



# WARMACHINE®



# WARATH™



The background is a complex, dark-toned steampunk illustration. It features numerous interlocking gears of various sizes, some with glowing orange-red outlines. Mechanical components like pistons, valves, and levers are visible within the gear structures. The entire scene is framed by a metallic border with rivets. On the right side, there are three horizontal, glowing orange-yellow rectangular elements. On the left side, there are two similar glowing elements at the bottom.

WITHIN OUR HEARTS  
IS THE WILL TO OVERCOME  
ANY OBSTACLE.

WE ASK FOR  
YOUR SHIELDING HAND,

O MORROW,

SO WE CAN FIGHT ON  
AND ENDURE AGAINST  
THE FALL OF NIGHT.

—MORROWAN PRAYERS FOR BATTLE





WARMACHINE®

WRATH™



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# FUEL THE ENGINES OF WAR!

In a very real way, *WARMACHINE: Wrath* marks a celebration for us at Privateer Press. As the first full expansion of *WARMACHINE* since the launch of the game's second edition, *Wrath* stands as our opportunity to set the tone for *WARMACHINE* development in its Mk II era. Once you've had a chance to absorb the offerings contained herein, we think you will join us in our excitement of what *WARMACHINE* has in store.

First and foremost, the most exciting aspect of *Wrath* is the introduction of battle engines, an entirely new model type. These mammoth models are so large and imposing that we had to create a whole new base size to contain their, well, wrath! In the game, battle engines replace neither warjacks nor warriors, but they provide players with survivable, concentrated firepower and a wealth of tactical options that will appeal to a broad range of play styles. On the table they stand as impressive centerpiece models sure to draw an audience, and on your hobby workstation they present rewarding opportunities to showcase your painting talents.

In addition to our excitement regarding their impact on the game, battle engines also herald a new production avenue for Privateer. Now in addition to the metal we normally produce, we are making resin parts for these kits as well. We have explored resin production in the past, but it has never

been on this scale. The parts are looking great, and we are thrilled to see where this new line of production can take us. *Wrath* marks just the beginning of some exhilarating plans we have cooking for the future.

We did not stop there, of course. *Wrath* also introduces another new model type in ranking officers. Ranking officers give Cygnar, Protectorate, and Khador players even more reason to field Mercenaries in their armies. They provide all the benefits you would expect from a typical unit attachment, but they also transform their Mercenary units into faction units subject to all the spells, abilities, and feats the faction has to offer.

*WARMACHINE* books are about more than just the models, however, and *WARMACHINE: Wrath* immerses its readers in no shortage of action in the Iron Kingdoms. Subtle maneuvering and raiding have given way to all-out war once again. With the bear of the north no longer sated on the territory of Llael, determined zealots applying pressure in the East, and the restless dead ever threatening, Cygnar truly faces its darkest hour.

*WARMACHINE* is stronger than ever, and its future is shining bright. With this book in hand, you are properly equipped to step into the fires of wrath and join us in forging the future of *WARMACHINE*!

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# THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

## PART ONE

### THE BLOODSTONE MARCHES, FALL 608 AR

Across the dunes the winds howled and swirled, sweeping sand into an abrasive curtain and forming entire hills where valleys had once been. The man who stepped from that howling curtain had long lost track of days and weeks. He was a tall figure in black, enameled armor with a massive greatsword slung across his back. The weight of his armament was at odds with the blood-red desert and oppressive heat. He staggered, face gaunt and eyes sunken, but his posture showed resolve. The sandstorm began to die as his steps took him closer to an oasis. Soon the wind no longer pressed upon him like the hand of an angry god.

The surface of a diminished pool of water lay just ahead, surrounded by a spot of lush growth amid the red sands, meager except for its contrast to the desert. Despite its proximity he stumbled and fell to one knee as the tortured muscles in his legs seized. He gritted his teeth as his vision blurred and the world become indistinct. Consciousness threatened to leave him, and he knew if he succumbed he would not rise.

He had learned amid the skorne that flesh could be pushed beyond its limits. Starvation, thirst, fatigue: these were nothing against the force of will. Most men were cowards who died without tapping their reserves. There was no pain, no thirst. All that mattered was the muddy pool ahead.

He regained his feet and shambled the last few steps. He tore off his gauntlets, sank to the sand, and cupped the water in his hands. He kept his wits, careful not to drink too much. It was ambrosia on his dried tongue and withered lips, a pleasure so primal and basic it was like pain. He could feel his vitality partially restored.

His hand went to the blade on his back. He stood and drew before he was fully aware that another man strode into the oasis. The arrival was wrapped in desert silks, his rugged and lined face brown from exposure, a rifle slung behind him and a sword at his waist. Behind him came several dozen ragged soldiers, service patches torn from their uniforms, clearly acclimated to the desert. The man at the front knelt and bowed his head and the others behind him followed his lead.

The armored man lowered his sword and rasped, "Rise, Saxon Orrik. Tell me of our plans."

### SOUTHWEST OF POINT BOURNE

The early autumn days were still warm, but the nights brought a sharp chill. It was not the cold that made Victoria Haley uneasy as she strode out of Point Bourne's southern

gate, followed by her Lancer, Thorn. The gate guards saluted crisply. None thought it amiss that a warcaster would have odd errands even at this late hour; leaving Point Bourne without a warjack might have seemed more peculiar than taking one. Bloody clashes across the Dragon's Tongue had become increasingly frequent, and the generals were convinced full hostilities with Khador would erupt soon.

Haley was not thinking of Khadorans but of the note slipped under her barracks door. It contained a brief description of a place and a time, written in what appeared to be her own hand. It was not the first message like this she had received. Jarringly, this time the note was written on Cygnaran Army letterhead, with the stamp used by General Sebastian Nemo from his command at Corvis.

When she arrived, she realized the directions led her to a long-neglected war monument in a wooded clearing near Point Bourne. It was dedicated to those killed at the Battle of the Tongue in the First Thornwood War. From how the weeds and vines had overrun it, she doubted it had been maintained in decades.

A vein throbbed in Haley's temple as she strained to sense cortexes or warcasters. She could feel distant glimmers of Kara Sloan and the instructors and apprentices at the northern Strategic Academy, but nothing nearer. Despite this, from the shadows stepped a wraith-like woman who solidified to become her slain twin, Deneghra, wearing warcaster armor more revealing than protective and no helmet. Haley looked into a mockery of her own face, pale as a corpse's.

Haley bid Thorn remain behind as she approached the vine-covered monument.

"Greetings, sister," Deneghra said, her voice warm. "So pleased to see you."

"What do you want?" Haley asked sharply.

Deneghra pouted. "No shouted accusations? How disappointing." When Haley simply glared, Deneghra continued, "Just as well; we don't have much time. I have information for you."

"Don't be coy," Haley said. "What was that last attack about? Answer or I'm not listening to anything else." She had thought repeatedly of the night she and Captain Jeremiah Kraye had conducted an off-the-record strike in the Thornwood. The sense of triumph after defeating a lich lord had faded into a sickening certainty of having been used.





"We both got what we needed from that."

"Then there is no reason for me to be here." Haley turned to go.

Deneghra spoke quickly. "I will never lie to you again. I may withhold information, but I know that any lie I speak may break the bond we have renewed. I could not bear that."

Despite herself Haley turned back, feeling indignant heat rise to her face. "Every word and emotion you feign is a lie. You are a dead thing, a darkness that profanes my sister's flesh."

