications traffic between ships and even disrupt ship-board commnets. Commanding a ship in these conditions is extremely difficult and for this reason most commanders assiduously avoid the flare region of the local star.

Effects

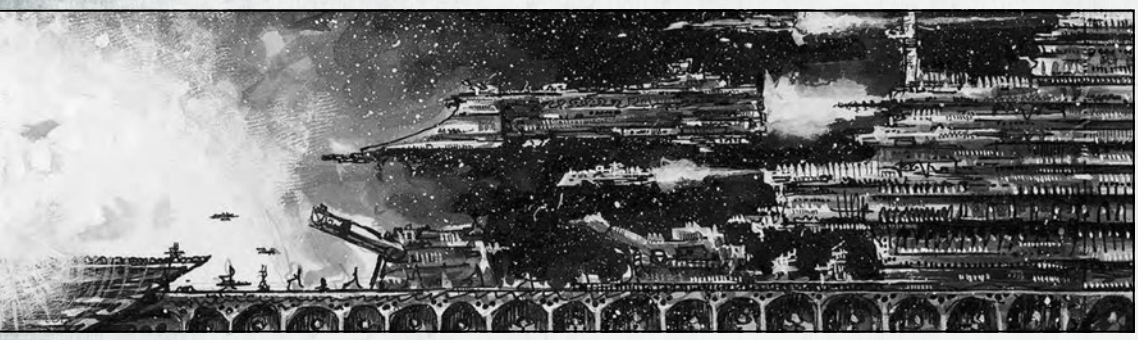
Roll a D6 at the start of each turn. If more than one radiation burst was generated as part of the celestial phenomena, roll a D6 for each one generated. For each roll of 5 or 6 a radiation burst occurs. Only one radiation burst can happen per turn even if multiple radiation burst were rolled for. Roll a D6 to see what the interference level of the burst is and all ships on the table reduce their Leadership value by the interference level for that turn. For example, if a radiation burst occurs and a 3 is rolled for the interference level, all ships suffer -3 to their Leadership for the rest of the turn.

In addition to the reduced Leadership for the interference, Fleet Commanders may only use their re-rolls for Command checks for their own ship or squadron during radiation bursts.

'The klaxon was sounding all across the ship now. I tried to enter the lower bridge, but the emergency bulkheads had shut. Sporadic bursts from the engines were pushing us to starboard and dipping the stern down towards Proxadis' outer moon. I heard one of the Tech-Priests reporting over the internal comm-net that the artificial gravity had failed along the starboard quarter gun-decks. With the bridge presumed destroyed, I was left as the highest authority on board. I ran into a party of ratings trying to jettison the blazing remains of the tertiary starboard lance turret and I ordered them to get to the saviour rafts. Another explosion shook the ship, sending us flying in all directions. Running up to the secondary aft bridge, I took stock of the situation. We had lost all helm control, the fifth, ninth and eleventh reactors were discharging plasma and the number three reactor was going into endphase overload. I ordered the general abandonment and led the aft bridge crew to the rafts at the end of 'C' deck, port quarter. Just as we jettisoned, I saw the outside of the ship through the port. Plasma was slowly engulfing the whole of the engine section. A gaping hole had been torn through both quarter galleries and fires were burning up on the bridge section. We had perhaps got 12,000 away when the reactors blew, sending a sheet of gas and flame surging towards us. It passed by about 4,000 away, but the shockwave buffeted us badly, and the engines cut.'

The loss of the Invincible by 4th Lieutenant Burns, one of only 1,250 survivors.

FIGHTING IN LOW ORBIT



In certain scenarios, ships can enter low orbit to attack a planet. Achieving low orbit is essential to any such attack, since a drop ship's range is very limited and any attempt to bombard ground forces from a greater distance is purely up to chance.

You will need a separate table (or section at one end of the main table) to represent low orbit. This doesn't need to be very large – 45-60 cm wide × 90-135 cm long should be sufficient. One long table edge should be nominated as the planet edge and represents the planet itself. Ships within the gravity well of a planet may elect to enter low orbit at the start of any of their turns – place the ship on the low orbit table, touching the edge furthest from the planet.

Ships in low orbit do not have to move and capital ships do not have to move a minimum distance before they can turn. To represent interference from the planet's gravity well and the outermost edges of its atmosphere, all firepower shooting in low orbit suffers one column shift to the right, lances and nova cannons require a 4+ roll to fire and torpedoes may not be fired by ships at all.

Ships which move within 45 cm of the planet edge will be gripped in the heart of the gravity well and must use their engines to keep station if they don't wish to crash. At the start of each player's turn, all ships within 45 cm of the planet table edge are moved directly towards the planet (without changing facing or turning in any way).

The distance that they move depends upon the size of the planet: small = 5 cm; medium = 8 cm; large = 10 cm. Any ship that moves off of the planet table edge in this way is totally destroyed. Escorts and transports which voluntarily move off the planet edge are said to have landed and are removed from play; capital ships cannot land. If a ship in low orbit moves off the table from any other edge, it is assumed to have left low orbit and is placed back on the main table, touching the edge of the planet. A ship may not enter low orbit and then leave it again in the same turn.

Apart from this, movement and combat is resolved in each player's turn as normal.

If you're limited for space, you can represent the low orbit table with a sheet of paper and markers, using a scale of 1 mm : 1 cm on the Deep Space table. Alternatively, you could use graph paper to plot moves in low orbit, again changing the scale as appropriate.

SCENARIOS

Although some space battles are straightforward affairs, with two fleets engaging each other simply to destroy the enemy, it is just as likely that the fleets will have a more specific objective to achieve, such as escorting a convoy or supporting a planetary assault. This section of Battlefleet Gothic provides the rules for fighting these different types of battle.

CHOOSING A SCENARIO

For your first couple of games we recommend you play the Cruiser Clash introductory scenario on pg. 128 while you get used to the rules and start building up your fleet. Once you have an idea of how the rules work you can try out some of the different scenarios that follow. There are ten scenarios in this section of the book, divided into small scale raids and larger battles. The two featured campaigns have some specific scenarios, as do a lot of the fleet lists.

Below are several ways of deciding which scenario to play.

Arbitrary Decision Method

This is by far the quickest and simplest method of choosing a scenario. Despite its rather grandiose title, this method merely involves the players picking a scenario they want to play because of the forces they have available, how much time they have, or just because it's their favourite.

Random Generation Method

If you wish to pick a scenario randomly, roll a D6. On a roll of a 1, 2 or 3, roll again on the Raids table. On a roll of a 4 or more, roll on the Battles table. Alternatively you can just decide whether you want to fight a raid or a battle and then roll on the appropriate table.

RAIDS

D6 Roll	Scenario
1	One: Cruiser Clash
2	Two: The Bait
3	Three: The Raiders
4	Five: Blockade Run
5-6	Six: Convoy

BATTLES

D6 Roll	Scenario
1	Nine: Exterminatus!
2	Four: Surprise Attack
3	Seven: Planetary Assault
4	Eight: Escalating Engagement
5-6	Ten: Fleet Engagement

USING AN ATTACK RATING

Some fleets are intrinsically better than others at launching attacks and picking where and when they fight their battles. This may be due to a skilled admiral, faster ships, better organisation, or access to powerful psykers who can scry the future and predict the enemy's actions. It also represents the fleet's ability to navigate warp space, as well as the wild, aggressive and often random nature of their attacks (particularly for Orks!). This is called a fleet's attack rating, which represents how likely they are to initiate a raid or battle (as opposed to being attacked themselves). The chart that follows shows the attack ratings of all fleets.

ATTACK RATINGS

Fleet	Attack Rating
Imperial	2
Chaos	2
Tau	2
Orks	3
Craftworld Eldar	3
Space Marines	3
Tyranids	3
Corsair Eldar	4
Dark Eldar	4
Necrons	4

You can use attack ratings to determine the scenario to be played by the following method. Each player rolls a number of D6 equal to their attack rating and chooses the best individual dice score. Compare the best scores of both sides. The fleet with the highest score has launched an attack and may choose which scenario to fight. If it is a draw, then determine a scenario randomly as already described.

DETERMINING ATTACKERS AND DEFENDERS

In many of the scenarios, one side will be attacking and the other side will be defending. If a scenario has an attacker and a defender, you can simply decide who is attacking and who is defending, or randomly choose which player is attacking by rolling a dice, tossing a coin, playing scissors-paper-stone or whatever. Alternatively, you can use the attack ratings given above. As with determining a scenario, both players roll a number of dice equal to their attack rating and the player with the highest single dice roll is the attacker.

If you are using attack ratings to determine the scenario being played (see above), the player who gets to choose the scenario is always the attacker.

Port Maw is the capital system of the Gothic Sector. The planet itself is the most productive hive world in the region, with a population of over 200 billion people. Orbiting above the world arc three Naval stations, including Fleet Command for the whole of Battlefleet Gothic, Nexus Station – the Gothic Sectors largest shipbuilding and repair station. Port Maw's orbital defences outmatch even those of the Blackstone Fortresses and the Chaos fleet wisely decided not to launch an all-out attack against this base. Instead, the naval base was blockaded continuously for seven years by Chaos ships. During this time, only a handful of vessels managed to slip into or out of the system and the need for food and supplies became great. After seven years, a brief break in the warpstorms around the sub-sector gave the battlecruiser, Sword of Redemption, and several other capital ships the opportunity to launch an effective attack, driving the Chaos blockade from the system and allowing the navy to make much-needed use of Port Maw's considerable shipyard facilities.

THE SCENARIOS

Each scenario is presented in the following format:

Title and Overview presents the type of scenario being played, with a short description detailing the situation that faces the fleet commanders.

Forces tells you how to pick your fleets, usually in conjunction with the Fleet Lists. In some scenarios, one side may have random forces, or additional resources such as planetary defences, transport ships, etc.

Battlezone shows what restrictions there are, if any, on choosing a battlezone, as well as any compulsory celestial phenomena that must be placed on the tabletop.

Set-up gives instructions for each of the fleets, showing where they begin the battle, where any reinforcements arrive on the battlefield, etc. This section also tells you which of the fleets must be set up first.

First Turn tells you which fleet has the first turn. Often the players roll a D6 and the winner can choose whether to go first or second.

Special Rules gives you details of any rules that are specific to that scenario, such as making a planetary assault, using special Contact markers, squadrons being on standby orders and so forth.

Game Length tells you how many turns the battle will last for, together with any other events which may end the battle.

Victory Conditions is the important bit! It is here that you'll find what your fleet must do in order to win. Often victory points are used to determine the winner, and the rules for these are as follows.

VICTORY POINTS

In many scenarios, the winner will be the player who scores the most victory points. Victory points are a measure of how much damage a fleet has inflicted on its enemy and are won by crippling and destroying enemy ships. Additional victory points can also be scored by achieving certain objectives, as detailed in the Victory Conditions section of the scenario, such as escaping an attack or attacking an enemy base. Victory points are earned as follows:

Capital Ships

If a capital ship is destroyed, the opposing player earns a number of victory points equal to the ship's points value. This should also include the points value of any Admiral, Warmaster or Chaos Lord on board and any points spent on other types of upgrades.

If a capital ship is crippled, the opposing player earns 25% of its total points value (rounding up) as victory points.

At the end of the battle, the fleet that holds the field earns victory points for the number of hulks it can capture. Your fleet holds the field if all enemy ships have been destroyed (or have disengaged) and your fleet has at least one operational ship on the table at the end of the battle. If one fleet holds the field the player earns victory points equal to half of the points value of each hulk on the table. Note that you earn victory points for your own ships that have been reduced to hulks (you have denied valuable resources to the enemy) as well as enemy hulks.

Escort Ships, Orbital Defences and Other Vessels

Each destroyed planetary defence installation earns a player a number of victory points equal to the installation's points value. Each destroyed escort earns its value in victory points provided the entire escort squadron is destroyed.

Disengaged Ships

Ships and escort squadrons which have disengaged are worth 25% of their total points value (including refits and embarked commander) in victory points if they were crippled before they disengaged. If the ship or escort squadron disengaged before it was crippled it is worth victory points equal to 10% of its value. An escort squadron is considered crippled if it loses half of its ships, rounding up.

VICTORY POINTS SUMMARY

Each enemy ship destroyed
Victory points equal to its points value.

Each enemy capital ship crippled
Victory points equal to 25% of its points value, (rounded up).

Each enemy ship disengaged
Victory points equal to 25% of the enemy ship's points value (rounded up) if crippled, or 10% (rounded up) if not.

Holding the field
Victory points equal to 50% of the points value of each hulk (friend or foe) on the tabletop (rounded up).

Scenario objectives
Victory points are awarded as detailed in the individual scenarios.

PRE-BATTLE SUMMARY

1. Determine Scenario. Choose, randomly generate one or use the attack ratings method.
2. Decide Attacker and Defender. If needed, randomly decide who is attacking, or use the attack ratings to determine the attacker. If you are using attack ratings to choose a scenario, the player who chooses is the attacker.
3. Choose Forces. Select your fleet following the instructions in the selected scenario.
4. Set up Celestial Phenomena. Determine the type of battlezone the game is played in and place any celestial phenomena on the tabletop (see pgs. 104–113 for details).
5. Generate Leadership. Roll for the Leadership values of your ships and squadrons.
6. Declare any capital ship squadrons. Assign the Fleet Commander(s) to their ship(s) if you haven't already.
7. Deploy Fleets. Set up your ships on the table as outlined in the scenario.
8. Determine First Turn. Find out who has the first turn as detailed in the scenario.
9. Start Fighting!

SUB-PLOTS

Each player may generate a sub-plot if they wish (note that in a campaign you must generate a sub-plot each). Roll a D6. On a roll of 1-2, roll on the *Legacies of War* table. On a roll of 3-4, roll on the *Chance Circumstances* table. On a roll of 5-6, roll on the *Secret Ploys* table.

Each sub-plot includes additional victory conditions, which may or may not complement your primary mission. If you are fighting a battle with sub-plots, there are four different victory results, depending on whether you win the main battle and if you complete your sub-plot objectives.

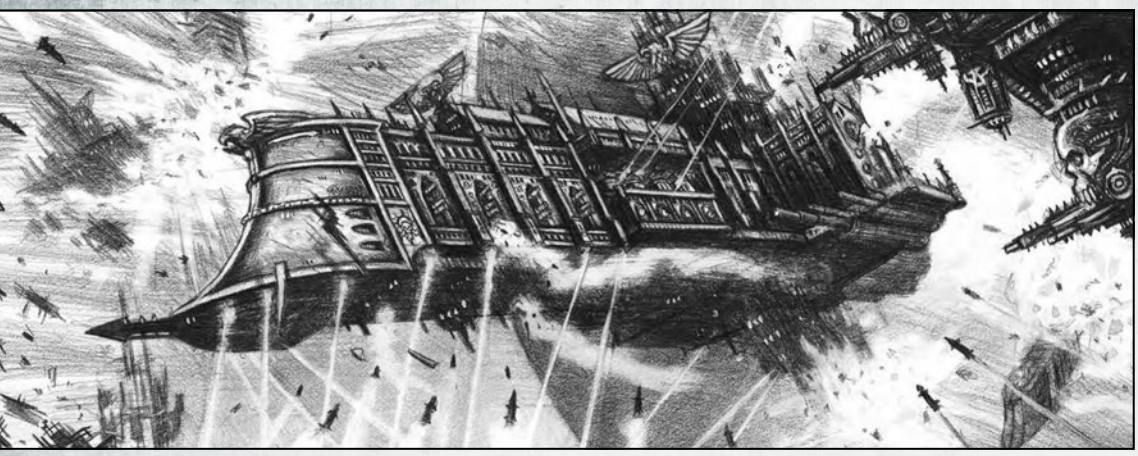
OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED	BATTLE RESULT
Completed main mission and sub-plot	**Heroic Victory!** You will long be remembered as a magnificent commander. Epic tales will be told of your exploits, and your deeds and tactics will be taught to future generations.
Completed main mission	**Victory!** Your fame is growing, as someone who can get the job done despite minor set-backs and myriad distractions. Your name becomes synonymous with sound tactics and steadfast leadership.
Failed main mission but completed sub-plot	**Heroic Defeat!** You will be remembered for snatching honour from the jaws of defeat. Stories will tell of hopeless odds and unforeseeable circumstances. You will be remembered for your courage and determination.
Failed main mission and sub-plot	**Miserable Defeat!** Your name becomes a watchword for incompetence and failure. If you die, you will not be missed. This is a dark day for your race ...

RENOWN

If you are playing in a campaign, you may gain or lose renown for achieving or failing in your sub-plot objective. This is given in brackets after the objective like this: (renown gained for completion/renown lost for failure). For example, the Extended Duty sub-plot is (+1/0) which means you gain an extra point of Renown for completing it, but you will not lose any if you fail.

LEGACIES OF WAR (ROLL OF 1-2)

Score	Sub-Plot
1	**Gunnery Practice:** In most space battles, victory went to the fleet with the best trained gun crews. It was not unusual for a fleet commander to order his captains to concentrate on gun drill training above all else. Roll a D6 for every capital ship in your fleet. On a 4, 5 or 6 the ship has a +1 Leadership bonus when attempting to go onto *Lock On* special order. *Prove the wisdom of your commands and inflict at least 1 point of damage on every enemy capital ship. (+1/-1)*
2	**Extended Duty:** Towards the end of the Gothic War, both sides were in poor shape. Ships often went into battle still suffering from damage sustained in previous engagements, or suffering serious shortages of manpower and ammunition. Roll a D6 for each capital ship in your fleet. On a 1, it starts the battle with D3 damage points less than normal. On a 2, it suffers a -1 modifier to all Leadership tests for *Lock On* & *Reload Ordnance* special orders. On a 3+ the ship is unaffected. *Destroy/cripple more points of enemy ships than you lose. (+1/0)*
3	**Blood Bond:** Ships' captains working together over an extended period built up a great deal of camaraderie. They would often push their crew to ever greater efforts to avenge a fallen comrade. Equally, if the fleet lost too many ships, morale would suffer badly. If one of your capital ships is crippled or destroyed, all the other capital ships in the fleet gain +1 Leadership for the next turn. *Finish the battle with less than half your capital ships crippled or destroyed. (+1/-1)*
4	**Fleet Experience:** A fleet that spent a long period under the same commander would get to know his plans and thinking. In some cases, they would even be able to predict the fleet commander's orders. Any ship within 30 cm of your fleet commander's ship may use his Leadership value instead of their own. *Your fleet commander's ship must survive the battle with at least 75% of its original damage left or lose the confidence of its subordinates. (+1/0)*
5	**No Quarter!** As the war dragged on, the battle of attrition escalated to astounding proportions. Often fleets were sent in to battle with no other objective than to blast the enemy out of the stars! *Cripple/destroy at least half the points value of the enemy fleet. (+1/-1)*
6	**Vendetta:** As the war progressed, worlds were razed and populations were enslaved or killed. Enemy ships became infamous for their exploits so it was a real boost to morale if these vessels could be destroyed. *Nominate one enemy capital ship to be the object of your vendetta. Cripple or destroy the nominated capital ship. (+1/-2)*



CHANCE CIRCUMSTANCES (ROLL OF 3-4)	
Score	**Result**
1	**Meteor Storm!** Meteor storms were a major cause of damage to ships. Roll a D6 for each capital ship in your fleet. On a 1, 2 or 3, roll once on the Critical Damage table and apply the result to the ship at the start of the game. *There are no additional victory conditions. If you can win with your fleet in such disarray it will be truly heroic, if you fail you will be condemned for your poor navigation and inability to adapt to circumstance. (+3/-2)*
2	**Signalling Problems:** Due to the increased warp storms, Astropaths were frequently unable to communicate between star systems, so escort ships were used to carry orders instead. You may only use fleet commander re-rolls on squadrons that have a ship within 30 cm of your fleet commander's ship. *At least half of your fleet's escorts must survive the battle. (+1/-1)*
3	**Unexpected Help:** Many ships were used in smaller numbers as long range patrols or scout fleets. In a good many battles, one side or the other had its strength unexpectedly bolstered by being joined by one of these roving ships or squadrons. You may add a single capital ship or squadron of escort ships totalling D3×50 points to your fleet before the game begins. *At least one ship from the reinforcements must survive the battle, without being crippled or destroyed, to continue its mission. (0/-2)*
4	**Navigational Hazards:** Asteroid fields and gas clouds can aid or hinder a fleet, depending on how well their cover is utilised. Roll a D6. **D6 Effect** 1-2 Place an extra gas/dust cloud on the tabletop. 3-4 Place two extra gas/dust clouds on the tabletop. 5 Place an extra asteroid field on the tabletop. 6 Place an extra asteroid field and D3 gas & dust clouds on the tabletop! *No additional victory conditions. Win and you'll be praised for using the environment against your foe, lose and you'll be cursed for not choosing a better battlezone! (+1/-1)*
5	**Fresh Captain:** Ship captains who proved themselves in battle would often be re-assigned to larger, better armed vessels. This meant that the captain's previous ship would have to spend time getting used to their new commander. Randomly select one of your capital ships (not including the fleet commander's vessel). This ship loses -1 Leadership. *The chosen ship must cripple or destroy enemy ships worth equal to or more than its own points value. (+1/-1).*
6	**Enemy Plans:** Boarding parties occasionally uncovered enemy plans. Each time you launch a boarding action against an enemy capital ship, roll a D6. On a score of a 4 or more, the enemy plans have been located. Add +1 to the roll if you board the opposing fleet commander's ship. *You must capture the enemy's battle plans. (+1/-1)*

SECRET PLOYS (ROLL OF 5-6)

Score	Sub-Plot
1	**Surprise Attack!** Although many battles were decided by sheer weight of fire and big guns, an almost equal number were won by one fleet surprising another while en route to its destination. A fleet commander who could ambush his enemy in such a fashion would have to maximise his advantage, before the enemy had time to organise themselves. The enemy fleet cannot go on to special orders for the first D3 turns. *There are no additional victory conditions. If you can win then your cunning strategy will be praised across the sector; if you fail you will be condemned for your hastiness and poorly thought out plan. (+2/-2)*
2	**Secret Intelligence:** Spies and traitors could be found in nearly every fleet in the Gothic War. Although mostly they were only useful for informing the enemy about fleet movements at the strategic level, occasionally they could gain knowledge of the fleet commander's battle plan just prior to an engagement and get this information to the other side. You gain an extra fleet commander re-roll for this battle. *Nominate one enemy capital ship, where your informant is hiding out. You must board this ship, or make a Hit-and-Run attack on it at least once to extract the informer. (0/-1)*
3	**Experimental Ship:** Both sides tried numerous ploys to gain whatever edge they could over their enemy. Strategy and tactics would be changed and one area of experiment was ship design itself. Many ships were fitted with one-off weapons, engines or shield systems and their performance was closely monitored. Even recovered ancient technology or alien artefacts were sometimes retro-fitted to a ship to change its performance in one way or another. Unfortunately, there was no perfect combination and whenever something was improved, something else had to be sacrificed to accommodate the new systems. Randomly select a capital ship in your fleet. This ship has recently been fitted with an experimental system that has yet to be tried out in the heat of battle. Roll a D6 on each of the following tables to see how the ship has been altered (re-roll the side effect if the two contradict each other): **D6 Improvement** 1 All weapons batteries/lances +50% range. 2 +1 shield 3 Speed +5 cm 4 +2 damage 5 Ship may make 90° turns. 6 +1 Leadership **D6 Side Effect** 1 -1 shield 2 All weapons batteries/ lances are at 50% range. 3 -2 damage 4 Speed -5 cm 5 -1 Leadership 6 Weapon battery firepower/lances at 50% strength (rounding up). *You must prevent the experimental ship from being crippled or destroyed so that it may be examined and lessons teamed about its performance. (+1/-1)*
4	**Desperate Mission:** It was not unusual for individual ships to be detached from the main fleet to undertake special missions. This could range from transporting attack plans, to small raids, or conveying Imperial Agents such as Inquisitors and Assassins to their secret destinations. *Nominate one of your capital ships as having to perform the desperate mission. You must prevent this ship from being crippled or destroyed. (+1/-1)*
5	**Decoy:** There are instances throughout the war of both sides using decoy ships to distract the enemy and cause confusion. Often these decoys would be incredibly ancient, out-of-service vessels, or transports refitted to outwardly resemble warships. They would only have a skeleton crew and their objective would be to attract enemy fire and divert the enemy's attention away from your real warships. You may include an extra capital ship in your fleet. However, this vessel really has the characteristics of a transport ship. Do not tell your opponent which of your ships is the decoy until it is fired upon or fires itself. The decoy is worth zero victory points. *If the enemy fires with a capital ship at the decoy, then your ploy has succeeded. If he does not, then you have failed. (+1/-1)*
6	**Hit-and-Run:** Although the war was a constant battle of attrition, speed was vital on occasion. If a fleet could hit hard and fast, it could attain its objectives before nearby enemy ships could react. If an attack could be quickly repulsed, then a swift counter-attack could scatter or destroy an enemy fleet. *Roll 2D6. This is the number of turns you have in which to win the game. If you have not won within this time limit then you have failed in your sub-plot, as your victory will not be as useful to the fleet. (+1/-1)*

SCENARIO ONE

CRUISER CLASH

The Cruiser Clash is an introduction to the Battlefleet Gothic rules. We suggest you play it several times when you're learning the rules, adding in extra rules from the Alternatives section as you become more familiar with the way the game works. After a couple of games you should hopefully be able to play a game using just the information on the playsheets.

