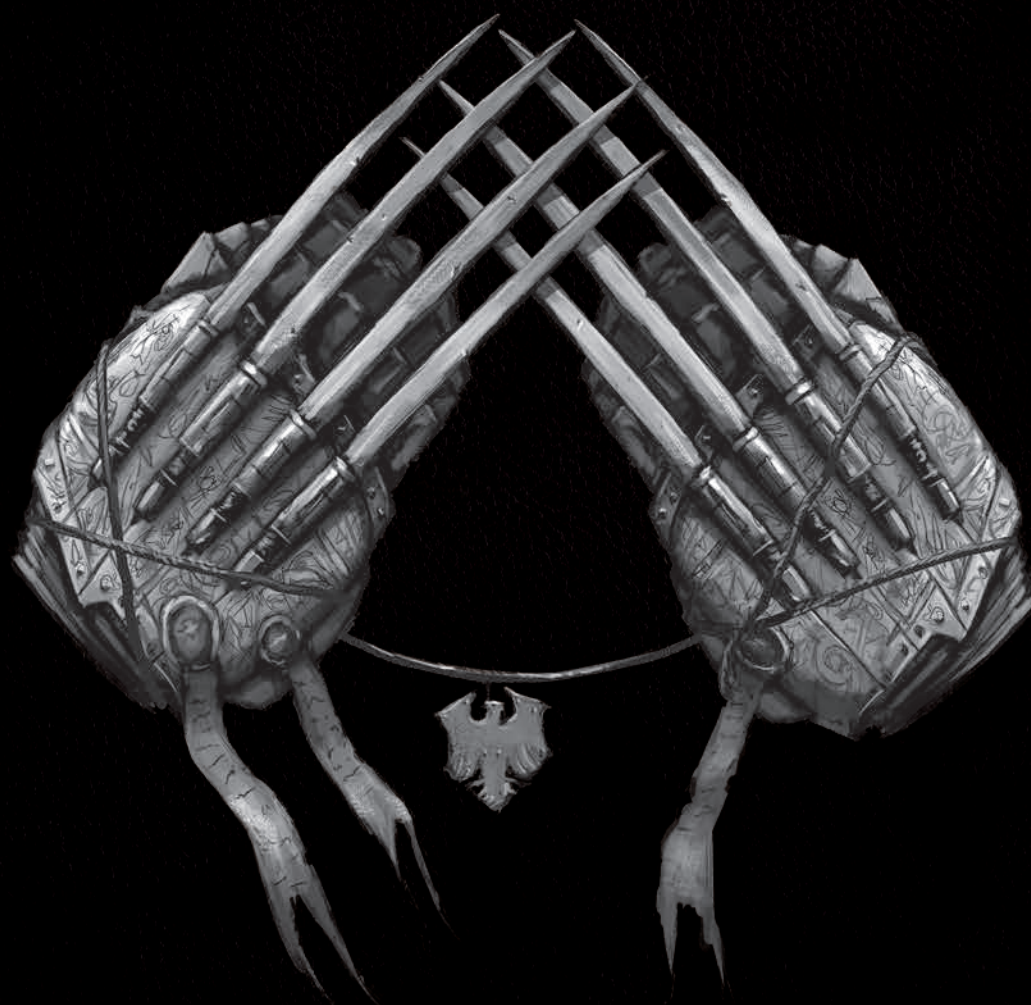


THE HORUS HERESY[®]

EXEMPLARY BATTLES OF THE AGE OF DARKNESS



THE BREAKING OF THE PERFECT FORTRESS

EXEMPLARY BATTLES

As the Age of Darkness ground ever onwards, the fires of war would spread throughout the entire galaxy, consuming everything in their path. Armies and worlds were reduced to nothing more than ash, in many cases leaving no one alive to bear witness to the sacrifices made or the atrocities committed. During this time, each Legion employed unique formations to prosecute their own style of war, whether by choice or through necessity, making use of unconventional, often abhorrent,

tactics and weapons. Many of these formations would be lost during the dark years following the Horus Heresy, their traditions wiped out and the last stockpiles of their weapons exhausted. Some, however, have been preserved in these records, that future generations may learn of the terrors unleashed upon the galaxy by the Emperor's turncoat sons and the valiant heroes who stood against them.