Deneghra actually flinched, and Haley felt a pang of doubt. Deneghra said, "I came to warn you that the Khadoran main assault will begin soon. In a matter of days." Haley did not react. "They will strike Corvis as well. When Sebastian Nemo joins the battle, Cryxian assassins will murder him. You will need to depart immediately to stop it."

Victoria Haley stared at Deneghra with steadily rising dread as hairs rose along her neck and flesh-and-blood arm. Thorn stepped forward to glare at the wraith witch. "You lie."

"Ignore me," Deneghra said, "and soon news of General Nemo's demise will reach you. Can you live with yourself knowing you could have prevented it?"

The certainty of being manipulated had never been stronger, and Haley demanded, "These assassins, I presume *you* sent them?"

Deneghra smiled sadly. "I know Nemo has been helping you unlock your powers. It pleases me to see you grow, and I realize how grief-stricken you would be should anything happen to him. Perhaps because of the death of our father—"

"Silence!" Haley shouted, her self-control nearly lost. The desire to annihilate Deneghra was so strong she could barely resist it, and her power field surged.

Suddenly spectral, Deneghra drifted backward into the shadows. "I did not come to anger you. Do not delay. Perhaps a written warning will suffice? Will you tell him how often we have met?"

Haley realized she had missed her chance to retaliate. Still fuming and with her stomach tightening, she was already deciding what soldiers and warjacks she could requisition without drawing the attention of her superiors and estimating the fastest way to Corvis.

## **NORTH OF THE DRAGON'S TONGUE RIVER**

Widowmaker Kapitan Ulveh sighted through the scope on his Vanar Liberator rifle at the northern walls of Point



Bourne. The advanced optics of his rifle gave him a better view than any ordinary spyglass. Ulvech said, "The screening blind is done, Kommandant. We delayed it as long as possible."

"You did a fine job, Kapitan," Supreme Kommandant Irusk reassured him.

The kapitan glanced at a length of silk he had tied to a burnt and blackened tree closer to the river, seeing how the wind toyed with its length. He adjusted the barrel, pressed his eye back to the scope, and held his breath as he squeezed the trigger. The sound of the report was extremely loud amid the silence. The kapitan's weapon was one of the finest rifles crafted in the Motherland, each lens in its scope a small miracle of precision. Still, this was an impossible shot. Irusk's eyes widened as he saw a small speck—what had to be a man—fall down the face of the distant wall.

**IRUSK'S EYES WIDENED AS HE SAW A SMALL SPECK—WHAT HAD TO BE A MAN—FALL DOWN THE FACE OF THE DISTANT WALL.**

The kapitan made a dissatisfied noise. "That is the last worker repairing Karchev's Breach who will die by sniper fire."

Irusk clapped the kapitan on the shoulder. "Thank you, Kapitan. Have your men stand down." He walked away, thinking. The Widowmakers had inflicted a heavy toll as the southerners labored to erect a structure to screen the breach so they could repair it unmolested. For weeks the sides had exchanged sniper fire from a distance while workers hastily cobbled together heavy boards on a wooden frame. Now they could repair the wall in peace. Unacceptable.

As he approached a large kommand tent he heard the sound of officer voices raised in debate. They came to attention as their supreme kommandant stepped inside. Looming above them at the back beneath an open vent in the tent was the warjack frame inhabited by Kommander Alexander Karchev. Next to him was Kommander Oleg Strakhov, who wore a bored expression.

Irusk looked to Kommander Strakhov and asked, "Did you get everything we need from the engineer?" He referred to a Cygnaran siege engineer they had captured.

Strakhov nodded confidently. "Yes, Kommandant. It took some gentle persuasion, but once he started to talk he did not stop." He waved at the maps and sketches on the tables. "I know the nooks and crannies of Point Bourne better than its commanding officers."

Kapitan Volkov asked, "You are certain he was not lying?"

"At the end we offered him *uiske*," Strakhov said. "He has been drunk ever since. Were he lying, he would want his wits. He drinks to smother the bitter taste of his betrayal."

"Your mad plan," Irusk said, "you are ready for it?"

"Of course!" Strakhov looked offended. "Just give the word."

The supreme kommandant cleared his throat and spoke to them all. "The Cygnarans have finished their blind. Many sons of the Motherland died to crack that wall. It will not take them long to seal it. One thing the southerners can do is build. They are like beavers." He let them enjoy a chuckle before continuing. "Our supply lines through the Thornwood are in shambles. Cryxians infest the forest. Clearing the Thornwood will be a bloody and grueling task that could take years." None of them looked pleased at this thought.

Irusk let that sink in before he continued, "That is not what we will do. The Cygnarans never tamed the Thornwood; they passed through it from one fortified city to another. Our fortress was demolished." He shrugged as if this were a minor inconvenience. "To secure the river demands a city to garrison. As we do not have time to build one, we will have to take one the Cygnarans built for us." He saw in their eyes the eagerness only the anticipation of bold action could inspire. "While Kommandant Makarov besieges Stonebridge Castle and Forward Kommander Kratikoff assaults Corvis, the greatest battle will be fought *here*. The time has come to seize Point Bourne for the empress, for the empire, for the Motherland!"



The firing of cannons was heard and felt throughout the northern barracks well before alarm bells began to toll. With the help of her adjutant, Captain Kara Sloan latched on the last pieces of her warcaster armor and accepted her rifle Spitfire. She stepped from the barracks and stopped a passing long gunner. "What's the situation?"

"It's the Khadorans, sir! Making their big push!" He rushed to catch up with his unit.

Sloan and her retinue went to the north wall, where the sound of the cannons was deafening. The sky was dark, dawn hours away. She could sense the cortexes of her Defenders and Avenger atop the wall where she was expected and her pair of Hunters stationed far out amid the outer trenches. Their augmented cortex receivers let them respond to her commands from a much greater distance. She got close enough to extend her sight through the eyes of her farthest Hunter.



The dark made visibility difficult, even aided by the bright flares several smaller cannons atop the wall periodically fired in high arcs beyond the walls. These special ordnance utilized blasting powder mixed with charcoal, sawdust, and shavings of magnesium. As one of these fired above the enemy and drifted downward with a bright white glow, Sloan saw heavy Khadoran warjacks, dozens of them, moving with a swiftness that suggested warcasters impelled them. Those at the fore included several heavily armored Devastators and Demolishers. The refined steel of these nearly impenetrable machines deflected even the heaviest cannons on the walls.

Sloan moved to her position and raised Spitfire to peer through its mechanically augmented scope. Through its lenses not only was she brought much closer to the enemy, but darkness was no longer a hindrance and the flares gleamed like suns. A formidable array of warjacks was at the vanguard, with hundreds of Man-O-War soldiers in the front ranks fanned out to either side, creating a wedge of heavy armor with the 'jacks at the point. Behind marched thousands of elite Iron Fang pikemen. The symbols on the warjacks and Man-O-War armor identified them as the 4th Assault Legion. Beyond them were ranks of Winter Guard as far as she could see.

Her mouth became dry. This was the army that had toppled Northguard, advancing like an unstoppable tide against Point Bourne. This was The Hammer, the 2nd Army of Khador, with the 4th Assault Legion at its fore—and those hardened soldiers earned their motto "Walls ahead, rubble behind."