In this battle, two forces of opposing cruisers have run into each other near to a system's jump point. Seeing their hated enemies, they immediately attack. The side which can inflict the most damage on the enemy will emerge victorious.

FORCES

Each fleet consists of between one and four cruisers (both sides have the same amount). Each ship is worth no more than 185 points and should be chosen from the appropriate fleet list. Refer to the fleet lists for characteristics, etc., of the different cruiser classes.

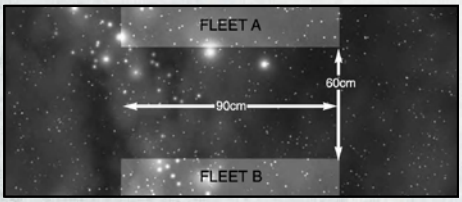
BATTLEZONE

For your first game, we suggest you do not place any celestial phenomena.

SET-UP

Remember to roll for the Leadership values of your ships before setting them up, using the Leadership table on pg. 45 (also on the playsheet).

One player rolls a dice. On a 1, 2 or 3 they set up in the area marked Fleet A on the map. On a 4, 5 or 6 their ships must be set up in the Fleet B zone.



Next, both players roll a dice. The player with the lowest score sets up one of his cruisers first. The other player then sets up one of his ships and the players alternate deploying ships until all the cruisers are on the table.

Ships may be put anywhere in the player's own deployment zone, but must be placed facing towards the opposite long table edge.

FIRST TURN

Both players roll a dice. The player with the highest score may choose whether to have the first or second turn.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until the players have had eight complete turns each or until one fleet has all its ships destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Normal victory points are not used in this scenario. Instead, at the end of the game, each player scores 1 point for each point of damage they have inflicted on the enemy ships. A player scores an additional point for each crippled enemy ship, or 3 additional points for each destroyed enemy ship.

For example, if an enemy ship suffers 5 points of damage this earns the opposing player 5 points and an additional point because the ship has been crippled. Note that you only receive 3 additional points for destroyed ships – you do not also get the single point for the ship having been crippled before it was destroyed.

The player who scores the most victory points is the winner.

CRUISER CLASH

ALTERNATIVES

After you have played this scenario once or twice, you may like to introduce some of the other Battlefleet Gothic rules.

FORCES

One thing you could do is remove the restriction on the maximum points value of the cruisers, which means that you'll be able to take cruisers with nova cannons and launch bays if you want. Alternatively, you could allow each player one cruiser with launch bays in their fleet, or some other restriction. Refer to the Fleet lists for the points values of different cruisers.

As another alternative, the players can pick any number of cruisers, up to an agreed points value, using their fleet list. A good size to start with is 750 points, or 1,000 points if you want to include fleet commanders in your game. Fleet commanders are Admirals and Warmasters who lead the fleets into battle. The rules for fleet commanders and the fleet commander options available to a player are given at the start of the fleet lists.

BATTLEZONE

Once you've got used to moving and shooting with your ships over an open table, you can try placing celestial phenomena on the tabletop. First of all, place a few gas and dust clouds on the table and after you've played with those a couple of times you might like to add a planet or some asteroid fields as well.

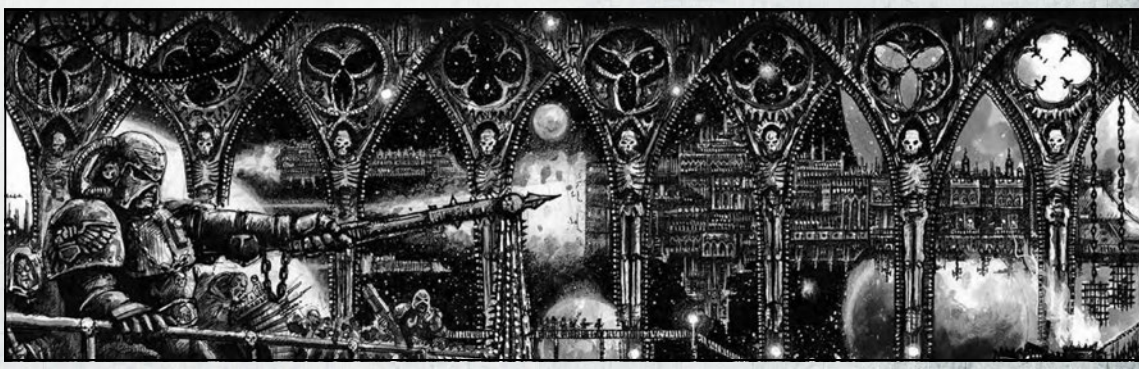
When you've got an idea of how these basic types of celestial phenomena work in the game (and the tactics you can use to make the most of them), you can use the full celestial phenomena rules. If you do this, roll a dice – on a roll of a 1, 2 or 3 the battle takes place in the outer reaches; on a 4, 5 or 6 the battle is fought in deep space. See the Celestial Phenomena section starting on pg. 104 for more details.

SET-UP

You may like to use the Set-up rules for the Fleet Engagement on pg. 142.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Rather than adding up damage points, you can use the victory points system in the introduction to the Scenarios section.



SCENARIO TWO

THE BAIT

A lone ship has been sent into a system to lure out the defending forces in an extended pursuit. Unknown to the pursuers, the fleeing vessel has some friends lying in wait up ahead.

FORCES

This scenario is a raid, so it plays well with forces worth up to 750 points. These are divided up as shown below.

Pursuing forces: Up to 500 points.

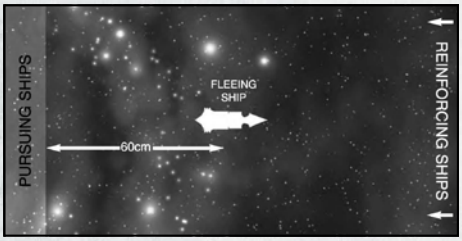
Pursued forces: One ship or squadron worth up to 250 points initially, with up to 500 points of reinforcements.

BATTLEZONE

This battle is most likely to take place in the outer reaches at the edge of a system, or in deep space near the jump point. If you are using a random battlezone generator, roll a D6: 1-3 = outer reaches, 4-6 = deep space.

SET-UP

The pursued vessel is placed in the centre of the table first, facing one of the short edges. The pursuers are deployed more than 60 cm away behind it. Reinforcements for the pursued ship enter from the table edge in front of it.



FIRST TURN

The fleeing ship takes the first turn.

SPECIAL RULES

Any reinforcements for the fleeing ships may enter the table on any turn, including Turn 1. If the reinforcing ships enter after turn 1, they may be deployed up to 30 cm along the long table edges for each turn after the first.

For example, a Slaughter class cruiser enters as reinforcements on turn 4, so it may be placed on the short table edge or up to 90 cm along one of the long edges.

GAME LENGTH

The game continues until one fleet disengages or is destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard victory points are earned for ships crippled or destroyed.

SCENARIO THREE

THE RAIDERS

A small attacking force has been sent in to cripple or destroy as much of the enemy fleet as possible before they are destroyed themselves. If the attackers succeed, the defending fleet will be put out of operation for months, enabling the attacker's main fleet to roam the system unhindered.

FORCES

Agree a points limit for the battle. The defender may spend up to this points limit in total, while the attacker can spend up to half this total.

BATTLEZONE

The attack could take place on a fleet near a planet, or on one out in deep space, so set up celestial phenomena in any mutually agreed fashion.

SET-UP

The defender deploys his whole fleet first. The defending fleet must be set up with all the ships facing the same table edge and at least 30 cm from any table edge. Each defending ship or squadron must be set up at least 20 cm apart. The attacker moves his fleet on to the table from any edge in his first turn.

FIRST TURN

The attacker takes the first turn and moves his fleet on from one table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

For the first D6 turns, all the defender's ships suffer a -1 Leadership penalty to represent their reduced state of alert.

GAME LENGTH

The game continues for eight turns, or until one fleet disengages.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total at the end of the battle wins.

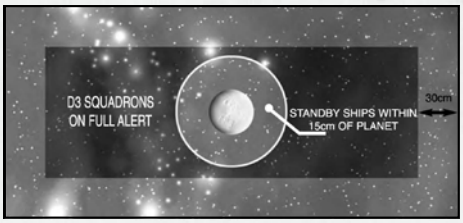
SCENARIO FOUR

SURPRISE ATTACK

The attacking fleet has launched a pre-emptive strike against the enemy, catching them unawares while they are still taking on stores in dock. The defenders must try to muster a defence as quickly as possible, before they are destroyed piecemeal.

FORCES

Both fleets are picked to an equal points value. In addition, the defender may spend an extra D6×10 points on planetary defences for every 500 points (or part) in his fleet (i.e. 10-60 points for up to 500 points of ships, 20-120 points for 501-1,000 points of ships and so on).



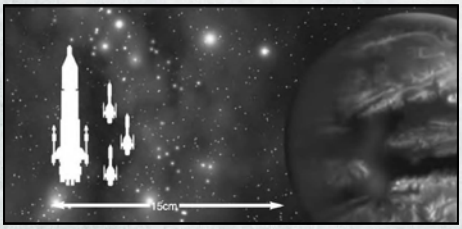
BATTLEZONE

A surprise attack normally takes place in the system's primary or inner biosphere. Set up a planet in the middle of the table. The planet's size depends upon the size of the battle: up to 500 points = small, between 500 to 1,500 points = medium, over 1,500 points = large. Generate rings, moons, etc. as normal. Then determine which table edge is sunward and place other celestial phenomena as normal.

SET-UP

At the start of the game, the defender may choose D3 ships or squadrons to be on full alert. These ships may be set up anywhere on the table that is at least 30 cm from a table edge. The rest of the defending fleet is still on standby. Squadrons on standby must be deployed with at least one ship within 15 cm of the planet and all ships abeam of the planet's surface.

The attackers move on to the table edge of their choice in their first turn.



FIRST TURN

The attacker gets the first turn.

SPECIAL RULES

Ships or squadrons on standby may not move, fire weapons or launch ordnance. They may however attempt to *Brace for Impact!* and repair critical damage. Turrets and shields work normally. To go on alert status, it must first pass a Leadership Test. Note that this is not a Command check, so failing with one squadron or ship will not prevent you from testing the others. A ship or squadron may not use special orders on the same turn that it goes on alert status.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until one fleet disengages or is destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total at the end of the battle wins.

SCENARIO FIVE

BLOCKADE RUN

A fleet has been trapped in the system for several months, unable to fight past the enemy fleet blockading the jump point. A small attack force has been assembled to break through the blockade at its weakest point, to hopefully return with sufficient reinforcements to lift the blockade totally.

FORCES

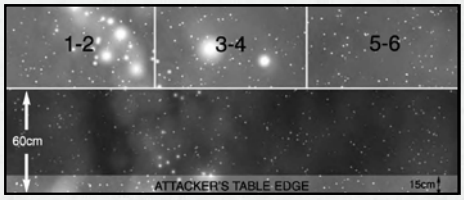
Agree on a points value total for the battle. The blockading player may spend this many points on his fleet. The attacker (attempting to break the blockade) may spend up to half this points total on ships.

BATTLEZONE

The blockading force is stationed on the edges of the system, so the battle will take place in either the outer reaches or deep space.

SET-UP

Divide the table lengthways into thirds, as shown. The blockading player then sets up his fleet. Roll a D6 for each blockading ship or squadron to determine which third of the table it is deployed in. Blockading ships may start facing in any direction, but may not be placed within 60 cm of the attacker's table edge. The attacker then sets up his force within 15 cm of his table edge.



FIRST TURN

Both players roll a dice and the player with the highest score may choose whether to go first or second.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both players score victory points for destroying and crippling enemy ships as normal. In addition, the attacker scores victory points equal to the points value of any ships that he can move off via the blockading player's table edge. Crippled ships are worth a quarter of their points value if the attacker can get them off the table. The side with the most victory points wins.

SCENARIO SIX

CONVOY

In this scenario, the defender must escort a convoy of vital transport vessels into a star system threatened by enemy forces. In order to catch the convoy, the attacking forces have seeded a wide area of space with ships lurking on minimal power to avoid detection and clusters of 'deadfall' torpedoes which will activate and launch as soon as an enemy ship registers on their sensors. But this convoy is desperately needed and must run the gauntlet of ships and missiles to deliver the supplies it carries.

FORCES

The convoy must include at least two transport ships. For every two transports the defender may choose up to 100 points of ships to protect the convoy, which may be deployed in a maximum of one squadron per pair of transports in the convoy. The transports may be formed into a single squadron if you want.

The attackers are generated randomly. Make D3 rolls on the table below plus one extra roll for each pair of transport ships in the convoy.

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1	One deadfall torpedo or attack craft cluster
2	Two deadfall torpedo or attack craft clusters
3	Three deadfall torpedo or attack craft clusters
4	A squadron of escort ships worth up to 100 points
5	A squadron of escort ships worth up to 150 points
6	One capital ship worth up to 200 points

Escort squadrons and capital ships are chosen from the attacker's fleet list.

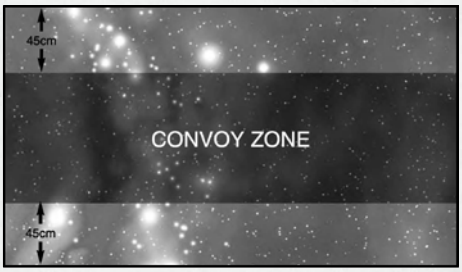
BATTLEZONE

The convoy could be attacked near a planet, or out in deep space, so set up celestial phenomena in any mutually agreed fashion. If you wish, you can use battlezone generators for the Convoy scenario. Roll to see which region of space the convoy is moving through and then generate celestial phenomena on the appropriate battlezone generator.

SET-UP

The attacking player sets up first. Place a face down Contact marker on the table for each capital ship, squadron, deadfall missile or attack craft cluster. Markers must be placed at least 30 cm apart and may not be placed within 30 cm of a table edge. If all of the counters cannot fit onto the table, start to double them up by placing an extra counter on top of each one already placed.

The convoy player then rolls a D6 to determine which short table edge the convoy enters from. Place one ship from the convoy at the edge of the table to mark the point where the convoy will move on from. The convoy may not enter the table within 45 cm of either of the long table edges.



FIRST TURN

The convoy player takes the first turn. The convoy moves onto the table from the point indicated. Any ships which do not enter the table on the first turn must move on in the second convoy player's turn. Any convoy ships which fail to enter play on the second turn are considered to be lost in the warp and do not take part in the game.

SPECIAL RULES

The attacker's face down counters are activated by a convoy vessel moving within 30 cm of them. Turn the activated counter face up as soon as the vessel moves within range and then complete the vessel's movement. Once the convoy player's Movement Phase is finished, deploy the attacking forces for any activated counters as follows.

The attacking player may voluntarily activate one counter at the start of his own Movement Phase to represent his forces detecting the approaching convoy. If any of the convoy player's ships are using special orders the attacking player may voluntarily activate up to two counters.

Deadfall torpedoes

Replace the Contact marker with a D6+2 Strength torpedo salvo. The attacking player may orientate the torpedo salvo to fire in whichever direction he wishes. The torpedoes have a speed of 30 cm and start moving in the next Ordnance Phase.

Attack Craft

Replace the Contact marker with D3+1 squadrons of attack craft. The attacking player can select any mix of fighters, bombers or assault boats and may place them together into a wave if he wants. The attack craft start moving in the next Ordnance Phase.

Squadron

Place one ship from the squadron on top of the Contact marker. The rest of the squadron is placed in formation with the first ship, no closer to the enemy than the first ship placed. The squadron may be deployed facing in any direction, but all the ships in it must be pointing in the same direction.

Capital Ship

Place the capital ship on top of the Contact marker, facing in any direction the attacking player chooses.

GAME LENGTH

The battle continues until the last transport leaves the table or is destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The success or failure of the convoy depends on the number of transports which get through. Only transports which cross the board and move off the opposite short table edge count for victory purposes.

TRANSPORTS EXISTING	RESULT
None	**Attackers Win** The defending forces have performed miserably. The attackers will feast well on their captured booty.
One	**Attackers Marginal Win** A single transport getting through was barely worth the risk of sending forces into hostile space. If the attackers can maintain this kind of stranglehold, the system is doomed.
Two	**Convoy Marginal Win** The convoy has been defended adequately – two of the valuable transports made it. More would have been better though.
Three or more	**Convoy Win** The convoy has made it through with enough transports to stave off the current crisis. Medals and promotions all round!

SCENARIO SEVEN

PLANETARY ASSAULT

One fleet is attempting to deploy troops onto a contested planet, either to spearhead an invasion or reinforce existing armies. They must smash through the defenders and hold off any counter-attack while they send troops down to the planet's surface.

FORCES

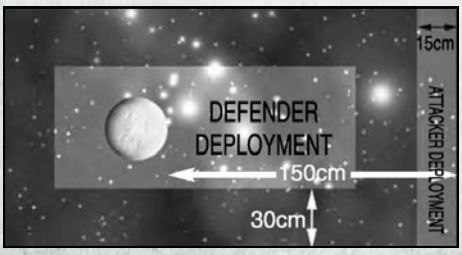
Both fleets are of equal points. The defender can spend an extra D6×10 points on planetary defences for every 500 points (or part) in his fleet. The attacker may take two free transports for every 500 points (or part) in his fleet.

BATTLEZONE

A planetary assault normally takes place in the system's primary or inner biosphere. Place a planet no more than 150 cm from one of the short table edges (roll a D6 to determine size: 1 = small, 2-5 = medium, 6 = large) and generate rings, moons etc. as normal. Declare one table edge as sunward and set up other celestial phenomena as normal.

SET-UP

The defender can choose to place ships and squadrons either on patrol or on standby in high orbit within the planet's gravity. Roll a D6 for each defending ship/squadron on patrol: 1-3 the attacker may set up the ship/squadron, on a 4-6 the defender may set it up. Ships on patrol may be set up anywhere that is not within 30 cm of a table edge or within an area of celestial phenomena. The defender always decides the facing of ships, regardless of who set them up. The attacker deploys his fleet within 15 cm of the short table edge furthest from the planet. You will also need a separate low orbit table.



FIRST TURN

The players roll a D6. Whoever got the highest may take either the first or second turn.

SPECIAL RULES

Attacking ships must move within 30 cm of the planet table edge on the low orbit table to send troops to the surface and bombard enemy positions. For each turn an attacking capital ship spends within 30 cm of the planet edge, the attacker scores 1 assault point. For each turn an attacking transport spends within 30 cm of the planet edge, the attacker scores 2 assault points. A ship deploying troops or bombarding the planet may not do anything else that turn.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until one fleet is destroyed or disengages, or the attacker has scored 10 or more assault points.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Add up the assault points earned by the attacker and add +1 to the total for every 500 victory points (rounding down) scored by the attacker for destroying or crippling ships and planetary defences. Deduct -1 assault point for every 500 victory points (rounding up) scored by the defender. Look up the adjusted assault point total on the table below.

TOTAL ASSAULT POINTS	RESULT
0-1	**Defender's Victory** The attacking forces achieved almost nothing. The pitiful amount of assaulting troops that reached the planet will be quickly annihilated.
2-5	**Defender's Marginal Win** The assaulting forces are prevented from making a substantial landing on the planet. Nonetheless, enemy detachments will now have to be hunted down and destroyed.
6-9	**Attacker's Marginal Win** The assault dropped enough troops, etc., to capture a large part of the planet's resources. Ongoing battles for control of the world will rage for months, even years.
10+	**Attacker's Victory** The attackers succeeded in sweeping aside the defending forces and staging decisive landings at key points all over the planet. Within a few weeks of mopping up, the attackers will have complete control of the planet.

SCENARIO EIGHT

ESCALATING ENGAGEMENT

Two opposing fleets are in the area, each unsure of the enemy's size and disposition. As they split to spread their search wider, two groups come into contact and signal the rest of their fleets. Whose ships will arrive first? Will they be able to overcome the enemy? Only time will tell ...