++Carta Segmenta++

Name: Narsis

Classification: Industrial/Fortress World
[Indomitus Class Fortification]

System Data: Gd/034498//k/ce Ɛ

Stellar Grid: 03-CD-5692/Omega

Segmentum: Tempestus/Sinistère

Notation: Previously, this world held in Fief-perpetua by Fulgrim, Lord of the Emperor's Children

++[Divisio Militaris agents previously listed this world in active rebellion against the Imperium]++

The Perfect Fortress was the physical embodiment of the pride of the Emperor's Children; a city remodelled by the genius of their Primarch, Fulgrim, and his chief lieutenants to become a fortress impregnable to any onslaught. Located on the world of Narsis, which the Emperor's Children had brought to Compliance during the Great Crusade, the Perfect Fortress served to secure the riches of several Forge Worlds and the Imperial strongholds of Agrapha, Chopix and Spartus as well as serving as a key part of the Imperium's defences. However, with the outbreak of the Horus Heresy and the betrayal of so many once loyal armies and worlds, Narsis and its Emperor's Children garrison stood as the lynchpin of the Traitors' presence in the southern Imperium, a redoubt so heavily fortified that the scattered Loyalist forces had neither the numbers to besiege it, nor the force of arms to take it by storm.

Despite all of this, the Primarch Corvus Corax, master of the Raven Guard, had set his sights on the so-called Perfect Fortress. Not only for the strategic value of that world or the riches it guarded, but also as a message to the Traitors that the Raven Guard would not hide; he and his Legion would not be cowed

by the terrible losses inflicted upon them at Isstvan V, but would fight till their last breath to protect the Imperium. Yet, with his Legion in tatters, there was no conventional means by which the Raven Lord could succeed in destroying the fortress Fulgrim had designed. Its vast walls, cunningly designed defences and formidable gun batteries truly rendered it all but impregnable to open assault – furthermore, the fortress also served as a city, housing a population of millions that served as both a militia and a shield against indiscriminate bombardment from orbit, for the Raven Lord would not allow so many innocents to perish to bring him his revenge.

Instead of defeating the fortress through brute force, Corvus Corax turned to guile and subterfuge. First, he ordered the Therion Cohort, Imperial Army soldiers bound in service to the Raven Guard, to undertake a full scale assault on the fortress, expending a significant portion of their strength in one massed onslaught. This assault, doomed to fail even from its inception, would feed the arrogance of the Emperor's Children and draw them out of the carefully placed defences of the fortress while the Raven Guard moved into hidden positions to strike the

exposed sections of the fortress-city. However, even as the initial stages of this plan unfolded and the Therion Cohort pressed their futile assault, the orbiting scout cruiser, *Fane of Shadow*, detected a secondary array of concealed flak batteries scattered across the city. These brutal servitor controlled weapons were all slaved to a control room deep beneath one of the central towers and hidden from the Therion Cohort's failing assault, a threat the Raven Lord would have no chance to counter.

Only the crew of the *Fane of Shadow* knew of this hidden threat to Corax's plans, with the fleet under strict orders to maintain vox-silence as the Primarch and his warriors worked to infiltrate the outer defences of the city. For that one moment, the fate of all those fighting below depended on the actions of one warrior, Centurion Beyar Kedron, who commanded the Deliverer detachment assigned to the 11th Chapter, known as the Pale Nomads within the ranks of the Raven Guard. The Deliverers were one of comparatively few cadres of XIXth Legion warriors trained to fight in Tactical Dreadnought Armour, the terminator armour that was prized in many other Legions but often shunned by the Raven Guard. The few Terminators in the Legion were most often Terran veterans who had fought and bled alongside the Justaerin and Horus before the return of the Raven Lord, and were ill-favoured by Corvus Corax for both their past and their brutal manner of fighting. However, it was these Deliverers, whom Corax had deliberately barred from the assault on Narsis, that now held the key to his attack's success.

Despite the disregard shown him by his Primarch, Kedron did not hesitate, and the *Fane of Shadow* broke formation under his orders and moved into low orbit, near a full company of Deliverers taking up arms and swiftly assembling so that they might go forth to defend the master that had abandoned them. Exposed now to the orbital defence batteries of the Perfect Fortress, the *Fane of Shadow* ploughed through a deadly hail of macro-laser blasts and flak bursts that threatened to tear the ship apart. Yet, it made no attempt to return fire, its armament too limited to threaten the Perfect Fortress.