Swallowing her trepidation, Sloan directed her Defenders and Hunters to fire even as she targeted the nearest heavy warjacks with her powerful rifle. The great cannons joined in, and long gunners by the hundreds fired their rifles. One of the Devastators buckled and fell, its armor riddled and its internal mechanisms compromised. Several other warjacks and Man-O-War soldiers collapsed as well, but the rest kept on, undeterred.

The trenches would slow them, but she apprehended the impossibility of damaging the sheer volume of heavy armor marching against them. Her hands reloaded automatically, and the shells from the Defender cannon mechanisms dropped into place as they fired again. Hundreds of rifles and smaller cannons amid the trenches added their voices. Additional Khadoran warjacks and soldiers toppled, but not enough. Sloan fumed, not happy to have her predictions vindicated.

After the earlier aborted assault on the walls, the generals had concluded the most likely next course for Khador would be a large-scale attack on Stonebridge Castle, to the northeast. Sloan had to admit there were reasons for this

logic. A frontal attack on Point Bourne seemed foolish; the Cygnaran Army could surrender this small northern section of the city and retreat behind the higher walls and more powerful cannons south of the river. Seizing the northern shore would avail Khador little. In times of peace, Point Bourne had served as a major hub of trade along the Dragon's Tongue River, using dozens of locks to safely lower ships down a drastic elevation change while the bulk of the river's water was diverted west of the city. Trying to breach southern Point Bourne across the river and its fortified locks would be difficult.

The generals concluded the better strategic course for Khador would be to seize Stonebridge Castle to the east. Stonebridge would allow a stable river crossing and enable Khador to stage major offenses against Corvis, Bainsmarket, or Point Bourne at their leisure. The generals had sent Lord Commander Stryker's Storm Division to Stonebridge, along with a concentration of Cygnaran warcasters and military assets. Some officers, including Sloan, had believed Irusk would never attack such a heavily fortified position head-on. Their protests were ignored.

As this was unquestionably Gurvaldt Irusk's army, Sloan scanned for him through Spitfire's scope. She first saw Karchev the Terrible striding at the center of a wall of walking steel but then found the supreme kommandant marching amid a contingent of Man-O-War shocktroopers, just back from the front line.

Given the movement of the shocktroopers in front of him he made for an exceptionally challenging target. She waited until she saw him invoke a surge of arcane momentum to speed his warjacks. Knowing this would diminish his power field, she gathered her will in a complex pattern that sent rings of blue runes to manifest around her rifle barrel as well as the Defenders, Avenger, and Hunters linked to her, augmenting their effective range. Timing the moment, she squeezed Spitfire's trigger.

The rune-inscribed projectile flew true, straight through a narrow gap. The supreme kommandant's power field flickered for a moment as it reduced the velocity, but the bullet still pierced through his armored shoulder and out the back with a trail of blood. The sight of him staggering with one hand to the wound gave Sloan some satisfaction. His escort quickly locked shields around him. She kept alert for the possibility of another shot but returned to firing on the armored advance.

The enemy swiftly reached the outer trenches. Damaged warjacks fell back from the front line to allow teams of Khadoran mechaniks to swarm them like ants, replacing pistons and armored plates. Fresh 'jacks stepped up to receive the next volley. Cannonballs and rifle fire tore through Iron Fangs but only slightly diminished their numbers.



She expected the Khadoran toll to rise as they dealt with the trenches, but Kodiaks and Devastators brought enormous metal plates to throw across the narrowest gaps. She growled, thinking those plates must have been salvaged from the fortress construction she had stopped. Each of these impromptu bridges eventually buckled under the weight of the 'jacks, but not until several rushed across to assault those defending the nearest trenches. The wrecks of previously destroyed 'jacks were hauled over and hurled in to bridge other gaps. Assault kommandos and Winter Guard charged through openings between Man-O-War soldiers to close on trenches.

Sloan tried not to think about those she knew amid those embattled lanes, including the man closest to her heart. She hoped the trencher officers would be wise enough to order a retreat. There were avenues of withdrawal set aside, but the Khadorans swiftly consumed the trenches while crushing everything underfoot. Grenadiers and Chargers fired and then rushed to engage heavier Khadoran 'jacks but were battered aside. Several old Ironclads directed by officers used quake hammers to disrupt the lines, but these too fell under the onslaught. Soon mortars, field guns, and Destroyers came in range of major bunkers to shell them in earnest. Irusk's assault legion pressed inexorably toward the breach.

Point Bourne was a city first and a fortified encampment second, and only a small portion of its defensive cannons could fire directly on any specific section of the battlefield, a fact Irusk exploited on his advance. This was why Sloan and her 'jacks were placed as they were, but she would have needed a dozen more to make a substantial difference. Onward the Khadorans came, unwavering despite losses.

"They're coming too fast!" she muttered, frustrated. One thought was keenly on her mind: they had someone whose expertise was perfectly suited to buying them the time required to inflict a heavier toll on the Khadorans, but there was no sign of her. Sloan turned to one of the ranking officers of the wall, a colonel directing the cannon batteries, and shouted, "Colonel Hurston, where is Major Haley?"

The colonel was an older man who had been stationed at Deepwood Tower before it had fallen. He blinked at Sloan and cleared his throat as though embarrassed. "The major left perhaps three days ago, on some urgent matter. There has been no word from her."

*Of all the times to pull her away, why now?* Sloan thought. "Someone has to stop them at the breach," she said, her expression grim. She turned back to stride toward the steam-driven lift used to move warjacks between the ground level and the battlements. Her Defenders and Avenger joined her. The lift operator engaged the engines, and the metal platform began to lower.

An out-of-breath runner reached the colonel and spoke urgently into his ear. Kara Sloan and her 'jacks were stepping off the lift platform when he blew his whistle to get her attention. "Captain Sloan!" he shouted down. "General Duggan orders withdrawal from the north shore!"

She stared at him with naked disbelief. "Surrendering the wall without a fight? I don't think so." He continued to shout after her as she marched away, something about Stormblades.

She had never disobeyed an order, but she could not turn away without a fight. She realized she had used almost all her ammunition and looked back to see Trencher Lieutenant Leslie Durdin, her adjutant, carrying a fresh belt from which dangled a dozen long rune-inscribed shells. Kara paused just long enough to remove the old and buckle on the new.

Lieutenant Durdin's face was pale with worry. Behind her soldiers rushed down from the battlements and began to withdraw. Durdin had to shout to be heard. "The colonel said—"

"I heard him." Sloan cut her off abruptly. Even as she spoke she saw through her Hunters' eyes that Juggernauts were closing on them. She fired off one last desperate shot from each, making the best possible use of their armor-piercing rounds. Before she could direct them to engage in melee they were hammered to scrap by Khadoran ice axes.

There was an ear-splitting boom, and the wooden screen blocking the breach exploded in a spray of burning splinters. The street shook as Khadoran Marauders fired ram pistons into the stone on either side of the gaping rent in the wall. The hasty repairs that had been done to the lowest section flew apart. There was a sharp crack and a groaning rumble as the breach widened and stone toppled into the lane beyond the wall, landing with deadly weight onto several passing soldiers. Kara Sloan raised Spitfire, and her warjacks followed suit with their cannons. She released her pent-up arcane power in a surge across the area, facilitating the firing mechanisms of her warjacks and her own rifle as they loosed a barrage of firepower. They obliterated several Man-O-War soldiers as well as the first Marauder crashing through the wall. Her Avenger's second explosive shell shook the ground and toppled several Man-O-War Demolition Corpsmen, letting them have a taste of falling masonry from the wall.