FORCES

Both players' fleets are split into five divisions. Each player takes five Contact markers to represent their divisions and assigns part of their fleet to each marker. Note down which vessels and squadrons are allocated to each marker.

There are no restrictions as to what ships can be in a division. Once a division moves onto the table, it is not constrained to stick together like a squadron. However, all five Contact markers must be allocated to at least some ships and they are drawn randomly, so an even split of forces is best. Also be warned that the time a division takes to arrive depends on the speed of its slowest vessel.

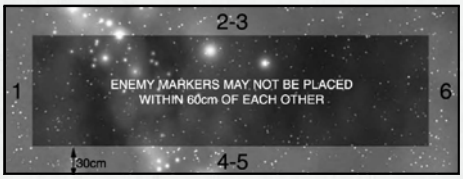
BATTLEZONE

Escalating engagements can occur anywhere from deep space to far inside a contested system, hence any method for placing celestial phenomena which can be mutually agreed by the players is acceptable.

SET-UP

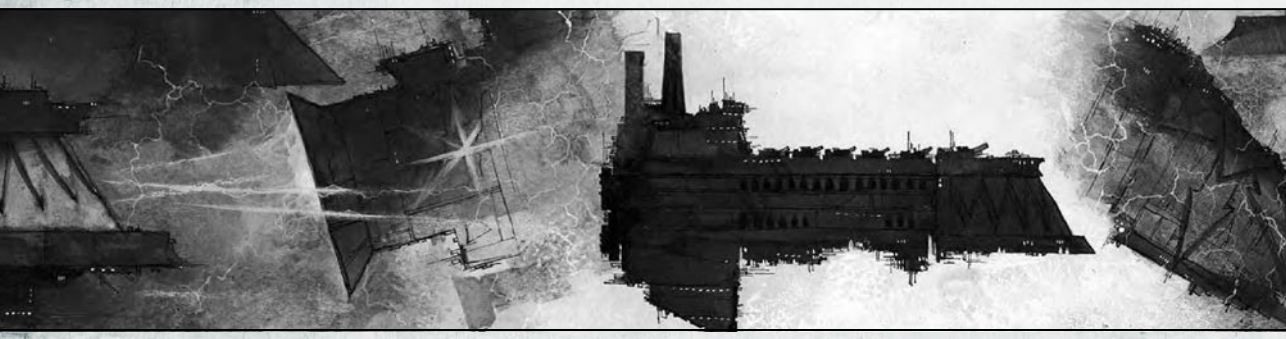
At the start of battle, each player has only one division on the tabletop: the others arrive as reinforcements later. Each player randomly chooses one Contact marker for their starting force. Roll to see who places their marker first. A marker may be placed anywhere on the table that is not within 30 cm of a table edge or within 60 cm of an enemy marker.

Once both markers have been placed, deploy the ships from the divisions they represent anywhere within 10 cm of the marker.



FIRST TURN

Once all ships have been deployed both players roll a D6 and the player with the higher score has the choice of whether to take the first or second turn.



SPECIAL RULES

In the End Phase of each player's turn, the player randomly chooses another one of their Contact markers and places it along a randomly rolled table edge within the following restrictions:

- The marker may not be placed within 60 cm of any enemy ships.
- If there are friendly ships within 30 cm of the table edge the marker must be placed within 30 cm of them.

At the beginning of a player's turn, he can try to bring additional ships into play by rolling a D6 for any Contact marker that is already in place on a table edge. The minimum score needed to bring the ships represented by that marker into play depends on the speed of the slowest ship in the division:

DIVISION'S SPEED	SCORE NEEDED TO ARRIVE*
up to 20 cm	5+
25	4+
30 cm or more	3+

**If friendly ships are within 30 cm of the Contact marker add +2 to the dice roll.*

If the roll equals or beats the number needed, the ships of that division may move on to the table from anywhere along the table edge that is within 10 cm of the Contact marker.

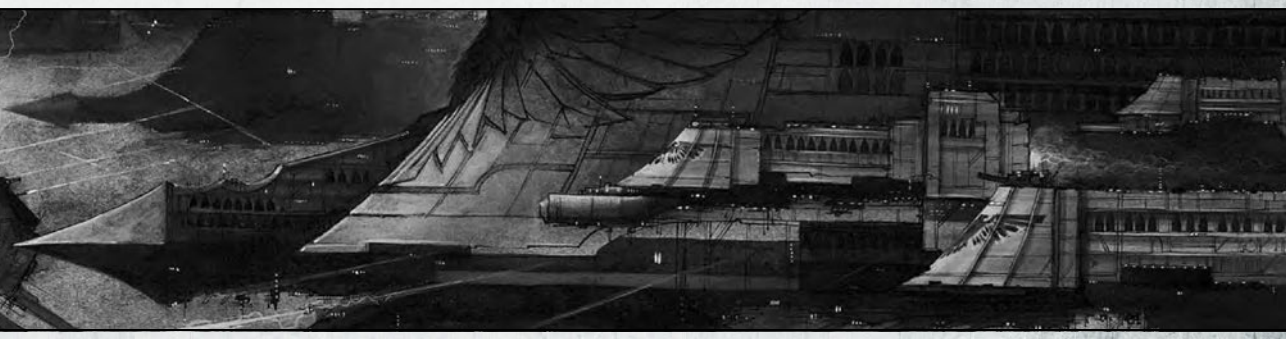
If the roll is failed, the Contact marker may be moved along the table edge by up to the speed of the slowest ship in the division.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until one fleet disengages or is destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total at the end of the battle wins.



SCENARIO NINE

EXTERMINATUS

The attacking fleet is escorting Exterminators, ships capable of laying waste to entire planetary populations or even obliterating all life on a world in a matter of hours. The Exterminator fleet must be stopped and every ship in the vicinity is rushing to defend the threatened planet.

FORCES

Agree a points total for the game. The attacker chooses a fleet up to this points value and in addition may take specialised Exterminator ships. The attackers may include a ship modified to become an Exterminator for every 1,000 points (or part) in his fleet (i.e. up to 1,000 points = one Exterminator, 1,001-2,000 points = two Exterminators, etc.). Nominate any capital ship to be an Exterminator: the ship's prow armament is replaced by an Armageddon weapon, which can only be used against planetary targets (in effect the prow weapon is lost). An attacking Chaos fleet may choose to include an active Blackstone Fortress (with the rules given in the Chaos Ships fleet list) instead of using modified capital ships. In this case the fortress does not sacrifice any of its weaponry to enable it to carry an Armageddon weapon.

The defender chooses a fleet to defend the planet and will receive additional reinforcements throughout the game. The defender may spend an extra D6×10 points on planetary defences for every 500 points (or part) in his fleet (i.e. 10-60 points for up to 500 points of ships, 20-120 points for 501-1,000 points of ships, etc.).

BATTLEZONE

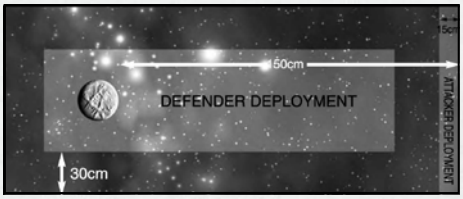
The battle is fought in the primary or inner biosphere. Place a planet no more than 150 cm from one of the short table edges (roll a D6 to determine size: 1 = small, 2-5 = medium, 6 = large), generating rings, moons etc. as normal. Declare one table edge as sunward, as detailed in the Celestial Phenomena rules and place extra phenomena following whichever method you choose.

SET-UP

The defender has most of his fleet stationed near to the planet as the enemy approaches, but several ships or squadrons are out on patrol and arrive later in the engagement. The defender must pick one capital ship or escort squadron to be on patrol for each 500 points in his fleet. These are kept to one side, not deployed at the start of the game. The remainder of the defending fleet may be deployed anywhere on the tabletop, but not within 30 cm of a table edge.

The attacker sets up his entire fleet within 15 cm of the table edge which is furthest from the planet.

You will also need a separate low orbit table, as described in the Celestial Phenomena section.



FIRST TURN

Each player rolls a dice and the player with the higher score may choose whether to go first or second.

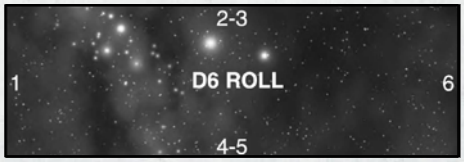
SPECIAL RULES

The Exterminator/s must enter low orbit and move to within 45 cm of the planet table edge. At the start of each turn that an Exterminator is within 45 cm of the planet table edge, roll a dice. On a roll of a 4 or more it activates its Armageddon weapon and triggers a catastrophic event that will obliterate all life on the planet! The defenders may always target an Exterminator – if it is not the closest target then no Leadership test is required.

The defending fleet rolls for the arrival of its patrols at the start of each of the defender's turns. Roll a D6 for each defending capital ship and escort squadron which is not in play and compare it to the table below.

SHIP'S SPEED	SCORE NEEDED TO ARRIVE
up to 20 cm	5+
25	4+
30 cm or more	3+

If the roll equals or beats the number shown, the ship arrives as a reinforcement on a randomly determined table edge.



Note: *If this scenario is being played as part of a campaign and the planet is destroyed roll on the table that follows.*

D6 ROLL	RESULT
1-3	The system becomes uninhabited, mark it as such on the sub-sector map.
4-6	The system's primary world is destroyed but one or more other planets still bear life. Roll again to see what the system becomes: 1-3 agri-world, 4-6 mining planet.

GAME LENGTH

The game ends when one fleet disengages, all the attacker's Exterminators are destroyed, or an Exterminator destroys the planet.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

If one fleet disengages then it loses. If all the attacking Exterminators are destroyed, the defender wins. If the planet is destroyed then the attacker wins!

SCENARIO TEN

FLEET ENGAGEMENT

Although many space battles are fought between relatively small forces with very specific objectives – raiding convoys, making surprise strikes and so on – larger fleets will sometimes bring each other to battle to protect a system, hold the line or simply to destroy each other.

FORCES

Both fleets are picked to an equal points value.

BATTLEZONE

Fleet actions are normally fought in the primary or inner biospheres to keep a particular world outside bombardment range, but they could take place anywhere. Celestial phenomena can be set up in any mutually agreeable manner.

SET-UP

Each player must choose one of the following fleet formations. Compare the two formations chosen on the table below and use the set-up indicated.

Sphere: This formation attempts to spread the fleet broadly so that it envelops the enemy fleet, surrounding it as the ships close in. The sphere is vulnerable to a wedge formation which will break through the closing net.

Wedge: A wedge is easily surrounded by more complex formations such as the sphere and cross. However a wedge keeps the fleet closely packed together for mutual support and allows it to storm through thinly-spread opponents.

Cross: A formation which spreads ships out to run parallel with the enemy fleet, keeping them on the broadside for an extended engagement.

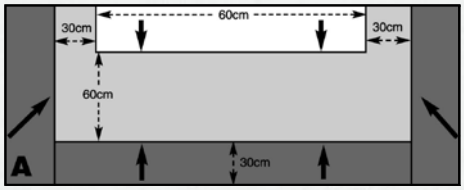
	OPPONENT'S CHOICE		
YOUR CHOICE	**Sphere**	**Wedge**	**Cross**
Sphere	B	A(d.grey)/C(d.grey)	A(d.grey)/D(d.grey)
Wedge	A(white)/C(white)	D(d.grey)/D(white)	B
Cross	A (white)/D(white)	B	B

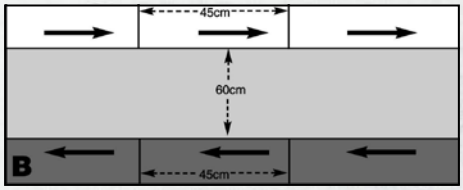
Notes: In a split result (i.e. A(d.grey)/D(d.grey)) both players roll a D6 to see which set-up is used. The player whose fastest ship has a higher speed than any enemy ship adds +1 to his dice roll. The fleet with the best Admiral (i.e. highest Leadership) adds +1 to its roll. The fleet with the most escort class ships adds +1. The winner of the dice roll may choose which set-up to use.

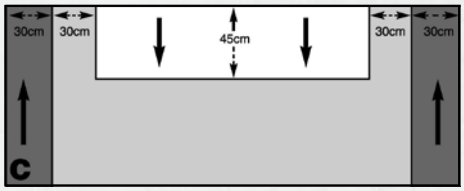
Once the set-up has been determined, both players roll a D6 and the player who rolls the lowest has to deploy a squadron or lone ship in their set-up area first. The players then alternate deploying ships or squadrons in their set-up areas until all forces have been deployed.

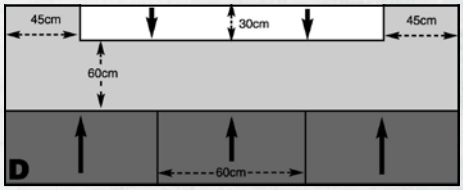
Divisions
Some set-ups split a fleet's deployment zone into several divisions. When this happens the fleet must deploy at least one ship or squadron in each division available.

Approach Angle
The set-up maps have arrows indicating the approach angle for the opposing fleets. As ships are deployed, they must be orientated so that they are travelling in the same direction as the arrows in their division.









FIRST TURN
Once all ships have been deployed both players roll a D6 and the player with the higher score has the choice of whether to take the first or the second turn.

GAME LENGTH
The game lasts until one fleet disengages or is destroyed.

VICTORY CONDITIONS
Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total wins.

CAMPAIGN RULES

At some stage all wargamers contemplate running a campaign. This is understandable – after all, battles don't take place in isolation, they are part of an ongoing war. A campaign allows you to fight your own 'ongoing war' by linking battles together, so that the results of one battle will have an effect on the future ones you fight. It adds a lot to a campaign if you keep a journal of the progress of the war, and from this you can write your own part of the history of the Gothic campaign. Over the course of the war you will be able to develop cunning strategies to conquer a whole sub-sector of the Gothic system and you will be able to watch your fleet develop as ships' crews gain in skill and ability – or are destroyed and have to be replaced with inexperienced crews. In the battles you fight there will be famous victories and shameful defeats, legendary (or infamous!) commanders will emerge and ships in your fleet will gain fame for the awesome feats they have pulled off against all the odds!

As I hope you can tell, campaigns can be a lot of fun and they are not all that difficult to run either. To help you, we've developed a map-based campaign system based on our own experiences of running campaigns over the years, but you really should feel free to modify and change what's here to suit your own tastes.

For example, playing a campaign offers great opportunities to try out new rules or new classes of ship that you've invented, or you could start thinking of adding rules for fighting land battles and boarding actions using the Warhammer 40,000 and Kill Team rules. The possibilities really are endless.

GETTING STARTED

In order to run a campaign you'll need at least one player with a Chaos fleet and one player with an Imperial fleet. Any amount of extra players can join in, including players with Ork or Eldar fleets.

Once you've got your players together you need to pick one of the sub-sectors we've provided maps for as the location for your campaign (the maps can be found at the end of this section). For your first campaign we recommend starting off with one of the smaller sub-sectors, unless there are lots of players (i.e. more than eight) taking part in the campaign. You'll need to photocopy the sub-sector map you've decided to use (or draw it by hand) to keep track of which player controls each system. We glued our map to a sheet of card and blu-tacked it to the wall in our gaming area, then used coloured pins to show which player controlled each system, but you could just as easily write down who controls what.

Next you need to get all the players together for a 'campaign briefing'. The most important thing you'll need to go over at this point is the rules for the campaign, to make sure that everybody knows what's going on. You should then decide how long the campaign is to last. For your first campaign we recommend playing for one month of real time and on the whole it's best to keep campaigns short – after all, you can always start another one!

Once this has been decided, players can pick their starting systems and design their fleets using the rules described below, then you can start fighting battles. However, it is usually a good idea to set a regular time and place for campaign meetings, and also to elect a 'campaign arbitrator' who is in charge of making sure that the campaign runs smoothly. You might also want to consider putting together a campaign newsletter, in which case you'll need to decide who will be its editor.

STARTING SYSTEMS

At the start of the campaign, many of the systems in the sub-sector will be neutral. As the campaign progresses, this will change and players will gain control of systems that will pay them tithes and help repair their ships.

Designers' Note: *Actually all systems start nominally under the control of the Imperium, but as planetary governors tend to go their own way until reminded of their obligations, they are for all intents and purposes neutral.*

Imperial and Chaos players start with one of the systems in the sub-sector under their control. Roll a D6 to decide the order that both players pick their system, and record who controls which system with coloured pins on the campaign map, or by keeping a written record. Eldar and Ork players start with a hidden pirate base instead, and should write down secretly which system it is hidden in (they can pick a system controlled by an Imperial or Chaos player).

STARTING FLEETS & THE FLEET REGISTER

Imperial and Chaos fleets begin the campaign with 2,000 points and Ork and Eldar fleets start with 1,500 points. Important: you must have models to represent all of the ships in your fleet, in case they all end up in a big battle! If your fleet doesn't add up to 2,000 points, then just use what you've got available (don't worry – you will get to add new ships to your fleet during the course of the campaign as you buy and paint new models for your collection).

Each player has his own fleet registry. He uses it to keep notes and dates of when a capital ship or escort squadron was commissioned (i.e. bought) along with class of ship etc., when it takes its fleet trials (i.e. it's assembled, painted and its Leadership rating is rolled for), its campaign history and its loss if and when they occur. If a vessel is used in battle before its fleet trials are complete (i.e. it's not fully assembled and painted) it will suffer a critical hit on a D6 roll of 1 every time it uses special orders.

Ships which are added to the fleet register after the start of the campaign suffer a -1 modifier to their Leadership due to their hasty training and less experienced officers.

When players fight battles they must pick their forces from their own fleet register.

THE COMMANDER

Each player's fleet has a commander (or an appropriately named leader for their race) who represents the player himself. Over the course of the campaign, your commander will collect renown points and gain in rank, and at the end of the campaign the commander with the highest renown is the winner.

Once you've filled in your fleet register, you need to fill in the details of your commander. He'll need a name, and starts off with 1 point of renown and one re-roll. In addition, you must pick one ship in your fleet as his flagship. If this ship is involved in a battle then 'you' are there, and you may use the commander's re-roll or any other special abilities he may have in the battle. If the flagship is not there then you may not use the commander's re-roll or abilities.

If the flagship is destroyed, then it is assumed that your commander manages to escape somehow. He may not have any further effect in that game, but you may choose a new flagship for him once the game is over.

FIGHTING BATTLES

In order for things to happen in the campaign players must fight battles (doh!). At its simplest level all players have to do is challenge any other player that is in the campaign to a game and if they agree then the game uses the additional campaign rules below as well as the rules used for a normal game.

The only problem with this is that it can lead to some odd situations where Imperial fleets attack other Imperial fleets to gain control of systems, and because of this, it's best if the Imperial players are not allowed to attack each other and if the Chaos and Eldar players restrain themselves,

if possible, from attacking players of their own race. If you have a lot of Imperial fleets in the campaign (or, indeed, only Imperial fleets), then it is best to split them into loyalists and rebels, the latter being assumed to have gone over to the dark gods of Chaos!

Anyway, however you decide to do it, you need to challenge other players in the campaign to a game. The game is arranged in exactly the same manner as a one-off game; simply agree on a time and a place and go for it. You can play as many or as few campaign games as you like, all you need to do is find an opponent.

Note that opposing players do not have to agree to play just because you happened to have challenged them to a battle – but you may want to penalise players that refuse to play games with anybody for long periods of time and spoil the campaign for the other players.

For example, if a player doesn't play any games for (say) a fortnight then they lose a point of renown, and if they don't play any games for a month then one of their systems (randomly selected) rebels and is turned over to another player.

THE CAMPAIGN TURN

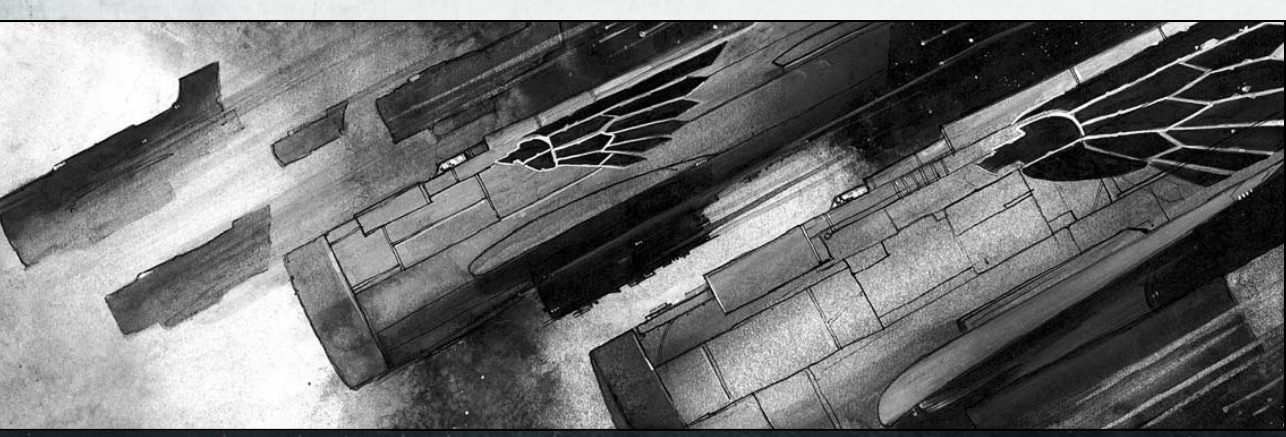
Campaign games include a number of extra steps which take place at the beginning and end of the game, these are described below. Unless stated otherwise all of the normal Battlefleet Gothic rules apply in a campaign game.

Each time that two players have a game they both get what is known as a campaign turn. The turn uses the following sequence of play:

1) Build-Up
- Determine Initiative
- Roll for incoming Orders, select target system if necessary
- Select Forces from Fleet Registry

2) Fight Battle

3) Aftermath
- Claim System
- Adjust Renown
- Promotions & Demotions
- Ship Experience
- Repairs & Withdrawals
- Make Appeals



We fell upon them as hawks do from a cloudless sky. Cannon were our terrible claws, and lasers our ripping beaks. In a flash we had torn their craft asunder and turned for home, giving praise to the Emperor and our captain both.

BUILD-UP

The build-up stage takes place at the start of the battle, before either player deploys or picks his fleet. In this stage you decide where the battle will be, what type of scenario to play, and what size of fleets to use. The stage has a number of steps that need to be carried out in the following order:

1. Determine Initiative
2. Receive Orders
3. Pick Fleet

1. Determine Initiative

Roll to see who is attacker and who is defender (the player who rolls highest is the attacker). If one player has more systems than the other his forces are stretched more thinly, so the player with fewer systems gains a +1 bonus to the dice roll. You may want to incorporate the attack ratings from the scenarios introduction, where you roll a number of dice, picking the highest one, to determine the initiative.