Instead, it dipped briefly into low orbit for only a few minutes before making a hard burn back into high orbit, out of range of the Perfect Fortress' fearsome orbital defence batteries. To an observer on the ground it would seem that the ship had undertaken a foolhardy probe in support of the Therion attack and been forced back empty-handed, but the *Fane of Shadow* had not failed in its mission.

On the surface below, at the base of ancillary hab-block Delta-19, the air began to shimmer and distort as the *Fane of Shadow* made its brief dive. This otherwise unremarkable structure was marked by carefully hidden fortifications and held a demi-company of the Emperor's Children who paid little heed to the battle raging on the far side of the city, remaining intent on their watch over a seemingly unimportant hab-block. The Emperor's Children were veteran warriors and knew full well that such an auspex flare could mean only one thing – a mass teleport in progress – and set their guns to bracket the attackers in a deadly crossfire that made optimal use of the hidden fire points and fortifications concealed within the facade of the hab-block. The teleport completed with a series of blinding flashes, the signal for the Emperor's Children to unleash a precise barrage of deadly bolt rounds and volkite blasts, firepower enough to cut down almost any ordinary foe in an instant.

From this maelstrom of bolt shell explosions, arcing volkite beams and the lingering tendrils of the teleport discharge marched a full company of Deliverers. Clad in full cataphractii armour of dull red and deep black, they weathered the Emperor's Children's onslaught with chilling indifference, firing their own combi-bolters even as dozens of impacts pocked their armour and tore into the ground around them. No more than a dozen Deliverers fell to this barrage, for such was the weight of fire directed at them that some shells inevitably found weak points in their armour, but this was far too little to deter a full company numbering near a hundred cataphractii-plated warriors. The victorious Deliverers pressed forwards with Centurion Kedron at their head, eager to avenge the fallen and prove their worth to the Primarch. Heavy flamers were brought to the fore and the Emperor's Children were driven from their fortifications by great gouts of burning promethium, with those Deliverers armed with lightning claws and power blades stalking through the flames to cut down dozens of the enemy as they sought shelter from the conflagration.

This brutal onslaught quickly cleared the entrance to block Delta-19, for this type of assault had been perfected by the Deliverers on countless battlefields from the Jovian moons to the infamous battle of Gate-42. Below block Delta-19 lay the cogitator chamber, which the *Fane of Shadow's* augury scanners had pinpointed from orbit, now vulnerable to assault by the Deliverers if they could breach the defences arrayed in the lower levels of the hab-block. It was into the maze of deliberately winding corridors and fortified rooms set below that the surviving Emperor's Children had retreated, setting a new line of defences amid the perfectly arranged fortifications, battered but far from broken. Drawn to the alarms sounded by their brethren, the various Emperor's Children defence cadres assigned to this sector of the city began taking pre-prepared positions in the surrounding hab-blocks, unleashing a devastating torrent of gunfire on the hulking Terminators below as they consolidated their position at the threshold of block Delta-19. Worse yet, triggered by the Deliverers' assault or by Corax's approaching airborne assault force, which had finally registered on the city's auspex grids, automated defence macro-batteries began to deploy across the city. If these cannon were still active when the Raven Guard reached the city walls, then what should have been a decisive blow would turn into yet another battle won only with a catastrophic cost in lives for the Raven Guard, something the battered Legion could ill afford.

Centurion Kedron, lacking the warriors to properly secure even a small sector of the sprawling city and ill-equipped to fight a defensive battle in the face of a dug-in enemy, chose the only option left to him – a brutal frontal assault into the teeth of enemy guns. With practised discipline the remnants of the Deliverers' company split into smaller detachments, each weathering concentrated defensive fire from the Emperor's Children as they moved to attack the hab-blocks that surrounded Delta-19. The multi-pronged onslaught served both to divide the fire of the entrenched Emperor's Children and to distract them from the true intent of the Raven Guard warriors as they covered their leader's descent into the enemy's stronghold beneath block Delta-19. A single squad accompanied Centurion Kedron into the depths where the hidden control chamber had been detected, determined to sunder whatever defences awaited them. The remote signal controlling the Perfect Fortress' hidden flak batteries must be silenced at all costs, for if it was not then all the efforts of the Deliverers would be for naught.