Through the smoke and debris strode Karchev the Terrible like a brooding incarnation of war. Kara reloaded and fired again, this time at the ancient warcaster, who rightfully should have died here a century ago during the Battle of the Tongue. Her Avenger shot shook the pavement beneath him, but Karchev was unfazed. Kara aimed for





his head, but he was moving and turning, and her bullet tore through a section of his chest armor instead. Defender shells opened other holes. He looked at her and gave a ghastly smile.

Blue-armored soldiers rushed past her, screaming battle cries, and the air filled with the scent of ozone. The Knights of the Rook, as the 3rd Storm Knight Company of the First Army called themselves, charged forward while loosing lightning bolts and then carved into the enemy 'jacks with storm-powered glaives and halberds. Karchev raised his axe Sunder and chopped down, sending a surge of destructive arcane energies that tore apart a dozen Storm Knights and opened a trench of shattered stone through the lane that toppled two of Sloan's Defenders. She leapt aside, shielding her face from debris, and her power field flickered as it deflected rubble.

The Stormclad directed by their captain smashed into one of the Marauders and sliced great rents in its armor with its generator blade, which sent lightning to bounce across the nearest soldiers. Sloan heard the distinct whistling of incoming mortar fire, and explosions began to rain down, followed by the distinct blasts of Gurvaldt Irusk's unique battle sorcery. More Stormblades and Stormguard fell.

She felt a hand pull at her right arm and turned to see Durdin, blood from a gash in her forehead flowing through the grime covering her face. The lieutenant pleaded, "We need to get to the river!"

Sloan's anger was undiminished, but seeing her adjutant and the fearful expressions on the other members of her retinue gave her pause—none of them were protected by warcaster armor. Their pistols and rifles had little effect, and with the wall breached, the enemy flooded in. The Stormblades would die to hold them, but it would be a suicidal stand. If the First Army was to stop the Khadorans it would not be here.

She could not leave the Stormblades without aid. She mentally touched the cortexes of her warjacks and directed them across the intervening distance, smashing into the enemy 'jacks to send them careening through Khadorans behind. Firing as she backed away, she focused her will to direct quake hammer and stun blade strikes and urged the machines to fight on until they could fight no more. Only then did she allow herself to be pulled toward the river.

### **THE SOUTHERN WALL, POINT BOURNE**

Gun Mage Lieutenant Ryall and his squad watched from the battlements near Lock Station Seven as the chaotic





withdrawal from the north shore proceeded. Flashes of lightning and explosions lit the northern section of Point Bourne. Ryall worried about those left outside the walls in the trenches and battlements.

He was surprised to see battle-weary soldiers climb the nearest stairs and approach. At their fore strode a large, unfamiliar man in Cygnaran warcaster armor with a captain's shield and stripes on his shoulder. With him was a unit of the largest trencher commandos Ryall had ever seen. Their supply sergeant must have struggled to outfit them, as not one looked comfortable in his uniform.

The warcaster nodded, and Ryall offered a crisp salute. Perhaps it was simply the added impact of the warcaster armor, but the gun mage found the captain's stare imposing. He had rarely interacted directly with warcasters, even when studying at the Tempest Academy. The warcaster said, "Lieutenant, I'm here to relieve you." He spoke with a Thurian accent, common among those born and raised near Ceryl, as he extended a crumpled paper. "You're to report to Lock Station Four."

Ryall stiffened as he took the paper and examined it. "I've heard nothing about this." The paperwork seemed in order, but he felt troubled. He realized he had no idea who this warcaster might be. "What's your name, sir? I didn't catch it."

The large man smiled easily, and Ryall found himself staring at the large jagged scar down his cheek. "Captain Larson Shackleton."

Ryall frowned. "Shackleton . . . There was a journeyman by that name who transferred to Stonebridge."

The warcaster took the question in stride. "I was promoted to captain last month. They delayed my transfer." His voice became firm. "Stand down, Lieutenant; we don't have much time."

If they were sending a warcaster to watch this station, where were his warjacks? Ryall's instincts told him something was rotten. "I need to confirm these orders," he said. He motioned to one of his subordinates. "Walter, find Major Trawlins." The gun mage nodded and turned to leave, but one of the trenchers stepped in his way.

Ryall scowled and took a step back, his hand resting on his holstered magelock. "This is against protocol. I must insist—"

As large as he was, the warcaster moved with surprising speed. He drew a brutal-looking single-edged sword and closed half the distance before Ryall's pistol cleared its holster. The lieutenant fired, but the rune bullet deflected off a flickering power field. The imposter's blade plunged into his stomach and ripped up under his sternum. After an explosion of pain he felt no more.

Kommander Strakhov made his move as soon as the lieutenant saw through his ruse. Two of the other gun mages were fast enough to draw pistols and fire, killing Piotr and Lachev before the rest of his disguised assault commandos closed. The Cygnarans were nimble, if not skilled with their swords. It took longer than Strakhov liked to finish them, and he had to kill two more by his own blade.

The entire exchange had taken only moments, but the sound of pistols firing and the subsequent scuffle had been loud. "Quickly!" He dragged two of the bodies into the control chamber while his men brought in the others and shoved them in the corner. Two of his team took up watch positions near the door.

Strakhov looked at the bewildering assortment of pressure gauges, switches, and long-poled levers. This station controlled the nearest section of the river locks by regulating the massive steam engines that directed the flow of water into each of the chambers used to raise or lower boats. Now would be the test of the most vital intelligence wrung from the Cygnaran engineer. Eventually Strakhov found the lever slot described to him. He retrieved a spare lever handle from a shelf and inserted it into the empty slot, which had apparently not been used in years. He gripped the valve wheels and cranked them in sequence as he had been directed, then yanked down on two of the old hinged levers, followed by the one he had just reattached. He was rewarded with a change in timbre in the thrumming steam engines below the station. The floor shook as heavy machinery engaged.

There had been a risk the old mechanism would not work. Cygnar's mechaniks were diligent, though, and for once Strakhov appreciated their fastidious nature. The mechanism activated an enormous lift at the bottom of the lock that had been designed for the passage of laborjacks during early construction on the opposite side of the river. Although several bridges existed along the locks, only one was sufficiently wide and reinforced for steamjacks. That bridge was currently the most heavily guarded place in Point Bourne. It included a defensive failsafe that could tilt its surface to send enemy warjacks tumbling into the waters of the nearest lock.

This forgotten 'jack lift was known to only a few mechaniks who worked closely with the engines powering the locks. Strakhov watched out the control room window as water poured through long-unused lock channels below. At last a large, metal platform emerged from the water to provide a stable bridge. Even before the lift had risen completely, he could see Kommander



Karchev and his 'jacks on the street opposite. They had crossed before the surprised Cygnaran defenders reoriented themselves to fire.

"Kommander," one of the sentries said, "there's a commotion."

"We need to move." He was not to join Irusk and Karchev in subduing the southern city; he had been ordered back north across the river to ensure the northern trenches outside the breach were secured. Irusk would need to know if reinforcements were sent from Stonebridge Castle.

Strakhov primed a cinder bomb from his belt, holding it behind his back as he left the control room. Outside, several long gunners ran up the stairs, rifles ready, alongside an older Cygnaran specialist holding a weighty wrench. Strakhov pointed behind and yelled in Cygnaran, "Something's wrong with the controls!" The older man and one of the long gunners rushed into the control room.