2. Receive Orders

Although fleet commanders have a large measure of autonomy, higher command still sends down the orders telling them what they must achieve next. In effect, the players get to decide what happens in the battles, but receive orders that direct the strategy they must follow, and the type of battles they will fight. To reflect this, one of the players must roll a D6 to determine what type and size of scenario is to be played.

INCOMING ORDERS	
D6 Roll	**Orders**
1-2	Raid (500-750 points)
3-6	Battle (750-1500 points)

If one player has 21 Renown points or more he may choose whether to fight a battle or a raid (if both are this status then roll to see who decides).

Decide Scenario: Roll on the tables below to determine which scenario is to be played, or if both player agree you can pick one from those listed for the type of scenario.

RAIDS	
D6 Roll	**Scenario**
1	Cruiser Clash
2	The Bait
3	The Raiders
4	Blockade Run
5-6	Convoy

BATTLES	
D6 Roll	**Scenario**
1	Exterminatus!
2	Surprise Attack
3	Planetary Assault
4	Escalating Engagement
5-6	Fleet Engagement

Decide Location: The attacker must select the system in which the scenario will take place. The system must be connected to one already controlled by the player via a warp route. If no systems are already held, any may be chosen. If an uninhabited system is chosen, the defender must reduce his points value by 100 pts. Other types of system can affect the number of planetary defences, as described elsewhere in the rules.

Decide Size of Battle: Once a mission has been generated, players agree the points value of the game and select their forces. The players can agree on the exact number of points for the game within the limits listed on the Incoming Order table. If one player holds more systems than the other their forces will be spread thinly, giving the player with the least number of systems an advantage. Each extra system a player holds over his opponent reduces his fleet size by 10 points.

Ork & Eldar Scenarios: Ork and Eldar fleets only ever make raids, they never take part in battles. If you roll up a battle on the Incoming Orders table, then it is treated as a major raid instead. Roll for the scenario for the major raid on the Raids table, but the size of the battle is increased to 750-1,500 points.

3. Pick Fleets

Both players must now pick their fleets using ships from their fleet register. The total value of the ships you pick may not exceed the points total you and your opponent have decided for the scenario you are to play. Note that you can't change the details of ships on the register or adjust their points value at this stage – the ships you pick must come from your register and not be changed in any way.

Fight the Battle: With the build-up completed all you need do now is roll for a sub-plot and then get fighting (hurrah!).

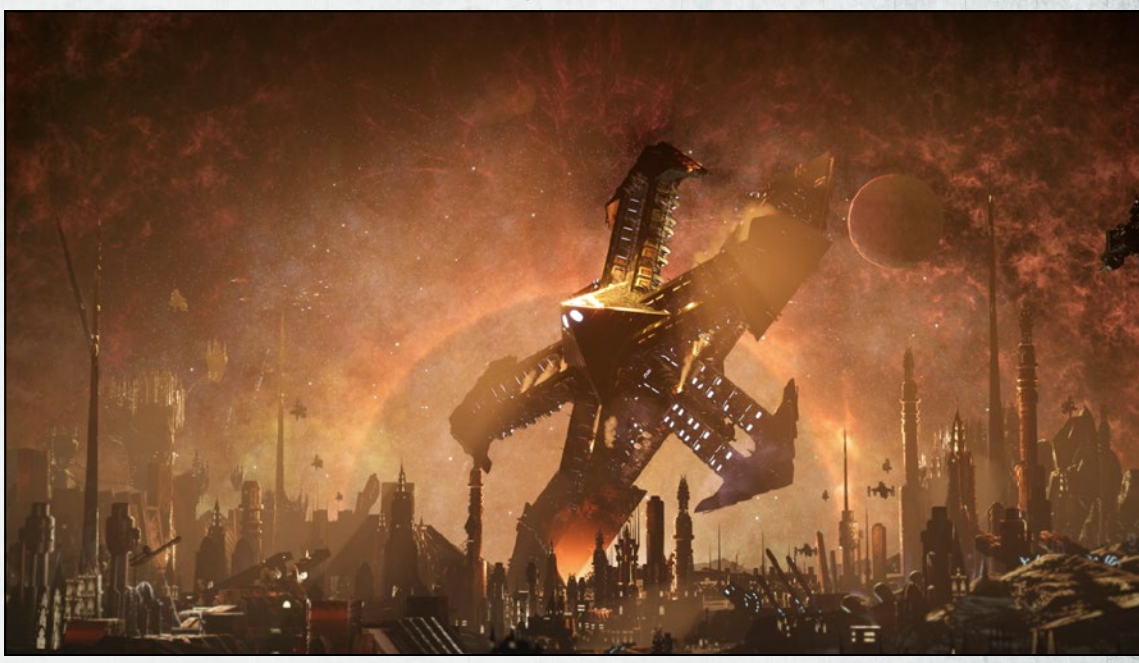
Attacking Pirate Bases

Orks and Eldar never get to capture systems, but instead have a secret pirate base. If an Ork or Eldar player's opponent with a rank of Admiral or higher (or its equivalent for other races) gains the initiative for a scenario, then he can attempt to attack the base instead of playing a normal scenario.

The attacker must, however, first find the base: roll a D6 and multiply the score by 10. If you roll under the Ork or Eldar side's renown, then you've tracked down the base and system that it is hidden in must be revealed. If the player fails to find the base (i.e. fails to roll under the defender's renown) then play a normal scenario. Once you know the location of the base you don't have to find it again (you can reveal its location to other players too if you want).

Once the base is found, the player may attack it if he controls the system, or it is in a neutral system. If neither of these conditions apply, then play a normal scenario instead. Assuming you find the base and it is in a location where you can attack it, then play either the Planetary Assault or the Exterminatus scenario. If the attacker wins then the base is destroyed and can no longer be used by the Ork or Eldar player.

AFTERMATH



Once you have fought a campaign game and know who has won, you come to probably the most important stage: the aftermath. This is where you find out what effect the game you have just played has on the campaign map, as well as the effect it has had on the ships and crew that took part. This stage has a number of steps, which need to be carried out in the following order:

1. Spoils of War
2. Adjust Renown
3. Promotions & Demotions
4. Ship Experience
5. Repairs & Withdrawals
6. Appeals

1. The Spoils of War
Whenever an attacker wins a battle, he may claim control of the system if it is connected by a warp route to one he already controls. The system can only be taken over by the player that won the battle if it previously belonged to the player that he defeated, or if it was previously neutral.

Whenever an attacker wins a raid, he may count the opponent's system where the raid took place as his own for the rest of this campaign turn (which is important, since the systems you control affect your ability to repair ships, etc.).

'The Emperor will judge your sins – after the officer of the Watch is finished with you.'

– Popular naval saying

2. Adjust Renown

Renown is a measure of the fame or infamy enjoyed by you, the fleet commander. Players start the campaign with 1 point of renown and can gain or lose renown as shown on the Renown table. Renown is very, very important because, at the end of the campaign, the player that has earned the most renown is the winner! Note that you can gain or lose renown even if your commander was not present during the scenario (i.e. his flagship did not take part).

RENOWN	
Renown can be gained for the following:	
Winning a battle or major raid	+2
Winning a raid	+1
Victory points earned	+(VPs/100 round up)
Sub-plots	variable
Each capital ship hulk captured	+1
Fought commander with higher renown	+1
Fought fleet with higher points value and lost	+1
Fought fleet with higher points value and won	+2
Renown is lost for the following:	
Losing a battle	-1
Losing a raid	-1
Each capital ship lost	-1
Sub-plots	variable

Note: *A commander can never be reduced below 1 renown point (you may be renowned as a bad commander, but you will be renowned nonetheless).*

A skilled Navigator can steer a ship anywhere through the warp, in theory at least. However, this task can be made much easier, and even allow vessels without a Navigator to make longer warp jumps, along certain shipping routes. These routes have a relay of Astropathic beacons along them, giving ships' captains and Navigators guidance along a pre-set path. Some shipping routes are part of a system of warp gates which link areas of the Gothic Sector together through stabilised warp tunnels. During the Gothic War, as the warp storms made travel through any area of space around the region extremely difficult, the control of the shipping routes became vital. Important meeting points of the trade routes, such as Port Maw and the Lysades sub-sector, were the site of several major fleet battles, as whoever dominated these areas could move their ships around the sector much more quickly and with greater accuracy.

IMPERIAL PROMOTIONS (ALL IMPERIALS EXCEPT MECHANICUS FLEETS)			
Renown	**Title**	**Ld**	**Notes**
1-5	Commander	8	1 re-roll
6-10	Battle Group Commander	8	2 re-rolls
11-20	Sub-sector Commander	9	2 re-rolls
21-30	Admiral	9	3 re-rolls
31-50	Fleet Admiral	10	3 re-rolls
51+	Solar Admiral	10	4 re-rolls

MECHANICUS PROMOTIONS			
Renown	**Title**	**Ld**	**Notes**
1-5	Explorator Techpriest	7	1 re-roll
6-10	Magos Errant	8	1 re-roll, 1 refit
11-20	Magos Explorator	8	2 re-rolls, 1 refit
21-30	Aspiring Archmagos	9	2 re-rolls, 1 refit
31-50	Archmagos Explorator	9	3 re-rolls, 1 refit
51+	Archmagos Veneratus	10	3 re-rolls, 2 refits

CHAOS PROMOTIONS			
Renown	**Title**	**Ld**	**Notes**
1-5	Chaos Champion	8	1 re-roll
6-10	Exalted Chaos Champion	8	1 re-roll, 1 Mark of Chaos
11-20	Tyrant	9	1 re-roll, 1 Mark of Chaos
21-30	Chaos Lord	9	1 re-roll, 2 Mark of Chaos
31-50	Overlord	10	1 re-roll, 2 Mark of Chaos
51+	Warmaster	10	1 re-roll, 3 Mark of Chaos

ORK PROMOTIONS		
Renown	**Title**	**Notes**
1-5	Nob	1 re-roll
6-10	Big Nob	2 re-rolls
11-20	Boss	2 re-rolls
21-30	Big Boss	3 re-rolls
31-50	War Boss	3 re-rolls
51+	Warlord	4 re-rolls

ELDAR PROMOTIONS (ALL TYPES OF ELDAR)			
Renown	**Title**	**Ld Bonus**	**Notes**
1-5	Captain	+0	1 re-roll
6-10	Lord	+1	1 re-rolls
11-20	Shadow Lord	+1	2 re-rolls
21-30	Prince	+2	2 re-rolls
31-50	Shadow Prince	+2	3 re-rolls
51+	King	+2	4 re-rolls

3. Promotions and Demotions

The player gains promotions according to their renown as shown on the tables below. It is possible to lose rank if you lose renown points. Your rank determines how many re-rolls or Marks of Chaos you receive in the scenarios that you fight.

Tau fleet commanders use the Imperial table for their promotions.

'The most important aspect of any planetary assault is to ensure the safe passage of shuttles and dropships. The greatest threat to this has always been the ground-based defence.'

– Imperial Navy Training Dogma

4. Ship Experience
As the campaign progresses ships (or rather, ship crews) will gain experience. This is represented by increasing their Leadership characteristic, and by giving them special 'crew skills'. On the other hand a ship that is badly damaged is likely to have lost a sizable proportion of its experienced crewmen, which will reduce its effectiveness, while a ship that is destroyed will have to be replaced by a new or salvaged vessel with a very inexperienced crew.

Gaining Experience: Ships which fought in a battle and were not crippled or destroyed roll 2D6. If the roll is higher than their Leadership rating, then either their Leadership may be improved by +1 point (up to a maximum of 10) or the ship may roll on the Crew Skills table. You may choose which option to take, unless the ship has a Leadership of 6 or 7, in which case you must choose to increase the ship's Leadership by +1 point instead of taking a skill.

Crippled Ships: Ships which were crippled in a battle lose -1 Leadership (to a minimum of 6). Note that crew skills aren't lost for being crippled, even if the ship's Leadership is reduced to 6 or 7.

Destroyed Ships: Ships which are destroyed (i.e. reduced to 0 damage points) must be replaced with a new ship. Change their name on your fleet register. The new ship has a Leadership of 6, no crew skills, and any refits that have been taken are lost (the rules for refits follow later on).

Escort Squadrons: Escort squadrons gain and lose Leadership and skills in the same way as ships. Escort squadrons which suffer 50% or greater casualties are considered crippled for the purpose of experience, while those that are wiped out are considered destroyed.

5. Repairs & Withdrawals

In a campaign, ships that have suffered damage must be repaired, and it is the number of systems a player controls that determines just how much damage can be fixed. Sometimes the systems under your control won't be able to repair all the damage your fleet has suffered, in which case you can either withdraw the ships and send them to be repaired outside the sub-sector, or you can let them limp on as they are until you have time to repair them.

Repairs: Each system a player controls may repair a number of damage points. This varies depending on the type of system and your renown. The number of damage points different systems can repair is shown below. Renown is important because it helps with recruiting/press ganging extra crew, claiming resources and time in dock etc.. Note that all criticals are repaired automatically, including ones which may not be repaired during a battle (i.e. Bridge Smashed and Shields Collapse). Also remember that if the attacker won a raid he may count the enemy system where the raid took place as his own for this turn. You can use Repair points to bring escort squadrons back up to strength, in which case each escort ship is worth 1 damage point.

Repairing Vessels

An Imperial commander has just won a battle. He now controls a hive world, two Agri-worlds and a penal colony and has 28 renown points. During the battle one of his cruisers took five points of damage, another took three points of damage and another lost four hits. He also lost two frigates from a squadron of four. With the systems he currently has under his control, the Imperial commander may repair nine points of damage plus D6-2 for his penal colony. He rolls a 4, which gives him a total of 11 repair points. He uses 5 to totally repair the first cruiser and another 3 to repair the second cruiser. He replaces the two lost frigates, meaning he can only repair 1 point of damage on the third cruiser. This cruiser will start its next battle with three hits less than normal.

REPAIR POINTS

Renown	Agri	Penal (min. of 1)	Mining	Forge, hive, pirate world	Civilised	Uninhabited
1-5	1	1	2	3	1	1
6-10	1	D6-4	2	3	2	1
11-20	1	D6-3	2	4	3	1
21-30	2	D6-2	2	5	4	1
31-50	2	D6-1	3	6	5	1
51+	3	D6	4	12	6	1

Withdrawing ships: A player may choose to withdraw ships to get them fully repaired at a major base. Mark the fact they have been withdrawn on the fleet register. Ships which are withdrawn are unavailable for the player's next game, after which they return to the fleet with their full number of hits. Escort squadrons which are withdrawn may return at full strength.

6. Appeals

After repairs have been completed, both players can appeal to higher authorities/ the gods of Chaos for aid. The amount of help you can expect to receive depends on how well you've been doing, as measured by your renown. To reflect this, the number of appeals that may be made depend on the players' renown as shown on the table below.

RENOWN	NO. OF APPEALS
1-10	1 Appeal
11-30	2 Appeals
31-50	3 Appeals
51+	4 Appeals

Appeals may be made for the things listed below. If you are allowed to make more than one appeal you can ask for the same thing up to two times (and may have each appeal granted), or you can appeal for different things – it's up to you! However, you must declare what you will appeal for this turn before determining whether the appeals have been granted. Having declared what you are going to appeal for, roll a D6 for each appeal to see if the appeal is granted.

Type of appeals allowed

There are 3 different types of appeal. Not every fleet is allowed every type. Allowances, restrictions and specific upgrades are printed with the fleet lists. The General Upgrades on the following pages are used by most fleets, so they are printed here and are not repeated in the fleet lists.

APPEAL GRANTED	
Reinforcements	2+
Refits	4+
Other	5+

Reinforcements

If the appeal is granted, one new capital ship or a squadron of up to five escorts may be added to the player's fleet registry. Note that you must have the models to represent the ships – if you don't, then they can't be added to the fleet register.

Refits

If you read through the background sections of Battlefleet Gothic, you'll see that ships often have things added, or have equipment updated or improved. This is called refitting, and in a campaign, you'll get a chance to refit the ships in your fleet in order to (hopefully) improve their performance in different areas.

A player who is granted a refit must choose one of his capital ships to undergo the refit, then roll a D6 to see what type of equipment system is upgraded. On a roll of 1 or 2 you receive a ship refit, on a roll of 3 or 4 an engine refit, and on a roll of 5 or 6 a weapon refit Then roll on the appropriate Refit table given later to see exactly what you get. If you roll a result that the ship already has, roll again until you get a result the ship does not already benefit from. The points value of the ship is increased by 10% for each refit it has and you'll need to update your ship register appropriately.

Other Appeals

Other appeals allow you to request the aid of other allied forces. For example, Imperial players can call on the aid of a Space Marine Chapter, Chaos players may draw on the power of the warp to cast arcane spells, etc.. The types of other appeal you can make are listed under "Types of Appeal Allowed" earlier, and if granted allows you to roll on the appropriate Appeal table. Again, if you roll a result on the table that you already have, then roll again until you get a new result.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction, you should set a deadline for the campaign. When the deadline comes up the player that has built up the greatest renown is the winner. However, once you've got some experience running campaigns like this, you should feel free to change the criteria for victory. For example, you could say that the first player to gain control of five systems is the winner (though this will be tough on Ork and Eldar players), or you could keep on playing until the entire sub-sector is entirely controlled by Chaos, in which case all of the Chaos and Ork players win, or is entirely controlled by the Imperium, in which case all of the Imperial and Eldar players win.

Other alternatives include doing a convoy run, where a fleet has to travel from system to system across the map, fighting opponents along the way as it does so, or you could have a game based on an Ork Waaagh! where Ork players are allowed to control systems. The most important thing to remember is that the rules above are only a starting point, and the possibilities for making up your own campaigns are really only limited by your imagination. Have fun!

GENERAL UPGRADES

These refits and crew skills can be earned by every ship, unless otherwise noted.

ENGINE REFIT	
The ship's engines are fitted with additional systems or improvements have been made to the power generators and energy relays in some fashion. Roll on the following table.	
D6 roll	**Engine Refit**
1	**Secondary Reactors:** The ship's additional power generators allow it to put on a tremendous burst of speed for short lengths of time. The ship rolls an extra 2D6 when on *All Ahead Full* special orders.
2	**Evasive Jets:** The hull of the vessel is studded with powerful short-burn engines which allow it to drastically turn to avoid incoming fire. At the start of the enemy Shooting Phase, the ship may take a Leadership test. If it is passed, the ship may make a single 45° turn immediately. However, the ship may not go on to special orders during the next turn.
3	**Manoeuvring Thrusters:** Additional thrusters along the length of the ship allow it to turn much more quickly. The ship reduces the distance it needs to move before turning by 5 cm.
4	**Arrester Engines:** The ship has a number of secondary engines mounted near its prow, which enable the vessel to reduce speed rapidly. When attempting to *Burn Retros* or *Come to New Heading* special orders, the ship may add +1 to its Leadership.
5	**Auxiliary Power Relays:** The rear of the ship is criss-crossed with additional cables and pipelines, feeding more power to the engines. The ship gains +5 cm to its speed.
6	**Navigational Shields:** The ship is enveloped in low-frequency shields designed to shunt aside debris and other impediments as the ship moves. The ship does not suffer reductions to its speed for moving through Blast Markers (this includes gas and dust clouds and similar effects).

SHIP REFIT	
The structure of the ship is improved in some way, new equipment is installed, or better trained or specialised crew members are brought in. Roll on the following table.	
D6 roll	**Ship Refit**
1	**Improved Sensor Array:** The ship's assayers and long range surveyors are particularly attuned to pick up energy emissions and signals from enemy ships. When taking Leadership tests to go on to special orders, the ship gains +2 for enemy ships on special orders, rather than the normal +1.
2	**Additional Shield Generator:** The ship has additional shield generators to deflect incoming shots. The ship gains +1 Shields.
3	**Superior Damage Control:** The ship benefits from an improved auto-repair system, or more highly adept engineers and technicians. The ship may roll one extra dice in the End Phase when attempting to repair damage.
4	**Reinforced Hull:** The ship's hull is fitted with additional armour and internal bracing, increasing its damage by 25% (rounded up) but reducing its speed by 5 cm.
5	**Improved Logic Engines:** The ship's countless metriculators and mechanical cogitators enable the crew to perform with full effectiveness even in the midst of the fiercest battle. The ship does not suffer -1 Leadership for being in contact with Blast Markers.
6	**Overload Shield Capacitors:** Specialised power relays and generators allow the ship's engineers to temporarily divert extra power to the shields. For each hit against the shields, roll a D6. On a roll of a 6, the hit is ignored and no Blast Marker is placed.

WEAPONS REFIT

The ship has been upgraded with additional or more sophisticated weapons systems, greatly enhancing its battle effectiveness. Roll on the following table:

D6 roll	Weapons Refit
1	**Extra Turrets:** The vessel is studded with numerous close defence weapons to shoot down enemy torpedoes and attack craft. This ship adds +1 to its Turrets value.
2	**Turbo-weapons:** The ship's weapons have been given additional punch and accuracy at long range. The ship does not suffer a right column shift when firing over 30 cm.
3	**Targeting Matrix:** The ship's weapon systems are linked together through a massive targeting network so that they can maximise their fire. All firing by weapons batteries benefits from a left column shift on the Gunnery table (before any other column shifts for range or Blast Markers).
4	**Auto-loaders:** The ship's crew are aided in their task of readying torpedoes and attack craft by huge semi-automated machinery. The ship adds +1 to its Leadership when attempting *Reload Ordnance* special orders (re-roll this if the ship has no ordnance).
5	**Superior Fire Control:** A powerful fire control system has been installed in the ship's bridge, enabling the command crew to direct the ship's firing with greater effect. The ship adds +1 to its Leadership when attempting *Lock On* special orders.
6	**Motion-Tracking Targeters:** A complex analytical array linked to the ship's navigational systems enables the gun crews to fire with greater accuracy when the ship is performing special manoeuvres. If the ship is on *All Ahead Full*, *Burn Retros* or *Come to New Heading* special orders, its firepower and lance Strength is reduced by 25% (rounded up) rather than halved.