On the surface, hulking umber clad warriors of the Deliverers wielding snub-nosed reaper autocannon blasted apart the humble facades of the hab-blocks, revealing the hidden armoured bulwarks behind which the Emperor's Children waited. The cunningly wrought defences of the Perfect Fortress, true to its name, gave the Traitors the advantage over any lesser troops – but not the warriors of the Deliverers, clad as they were in imposing and nigh-impregnable cataphractii plate. The Emperor's Children were forced to focus tremendous firepower just to incapacitate a single terminator-armoured Deliverer and as they sought to thin the number of the invaders, the hulking warriors of the Deliverers reached the walls of the scattered hab-blocks. There, even though the careful design of the hab-blocks allowed Traitor fire teams on neighbouring blocks to continue firing at them, Raven Guard Terminators with growling chainfists made short work of the armoured bulkheads and wrought a bloody ruin of the purple armoured warriors that waited within, the sheer brute force of the Deliverers' weapons making a mockery of their foe's superlative skill-at-arms.

Breaching the hab-block walls with fire and fury, the Loyalists scattered the first wave of defenders, but found little respite. Every corridor and stairway was built to grant the defenders every advantage possible, each turn an ambush point and each archway a deadly trap. In the twisting corridors and cramped stairwells the Raven Guard strode through a storm of weapons fire and frag blasts, each fresh assault chipping away at their stalwart armour and leaving them with an ever mounting toll of wounded and dead. Each time the Raven Guard broke through a line of defences to scatter their tormentors in a furious melee that pitted brutally hooked power claws against elegant lances, the Emperor's Children left a token force to fight a rearguard as their main body fell back to another layer of artfully designed fortifications. Bodies in both purple and ochre-stained black littered every intersection and stairway, armour cleaved and broken, but each still and silent cataphractii was a telling blow to the limited strength of the Deliverers.



In this grim contest of arms the Raven Guard knew they could not best the design of the Perfect Fortress and sweep away their foe, instead, they could only hold them in a brutal and grinding stalemate. This had ever been the lot of their dour brotherhood and they did not balk at the sacrifice they made in the name of their Legion, but instead sought to turn bitter defeat into bloody victory. More and more Emperor's Children reserve units arrived using concealed highways and rooftop paths, drawn to the deliberately gruesome carnage wrought by the Deliverers and eager to avenge their fallen brethren. What they found was a slaughterhouse to drive lesser soldiers to abject terror, a trail of destruction that led to the innermost chambers of the hab-block, where the last few surviving squads of Deliverers waited for them. Turning the fortifications against their builders, the Raven Guard made their final stand, luring the Emperor's Children into their own traps and defences. In the darkness, heavily armed Terminators unleashed torrents of autocannon fire from emplaced bulwarks, while claw-wielding Deliverers ploughed through the ferrocrete walls to outflank the Emperor's Children and wreak havoc before they could be brought down by sheer numbers. Each death kept the eyes of the Emperor's Children on the small force that dared shame them in their own fortress, and away from the Raven Guard's true target deep below hab-block Delta-19.

As his warriors on the surface bought time with their lives, Centurion Kedron and his command squad fought their way through a nightmare labyrinth in the depths of the Perfect Fortress. They cut through scores of mindless defence servitors, forcing a path through disorienting layers of electromag fields that scrambled sensors and breached near endless layers of armoured bulkheads, in search of the vital cogitator networks that allowed its complex automated defences to function. Centurion Kedron traded safety for speed, ever mindful that each moment they continued their assault was bought with the blood of those that fought and died above, and his company slowly dwindled as they homed in on the target they had identified from orbit. Yet, the greatest challenge of the assault waited on the threshold of victory, a phalanx of warriors clad in terminator plate, lacquered in deep purple and artfully trimmed in gold filigree – a marked contrast to the brutally efficient styling of the Deliverers' own armour – blocked the final bulkhead. This cadre of the Phoenix Guard was led by the Phoenix Warden Daric Ashmoune, who had arrayed his warriors in a formation that both maximised their combat efficiency and flaunted the artistry of their wargear to their foe. At Warden Ashmoune's signal, the elite warriors of the Emperor's Children lowered their flickering power spears in a single synchronised motion, before charging as one body into the ragged group of battered Deliverers.