Strakhov casually flipped the cinder bomb after them, and it exploded with a deafening blast to incinerate both the specialist and long gunner while melting the controls to slag. The warcaster pointed back at the remaining long gunners. Red runes circled his hand as he invoked an explosion to annihilate the four closest, taking with them a large section of the stairway.

He leapt past the gap to slash through the throats of the last two, who had fallen back. His men followed behind, blending in with the chaos. They heard shouting nearby, but he felt confident their uniforms would get them back to their lines.

### **NORTH OF TOWER JUDGMENT, BLOODSTONE MARCHES**

Feora, Priestess and Protector of the Flame, walked the rugged hills north of Tower Judgment and scanned the desert wastes. She had taken to patrolling the northern border since the recent loss of a sizable Menoth's Fury refinery deeper in the desert. Its destruction by Devourer Wurm cultists had been a serious blow.

There had been no additional sign of the cultists, but the memory of the storm and earthquake that had swallowed both the refinery and hundreds of her soldiers still troubled her. Feora had rallied the Flameguard afterward and used the disaster as an abject lesson, blaming its loss on their lapse of faith.

Immediately afterward, she had leveraged the situation in a meeting with the Synod to convince the visgoths to grant her greater control over their refineries and mines, each of which needed protection. The Synod was uneasy with so much of the Protectorate's military strength committed to the Northern Crusade in Llael.

They invoked decrees to increase recruitment efforts and foundry production, bolstering Feora's garrisons, which presently served as the only protection for Imer, Sul, and Ancient Icthier. Knowing the Synod's support might wane at any time, Feora sent her right hand, the warcaster Thyra, Flame of Sorrow, to lead raids across the Black River on Cygnaran soil. As expected, the Cygnarans retaliated into Protectorate territory. These attacks served to remind the Synod they needed the Flameguard—they needed Feora. They had reluctantly agreed to deploy several potent relics of the faith to empower holy weapons built by Visgoth Ark Rezek, overseer of the Sul-Menite Artificers. Hierarch Severius demanded the most potent of these be sent north, but Feora arranged for Vessels of Judgment to be allocated to the southern garrisons as well.

**ALL FOCUSED ON A SINGLE  
BLACK-ARMORED FIGURE,  
NEAR WHICH LAY SEVERAL  
FALLEN KNIGHTS, THEIR BLOOD  
SPILLED UPON THE SANDS.**

Her patrol was interrupted when she heard the clash of metal on metal, suggesting a skirmish beyond the nearest hills. She marched in that direction as she invoked prayers to Menoth to speed her steps as well as those of her warjacks: a Devout, Dervish, Guardian, and Reckoner.

Topping the hill they saw three detachments of Exemplar knights below, ranged in a semicircle facing inward with blades drawn. A detachment of Exemplars errant farther back held crossbows ready. All focused on a single black-armored figure, near which lay several fallen knights, their blood spilled upon the sands. Both sides stood motionless and tense.

Feora approached the ranking errant. "What is happening here?"

He offered a respectful nod. "We ran into him on patrol. Said he came to speak with you, Priestess. Our seneschal demanded he surrender his blade, but he refused. When we forced the issue . . ." He indicated a fallen knight with broken banners in a pool of blood.

"He is alone?" Feora asked, incredulous.

"There are others, up on the hill." Feora looked to where dozens of indistinct dots speckled the opposite hill. The huddled figures blended into the shrubs and sand, but she spotted the glint of what might be rifles. That they held back even as their leader was surrounded intrigued her.



Sudden motion drew her eye back to where three of the Exemplar knights attacked together. Their relic blades were large but perfectly balanced and blessed weapons. The stranger's greatsword seemed clumsy in comparison, yet he moved with uncanny speed to deflect the first blow while stepping aside to evade the second and batting the third aside with a gauntleted hand, wielding his sword in one hand.

**FEORA HAD NO DOUBT SHE COULD  
SLAY THIS MAN, BUT WHAT HE HAD  
DEMONSTRATED SHOULD NOT  
HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.**

With a contemptuous sweep of his sword he carved through all three knights, parting breastplates and torsos with equal ease to send them flying back with sprays of gore. Two died instantly while the third dropped to his knees, releasing his sword to clutch at the entrails spilling from his midriff, then toppled. A shout of righteous indignation went up from the remaining Exemplars. Several Exemplars errant fired, but the bolts deflected off the stranger's armor.

Feora shouted, "Hold!"

The stranger wore no arcane turbine and she did not sense he was a warcaster, but his skill was undeniable. She approached him, her Flameguard hurrying behind, their preceptor discomfited as she put herself in potential danger. The stranger looked to her, and from this closer proximity his sharp-edged features were older than she expected, his hair streaked with gray. He wore a patch over one eye. "Feora, Priestess of the Flame? I have a proposal for your ears alone."

"Surrender your sword," she stated, "and we can talk."

He gave her a tight smile. "I surrender nothing."

Feora felt in no danger—not with her warjacks close at hand—but his arrogance grated. She took mental control of her Dervish and sent it toward him. She said, "Drop the sword while you can."

Rather than obey he adopted a ready pose, his sword held in both hands at shoulder height with its blade horizontal and pointed at the Dervish. Feora thought it unfortunate she must slay him without learning his purpose, but she had given him ample opportunity. She could feel the Dervish's blades as if she held them in her hands as it sprang forward. She brought the twin swords across in a horizontal scissors strike.

The man stepped inward while delivering a fierce downward blow that severed the Dervish's connecting left arm pistons. Its forearm, hand, and blade fell to the sand. He lifted his sword behind his back with one hand to block the Dervish's other blade, which hit with a spray of sparks. The impact was strong enough to push him several feet through the sand, but he was unharmed.

Without pause he moved around the 'jack to deliver another simple but highly effective blow to chop through its steam engine as if it were nothing more than a block of wood. The Dervish's pressure chamber was breached with a whistling release of steam, and the 'jack toppled onto one knee. His sword looked unmarred. She asked incredulously, "Who are you?"

He stepped closer despite the proximity of both Exemplar knights and Temple Flameguard. "Vinter Raelthorne the Fourth, the true king of Cygnar." He slung the sword onto his back.

Such a claim from a random stranger might have been dismissed if not for the feats she had witnessed. Feora had no doubt she could slay this man, but what he had demonstrated should not have been possible. His appearance matched what she knew of Cygnar's former king, who had been deposed when she was still a recruit among the Flameguard clergy. She addressed the Protectorate warriors. "I offer him the courtesies of the Law of Envoys." The knights were agitated, but it was their duty to obey, and they lowered their swords.

She walked aside with him, her warjacks staying near. She said, "Murdering our knights is a dubious method to initiate a proposal."

Vinter was unapologetic. "They chose to die by my blade. Let me be blunt: each of us has pressing responsibilities. My army will soon reclaim my crown from the usurper, my brother."

Feora turned her head toward the far hillside with its dozens of ragged men. "This is your army?"

Vinter smiled again. "Not the least part of it. Many of Cygnar's nobles follow me. The Cygnaran Army will stand divided."

"The thought of a second civil war in Cygnar pleases me, but ultimately it matters little to our crusades which king leads your heathen kingdom."