CREW SKILLS

D6 roll	Skill
1	**Expert Gunnery:** The ship's gun crew are amongst the finest in the whole sector, able to lay down a devastating barrage. When the ship attempts *Lock On* special orders you may roll 3D6 and discard the highest roll before comparing the score to the ship's Leadership.
2	**Skilled Engineers:** The crew responsible for running the engines are highly adept, able to respond quickly to orders for more or less power. When the ship attempts *All Ahead Full* or *Burn Retros* special orders you may roll 3D6 and discard the highest roll before comparing the score to the ship's Leadership.
3	**Adept Trimsman:** The officers and crew responsible for the ship's manoeuvring boast that they could get the ship to turn on the head of a pin! Whenever the ship attempts *Come to New Heading* special orders you may roll 3D6 and discard the highest roll before comparing the score to the ship's Leadership.
4	**Excellent Pilots:** The ship is famed for the skill of its pilots. The well-timed attack runs of its bombers can cause horrendous damage while its fighter pilots fly rings around enemy attack craft. Any bombers launched by this ship may re-roll the dice when determining how many To Hit rolls they have. If fighters from this ship intercept attack craft or torpedoes, roll a D6. On a score of 4+ the fighters are not removed as normal but remain in play. Re-roll this skill if the ship does not carry attack craft. Eldar and Space Marine players should re-roll this skill.
5	**Disciplined Crew:** The ship's crew bend to their tasks with enthusiasm and loyalty. Once per battle the ship may re-roll a failed Leadership test or Command check.
6	**Elite Command Crew:** The ship's command crew work well as a team, able to respond quickly to the orders of the fleet commander. Once per battle the ship may automatically pass a Leadership test or Command check – there is no need to roll any dice.

THE SUB SECTOR MAPS

NUMBER OF SYSTEMS

A sub-sector contains many stars, but of these only a few will have any planets orbiting. The vast majority will be gas giants or planets locked in sub-zero ice ages. This means that any given sub-sector will have relatively few star systems actually worth fighting over. Of these, the majority will be mining worlds, agri-worlds and other worlds with a sizeable population and contemporary technology level (categorised as civilised worlds). A few systems may have a forge world, hive world or other such planet. Occasionally uninhabited systems also have strategic importance as jump points or gathering places for assembling war fleets. The sub-sector maps only show those systems of military or strategic importance to the forces fighting in the Gothic War.

WARPSPACE CHANNELS

In theory it is possible to travel anywhere through warp space. However, the warp's shifting tides make it easier to travel from some systems to others, and short warp jumps are always more accurate than longer ones. This is particularly true when moving a large fleet, which may become spread out across several light years of space. For this reason, the systems on a sub-sector map are connected by a number of warp channels to the other systems.

SYSTEM TYPE

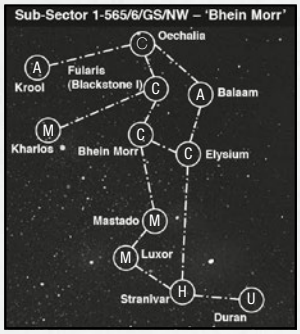
Each system will be one of the following types: uninhabited, agri-world, mining world, hive world, penal colony, forge world or civilised world. The system may actually contain more than one world, but the political power and the bulk of the resources will be concentrated on the type of world shown. The system type will influence how much ship damage it can repair and level of its orbital defences.

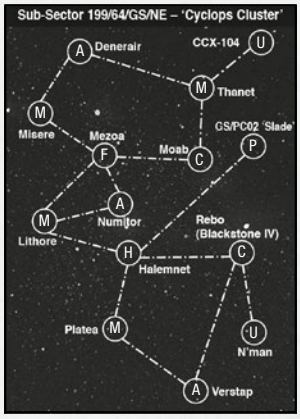
SPECIAL NOTES

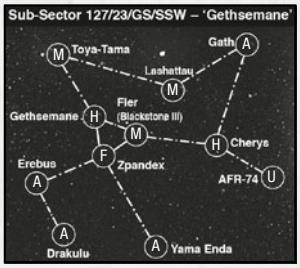
Blackstone Fortresses: We have marked on the maps where each of the Blackstone Fortresses is located. If you wish to (and you don't have to if you don't want to) you can include a Blackstone Fortress in the planetary defences of that system.

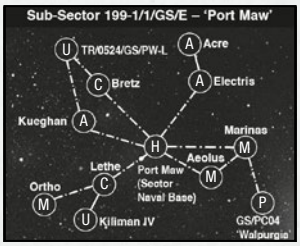
Port Maw: Port Maw is the largest naval base in the Gothic Sector and the headquarters of the Battlefleet Gothic. Any planets in the Port Maw system (not to be confused with the Port Maw sub-sector) have double the normal amount of planetary defences.

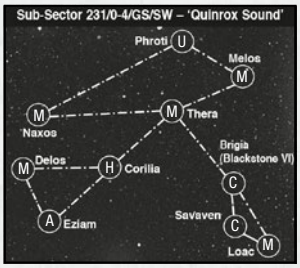
GOTHIC SECTOR

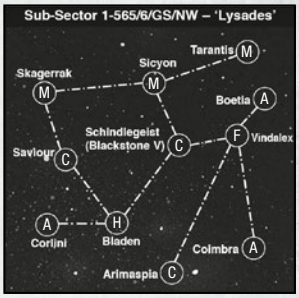


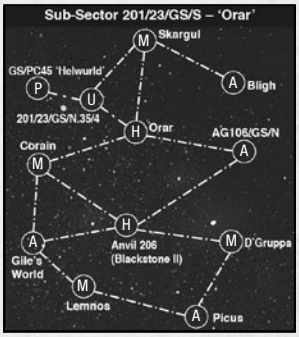












KEY TO SUB-SECTOR MAPS	
A	Agri-world
C	Civilised world
F	Forge world
H	Hive world
M	Mining world
P	Penal world
U	Uninhabited system

941.M41 THE THIRD ARMAGEDDON WAR

The Third Armageddon War is nothing less than the greatest Ork menace ever known. Ghazghkull had failed to invade that accursed world once before, and returned with a new plan and new determination to avoid repeating his mistakes. A terrible time was about to begin...

THE LEGACY OF WAR

The Second Armageddon War, Ghazghkull's first invasion of that ill-fated planet, had cost the Imperium dearly. As the Imperium finally repelled the Ork invaders, their forces pushed outwards to reclaim worlds and systems which had been cut off for years, finding most of them to be little more than smouldering wrecks. Rebuilding even a tiny portion of the carnage wreaked by the Orks would stretch the Imperium's resources to the limit. More pressingly, ensuring a sturdy defence during this time, to guard against further opportunistic attacks, would be a tall order with the depleted, dilapidated and demoralised forces now available to the Imperium. The Apocalypse class battleship, *Triumph*, was brought into Battlefleet Armageddon in 951.M41 and, between the wars, served as the flagship of the defence fleet under Captain Honyaeger. The *Triumph* proved to be the bane of many pirate fleets keen to take advantage of any weakness in the Imperial Navy. Amassing an impressive roll of honour, the *Triumph* became the symbol of the Emperor's Will within the sub-sector.

A generation later, when further Ork attacks on systems surrounding Armageddon started to drastically cut the amount of merchant shipping voyaging to the main system, the *Triumph* and other ships of the Imperial Navy found themselves stretched to breaking point. There were simply too few ships to cover so much space and it was the merchant transports that were feeling the effect. An appeal for reinforcements was met by the arrival of Admiral Parol on board *His Will*, accompanied by three first line cruiser squadrons. Acknowledging the Admiral's seniority and greater experience, Captain Honyaeger transferred command of the fleet to Parol and, for a short time, the depredations of the Ork pirates abated.

This all changed, almost overnight, as the piratical raids turned into full blown planetary assaults of several minor systems.

THE GREEN TIDE APPROACHES

The Third Armageddon War began in earnest when the Ork fleet re-entered normal space at the very fringes of the Armageddon system, converging immediately on Monitor Station Dante, one of three stations specially designed to guard against just such an attack. Dante survived barely long enough to open a communications channel, let alone broadcast a distress signal, but for the defenders of Armageddon, already convinced that attack was inevitable, the breakdown in such communications was all the proof they needed that Ghazghkull had returned.

While the ground forces in Armageddon and its neighbouring systems were placed on high alert, preparations were made for deep space conflict. Admiral Parol, commanding the fleet from his flagship *His Will*, led seven cruiser groups against the invading Ork fleet, intercepting them close to the high-gravity world of Pelucidar.

THE BATTLE OF PELUCIDAR

For Parol, perhaps feeling the pressure as the first line of defence against this greatest of threats, Pelucidar presented a quandary. The Orks' inevitable goal would be to land on Chosin, Armageddon and the host of other populated planets in the system. Here, amidst the far less appealing gas giants and barren super-planets of the outer reaches might well be the only chance the Imperium would get to fully engage the Ork fleet. On the other hand, even the few garbled messages received from Dante station were enough to tell him that victory would not come against such a numerous enemy. Regardless, perhaps feeling the burden of hope placed upon him, Parol felt forced to commit his entire fleet to an action staged around Pelucidar.

Within five days of leaving St. Jowen's Dock, the Imperial fleet had encountered leading elements of the Ork fleet, decoying enemy escorts with the battleships as the faster moving Imperial cruisers used Pelucidar's gravity well to swing around the Orks' flanks.

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go,
'Ere we go, 'ere we go, throo the cosmos.
'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go,
'Ere we go, 'ere we go, throo infinity.

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go,
'Ere we go, don't know where 'til we get there.

Orkish Space Chant,
intoned when hitching into space hulks

The *Triumph* and *His Will* worked in concert, combining their fearsome lance armament to create a lethal web of firepower that no Ork vessel could survive for long. Over sixty enemy escorts were blasted apart for no loss on the Imperial side. As more and more Ork ships joined battle though, combat degenerated into a chaotic brawl of the sort Orks excel in. As the bulk of the alien fleet moved further into the Armageddon system, the Imperial ships suffered greatly as the Orks' combined numbers and suicidal rushes threatened to overwhelm the Naval line. The battlecruiser, *Thunderchild*, was the first to fall, its Captain bravely deciding to fight on whilst crippled rather than disengage, in order that the rest of his squadron could rally around the battleship *His Will*.

As more and more cruiser squadrons started to suffer losses, Admiral Parol ordered the *Triumph* to keep station so that the Imperial fleet had a stable rallying point. The Admiral took *His Will* forward to join the engagement of the first Ork hulk to enter the pitched battle. Almost immediately, an oversized squadron of kroozers took advantage of the break in the Imperial line and surged forward, taking little damage from *His Will's* long ranged broadside fire, before bracketing the *Triumph* and bombarding her with massed fire. *Triumph's* shields failed within seconds and its ancient hull was soon battered by crude but heavy Ork weaponry. As the kroozers moved closer to the battleship, a series of boarding attempts by attack craft and teleporters took the battle into the very heart of the *Triumph*, where its crewmen fought valiantly hand-to-hand against the Orks. As crew were diverted from their main duties to fight the boarders, the kroozers in the void outside found it easier to continue their bombardment of the increasingly sluggish *Triumph*, heedless of the lives of the Orks they had already sent to board the battleship.

Captain Honyaeger was pained by the onslaught his ship had suffered and reluctantly gave the order to disengage from combat, a feat he barely managed in his crippled vessel. The fighting to clear the Ork boarders from his vessel reportedly took another four days to complete.

With the *Triumph* out of action and three more Ork fleets detected entering the Armageddon system, Admiral Parol was forced to disengage the remainder of his ships and regroup them to slow the Ork advance through Imperial space by any means he could. In the event, the Orks seemed to care little for the Imperial fleet, obviously viewing a fleeing enemy as good as a destroyed one and instead sped forward as fast as they could towards the glittering jewel of Armageddon itself. Parol and his captains watched on, helpless as their system was overrun.

A WORLD SHUDDERS

First to feel the wrath of the Ork fleets was the sector naval facility of St. Jowen's Dock, as facility commander, Captain Starrkos, recorded in a transmission to Admiral Parol in the days after Pelucidar:

"I must now report on our own situation here on St. Jowen's Dock. As the Ork fleet swept past your line, we prepared for multiple boarding actions but, incredibly, the Orks opted for simple bombardment. Few enemy vessels attempted orbit of our dock, preferring instead to simply unload ammunition into our hull as they continued their headlong rush towards Armageddon itself. I feel that we were in no way a target for them – St. Jowen's Dock was just in their way. Over ninety percent of our surface defences were destroyed in the first seven hours of the attack, negating our ability to strike back at the invaders. Soon after, enemy assault boats were launched. There was nothing coordinated in their assault and many of my bridge officers have formed the opinion that the many boarding craft that left the launch bays of passing Terror Ships were the result of poor discipline amongst the aliens. Simply put, we believe we were finally boarded by Orks that could not wait long enough to reach Armageddon before engaging in battle. With our defences all but nullified, we were powerless to stop them entering the Dock itself, but I organised combat teams to repel their assault with all haste. We suffered heavy losses as the Orks fought with literally inhuman ferocity and the fighting that took place as the aliens pushed towards the main reactors was intense. I was forced to divert

many teams to aid in the defence of the reactors for fear that the Dock could be lost altogether if they succeeded in their attack, though this allowed many of their number to sweep unopposed through to some of our upper decks. We now have the Orks somewhat under control, but we have lost almost all contact with the lower decks and must consider them enemy held territory. We have the manpower to halt any further advance now that the fleets have moved passed us and begun their main assault, but we will never be able to clear the infestation unaided."

Although at first report Parol was mildly relieved to hear the fate of St. Jowen's Dock, escaping, as it had, complete destruction at the hands of the Orks, he quickly realised that their dismissal of the stations importance was in fact an even more damning blow to the Imperium's efforts. If the Orks had no intention of spreading their green curse across the entire system, the sheer scale of invasion which was Armageddon was about to face must be even larger than previously feared, Parol reasoned. Still, ever the calm strategist, even amidst these hopeless opening defeats of the war, this chain of events nurtured some hope in Parol. If the Orks, apparently under direct instruction to do nothing more than bombard St. Jowen's Dock, could still not resist their barbaric urge to close and tussle with the enemy, perhaps their actions could be as much of his making as their master's. A strategy of divide and conquer was rapidly becoming the Imperium's last hope.

TO RECLAIM THE STARS...

While Parol remained distant from the conflict, regrouping and re-evaluating the Navy's effort in the wake of Pelucidar, matters on Armageddon itself became ever more urgent. Fearing that the encroaching Ork fleet would come upon Armageddon before a coordinated defence could be mounted, many of those Space Marine Chapters now massing on the planet took to their battlebarges and strike cruisers and returned to space. As the Ork fleet approached the assembled fleet, under the command of Black Templars High Marshall Helbrecht, they gambled on a single, short lasting volley of fire against the Orks. Almost in unison, more than a dozen battlebarges and several dozen strike cruisers pummelled Ghazghkull's fleet with torpedoes and bombardment cannons, virtually demolishing the first wave of escorts and crippling the hulk, *Rumbledeth*. Even so, Helbrecht quickly realised that the stars could not belong to the Space Marines that day, and dispatched most of the assembled forces back to the planet, leaving the fleet to retire and join Parol's own navy vessels in solemnly allowing the Orks to push on to Armageddon virtually untouched.

LOGISTICS

Following Pelucidar, as final preparations for a ground war were undertaken, very serious consideration had to be given to the role the Imperial Navy could play in the coming war. In the Imperium's long history, combined actions where Imperial Navy elements acted principally as transports for the lumbering Imperial Guard armies, or as reserves guarding supply chains and patrol routes were common, as were the many space-bound wars which the Navy had become accustomed to fighting. Likewise, the Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes excelled in swift and bloody fleet actions designed to hammer a way through to contested planets where their particular penchant for planetary assaults would lend them the upper hand. Armageddon, however, proved to be something quite different.

Simply using the Navy to defeat the Orks in space had proved impossible, since Ghazghkull had no reason to allow any portion of his fleet to be drawn into combat where superior Imperial discipline would probably overwhelm Ork brutality. Likewise, relying on the speedy deployment of ground forces to counter the Orks as they landed was ineffective. The Ork horde was simply too great in numbers to be conclusively beaten in a solely planetside conflict, but likewise too vast, and what's more too reticent to be properly engaged in space. Instead a new strategy had to be devised – one allowing

the Imperial Navy to operate effectively in deep space, despite being overwhelmingly outnumbered, whilst maintaining enough of a transport capacity to ensure that no single enclave of the system became overlooked or cut off from the Imperial effort. For virtually the first time since the Heresy, a system wide war had broken out which required the complete integration of ground and fleet actions.

These problems, initially at least, were not easily overcome. Unusually, the majority of the Imperial fleet was made up of Space Marine vessels, and their role in this mixed campaign was initially unclear. Commitments on the ground led to an undermanned Space Marine fleet, and one further stymied by the need to remain close to their attendant ground forces should the need for sudden movements arise. Any determined attempt to muster a Space Marine fleet for deep space combat invariably compromised other areas of the campaign.

MARSHALLING THE FORCES

After several horrifying defeats in the early part of the war, the Space Marines quickly came to realise, however, that the almost unstoppable numbers in which the Orks were arriving on Armageddon itself was only being exacerbated by their failure to deal with the threat effectively in space. Angry at his counterpart's arrogant dismissal of the Imperial Navy, High Marshall Helbrecht of the Black Templars restructured firstly his own men, then gradually all Imperial forces, to better fight the war system wide. Helbrecht, like many descendants of Dorn, had always prided himself on his willingness to cooperate with other elements of the monolithic Imperial institutions, and his skill at negotiation and delegation proved pivotal. Helbrecht himself assumed joint command of the fleet, taking responsibility for organised movement and transport affairs whilst Parol was freed to dedicate his time solely to the actual matter of fighting one of the Imperium's largest ever space conflicts.

Helbrecht quickly realised that the inevitable casualties on the ground were themselves making the size of the Space Marine fleet a problem. Indeed, the

Salamanders, one of the Chapters hardest hit in the early stages of the conflict, reluctantly reported to Helbrecht that two of their much needed battlebarges would be unable to attend as they had been left in a state of near abandonment for several weeks following an overzealous commitment of their crews to the fighting around Acheron Hive. To Helbrecht, the Master of a Chapter whose entire existence is spent aboard their Crusade Fleets, such problems were easily remedied. The typical Space Marine tactic of boarding had to be stayed – such close quarters fighting would be reserved for the bloodied soil of Armageddon. Helbrecht also overcame the initial reluctance of his fellow commanders to withdraw a greater proportion of their men from the ground to place them aboard the fleet with the insistence that the extra mobility such increased manpower would lend the fleet would make those same Space Marines infinitely better able to return speedily to the surface should the need present itself.

TO TRADE VICTORY FOR DEFEAT

Even with such masterfully crafted reforms, the initial Ork assault had already pummelled large parts of Armageddon into a bleeding, smoking mass of rubble and corpses. That battle, Helbrecht and Parol agreed, was already lost. Instead, both the Marine and Navy vessels withdrew from the immediate space around Armageddon to concentrate instead on a blockade of the system to prevent Ork reinforcements. From this strategy born of earlier failure, an unexpected boon was gained by the Imperium.

Allowing such vast numbers of Ork vessels through pandered to the Ork psyche (as Parol had already presciently noted after St. Jowen's Dock) and they began a frantic planetary assault in their millions. Orks from the lowliest Grot to the most ancient and bloated of Warbosses boarded landing craft and plunged violently and insanely towards the planet's surface, leaving their fleet a muddled and disorganised mass. As well as this, the Ork landing diverted the vast majority of their available fighta-bommas, leaving the Ork fleet largely without attack craft for the remainder of the campaign –a fact which would cost Ghazghkull dearly.

HELBRECHT'S REVENGE

Capitalising on this, Helbrecht began the first stage of the war to return space to Imperial control. At the battle later dubbed *Helbrecht's Revenge,* a Space Marine fleet acting in wedge formation (a tactic allowing powerful forward bombardment whilst retaining as many defensive attributes as possible) closed upon the Ork hulk, *Rokdroppa*.

The encounter proved to be something new for many of the Space Marine vessels present – a battle in which the firepower superiority of their ships was to be utilised almost to the exclusion of their favoured boarding and assault tactics. Amongst the fleet, members of the Black Templars and Black Dragons Chapters, already experienced naval chapters, excelled beyond all others, and in their absolute supremacy acted as a fine example to the rest of the fleet of how the war must henceforth be fought. Against the wedge of vessels, *Rokdroppa* was unable to move itself into a good firing position without leaving itself vulnerable, even with the sizeable armada of escorts, kroozers and roks which accompanied it. No matter which way it turned, *Rokdroppa* found itself pummelled by bombardment cannons. The Orks, unable to resist the urge to close with the enemy, only brought themselves closer to the hungry guns of the Space Marine fleet.

At the loss of two thirds of its escorting vessels and the apparent death of its Warboss, *Rokdroppa* finally turned to disengage, though it was too late and its hurried flight served only to bring it into the sights of *Ebon Flame*, a Black Dragons battlebarge operating in the honour position of the left hand flank of the wedge. Mere moments after it came into range, the *Rokdroppa* was torn clean in two, even its wreckage pummelled by the astute Helbrecht for fear such a large chunk of a hulk might fall planetward if left simply to float through the ether.

A CIRCLE OF IRON

Even with such a victory under its belt, the Space Marine fleet still remained a lone lighthouse in a sea of green, and at great risk of encirclement. At this point, Parol enacted the first stage of his counterpart plan to slowly widen a blockade around the entire Armageddon system. Parol and his fleet emerged alongside the victorious Space Marine fleet just in time to repel a further opportunistic attack from a second Ork fleet. Parol deployed a cordon of battleships and cruisers to the rear of the Space Marines while determined packs of Imperial escorts saw off the already intimidated Orks. Parol's manoeuvre allowed the Space Marines the time needed to disengage from their highly effective, but woefully immobile, wedge formation in safety.

Having at last bought themselves a little breathing space, the fleet dispersed into a series of more effective, smaller battlegroups, moving cautiously at first to guard one another's backs, but nonetheless slowly widening the area of space over which they could exert control. Helbrecht willingly took a back seat to Parol during this stage of the campaign, whose unequalled tactical skill allowed the Imperial fleet to rapidly expand its blockade for only minimal loss.

Parol was keenly aware that his only advantage lay in the Orks' predictable pattern of invasion, doing, as they did, little more than head for whichever planets they hadn't already overrun. Parol clustered his battlegroups around the planets in question, though always taking care to remain some distance away from any planetary assaults already underway. Instead clever manoeuvring, so Parol hoped, would allow his fleets to retain the cover of those planets, moons and phenomena for as long as they could, before intercepting the Ork fleets as they approached. The remnants of the Chosin line, a woefully inadequate perimeter of planetary defences installed in the system after the Second Armageddon War, finally proved to be of some, albeit minor, use in this strategy.

By these means, Parol overcame his lack of numbers, since he could afford to leave gaps in the blockade in deep space areas, from where the Orks would inevitably head planetward and run in to the Imperial forces later on, anyway.