Poised skill met bitter fury as the Phoenix Guard clashed with the Deliverers in combat. Only a dozen of the Raven Guard remained, set against almost twice their number of the foe, a battle that under normal circumstances would have resulted in annihilation for the warriors of the XIXth Legion. Yet the Deliverers had little intention of fighting honourably, and rather than give open battle in a dramatic set-piece engagement,

they split into pairs and trios and drew the Phoenix Guard into the warren of tunnels where both simple darkness and the electromag fields that had before hampered them, now proved their allies. Pride would not allow Warden Ashmoune to hold his ground as the enemy showed him such disrespect, and he ordered the Phoenix Guard to give chase, letting his hubris turn their own fortifications against them. In the darkness the Raven Guard divided the enemy's ranks and set upon them from hidden ambush, using the brute strength and the single-minded frenzy that sometimes overtook the warriors of the Raven Guard overcome the skill and superior numbers of the foe.

Last to fall was Daric Ashmoune, who the Deliverers had left untouched, his gold-chased armour still pristine and unmarked by the vicious melee that played out around him. Vainly, Warden Ashmoune issued challenge after challenge, demanding that Centurion Kedron meet him in single combat as was the right of any commander of the Legiones Astartes. Kedron had little intention of fighting the elite Phoenix Warden on his terms, and emerged from the shadows only once all the other Emperor's Children warriors had fallen. As Warden Ashmoune advanced to meet him in an honourable duel, still confident that his own skill could turn the tide of the battle, the remaining Deliverers fell upon him and the Raven Guard tore their foe apart in a brief and perfunctory slaughter that offered the fallen warrior no glory in his passing. With the cogitator chamber now undefended, the few surviving Deliverers made use of power-shrouded talons and explosive charges to destroy the vulnerable cogitator cores. The machine-anima housed within annihilated, the hidden macro-batteries around the Perfect Fortress fell silent and still even as the attack craft of the Raven Lord swept over the walls and disgorged their occupants upon the main host of the Emperor's Children, who remained focused on the slaughter of the Therion Cohort and were caught completely by surprise. Perfection had been sullied and the pride of the Emperor's Children broken, and within the battered precincts of their shattered fortress, Corvus Corax exacted a bloody revenge upon the sons of Fulgrim that is well documented in other treatise.

In the aftermath of Corax's swift victory over the supposedly perfect fortress of Narsis, casualties among the main body of the Raven Guard were light, as the hidden defences concealed within the city's fortifications had been disabled before they could be fully brought to bear. The Deliverers under Centurion Kedron, however, paid a fierce toll for their bravery, and before they departed Narsis they laid more than two-thirds of their brothers to rest in the mausoleum of Narsis' fallen stronghold. No honours would be granted to these fallen warriors for their actions, nor is Corvus Corax known to have uttered a word either of praise or condemnation for the Deliverers when informed of their assault. In the months that followed the fall of Narsis and the Raven Guard's new campaign in the southern reaches of the Imperium, Centurion Kedron, as well as a number of commanders from the Therion Cohort who had criticised the plan that all but destroyed their ranks to distract the Emperor's Children, would be assigned to seize and secure the isolated world of Galaspar, far from the war that would in later years earn the Raven Lord much renown.



ELITES

Few warriors of the XIXth Legion favoured the use of terminator armour in battle, mainly those Terran veterans who prior to unification with the Primarch had long served in the shadow of the Luna Wolves. These warriors had trained alongside the infamous Justaerin and mastered the tactics of close range shock assault from both aerial transport and teleport deployment. The Legionaries of the Raven Guard and the Luna Wolves came to refer to these detachments as 'Deliverers', both for the carnage they brought to the enemy and for their tendency to be deployed when the daring assaults favoured by the XIXth Legion floundered and threatened to fail. Horus himself is known to have honoured the Deliverers attached to the Pale Nomads Chapter for the ferocity of their counter-attack at the siege of Novas-praxim, including them as part of his personal entourage until the Raven Lord reclaimed command of his Legion. In the wake of Corvus Corax's return, the Deliverers were rarely called upon by the Primarch. Most were assigned to distant Great Crusade fleets, and those that remained at Corax's side became the avatars of his carefully controlled anger, loosed when an enemy proved itself worthy only of utter destruction.