"Just so," Vinter said. "A protracted civil war would weaken Cygnar against its enemies, which presently includes your nation. Both our goals will be aided should we work together." He paused to allow the bold statement to sink in. Feora stared at him in silence. He continued, "Should you assist me, when I sit once more on the Cygnaran throne, I



vow to nullify the decrees making the Church of Morrow the state religion. For their treasonous complicity and collusion in my unlawful overthrow, its leading priests will be executed, first among them Primarch Arius. I swear to the Creator to reinstate the worship of Menoth in Cygnar. Your priests will be empowered to supervise religious matters. We will recognize your theocracy as ally and friend."

Feora heard a strange ringing in her ears and felt off balance, as if she had not been breathing deeply enough. She asked, "Why not go north to make your offer to Hierarch Severius?"

Vinter grimaced. "I respect the former grand scrutator. But he holds the position of hierarch temporarily. Mortality will claim him, sooner rather than later. When he goes to his final rest, it will fall to you to lead your people."

"You are well informed." Feora found it strange to hear her private thoughts spoken by another. "There is no certainty you can reclaim the throne. Why should I risk aiding you?"

"You risk nothing. I have numerous powerful allies on Cygnaran soil. I offer them for your use, should you loan military assets toward the elimination of targets of my choosing."

Feora considered this. "Targets whose absence will facilitate your resumption of the throne?"

"You perceive the situation." Vinter inclined his head. "My enemies are yours. By my help you can move with unprecedented freedom within Cygnar's borders. All I ask is that certain individuals be left untouched. Whether I succeed or fail, your favor will rise in the eyes of the Synod."

Feora mulled this over at length. Madman or not, there was no doubt Vinter Raelthorne IV was formidable. At last she answered, "Let us discuss a suitable first demonstration."

## **SOUTHERN POINT BOURNE**

The Centurion broke through the wall of Iron Fang pikemen, smashing a half-dozen underfoot and killing more with its shield and spear. Alongside it a Hammersmith made a similar advance against a damaged Juggernaut, connecting mightily with both hammers. The Juggernaut staggered even as the Hammersmith delivered a last blow of tremendous force. The Khadoran 'jack flew through several pikemen and the Man-O-War kovnik who had been controlling it and crashed through the brick wall of a building behind them.

Supreme Kommandant Irusk immediately ordered the Iron Fangs to pull back, sending his 'jacks to take their place. He knew the soldiers were eager to fight, but they were exhausted from long hours of ceaseless battle. Irusk was mindful of his promise to Empress Vanar; he intended to lose no more men than was necessary. His Spriggan, Marauder, and Kodiak squared off against the Cygnaran

heavies. Beyond them Irusk saw the warcaster, an older man with short-cropped white hair. He had a mechanically augmented Caspian battle blade in hand.

Although the Cygnaran's armor fit poorly and he looked too old for the front line, Irusk would not underestimate any warcaster. The supreme kommandant was familiar with all of Cygnar's major military assets and identified this man as Colonel Wies Glowerby, one of the foremost warcaster instructors of the northern Strategic Academy. He had spent decades training Cygnarans how to wage war. It had been a decade since he had stood on a battlefield, but his control over warjacks was undiminished. Irusk called out, "Colonel Glowerby! Surrender and power down your warjacks! No harm will come to you."

The colonel glared and spit to the side. The Centurion had its shield up and its spear readied. The Hammersmith stomped each foot, breaking through cobblestones, while adjusting the weapons in its hands. The Cygnaran warcaster shouted, "Ha! I was about to make you the same offer!"

Irusk tried again. "You are at a disadvantage, and there is nowhere to run. You have fought well. There is no shame in surrender." He had been surprised to find the colonel sallying forth from the military quarter to intercept their advance. They had lured the warcaster and his 'jacks onto this avenue, where he was now trapped in a cul-de-sac. Yet even an aged warcaster could be as dangerous as a wild boar when cornered.

Already the cost of seizing Point Bourne had been high. Irusk had lost more warjacks than he considered ideal, expending a sizable portion of the division's heaviest assets. Many of those 'jacks had intact cortexes and could be rebuilt in time, taking advantage of Point Bourne's captured industrial facilities. Thanks to Strakhov's gambit, the Cygnarans had succumbed quickly after seeing the wall was lost, and only some street-to-street fighting remained. Karchev, Irusk, and the rest of the Khadoran force had swept into the southern city to seize key positions while keeping pressure on the Cygnarans. Squads of Winter Guard had separated from the main force to hold each district, ensuring the civilian population was secured.

Point Bourne's defenders had withdrawn to the heavily fortified military quarter containing the northern Strategic Academy and the attached Tempest Academy. Given how many of the nation's elite gun mages and warcasters had been trained in those halls, its seizure would be a tremendous victory for Khador but one Irusk expected to take time. The military quarter was built like a fortress complex and would be far harder to crack than the city's outer walls had been. Irusk would be satisfied with bottling up the Cygnarans for now. With his army controlling the streets, the defenders had no access to resupply.



This colonel was one of the last holdouts. Irusk genuinely hoped for surrender—his shoulder wound burned, and pain spasmed down his arm. The bandages his field medics had applied were already soaked again; he could feel the wetness against his skin. They had advised him to rest so the blood would clot, but he had ignored them.

He knew the sniper responsible for his injury was a warcaster named Kara Sloan, a young captain and a significant asset to Cygnar. He had seen her several times during their advance, and she had nearly hit him with a second bullet while he crossed to the south shore. One of his loyal shocktroopers had taken that shot and died for it. Irusk wished he faced Sloan instead of this aged colonel so he could repay her in kind. She was likely ensconced within the military quarter, atop its battlements, ready to shoot any Khadoran who approached.

Irusk saw the exact moment the colonel made his decision, broadcast in the set of his shoulders and a small nod with gritted teeth. Irusk urged his battered Marauder to step forward ahead of his other 'jacks. The colonel raised his sword and blue runes manifested in a circle around his fist and then around the weapons of his Hammersmith as it leapt into motion. Next the warcaster pointed at Irusk, who stepped quickly to the side behind the edge of the nearest building just as an explosion of arcane power filled the air where he had stood and tore through the nearby bricks and cobblestones. Irusk was showered with a spray of rubble.

The Hammersmith took the bait and rushed the Marauder to deliver powerful hammer blows in sequence, the last sending the Khadoran 'jack tumbling crippled onto the street. The Centurion also moved forward, its spear fully extended. Irusk stepped back into the open and pointed his sword Endgame as he summoned his own power, shaped to manifest as powerful, clinging energies in front of the enemy 'jack. It staggered as the pavement beneath its metal feet clung to it, slowing its progress. With that warjack delayed, Irusk impelled both his Kodiak and Spriggan to close on the Hammersmith, hoping to finish it while it was isolated.

The Spriggan arrived first with its oversized lance, the tempered point smashing straight through the armored hull of the Cygnaran 'jack with the sound of screaming metal. It yanked the lance free and struck again, deeper into the same gaping hole. The Kodiak was next, punching great indentations in the Hammersmith's armor with armored fists before seizing hold of it in both hands and hurling it straight into the more slowly advancing Centurion. The Cygnaran 'jacks collided in a deafening cacophony. The Hammersmith was out of the fight, the light in its eyes fading. As the Centurion regained its feet, the Kodiak leapt upon it like the bear that was its namesake.

Supreme Kommandant Irusk was moving past them, his gaze unwavering as he closed on Colonel Glowerby. Beads of sweat shone on the older warcaster's brow but he gave a battle yell and charged with his mechanikal battle blade upraised. The two men met in a clash of steel.