SILENT RUNNING

Insurgencies beyond the blockade were still frequent however, and when they did occur, Parol carefully monitored the movement of the Ork hulks in question, waiting for them to approach within precise ranges of other key points of the blockade. At meticulously timed opportunities, battlebarges would make a single speedy movement towards a rendezvous point before disabling their own systems and gliding coldly and silently on a straight collision course with the invading hulk. Several hulks and the battleship *Gorbag's Revenge* were lost to this new 'silent running' tactic, where battlebarges would suddenly engage their systems and appear to emerge from nowhere to quickly cripple their unsuspecting prey. Ever the masters of Hit-and-Run warfare, silent running quickly became a favourite tactic of the White Scars elements of the Imperial fleet, keenly rejoicing in the unexpected ability to fight by their own favoured means, even in the cold blackness of space. The White Scars' battlebarge *Plainsmaster* was even renamed *The Silent Horseman* in honour of this newly adopted mode of attack.

Such a blockade would never be strong enough to repel the Ork attack completely, indeed both Parol and Helbrecht would have considered any attempt to do so foolish in the light of earlier events. However, the carefully placed points of resistance along the blockade did dramatically reduce the number of Ork vessels and, most importantly, Ork hulks getting through, reducing the Orks' available troops planetside and so handing the advantage to the otherwise beleaguered Imperial ground forces. Cautious but nonetheless erudite advances by battlegroups at the edges of the blockade shored up valuable supply chains, sometimes reopening them after months of Ork domination. With this came the inevitable increase in Imperial reinforcements, still being summoned to Armageddon in numbers. With each new influx of Imperial Navy vessels, Helbrecht was able to redirect precious battlebarges and strike cruisers to the ground conflicts, further tipping the balance in favour of the Imperium.

But there was no escaping the fact that the ground war would remain a precarious balance while the Orks still flooded reinforcements planetwards via their mysterious tellyportas. Acting on the freedom of movement brought about by this new dominance of space, Parol gave instruction for some of the most unique actions of the war – to seek out and destroy the tellyportas.

THE HUNT FOR RED ORKTOBA

Hunting the enemy is one thing, indeed, the one thing that most of the available forces were adept at. But this was an enemy who had no reason to be caught. The simple pirates and raiders most often the targets of such scouring searches sooner or later, by their very nature, have to reveal themselves, even if only against unarmed merchant and transport vessels. Whichever vessel or vessels it was that bore the tellyportas had little reason to remain in the face of the enemy, and could simply flee at first sight of attack since their only role lay in remotely teleporting hordes of Ork warriors. Parol and Helbrecht were well prepared for a long hunt. The Oberon class battleship, *Green Lake*, was chosen as one of the foremost hunting vessels, since its ancient design, dating from a time when the Imperium feared the then newly developed attack craft would invalidate its battleships, and optimised for operating single handedly against a variety of foes without the need for escorts, made it the perfect predator. Even for this, the hunt could still have been in vain where it not for a peculiar piece of luck.

Ground forces on Armageddon itself reported a brief, three week long period when, at initially unconnected times of day, the tellyporta drops seemed almost to stop completely, with those that did arrive presenting an extraordinarily high number of dead Orks, hideously mutilated by the process. Captain Fitzmander, a skilled pirate hunter, realised there were only two possible causes – a sudden failure of the Ork technology (unlikely, since as far as anyone knew, Orkimedes was still alive and well), or some unexpected change in the conditions from which the tellyporta was operating.

Fitzmander narrowed down the likely causes to the area around Namara, where a fluke alignment of planets had captured the tiny world of Chosin exactly equidistant between its gigantic neighbours, Namara and Gramaul, exerting countless unpredictable astronomical forces upon all three. Most acutely, as revealed by long range sensor probes conducted by *Green Lake*, was the distortion of energy and electrical activity around Namara, where the gravity of the other two planets had conspired to distort such signals.

Working on the theory that this must be the source of the tellyporta disruption, the *Green Lake* headed as swiftly as possible for Namara. Sure enough, in orbit about the planet Fitzmander located the Ork hulk, *Skullbanga*. The *Green Lake* closed quickly, attacking from close range with substantial broadside firepower. Lacking the fighta-bommas that would be the customary response to a lone battleship such as this and with only limited numbers of escort vessels, *Skullbanga* was so badly mauled that it was crippled as it attempted to enter Warp, the strain of which utterly destroyed the hulk.

RED BLOOD IN THE GREEN LAKE

Victorious, the *Green Lake* pursued the fleeing elements of the Ork fleet, hunting them down in short skirmishes over the course of several days. *Green Lake's* pursuit continued unabated until the unexpected appearance of the Ork battleship, *Dethdeala*. An exploratory wave of attack craft drew no response from the battleship, leading Fitzmander to assume that, like much of the Ork fleet, *Dethdeala* was at a distinct shortage when it came to fighta-bommas.

Relying on proven tactics, Fitzmander elected to close to optimum weapons range and open fire. Little could he have known he had already run too far…

Moments before the order to fire could be given, the *Green Lake* was overrun by boarding Orks. Fitzmander could never have predicted such an attack and his crew struggled to repel the boarders. *Dethdeala* it seemed, also bore a tellyporta, perhaps without sufficient range for planetary landings, but nonetheless sufficiently powerful to flood the *Green Lake* with Orks at a distance where ordinarily only the most long range weapons should have been effective. Caught completely unawares by the tactic, Fitzmander died alongside his crew, fighting the Orks hand-to-hand amidst the cramped corridors across every level of the ancient battleship.

PAROL'S SACRIFICE

At news of the *Green Lake's* destruction, Parol ordered an even more intense search for Ork elements operating on the fringes of the system, believing now that far more vessels carried tellyportas than he had previously feared. The destroyer squadron, *Brothers of Cale*, made a long distance sighting of another Ork hulk in the debris of Mannheim station. Tortured by the loss of his old friend Fitzmander, Parol led the attack on the hulk in person.

Just as *Skullbanga* had done, the hulk, never properly identified by Imperial sources, broke from orbit and fled, attempting to enter the Warp. Parol, aboard *His Will*, his flagship of many decades gave desperate chase. Hastily deployed attack craft disrupted the hulk just enough to prevent it entering the Warp while *His Will* attempted to close. The speed and manoeuvrability of the hulk was startling, so much so that Parol was certain Orkimedes himself must be on board.

Fearing that such a marvel of Ork engineering might outrun him, Parol abandoned his normally stayed methods, forsook all thoughts of proper formation and simply ordered *His Will* all ahead full in pursuit of the hulk. As the hulk prepared to enter the Warp, Parol saw no alternative but to ram, bringing *His Will* hard into the vulnerable rear starboard side of the hulk. Parol ordered his crew ready for a desperate boarding action, a call for reinforcements in support of which was the last communication ever received from *His Will* before it and the hulk both slid away into the Immaterium. With nothing to suggest he could possibly have survived, Admiral Parol has been presumed dead ever since that moment.

While Parol's loss was a bitter blow to the Imperium, it did not seem to be in vain. The tellyporta drops ceased at once, seemingly proving that the hulk Parol encountered had been responsible for most of the Ork reinforcements making it through the blockade.

THE GREEN TIDE TURNS

Next, Helbrecht chose to make a decisive move, turning almost all the remaining Space Marine vessels inwards from the blockade, aiming to finally confront head-on those Ork vessels which had long held such a strong position around Armageddon itself. Perhaps realising that he would be stranded should his fleet be lost now, Ghazghkull proved himself once again the most exceptional of Orks and withdrew huge numbers of his troops to the fleet and swiftly headed out system. Helbrecht prepared to pursue, but now, wiser than ever to the danger of dividing his forces too thinly, delayed long enough to retrieve those Space Marines that could be spared from the planet's surface. A number of the other chapters were assigned to close planetary actions, blockading Armageddon itself more tightly behind the departing Orks, while Helbrecht withdrew his Black Templars to their ships and initiated a spacebound Crusade in pursuit of Ghazghkull's immense fleet.

Similarly concerned that the Orks might simply use their retreat as a means to attack nearby worlds whilst such substantial numbers of men were tied up on Armageddon, Yarrick ordered that all ground based Imperial Guard reserves return to fleet transport to be ready for any new planetary assaults, should the need arise. Having seen Ghazghkull slip through his fingers once before, this was not enough for Yarrick, and the Old Man joined Helbrecht at the head of the Imperial fleet as it set off in pursuit of his old enemy.

The pursuers might have lost Ghazghkull in those first few days of the chase, had it not been for another side effect of Parol's ingenious blockade. The staunch line of resistance which had once kept the Orks out, now hemmed them in, or at least forced them to make their presence known as they tried to leave the system. Battlegroups on the edges of the blockade reported the Ork fleets movements, attacking them in delaying Hit-and-Run attacks where they could, allowing Yarrick and Helbrecht in pursuit to close with the greenskins.

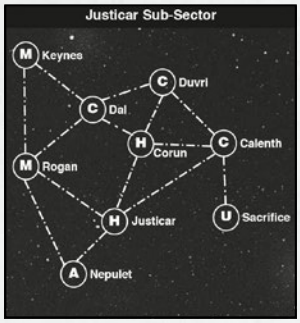
ARMAGEDDON NOW

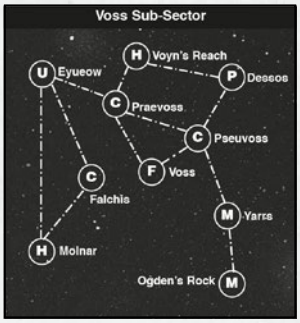
Both Helbrecht and Yarrick knew the fighting was far from over, and prepared for a long campaign against Ghazghkull around the edges of the system, one for which Ghazghkull quickly amassed his surviving vessels into a horrifying armada poised once again perilously close to Armageddon.

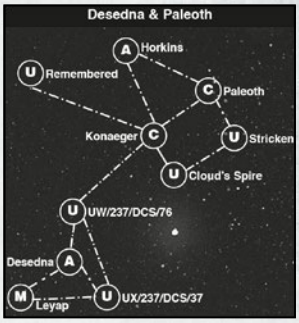
Behind them, though, the story was rather different. Armageddon itself remained ravaged, and perhaps a little too much effort was concentrated on the planetside campaign by the commanders left there following the departure of Yarrick, Helbrecht and Parol. The Imperium of Man is a vast and nigh immutable thing, unchanged in millennia as much through its own reluctance as through any lack of means. Typically for such a lumbering organisation, the bold and courageous kind of reforms which Helbrecht and Parol had instituted to win such a victory as they could were all too quickly forgotten in their absence. As the conflict in space relented a little, pedantic Imperial captains quickly fell into the old habits of needless bureaucracy, insisting on pointless movements of vessels solely to restore old and unnecessary arrangements of battlegroups and fleets, as much for their own comfort and sense of place as for any good strategic reason.

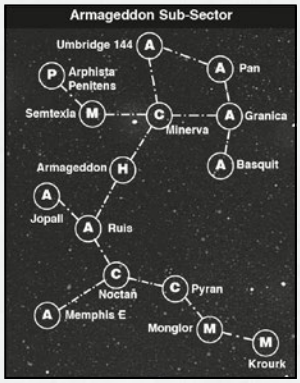
With such pointless deeds, the Imperial Navy, having achieved such remarkable success from so pitiful a position at the start of the war, now just as astonishingly neglected its advantage, content simply to patrol and defend the blockade which Parol had intended to act as a base for later campaigns, not simply as a place of rest for the lazy or cowardly. A hard won advantage rests in Imperial hands, though whilst Parol remains missing presumed lost, it is hard to imagine when, if ever, it will be decisively pressed.

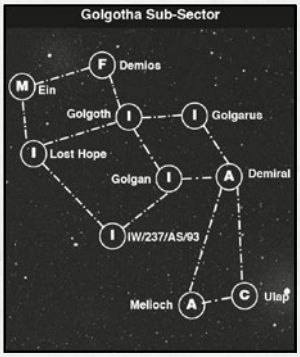
ARMAGEDDON SECTOR











KEY TO SUB-SECTOR MAPS	
A	Agri-world
C	Civilised world
F	Forge world
H	Hive world
M	Mining world
P	Penal world
U	Uninhabited system

THE THIRD ARMAGEDDON WAR: SCENARIO ONE

THE GAUNTLET

The ferocity and speed with which Ghazghkull's Waaagh! assailed the Armageddon sector left many worlds isolated, and left much of the Imperial Navy scattered. To ensure the sector did not become entirely strangled, numerous daring convoy runs had to be made through Ork held space...

FORCES

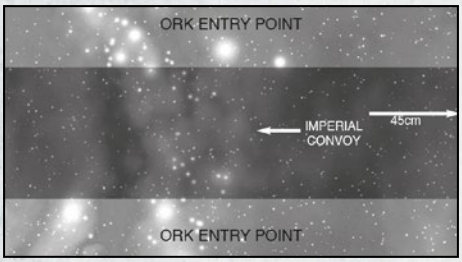
The Imperial convoy must include at least two Transport ships. For every two convoy ships taken, the Imperial and Ork players may take 100 points worth of ships. The rules for Heavy Transports may be used freely in this scenario. The Imperial player may only take one Cruiser. All his other ships must be either Light Cruisers or Escorts. The Ork player is limited to taking just Escorts.

BATTLEZONE

This battle takes place in the Primary Biosphere where the Orks are attempting to tighten their gauntlet around Armageddon. Generate celestial phenomena on the Primary Biosphere table. Ignore any rolls that produce a planet.

SET-UP

The Imperial convoy and escorting ships are all placed within 45cm of one short table edge, facing the opposite edge. The Ork ships move on from any point along either long table edge in the first turn.



FIRST TURN

The Ork player has the first turn.

GAME LENGTH

The battle continues until one fleet is destroyed or disengages, or the Imperial fleet exits from the far short table edge.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Imperial player must exit at least three Transport ships from the opposite short table edge to the one he started on to claim a victory. Any less is considered to be an Ork victory.

RUNNING BATTLES

As this is a running battle, representing an Imperial fleet desperately trying to get their convoy to safety, you might like to try the following special rule in this scenario.

The Imperial convoy and escorting ships are all placed within 30cm of the centre of the table at the start of the game, facing either short table edge. The Ork ships move on from any point along either long table edge in the first turn as normal.

At the end of every Imperial turn, every ship and item of celestial phenomena is moved back 20cm, away from the table edge the Imperial ships were facing at the start of the game. Any ship that 'drops' off the end of the table during this is considered to have disengaged from the battle.

In addition, roll a die at the end of the Imperial player's turn. On a 6, a randomly generated item of celestial phenomena is placed by the Imperial player along the short table edge his ships originally faced. It is assumed that the Imperial commander leading the convoy will be able to 'steer' the battle towards any celestial phenomena that he feels will give him an advantage in this mission. As before, ignore any rolls that generate a planet – Armageddon is still many thousands of kilometres away!

In this variation of The Gauntlet, the game lasts for ten turns. If the Imperial player still has at least three Transports on the table by this time, he may claim victory.

THE THIRD ARMAGEDDON WAR: SCENARIO TWO

PAROL'S BAIT

As the massive tidal wave of Ork ships spread throughout the Armageddon system, Admiral Parol was forced to disengage his ships from front line combat or run the risk of having his fleet destroyed before he was able to mount any serious challenge. With direct battle out of the question, Parol dispersed his forces with orders to harry the Orks' flanks wherever possible. With most of the alien vessels only too willing to seek combat, Parol hoped that he could distract and possibly destroy enough of the enemy to delay their arrival around Armageddon itself. Many text book naval stratagems were tested to their limits.

FORCES

In this scenario, a small group of Light Cruisers and Escorts have successfully drawn out a force of Ork ships from the main fleet and are leading them towards a trap. Parol's Bait is a variation of Scenario Two: The Bait on pg. 130. You may want to familiarise yourself with The Bait before proceeding with this mission.

Pursuing forces: Up to 500 points of Ork ships.

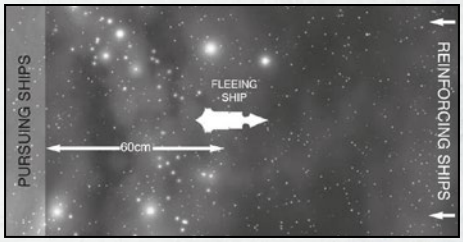
Pursued forces: Up to 250 points initially, with up to 500 points of reinforcements. Only Light Cruisers and Escorts may be bought but, unlike The Bait scenario, more than one Light Cruiser or squadron may start as the fleeing ships. The Imperial player may also purchase up to six Orbital Mines. Although they start on the table, they will be paid from the 500 points for the reinforcements.

BATTLEZONE

Roll for the battlezone randomly. On a 1-4, this scenario takes place in the outer reaches. On a 5-6 it takes place in the Primary Biosphere. Generate celestial phenomena on the appropriate battlezone table.

SET-UP

The pursued Imperial ships are placed in the centre of the table, facing one of the short table edges. Any Orbital mines can be deployed anywhere in front of these ships. The pursuing Orks are placed behind the Imperial ships, at least 60 cm away. The Imperial reinforcements enter from the short table edge that the pursued ships are facing.



FIRST TURN

The Imperial player has the first turn.

SPECIAL RULES

Any reinforcements for the Imperial ships may enter the table on any turn, including turn one. If the reinforcing ships enter after turn one, they may be deployed up to 30 cm along the long table edges for each turn after the first.

GAME LENGTH

The battle continues until one fleet is destroyed or disengages.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard Victory Points are earned for ships crippled, destroyed or disengaged. In addition, the Orks gain bonus Victory Points equal to half the points value of any reinforcements brought on to help the pursued Imperial ships. If mines are taken, the victory points for these are automatically awarded to the attacker.

THE THIRD ARMAGEDDON WAR: SCENARIO THREE

PELUCIDAR

The initial elements of Ghazghkull's fleet entered the Armageddon system on the Day of the Feast of the Emperor's Ascension, a time when the Imperial Navy was building up to full alert status. Admiral Parol knew that time was of the essence as the forces of the Imperium marshalled their strength on Armageddon itself and that it would be the task of his fleet to buy this valuable time in the face of an immense Ork fleet.

The Defence of Pelucidar was actually a huge engagement and so this scenario concentrates on only a small portion of the battle. The Imperial player, representing Admiral Parol, must cause as much damage as possible to the Ork fleet whilst trying to minimise his own losses. Initially, the Ork fleet will be poorly organised, but their strength will soon increase and threaten to overwhelm the Imperial force.

FORCES

The Imperial player may have a fleet of up to 1500 points, but may only choose Cruisers, Battlecruisers and Battleships from his fleet list. Up to four Minefields may also be purchased. Historically, only Armageddon-class Battleships were featured in this battle, but there is no reason that an Imperial player cannot use other classes just to 'see what would have happened'.

The Ork player starts with no ships at all and will receive his fleet randomly throughout the battle.

BATTLEZONE

This battle is fought in the Outer Reaches of the Armageddon system. After rolling for Celestial Phenomena randomly, the Imperial player may then place the planet of Pelucidar anywhere on the table he wishes. He must then deploy his entire fleet in the area indicated on the map below.

The Ork player moves his ships on from any point along his table edge.

SET-UP

The defender deploys his whole fleet first. The defending fleet must be set up with all the ships facing the same table edge and at least 30 cm from any table edge. Each defending ship or squadron must be set up at least 20 cm apart. The attacker moves his fleet on to the table from any edge in his first turn.

FIRST TURN

The Orks have the first turn in the Defence of Pelucidar.

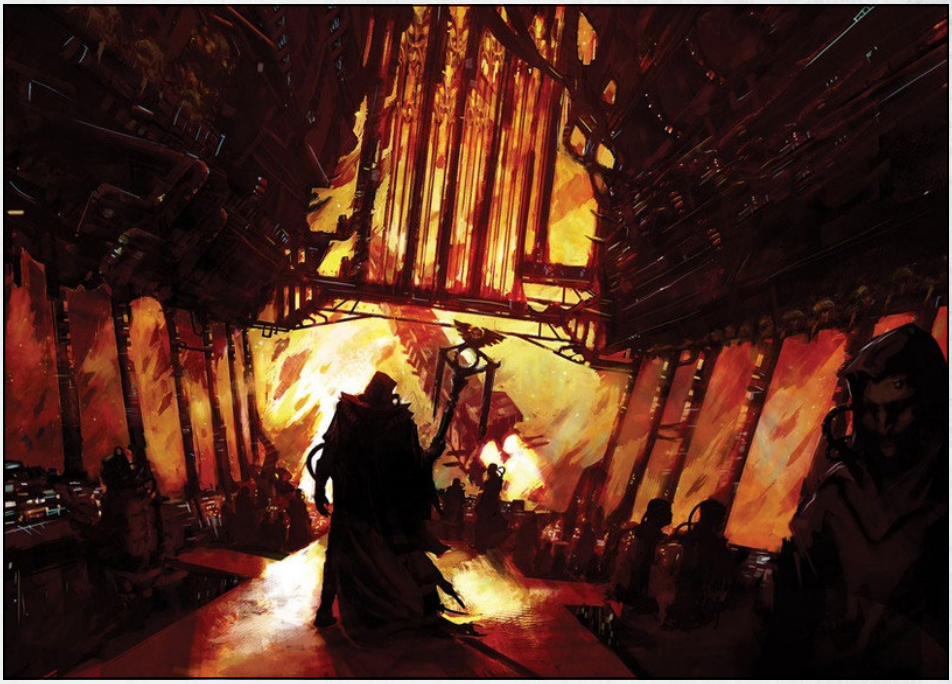
SPECIAL RULES

At the start of each of his turns, the Ork player rolls on the chart below to see what forces turn up for battle. You will notice that the first few turns go by very quickly, but things will soon start hotting up as the Orks gradually receive more and more ships.

A Squadron of Escorts will have D6 Escorts of whatever type the Ork player wishes. A Fighta-Bomma or Attack Craft Wing will have four counters.

D6+TURN ROLL	RESULT
2-4	1 Fighta-Bomma/Attack Craft Wing
5-6	1 Escort Squadron
7-9	2 Escort Squadrons
10	3 Escort Squadrons
11	1 Kroozer or Terror Ship
12	2 Kroozers or Terror Ships
13-14	1 Rok
15+	1 Space Hulk

If the Ork player rolls a unit he cannot field due to a lack of models, use the next lowest item on the table instead. For example, if a Kroozer is rolled for, but the Ork player has already used all of his Kroozer models, then he would receive three Escort Squadrons instead.



GAME LENGTH

The battle lasts until the Imperial fleet is destroyed or has disengaged

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Imperial player scores Victory points for destroying and crippling Ork ships as normal, but not for 'Holding the Field'. In addition, the Victory Points for any Imperial ship that is destroyed or disengages is deducted from his total. The Ork player receives no Victory Points in this battle.