O-1 RAVEN GUARD DELIVERER SQUAD

275 POINTS

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| Deliverer | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 2+ |
| Deliverer Chieftain | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2+ |

Unit Composition

- 4 Deliverers
- 1 Deliverer Chieftain

Unit Type

- Deliverers: Infantry
- Deliverer Chieftain: Infantry (Character)

Wargear

- Combi-bolter
- Power weapon (any type)
- Cataphractii Terminator armour
- Infravisor
- Teleportation transponder

Special Rules

- Legiones Astartes (Raven Guard)
- Stubborn
- Implacable Advance
- Corax's Shame

Options

- The Deliverer Squad may take:
 - Up to 10 additional Deliverers +40 points each
- For every five models in the unit, one Deliverer in the unit may exchange their combi-bolter for one of the following:
 - Heavy flamer +10 points each
 - Reaper autocannon +15 points each
 - Multi-melta +25 points each
- Any model in the unit may exchange their combi-bolter for:
 - Combi-weapon +7 points each
- Any model in the unit may exchange their combi-bolter and power weapon for:
 - A pair of Raven's Talons +10 points each

Corax's Shame

As an eternal reminder of the cruel and brutal past of those Terran veterans that Corax inherited when he took control of the Raven Guard, the Deliverers have long been exiled from any position of honour in their own Legion. Once, before the Raven Lord's arrival, they had walked in the vanguard of Horus himself, but now they skulked in the shadows of history – abandoned by the Primarch that the Emperor appointed as their master. In the dark years of the Horus Heresy, when their old patron Horus raised his banners in rebellion, some of the few remaining Deliverers would see an opportunity to rise to glory in his name once more, abandoning the Raven Lord to serve the Warmaster, while others would see in the tumult a chance to prove themselves worthy of Corax's notice, even if only in death.

If selected as part of a Loyalist army, a unit with this special rule counts its Toughness as being one point higher when determining whether it suffers Instant Death from any attack (this does not affect To Wound rolls). A unit with this special rule that is instead selected as part of a Traitor army gains the Hatred (Corvus Corax) special rule. If Corvus Corax is part of the same army as a unit with this special rule, then no unit that includes any models with this special rule may be deployed within 18" of Corvus Corax (including when this unit enters play from Reserves, either normally or due to the Deep Strike special rule) and Corvus Corax may never join a unit that includes any models with this special rule.

UNIT SHOWCASE

Shown below are some examples of Raven Guard Deliverers that have been built and painted by members of the Studio staff. They are based on the Citadel Cataphractii Terminator Squad, with a selection of upgrade parts from the Forge World range, including the Cataphractii Power Axe Upgrade Set and the Cataphractii Special Weapons Upgrade Set.





THE BREAKING OF THE PERFECT FORTRESS

MISSION: THE BREAKING OF THE PERFECT FORTRESS

Although it was known as the Perfect Fortress, it was no mere citadel upon the world of Narsis. Built under the instruction of the most adept commanders of Fulgrim's Legion, the Perfect Fortress was far more; a vast and sprawling metropolis of buildings, together forming a defensive structure of gargantuan proportions. Colossal orbital laser batteries tracked the skies ready to intercept enemy craft, and flak guns were ready to shred attackers bold enough to attempt to strike from the sky. From administratum sectors to manufactorums, each seemingly innocuous structure concealed defences upon which every inhabitant could mobilise as a militia, creating interlocking firing arcs from balconies and window bays and turning plazas and gardens into killing fields for any assailants.

In this mission, one side must clear a fortified hab-block, driving out the enemy while minimising their own casualties. The opposing side has patiently set their traps and defences and must resist the onslaught and keep the attackers from key control points.

This mission uses the Zone Mortalis rules alongside The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness rules.

THE ARMIES

The mission presented here can be used to recreate the events that took place on Narsis, representing forces from the Raven Guard as they clear the hab-blocks around block Delta-19. However, players may wish to vary the forces used in these scenarios to portray alternative conflicts in the Age of Darkness, using the recommended army size of between 1,500-2,000 points and the Zone Mortalis Combatant Force Organisation chart. Regardless of the forces used, players should roll off to see which side will be the Attackers or Defenders.