Forced to fight with his off-hand due to the injury to his shoulder, Irusk felt awkward. The colonel was an experienced swordsman, and his warcaster armor made up for his waning strength. They traded strike and parry twice each, the colonel staggering and giving up ground with each blow. He made a desperate lunge, hoping to buy himself a moment of time, but Irusk anticipated the movement and stepped aside. Overextended, Glowerby was unable to react as Irusk delivered a clean thrust into his side, penetrating power field, armor, and flesh. Irusk withdrew Endgame to release a wash of blood as the Cygnaran gasped and stumbled.

"Surrender!" Irusk commanded. Behind them the Centurion dealt a powerful blow to Irusk's Kodiak, driving its spear into the other 'jack's hip assembly, but faltered beneath the onslaught of the two Khadoran heavies. Its shield could not be everywhere at once.

Colonel Glowerby gritted his teeth and sucked in a deep, ragged breath as he drove at Irusk in a series of desperate slashes with the last of his remaining strength. He was giving no thought to defense, but his rash gambit forced Irusk to scramble to block. Irusk barely evaded the last wild swing, but the weight of the Cygnaran blade unbalanced the colonel, who gasped and staggered. Irusk lunged forward to drive his sword through Glowerby's throat. The colonel's eyes rolled up as Irusk neatly withdrew his blade. He watched the man fall limply to the stones. The Centurion froze as its cortex was overcome by a backlash of mental energies.

Irusk stood looking down at the body in the lengthening shadows. The colonel had been a worthy adversary, a warrior who had done his duty and faced his end bravely. The supreme kommandant understood the heart of this man—this foreigner—better than he did some of his own kinsmen, those kayazy who fattened themselves on the carcasses of conquered lands he left behind. Irusk spoke an ancient phrase from the era of the Khardic horselords. "Today I send you to Urcaen, my enemy, but tomorrow I may join you. Rest and struggle no more."

His shoulder throbbing with pain and his soaked bandage having slipped loose, Irusk winced as he walked away, his 'jacks following. He handed his blade to an aide to clean. A messenger arrived with news Karchev had cleared the enemy south of the military quarter's main gate. The Cygnarans were cornered. He felt some small satisfaction in knowing Point Bourne was theirs. Those hiding in the military quarter could enjoy a reprieve behind their walls, while he gave his men the same. They had earned it.



## POINT BOURNE, THE NORTHERN TRENCHWORKS

Strakhov ordered his kommandos to fall flat beneath the sandbags as the rattling chain gun tore into them, then he leapt over the top. Bullets deflected off his power field as he hurled a cinder bomb through the narrow aperture of the bunker. There was a dull thump and a wash of heat followed by the screaming of dying trenchers. That chain gun was silenced. The kommandos sent choking smoke grenades into the last stretch of trench before moving forward to fire on any trenchers they spotted. Meanwhile Strakhov's 'jack Torch expelled a plume of fire down another trench on the other side, killing the last few who had run in that direction. Strakhov's Destroyer was situated farther back covering them with its bombard. He had grown weary of guiding the old thing with its dim cortex through the maze of trenches.

"That's the last of them on this side, sir," Lieutenant Kristovich reported as he unrolled a soiled map. "There might be some over here." He circled a region at the outer perimeter. "And there are the tunnels connecting the larger bunkers."

They had been weaving their way back and forth across the trenches moving outward from the breach to ensure the last of the Cygnarans left behind were eliminated. Strakhov was beginning to feel the fatigue, and he could see it clearly on the strained faces of his men. They had been fighting for hours now. Strakhov was relieved to be back in his own warcaster armor, having left behind the Cygnaran set as they neared their own lines to avoid friendly fire. His men had been just as eager to shed their trencher gear.

His work would not end when the trenches were clear. Cygnaran patrols were expected to return at any time; it would be his job to neutralize them. He was also to watch for reinforcement from Stonebridge, although if Irusk's plans went properly, the enemy should be kept busy for several days. There was always the chance Cygnar would send a battlegroup with one of the warcasters under Lord Commander Stryker's command to check on the city.

Strakhov heard a distinct whistle from one of the kossite woodsmen along the eastern perimeter on sentry duty and waved his men to follow. He directed Torch and his Destroyer to take a more circuitous route. He arrived ahead of the others and saw by the kossite's hand signals that dozens of men approached. After a few moments, staring in that direction, he discerned a platoon of Cygnaran soldiers making their way through the outer tree line.

He moved back to the nearest trench and hunkered down, silently signaling his men to do the same. It would be impossible that such a patrol would not have heard the distant cannons or seen the smoke rising over Point Bourne, so they would be wary. Still, the outer trenchworks looked abandoned, and with the light fading they might

catch the arrivals by surprise. His 'jacks would be another matter, but they were farther back. Strakhov urged Torch to fire smoke grenades to obscure its position.

The kommandos watched for Strakhov's signal as he listened to the sound of boots crunching on soil. Linking his sight to Torch, he peered through the smoke at the soldiers nearing their trench. They moved listlessly, marching as if weary. He heard no conversations, no exclamations of shock or dismay at the corpses of their comrades.

He gritted his teeth and stood up suddenly, his riot gun in hand. He pulled the trigger to blast the nearest soldier. As the bullet impacted there was no spray of blood and none of the reflexive spasms of a living body; the soldier simply collapsed and fell wetly apart. He fired again and again, taking out two more, as his kommandos sprang up to fire. Strakhov growled in distaste to be fighting the walking dead. Red runes circled his other hand as an explosion of power erupted amid the largest knot of the shambling corpses, creating an upheaval of rock and soil as it sent them flying, torn to pieces. He sent a summons for Torch to make its way back to his side, and his Destroyer fired its bombard to destroy several more. Kossites fired rifles from the perimeter but were soon set upon.

The shambling dead did not appear to be mechanithralls. One leapt down into the far side of the trench and exploded in a powerful blast, taking out the two nearest Khadorans. Strakhov scanned the walking corpses and saw several affixed with metal-and-black piping. He aimed the next shots from his riot gun at those. "Back up to the next trench!" he shouted.

Strakhov felt a warning from Torch even as he climbed out the back of the first row of trenches. He saw dark forms coming from the west, behind them. At their center was a spectral figure that coalesced into a woman whose hips moved in sultry motion as she walked closer, idly twirling a long-bladed polearm. Bonejacks rushed forward from alongside her on short but swift necrotite-powered legs. Directly behind her was a rune-covered Slayer whose eyes gleamed with malice, its claws extended eagerly.



# NEW RULES

## BATTLE ENGINES

From armored, horse-drawn carriages that predate warjacks to innovative marvels never before seen in the Iron Kingdoms, the battle engines of WARMACHINE are powerful weapons of war. These giant machines require neither sorcerous control from an army's warcaster nor battlefield guidance from its officers. Instead, a battle engine's own commander, crew, or consciousness guides it to rain down destruction upon enemies bold or foolish enough to stand in its path.

Battle engines have their own model type: **battle engine**. Battle engines are not warrior models. Battle engines are independent models.