The Imperial player must earn at least 2000 Victory Points at the end of the battle to claim a victory. Anything less is counted as being a victory for the Orks.

Take particular note that the Imperial player will lose Victory Points at the end of the battle because his ships have to disengage, so he must take this into account or be very red faced when he pulls into the space dock around Armageddon!

999.M41 ABADDON'S 13TH BLACK CRUSADE

Since the end of the Heresy the surviving Chaos Space Marines of the Traitor Legions have remained the Imperium's greatest enemies with their frequent raids from the Eye of Terror. Amongst them, undoubtedly the greatest and most fearsome is Abaddon, heir of Horus and dread leader of the Black Crusades...

THE GROWING STORM

The beginning of Abaddon's 13th Black Crusade was marked by an escalation in the number of raids on isolated, seemingly insignificant worlds in the sectors outlying the Eye of Terror. Such raids, whilst certainly not unusual, had previously always been the work of small groups of pirates, acting without common motive, and invariably dogged shipping lanes and the like, rather than directly attacking settlements. This new wave of attacks seemed too highly coordinated, based on far too detailed a plan to simply be the work of the wolf packs. Something terrible was clearly emerging.

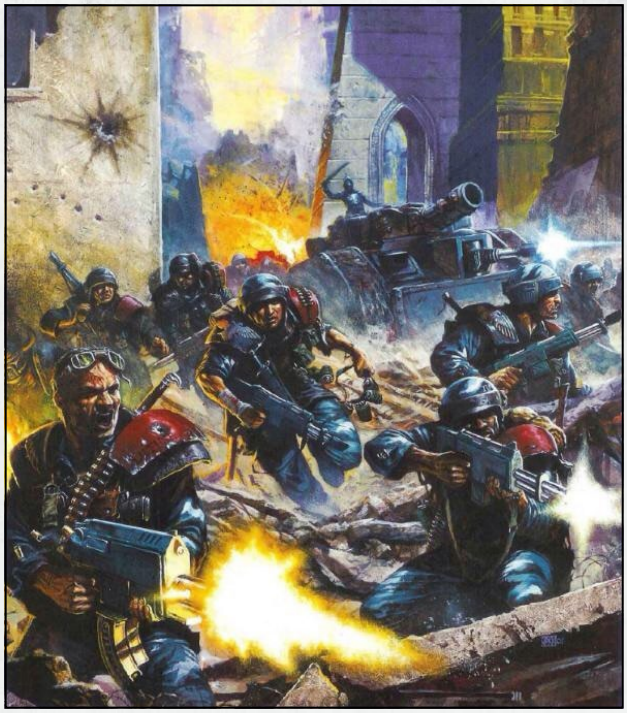
Rashes of warp flares erupted all around the Eye of Terror, making travel impossible, disrupting communication and breaking supply lines. Around these warp flares, small Chaos fleets emerged to prey upon those Imperial vessels stranded in small numbers by the inhospitable conditions, brutally massacring them all. Most horrifically, alongside these emergent Chaos fleets, there came reports of weird, ethereal Daemon ships, seemingly creatures of the warp carried into material realm on the tides of Chaos. Imperial fleets engaged these vessels where they could, though many reported them intangible and elusive, translating to and from the warp at will, making their ambushes and raids all the more deadly.

Patrol groups from all local battlefleets dispersed across the Agripinaa sector, the target of many of the fiercest and most brutal raids, hunting down and engaging the raiders where they could. The small raiding groups which Imperial command had anticipated invariably turned out to be drastically larger forces, and many of the Imperial patrols were lost before even being able to give accurate reports of the opposition they faced. It quickly became apparent that a system of patrol and interception would do little more than plug the holes – not cut off the leak.

Under such an atmosphere of uncertainty, the decision was made to withdraw fleet resources to dock, where larger, more effective battlegroups could be mustered and a common plan for defence determined. The captains of the returning vessels were grilled for what information they could provide on the growing threat, though so short and bloody had been their defeat that little of use could be gleaned. Confusing reports of Eldar vessels completely ignoring, or even aiding Imperial fleets baffled many of those present, but the wisest amongst them realised instantly that such unexpected unity could only stem from a common enemy. A foe to trouble even the Eldar was about to descend upon the galaxy, it seemed.

TRAITORS UNMASKED

It would not be long before confirmation emerged. Even as fleet commanders gathered in the Agripinaa sector to ponder their next move, news reached them of the Volscani Cataphracts' horrifying betrayal on Cadia. Chaos, it would appear, was not merely on their doorstep, but already deep within their house. The massacre on Cadia, however, meant that the Imperial fleets' numbers were bolstered dramatically in the following days, as reinforcements arrived from neighbouring sectors, including an almost unprecedented number of Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes also responding to the call for aid in the aftermath of Kasr Tyrok. The Gothic class cruiser, *Abridal's Glory*, even filed a report of a Fortress Monastery entering the region, suggesting that even to the Space Marines, coming events were of the greatest importance.



Understandably, most of the arriving Chapters feared further revolts and uprisings across the sectors bordering the Eye of Terror, and almost all elected to begin ground offensives against those systems where the strife and disorder had already become widespread. The Space Marines were similarly tasked with fighting through many of the raging warp storms and mounting assaults on the scattered and isolated worlds already fallen to the Curse of Unbelief. Here, the Space Marines would be far less hindered by the lack of numbers and adverse conditions than the Imperial Navy. Against a host of worlds the Adeptus Astartes fleets unleashed massive planetary assaults to corral and contain the spreading contagion, using planetary bombardments (and in the worst cases, Exterminatus) to control areas already deemed unclean.

The best this strategy could hope to achieve, however, was to stabilise conditions on many of the smaller worlds across the affected sectors, where Imperial rule had been placed under the most strain. A far stronger defence would be required if Cadia and its neighbours were to be truly ready for what few now doubted would be a major invasion. To this end, the vast collection of ships assembled at the main sector docks around the Eye of Terror were formalised into battlefleets and dispatched to defend vital supply lines, inhabited worlds, and known routes out of the Eye of Terror. Foremost amongst these would be battlefleets Cadia, Agripinaa and Scarus, who were detailed to act as the main crux of the Imperial fleet effort.

As these defensive preparations were made, unknown raiders hit the Tabor and Ulthor systems, but this time vessels of the Imperial Navy were in position to counter-attack. Three squadrons of Cobra Destroyers in conjunction with the Lunar class cruiser, *Goliath*, pursued

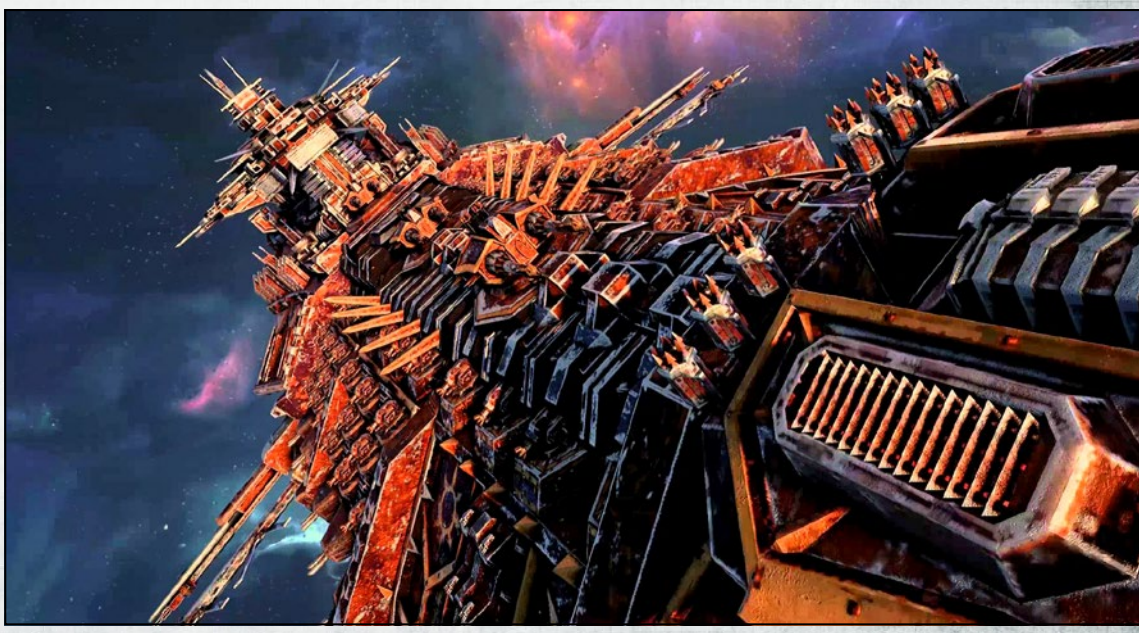
the attackers into the Faberius Straits and in a fearsome battle, crippled the Styx class cruiser, *Darkblood*. The engagement cost the Navy most of the Cobras and the *Goliath* was severely damaged, but at last the attackers had been identified. The *Darkblood* was codified as being attached to the Night Lords warleader, Tarraq Darkblood, one of the most vicious killers in a Legion replete with sadistic butchers. Before Imperial reinforcements could arrive, a huge force of Chaos warships were picked up on long-range augers, and the surviving Imperial vessels were forced to withdraw, and limp to the safety of the nearby port of Aurent.

Similar opposition was met by many of the Imperial battlegroups. The Imperium was able, largely, to stave off these small incursions, but often at a great cost in resources, invariably forcing back the Imperial fleet and leaving it poorly equipped to repel any subsequent attacks. Reluctantly, the Imperial vessels withdrew, realising that some massive attack must be imminent and that their best hope lay in a single, combined defensive effort.

This change in tack meant that the Imperium's highest priority very rapidly became predicting and pre-empting the location of any initial attack. The answer was to come in unimaginably bloody fashion.

A patrol group, delivering Cadian Kasrkin to the planet of Urthwart, were to make the discovery. They came upon Urthwart to find it already lost, enslaved utterly by Chaos. Nothing there could be saved, and the Kasrkin made ready to withdraw, perhaps suspecting they had arrived too late. In truth, the fact that they had arrived at all was the enemy's ultimate success. As the Cadians made ready to withdraw, the space around Urthwart was eclipsed by a Chaos fleet emerging from the Eye of Terror. At the centre of this armada of the Dark Gods, horrifying and incomprehensible, came the *Planet Killer*.

In a matter of hours, Urthwart became a victim of the aptly-named *Planet Killer* – the world and all it had ever contained committed instantly to history by this greatest of Abaddon's machineries. Like a herald of damnation, the arrival of the *Planet Killer* instantly announced to all that a new Black Crusade had well and truly begun…



THE SPREADING PLAGUE

As if answering some unspoken signal, the destruction of Urthwart coincided precisely with the emergence of Typhus' Plaguefleet, the fiend himself in command at the helm of his flagship, *Terminus Est*. The fleet was immense, accompanied most alarmingly by two Blackstone fortresses (relics of Abaddon's previous incursions into the Gothic sector) though now hideously altered so as to appear artefacts of Chaos rather than the ancient bastions they once were.

If a stand was to be made, it was now. The Imperial fleet amassed at Ormantep, within the boundaries of a vast asteroid belt known as the Ilithrium Belt. It was here that the forces of the Imperium and those of the dark gods at last came face to face. The disruptive effect of the asteroid belt forced the fleets into brutally close range combat. Hordes of Chaos attack craft, and torpedoes unleashed at close range where their accuracy was highest decimated the Imperial fleet. Even the fleet flagship, *Honour and Duty*, under the command of Admiral Pulaski, fell prey to the hungry guns of Chaos and exploded as its internal damage got the better of the ancient vessel. While strength of numbers and sheer firepower may have been advantages that lay squarely in the hands of Chaos, unbreakable faith and courage remained as ever the epitome of the Imperial Navy. If victory could not be gained at Ilithrium, defeat would at least be stalled. Captain Agenager, adopting control of the fleet after Pulaski's demise ordered the fleet into a cross formation, arranging their broadsides against the Chaos fleet where vessels could defend one another with massed firepower and turrets, fending off enemy attack craft and creating a vicious zone of crossfire to their port and starboard. The immobility of the formation left Agenager with little hope of escape, but would at least stall the Chaos advance. With his decision made, Agenager and his fleet steeled themselves for the fight, praying only that their sacrifice would not be in vain.

In the event, the sacrifice was not to be asked of them. As the Chaos fleet found itself stubbed by the unbreakable cross formation arrayed against them, its flanks first buckled then collapsed utterly as the mighty Battlefleet Agripinaa arrived to unleash its fury upon the traitors. It was immediately apparent to Admiral Quarren, arriving at the head of the Battlefleet, that a final victory could not be achieved. Instead, his reinforcements could provide only respite and the chance of escape to their comrades – a chance which all the assembled Imperial Navy vessels gladly took, departing at once for the relative safety of port at Demios Binary.

THE SLOW REPRISAL

So it was that as Abaddon's Thirteenth Black Crusade swept throughout the sectors bordering the Eye of Terror, the immense warfleet which he had amassed proving unstoppable. In comparison to Abaddon's Grand Fleet and the Plaguefleet of Typhus, the Imperium's defences were thinly spread, even around the Cadian Gate where the so called Bastion fleets stand as the largest permanent Imperial Navy element outside of the Solar system.

Thus, in the early stages of the war Abaddon's fleet held orbital supremacy across

most of the sectors within the warzone allowing him to bombard worlds, enslave their populace and deploy Chaos forces to the surface at will. All the while, however, the ponderous machine of the Imperial Navy readied itself, slowly but surely against him.

The Imperial Navy is, ultimately, an inevitability. Stretched out across the thousands of light years of Imperial Space, dispersed across a hundred warzones, patrol routes and shipping lanes it is far from the most reactive force in the Emperor's service. Nonetheless, the Imperial Navy is a giant, an unstoppable behemoth which sooner or later will, inevitably, arrive to unleash its vengeance, no matter how powerful the foe.

The Imperial Navy had been forced to divide its assets across hundreds of worlds at the outset of the war. However, as the war drew on it was gifted a valuable opportunity to combine its numbers and concentrate its forces once Abaddon's plans became clear and the Chaos fleets had delivered hordes of ground troops to important worlds such as Cadia, Agripinaa and Thracian Primaris. Where Imperial defences had been overstretched at the outset of the war, they soon stood reinforced by dozens of neighbouring battlefleets. Tiny patrols, at first hopelessly outnumbered and overwhelmed by Abaddon's invasion, mustered together into battlefleets numbering hundreds of vessels. Space Marine Chapters committed their own fleets to the war in space and soon the Imperial Navy stood as an unbreakable circle of iron around Abaddon's forces. From this strong regrouping, Admiral Quarren was more than ready to launch his counter-attacks against Abaddon's chosen targets.

A thousand small battles were already lost for the Imperium – worlds engulfed by cults and treacherous defenders, worlds decimated by the Plague of Unbelief and other forgotten battlefields were already far past the point at which they might be saved. Indeed, fighting the war across a front scattered like a thousand broken shards

had undoubtedly stymied the Imperium in the early days of the invasion, forced to spread its already hard pressed assets, uncertain of where the hardest blow might land. To win the greater war now, the wise (and not least amongst them, Admiral Quarren) realised that a handful of crucial fronts must be all to which the Imperium committed. So it is that the course of a war – the story of victory and defeat – cannot be described in terms of all its constituent parts, but instead must be thought of in terms of those particular prizes for which both sides tussle most fiercely – worlds like Agrapinna, Nemesis, Agripinaa, Subiaco Diablo and most of all, Cadia and its ancient Pylons.

THE IMPERIUM RESURGENT

As Quarren's reunified, reinforced and reinvigorated fleet moved towards Cadia, the Chaos fleet, including one of the Blackstone Fortresses – ancient engines of destruction built aeons ago by unknown xenos – gathered above the planet. In a manner no-one could have predicted, the Chaos fleet was unexpectedly delayed by lightning-fast attacks on the Blackstone by squadrons of Eldar cruisers. Lord Admiral Quarren was quick to take advantage of the delay and his counter-strike (composed of vessels arriving from out of system) flowed from Cadia to Xersia and finally Demios Binary.

In his first action, Quarren chose to strike directly at the vessels in orbit around Cadia itself. The vast majority of Abaddon's forces had already been committed to the planet, so Quarren could do little to aid the struggle there, but his fleet did now have a massive opportunity to retake control of the space around Cadia and prevent Chaos reinforcements.

Quarren attacked the Chaos fleet side-on, trapping the traitor vessels between his own fleet and the planet Cadia where their superior speed would provide them little benefit. Even with the enemy trapped, the Chaos fleet still presented a fearsome amount of firepower By dint of this cunning stunt Quarren succeeded, first in dividing the main fleet, and then, in pursuing the defeated elements to final extinction. Only those squadrons that stayed close to the Blackstone Fortress remained a threat but the Chaos fleet was now concerned with survival. Most significantly, the Imperial Flagship, *Galathamor* crippled the *Merciless Death*, driving it to Warp from whence it took no further part in the war.

As an act of vengeance, Abaddon despatched the *Planet Killer* to Macharia. A desperate boarding action by Space Marine Honour Guard companies failed to prevent the *Planet Killer* firing, but damaged its shields. As a consequence, debris from the shattered world struck the *Planet*

Killer, which was last seen tumbling away into wilderness space critically damaged.

When worlds in the Cadia system fell prey to the Dark Eldar, the Relictors Space Marines stood ready and swiftly repelled the raiders, driving them back to their fleet. The Dark Eldar could not have expected Admiral Quarren would have set his fleet in motion so swiftly after fighting the Chaos fleet though. His vanguard smashed into the Dark Eldar fleet and inflicting terrible damage and driving them out of the war in the Cadian sector.

Upon the fortress world of Kasr Patrox, the Traitor Legions of the Chaos Space Marines scored an immeasurable victory, though would themselves be slain by a most unexpected foe. High above them oblivion beckoned in the monstrous form of a corrupted Blackstone Fortress.

The Blackstone Fortresses' weaponry beat down on Kasr Patrox, remorselessly slaughtering the warriors of both sides. Faced with the certain destruction of Cadia's last defenders, Admiral Quarren had no choice but to muster his battered fleet for yet another battle. One by one the screening Chaos vessels were peeled away from the Blackstone until eventually it was forced to cease its attack and concentrate upon its own defence. With the end of the Blackstone's attack an uneasy lull settled on Cadia during which Lord Castellan Ursarkar Creed evacuated Kasr Patrox while he still could.

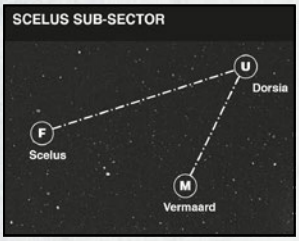
THE LONG DEMISE

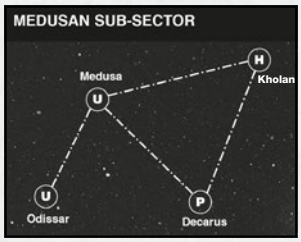
Abaddon may have succeeded in his conquest of the worlds outlying the Eye of Terror, but by the grace of the Imperial Navy, few reinforcements will reach his forces now to bolster his campaign. Some have said that it is for this reason alone that Cadia still belongs in the material realm.

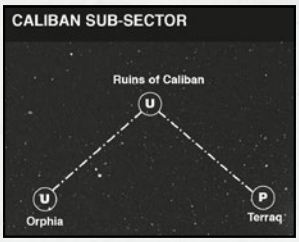
As with all wars, many of the events of the Thirteenth Black Crusade will forever go unknown and unremembered. The Fog of War does not rise quickly, and in a conflict of such immensity as this, the fate of many worlds (and, indeed, exactly how they came to meet that fate) is something history will singularly fail to remark upon. To seek out survivors of the countless scattered warzones around the Eye of Terror could never be a priority for the perpetually embattled Imperium, and many of those who perhaps survive do so without the means to contact their fellow Man, isolated and cut-off by the tumult of Abaddon's bloody invasion.

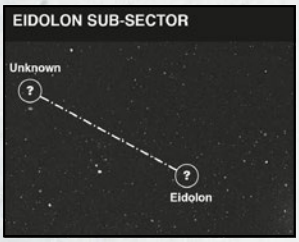
Perhaps in days to come distant patrols or roaming merchant fleets may stumble upon forgotten worlds to find that their human populations endure, or perhaps that they no longer exist at all. Perhaps they will find whole worlds in the grip of Chaos, where treacherous warlords rule unopposed on the surface but with their fleets beaten and destroyed, leaving them with the hollowest of victories and stranding them on worlds which can expect nothing more than Exterminatus as soon as the vessels might be found to perpetrate it. There may be other worlds, too, where no living thing now remains –a whole world's substance expended in the unspeakable battles which it has witnessed. There may even be those worlds upon which war still rages, but unless the hordes there assembled can yet threaten the wider Imperium their fate is less than a major concern.

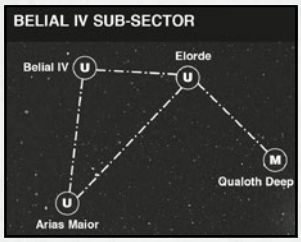
13TH BLACK CRUSADE

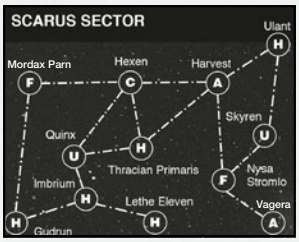


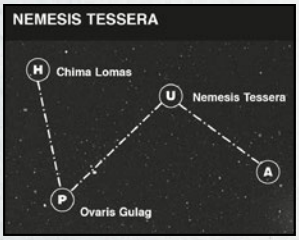


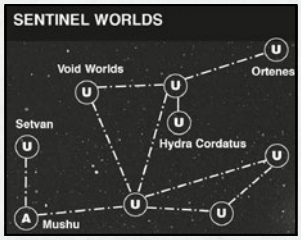


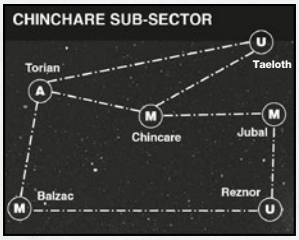


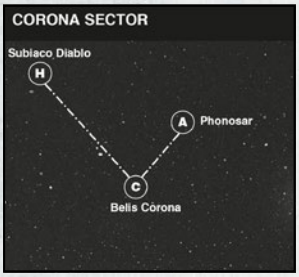


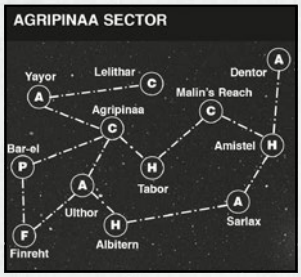


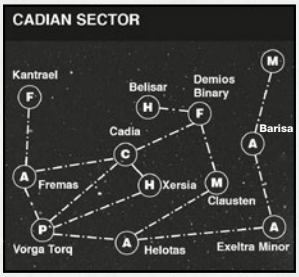












KEY TO SUB-SECTOR MAPS	
A	Agri-world
C	Civilised world
F	Forge world
H	Hive world
M	Mining world
P	Penal world
U	Uninhabited system

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO ONE

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

A Chaos fleet led by the Planet Killer heads towards the Cadia system to join Typhus and his Plague Fleet. Imperial forces on patrol detect the fleet and quickly change course. Their only option is to stop or at least stall this advancing Chaos fleet before they can join the main warfleet around Cadia. Will the Imperial forces succeed in buying some precious time, or will these brave souls join the long list of those crushed under the might of Chaos?