SETTING UP THE GAME

- If using the recommended points limit, a 4'x4' battlefield will give players the most engaging experience.
- A greater density of terrain should be used compared to the quarter to one third coverage of the battlefield used in a standard game, making sure that each table edge has at least one clear entry/exit point per player. The fortified interior of the hab-block can be represented using Citadel Miniatures Zone Mortalis terrain.
- After terrain is placed, but before any models are deployed, the Attacker must select any one board edge. The Objective must be placed in the middle of the selected board edge. There must be sufficient open ground, free of terrain, to move and place models within 6" of the Objective during the game. If there is not, an alternative board edge must be selected, or terrain moved to create sufficient space.
- Determine Warlord Traits and psychic powers as per *The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness rulebook*.

DEPLOYMENT

- The Attacker's board edge is the board edge opposite that where the Objective is placed. The Attacker's deployment zone is the area within 12" of the middle of their board edge, as shown on the deployment map (see page 10). The Attacker must deploy their army first, not including any units they have chosen to place in Reserves. Any units that cannot be deployed must be placed into Reserves.
- The Defender's board edges are the remaining two board edges. If any of the Defender's units must Fall Back, the Defender must move them towards the Defender's board edge that is closest to the majority of the models in the unit that is falling back. The Defender may choose which of their board edges any Reserves arrive from.
- The Defender deploys their army within 6" of either of their own board edges, but not within 12" of an enemy unit. Note, this may mean that a portion of their deployment zones may not be able to be used. Any units that cannot be deployed must be placed into Reserves.
- Players now deploy units with the Infiltrate special rule and redeploy any units with the Scout special rule as per *The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness rulebook*.

FIRST TURN

In this mission, the Attacker gets the first turn, unless the Defender can Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

The game uses the Variable Game Length rules found in *The Horus Heresy: Age of Darkness rulebook*.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The winner of this mission is the side that has the most scoring units, that are not Pinned or Falling Back, within 6" of the Objective at the end of the game. If, at the end of the game, neither the Attacker nor the Defender has more scoring units than their opponent within 6" of the Objective, the player that has scored the most Victory points from Secondary Objectives is the winner. In the event that the amount of Victory points scored from Secondary Objectives by each player is equal, the game is a draw.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

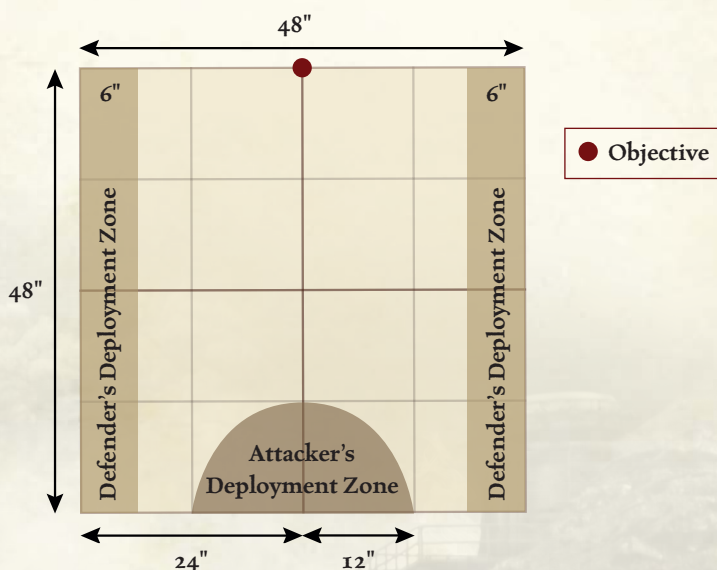
- Slay the Warlord
- First Blood
- Attrition

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

- Reserves
- Precision Assault

Precision Assault

Once per game, at the start of any of their turns and before rolling for Reserves, the Attacker may declare that they are launching a Precision Assault. Until the end of the player turn, any of the Attacker's units that are equipped with teleportation transponders and arrive via Deep Strike do not Scatter after the first model is placed.



Permission to download/print for personal use only.
© Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2022
www.forgeworld.co.uk

CITADEL
MINIATURES

Forge World
MINIATURES



warhammer.com