FORCES

The Chaos fleet includes the *Planet Killer*, a Devastation class cruiser, a Slaughter class cruiser, and a squadron of three Iconoclast destroyers. The *Planet Killer* is commanded by a Chaos Warmaster (Ld9) with three re-rolls.

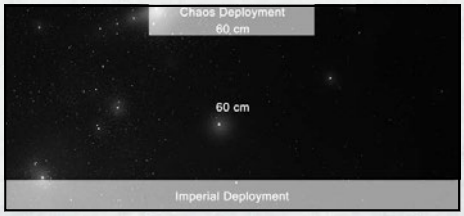
The Imperial fleet includes a Mars class battlecruiser, one Tyrant class cruiser, one Gothic class cruiser and a squadron of four Cobra class destroyers. The Mars class battlecruiser is commended by an Admiral (Ld9) with two re-rolls.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table with whatever celestial terrain you wish for the scenario.

SET-UP

1. The Chaos player first places the *Planet Killer* on the centre line of his long table edge 10 cm in from the edge.
2. Players then alternate placing a single cruiser or squadron of escorts within their deployment zone up to 30 cm from the table edge until all models have been placed. (See map for deployment zones)



FIRST TURN

The Imperial fleet may choose whether to go first or second.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

All the Imperial forces can hope to do is slow the Chaos fleet and buy time for Cadia's defenders. If the *Planet Killer* is destroyed, it will be a major victory for the Imperial forces. If the *Planet Killer* is crippled, then it will be a minor victory for the Imperial fleet.

If the *Planet Killer* and one other Chaos capital ship make it off the opposite table edge, the game will end with a Chaos victory (unless the *Planet Killer* is crippled).

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO TWO

REARGUARD ATTACK

Forces sector wide have been split up into smaller patrols and sent in to cripple or destroy as much of the Chaos rearguard as possible before they are destroyed themselves. The targeted Chaos forces are experiencing radar malfunctions due to the presence of jammer mines scattered in their way. The time to strike is now. If the Forces of Order cause enough damage, then these rearguard fleets will be rendered temporarily ineffective, buying the systems ahead some time to organize their defences. The odds are stacked against the Imperium, but stealth may just triumph over numerical superiority.

FORCES

Agree a points limit for the battle.

Forces of Disorder: This player is the defender. They may spend up to the agreed points limit in total on their fleet. Split 25% of this force off as reinforcements.

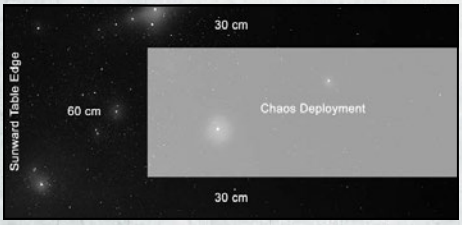
Forces of Order: This player is the attacker. They may spend up to half of the agreed points limit on their fleet.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table with whatever celestial terrain you wish for the scenario.

SET-UP

1. The defender deploys his whole fleet first. The defending fleet must be set up with all the ships facing the sunward table edge and at least 30 cm from any long table edge and 60 cm from the sunward table edge.
2. Each defending ship or squadron must be set up at least 10 cm away from all other defending ships or squadrons.
3. The attacker moves any of his ships in from any table edge in his first turn.



FIRST TURN

The attacker takes the first turn and moves his fleet onto the table.

SPECIAL RULES

Ambushed: For the first D6 turns, all the defender's ships suffer a -1 Leadership penalty to represent their reduced state of readiness.

Reinforcements: Reinforcements for the Forces of Disorder may enter the sunward table edge on any turn, including Turn 1. If the reinforcing ships enter after Turn 1, they may be deployed up to 30 cm along the long table edges for each turn after the first.

For example, a Slaughter class cruiser enters as reinforcements on Turn 4, so it may be placed on the short table edge or up to 90 cm (30 cm × 3) along one of the long edges.

GAME LENGTH

The game continues for eight turns, or until one fleet disengages.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the fleet with the highest victory points total at the end of the battle wins.

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO THREE

ALIEN INTERVENTION

A Chaos fleet thought to have abandoned the sector of Chinchare is instead found raiding a space hulk orbiting Van Sele's World. Once this news reached Imperial command, a force was quickly gathered in an attempt to surprise the traitors and crush them. However this was not to be. Imperial scouts were spotted by the Chaos fleet. The Forces of Order now sped into a trap they know nothing about and all seems to be in favour of the evil forces aligned against them. That is until their sensors began picking up traces of nearby Eldar ships...

FORCES

Agree a points limit for the battle.

Forces of Disorder: This player is the attacker. They may spend up to the agreed points limit in total on their fleet.

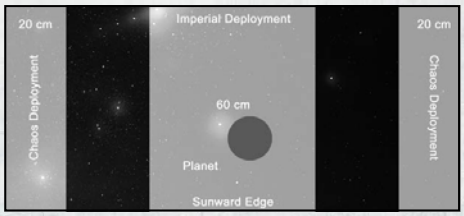
Forces of Order: This player is the defender. They may spend up to 75% of the agreed points limit on their fleet. The remaining 25% of this force is chosen from the Eldar list as reinforcements. This is a great opportunity to get a friend to join you and play the separate Eldar fleet along with you.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table with whatever celestial terrain you wish, except that you must include one planet and a drifting hulk anywhere within 30 cm of the table centre.

SET-UP

1. The defender deploys his whole fleet first. The defending fleet must be set up within 30 cm of the table centre line.
2. Each defending ship or squadron must be set up at least 10 cm apart and facing in the same direction.
3. The attacker sets up all his ships within 20 cm of either short table edge.



FIRST TURN

The attacker rolls 2D6 and the defender rolls a D6. High roll chooses who goes first.

SPECIAL RULES

Eldar Reinforcements: The Eldar, fickle as they are, arrive as reinforcements randomly. Roll a D6 at the start of the Forces of Order player's 2nd turn and consult the chart below:

TURN NUMBER	ELDAR FLEET ARRIVES ON
2	4+
3	3+
4	2+
5	2+
6	Auto

When the Eldar arrive, the entire fleet enters play from one of the long table edges.

GAME LENGTH

The game continues for eight turns, or until one fleet is left on the table.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both fleets score victory points as normal and the side with the highest victory points total at the end of the battle wins.

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO FOUR

ABOVE BELIS CORONA

A massive influx of Imperial reinforcements are making their way to the Belis Corona System from Cypra Mundi. Although this regrouping effort can't be stopped, it can be hindered. A raid on the orbital docks around the planet Belis Corona could stall the current Imperial momentum if the attack goes well. The docks will need to be repaired by the Imperials before they can move on. A small fleet has been dispatched to raid the planet and cause as much havoc as possible before further Imperial reinforcements arrive.

FORCES

Forces of Disorder: This player will be the attacker. Choose a 1500pts fleet and then split it into 2 forces with a points value as equal as possible.

Forces of Order: The defender chooses a 750pts fleet with no battleships and an extra Re-roll for free. In addition to this the player receives 2 space stations, 1 orbital dock, 8 orbital mines, 2 system ships, and 1 defence monitor.

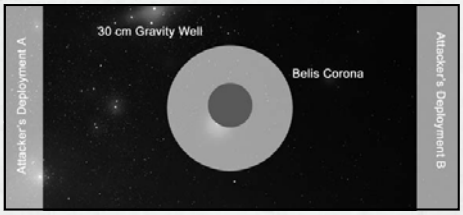
Also, choose a mix of eight platforms from the following list: orbital defence laser platform, orbital torpedo launcher, orbital weapons platform. Then split the chosen eight platforms into two groups of four. Nominate one group as outer platforms and one group as inner platforms.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table. Place the planet Belis Corona in the dead centre of the table. This planet's gravity well extends 30 cm. Each player places an asteroid field anywhere on the table that is at least 30 cm from the planet.

SET-UP

1. The defending player places the orbital dock and two space stations anywhere within the planet's gravity well. Next, the defender places the four outer platforms anywhere on the table (these platforms are special and do not need to be placed within a planet's gravity well).
2. The attacker places one half of his fleet up to 10 cm in from a short table edge and then does the same on the opposite table edge with the other half of his fleet.
3. The defender now places his four inner platforms, two system ships, defence monitor, and eight orbital mines anywhere within 30 cm of the planet.
4. The defender's remaining ships are held in reserve and the defender needs to roll on the reinforcement chart (found below) to see when they enter play.



FIRST TURN

The attacking player rolls 2D6 and the defender rolls 1D6. The player who rolls the highest chooses whether to go first or second.

SPECIAL RULES

Reinforcements: A small patrol fleet has been called in to aid in the defence of Belis Corona. To see if help arrives, the defending player rolls a D6 at the start of his turn for each ship or squadron in reserve. Check the chart below for the result. If a roll is failed for a particular ship or squadron twice, add +1 to the roll next turn. This effect is cumulative. When attempting to see if a mixed squadron arrives, use the slowest ship speed in the squadron. Defending ships enter play from the designated long table edge as per the map above.

SHIP SPEED	REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE ON
up to 20 cm	5+
25	4+
30 cm or more	3+

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for eight turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The attacker is attempting to cripple Belis Corona's defensive capabilities. Victory can only be claimed with the complete destruction of the two space stations, the orbital docks, the four inner platforms, and 25% (points wise) of the defender's reinforcement fleet. ALL criteria must be met for the attackers to win! Any other result is a win for the defenders.

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO FIVE

DAEMON BLOCKADE

Reinforcements en route to the Belis Corona and Scelus sectors find themselves having to penetrate various Chaos blockades. This is risky business indeed. Admirals find themselves having to move as fast as possible through treacherous minefields and withering amounts of firepower. Surprise is the only thing on their side. To make matters even more difficult, there are reports that the ruinous powers have infused orbital mines with Daemonic power. This can only be a bad thing.

FORCES

Agree on a points value total for the battle.

The Chaos fleet will act as the blockading fleet.

Chaos Fleet: The blockading player may spend up to the agreed points value minus 100 on his fleet. In addition to the chosen fleet this player receives ten daemon mines, which follow the special rules below.

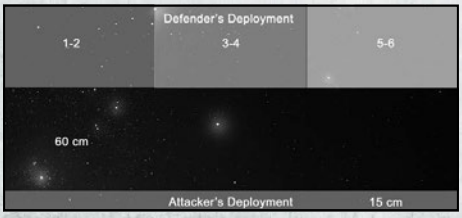
Forces of Order: The attacker (attempting to break the blockade) may spend up to half the agreed points total on ships.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table. The blockading force is stationed on the edges of the system, so the battle will take place in either the outer reaches or deep space.

SET-UP

Divide the table lengthways into thirds, as shown. The blockading player then sets up his fleet. Roll a D6 for each blockading ship, squadron or Daemon mine to determine which third of the table it is deployed in. Blockading ships may start facing in any direction, but may not be placed within 60 cm of the attacker's table edge. The attacker then sets up his force within 15 cm of his table edge.



FIRST TURN

Players roll a D6. The player who rolls the highest decides who goes first.

SPECIAL RULES

Daemon Mines: These function as the orbital mines except:

- They move 10+D6 cm each Ordnance Phase.
- A Daemon mine will devour any enemy ordnance it comes in contact with no repercussions, except for fighters. Yes, this means torpedoes too!
- When enemy fighters contact a Daemon Mine, roll a D6. On a roll of 4+, the Mine remains in play. Remove the enemy fighter counter from play regardless of the outcome.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for six turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Both players score victory points for destroying and crippling enemy ships as normal. In addition, the attacker scores victory points equal to the points value of any ships that he can move off the table via the blockading player's table edge. Crippled ships are worth a quarter of their points value if the attacker can get them off the table. Daemon Mines that are destroyed (not detonated) are worth 10 pts each to the attacking player. The side with the most victory points wins.

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO SIX

NAVIGATE THE STORM

Warp Storms have ravaged several sectors, making travel through them difficult at best, and in many cases impossible. Many warp rifts have opened up along transport channels as a result of these storms. These vital channels have been rendered doubly dangerous by the disturbing fact that the arriving Chaos fleets have found a way to use the Warp Rifts to their advantage. The transports must continue to deliver their important cargo on time and so convoy escort fleets have doubled in size to repel any would-be attackers.

FORCES

Chaos Fleet: The Chaos player has 750 pts to spend on a fleet.

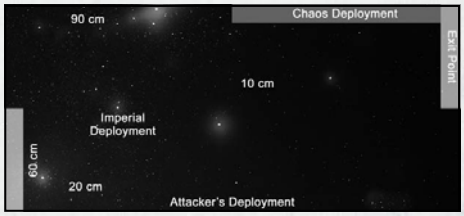
Imperial Fleet: The Imperial player has 1000 pts to spend on a fleet. In addition to this fleet you have 10 Transport ships.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table. Each player has eight Warp Rifts (pg. 111) and takes it in turns to place these on the table. Each Warp Rift must be 10 cm at least away from any others deployed so far.

SET-UP

1. Both players should set up their fleets secretly. Erect a screen to shield each board half, or have each player sketch their ship locations onto a map. Place the fleets in the designated deployment zones as per the map to the right.
2. Each player reveals their ship locations and places their fleets onto the table.



FIRST TURN

The Chaos player chooses whether to go first or second.

SPECIAL RULES

Transformation: If a Chaos ship attempts to navigate a Warp Rift and fails, it is not lost forever. Instead it is transformed into a Daemonship! During the current Chaos End Phase the new Daemonship immediately deploys via Warp Translation as per the rules for Daemonships. This transformation is permanent! Further failed Warp Rift rolls as a Daemonship will yield the same result as above – i.e. during the current Chaos End Phase the ship is redeployed via translation and so on.

Exit Point: The light grey area of the map is where Imperial transports need to exit the table.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until victory conditions are met or no transports remain in play.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Chaos player needs to destroy eight transports and cripple or destroy 50% (points wise) of the Imperial fleet. Imperial ships lost in Warp Rifts count towards this total. Both of these stipulations must be achieved to win.

The Imperial player needs to move five transports off the table via the exit point (see the map) as well as move 25% of his fleet (points wise) off the same table edge. This 25% may not include crippled vessels. Both of these stipulations must be achieved to win.

If neither player achieves both of their stipulations, then whichever player has the higher amount of destroyed (Chaos) or escaped (Imperial) transports can claim a minor victory.

13TH BLACK CRUSADE: SCENARIO SEVEN

MACHARIA'S END

The dreaded Planet Killer has managed to battle its way to the planet Macharia with the help of a sizable Chaos armada. If action is not taken immediately, the unthinkable will happen. Data previous victims of the Planet Killer points to the fact that the Armageddon gun takes a considerable amount of time to charge to a level of energy capable of destroying a planet. This means that there may still be enough time to thwart the Chaos fleet and save Macharia if swift Imperial vengeance is brought upon Abaddon's infernal machine.

FORCES

Chaos Fleet: The Chaos player has 1500 pts to spend on a fleet in addition to the *Planet Killer* itself.

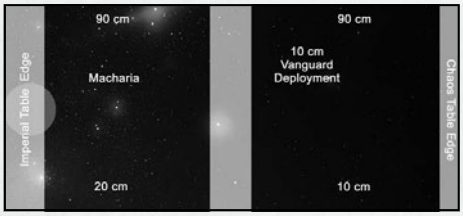
Imperial Fleet: The Imperial player has 2000 pts to spend on the main fleet. Up to 500 of the 2000 pts may be separated as a Vanguard fleet.

BATTLEZONE

Set up a 180 cm × 120 cm table. Place Macharia in the centre of the Imperial player's table edge.

SET-UP

1. The Imperial player places his main fleet within 20 cm of his table edge.
2. The Chaos player places his fleet minus the *Planet Killer* within 10 cm of his table edge.
3. The Imperial player can now place his vanguard fleet anywhere within 5 cm of the table centre line.
4. The *Planet Killer* will move onto the table from the Chaos player's table edge during the first turn.



FIRST TURN

The Imperial player goes first.

SPECIAL RULES

This scenario uses a large number of special rules, especially for the *Planet Killer*.

Armageddon Overcharge: The *Planet Killer* needs to build up a charge of energy before it can deal the deathblow to Macharia. While it can use this weapon normally if desired, it must overcharge the weapon in order to win the game. At the start of the Chaos player's turn decide whether or not to begin the charge build up for the Armageddon Gun. If you do, place a charge counter (a penny will do fine) next to the *Planet Killer*, and another counter at the start of each following turn. Once 3 counters have been accumulated the gun must fire during the Shooting Phase.

While Charging the Gun: The Planet Killer cannot turn, nor can it take any Special Orders or fire its lances. The *Planet Killer* gains an extra 2 shields. Once started, the charging process can not be stopped.

Firing The Gun: Place the Nova Cannon template so that it is touching the Planet Killer's stem then move it directly ahead 60 cm. Note that this is a slightly shorter firing range than the gun normally enjoys. It does NOT fire 90 cm when overcharged! If any part of the template passes over ANY ship's base, that ship is obliterated. If the template hole touches planet Macharia it is destroyed and the game is over.

Recharging: If for some reason you manage to miss planet Macharia with the overcharged blast (how did you do that?), the *Planet Killer* needs to pass two Reload Ordnance special orders over different turns IN A ROW to bring it back online. During this time the *Planet Killer* cannot fire any weapons; all it can do is move.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts until Macharia is destroyed or the *Planet Killer* is crippled.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Chaos player needs to destroy Macharia. The Imperial player needs to stop the *Planet Killer* by crippling it.

ANDY CHAMBERS' NOTES

So you've made it all this way and you're still hungry for more! Well at this point I get to talk about some of the general principles behind the rules. First thing is to say a big thank you to all the people who have offered ideas, suggestions or encouragement by writing in or speaking to me direct. Thank you!

Anyway on to business. The first thing is the most important rule you'll ever need to know. If (when) you come across a situation that doesn't seem to be covered by the rulebook, roll a D6 for it. Let fate decide the outcome and then get on with the game. It's more important to keep the game going than get bogged down in a long argument about rules. If you find the idea of rolling a dice to sort it out horrifying, feel free to sort out the problem in a more gentlemanly fashion.

If you want to change bits of the game to suit yourself, you have my blessings as long as your opponent agrees.

LEADERSHIP

Random Leadership: Many players struggle with having randomly generated Leadership. I've had lots of suggestions about generating crews first and then assigning them to ships afterwards, or using unmodified values based on race. Either of these ideas is fine of course, I just find them dull. The idea that the biggest ships will always have the best crews is not born out by history (in fact smaller ships tend to see more action and so develop better crews). Likewise the practicality of transferring experienced crews from one ship to another is… questionable – quite apart from the issues of crew size (frigate crews can't run battleships) a good deal of experience represents familiarity with a specific vessel. Commanders and the clever use of squadrons can overcome the worst effects of bad leadership, so I urge you to accept the vagarities of fate and the occasional untried crew as part of the challenge of the game. And if it still really bothers you, play a campaign!

THE TURN

The alternating turn sequence is clunky but useful for keeping things nice and forward. Players with a hankering for more complexity can always start by experimenting with the turn sequence. Options include: players alternate moving and shooting with one ship/squadron at a time, introducing an Initiative system based on speed for making moves, counters drawn at random to see which ships move when or use a Player A moves/Player B shoots principle, etc. (yes, I really thought about using all these options!).

THE MOVEMENT PHASE

Accidental Collisions: The observant player will have noted that there's no chance of accidental collisions in Gothic. This is deliberate – amidst the vast gulfs of space the chances of actually getting that close to another ship (unless deliberately trying to ram it) are tiny.

THE SHOOTING PHASE

On the Line: If a ship ends up where it has a target "on the line" between two of its fire arcs the player can decide which he has the target in, but may not count it as being in both.

Halted Ships: Sometimes a combination of critical damage and Blast markers will bring a ship to a halt, or a ship may be using a gravity well to remain stationary. In either of these cases use the Defences column on the Gunnery table if they are fired at – a halted ship is just a sitting target.

Blast Markers: These take effect as soon as they are placed, and will even affect subsequent shooting by the same ship in the same Shooting Phase (here's a hint: always fire your weapons batteries before lances). A ship that moves away from Blast markers in contact with its base always suffers the 5 cm speed penalty, even if it moves directly away and not through the markers – the buffeting it receives still limits its speed. Being slowed down by Blast markers does not reduce the distance a capital ship must move before turning, or the half speed distance the ship must travel.

THE ORDNANCE PHASE

Moving Ordnance: It's important to appreciate that ordnance always moves in both players' turns. Although attack craft can opt not to move in an Ordnance Phase, torpedoes must move their full speed each Ordnance Phase.

Ordnance vs Varying Armour Values: Bombers attacking a ship with more than one armour value always roll against the lowest value. Torpedoes, however, attack the armour value of the ship on whichever facing they strike first.

THE END PHASE

Shields: These are knocked down or 'regenerated' by the presence of Blast markers. This is how it's intended to work so don't be surprised that there are no separate rolls for repairing shields in the End Phase. If you want your shields back up keep moving! They'll recover automatically once you're out of the salvoes the enemy is plastering you with.

Thank you for reading.

I hope you enjoyed this compilation of rules presented in a new format and you have many space battles yet to fight.

If you find any errors, please feel free to contact me at: simon.saier@gmx.de

BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC

– REMASTERED –

+++INCOMING.ORDERS+++FLEET.TO.ASSEMBLE+++
Man has learned to embrace war as its religion, billions take up arms against a galaxy of foes. Great ships sail the void, their guns charged to rain death upon the enemies of the God-Emperor.

This the Age of the Imperium. A time of war and carnage among the stars, of great fleets and mighty armies, selfless heroism and blackest infamy.

This book provides you with all the core rules to play games of Battlefleet Gothic, based on the 2007 digital rules and updated with the 2010 FAQ/Compendium.

Please note: You will need the fleet lists and ship profiles, as these are not included in this book.

A game set in the universe of

WARHAMMER 40,000