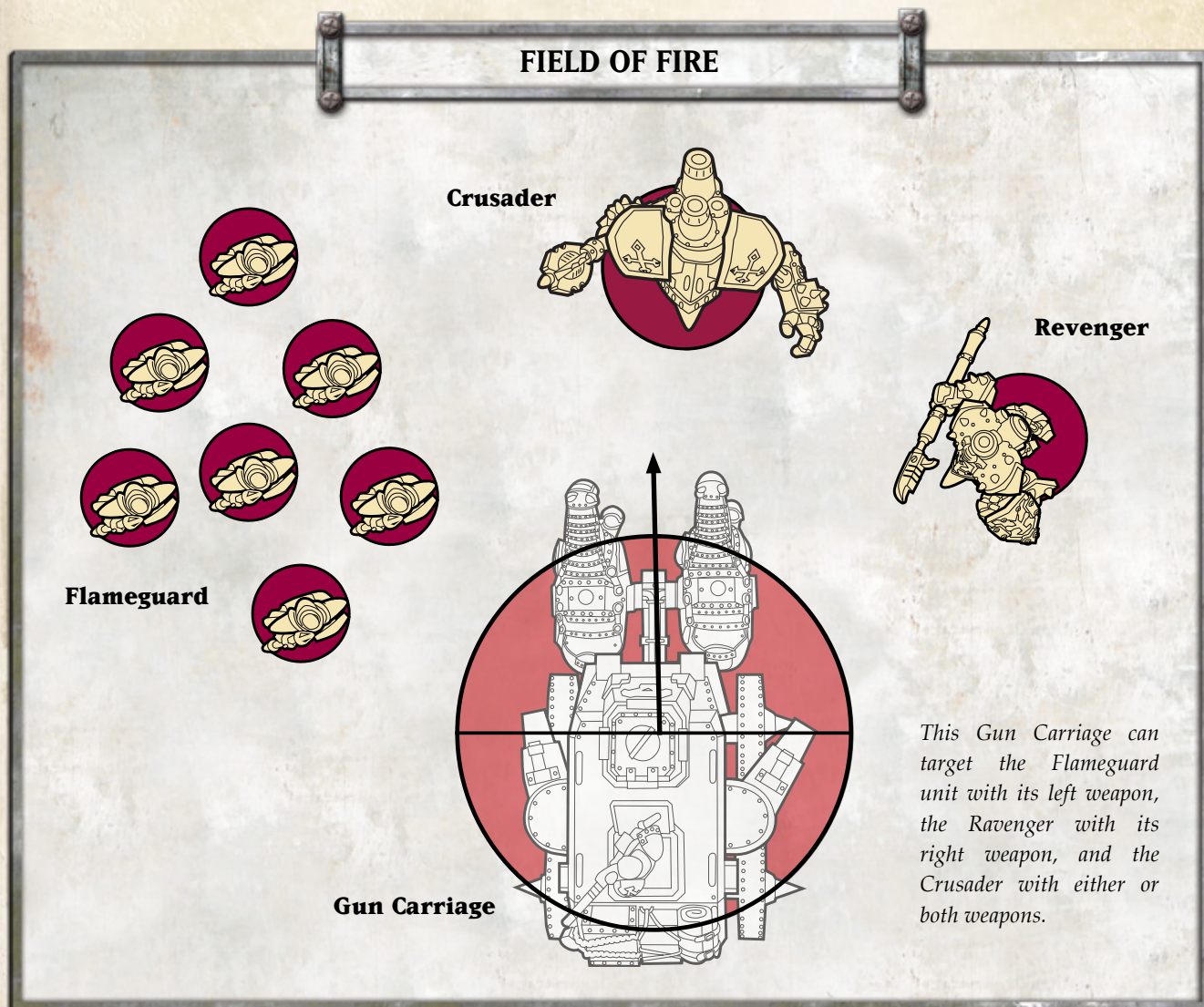
Battle engines are on **huge bases** (120 mm).

## HUGE BASE

A huge-based model occupies the space from the bottom of its base to a height of 5".

## FACING & LINE OF SIGHT

A battle engine's front arc is marked on its base. Its front arc is further divided into two 90° **fields of fire**. These fields of fire determine which models a battle engine can target with its weapons depending on their location. Weapons located on a battle engine's left side (L) can target only models in its left field of fire. Weapons located on a battle engine's right side (R) can target only models in its right field of fire. Weapons with location "-" can target models in either field of fire. If any part of a model's base is on the line separating the left and right fields of fire it is considered to be in both fields of fire.





## TARGETING A BATTLE ENGINE

A battle engine never gains the DEF bonus from concealment, cover, or elevation.

## CLOUD EFFECTS AND FOREST TERRAIN

Cloud effects and forest terrain do not block line of sight to a battle engine.

## TARGETING A BATTLE ENGINE IN MELEE

A model targeting a battle engine with a ranged or magic attack does not suffer the target in melee attack roll penalty. If a ranged or magic attack misses a battle engine in melee, that miss is not rerolled against another model. It misses completely.

A battle engine can be targeted by combined ranged attacks while it is in melee.

## PREDEPLOYMENT

Battle engines must be placed before normal deployment. If both players have models to predeploy, they predeploy their models in standard deployment order.

## MASSIVE

A battle engine cannot be pushed, knocked down, or made stationary. A battle engine cannot be moved by a slam or throw.

## PATHFINDER


Although the icon does not appear on their stat lines, all battle engines have the Pathfinder advantage.

## SERVICEABLE


Friendly Faction models with the Repair ability can attempt to repair damaged battle engines. To attempt repairs, the model with Repair must be in base-to-base contact with the damaged battle engine and make a skill check. If successful, remove d6 damage points from the battle engine.



## RANKING OFFICERS

Ranking Officers are unit attachments that can be added to any Mercenary unit in the army. While the Ranking Officer is in play, the models in its unit are considered to be models of the Ranking Officer's Faction rather than Mercenary models.

If any other model in a Ranking Officer's unit has Officer , it loses that ability while this model is in play.

A Ranking Officer cannot issue orders that are not on its card.

If a Ranking Officer's unit has Advance Deployment , the Ranking Officer gains Advance Deployment.

If the rest of its unit has an ability or advantage that keeps models in the unit from fleeing, such as Fearless  or Undead , the Ranking Officer also never flees.

A Ranking Officer attachment cannot be added to an ally unit of the same faction because an ally unit in a Faction army is considered a Faction unit and not a Mercenary unit. For example, if the Precursor Knights were part of a Cygnaran army, the Knights would be considered Cygnar models and not a Mercenary unit, so Captain Jonas Murdoch could not be attached to them.

## RANKING OFFICERS & 'JACK MARSHAL

A Ranking Officer can never gain the 'Jack Marshal advantage and can never take control of a warjack controlled by a model in its unit. If the Ranking Officer is part of a unit that has the 'Jack Marshal advantage, it does not become the 'jack marshal. Instead, the unit leader or original officer model is the unit's 'jack marshal.

The unit 'jack marshal can check to see if the warjacks it controls are in its command range at any time during its activation or during the activation of a warjack it controls.

A 'jack marshal in a Ranking Officer's unit can control the types of Mercenary warjacks that the unit could control normally. A warjack controlled by a 'jack marshal in the unit is not considered to be part of the Ranking Officer's Faction, and the 'jack marshal does not gain the ability to marshal Faction warjacks of its new Faction.





# CYGNAR

## THE LONGEST HOUR

The Sancteum, Caspia, 608 AR

Sunlight streamed through the stained glass windows and transformed into myriad colors along the gleaming marble floors of the Archcourt Cathedral, the largest and most impressive house of worship of the Church of Morrow. Within the enormous nave sat thousands of mourners, among them King Leto Raelthorne. Hundreds of Morrowan knights from various orders kneeled in the long, central aisle with heads unadorned to show respect. A choir standing just beyond the elevated coffins raised their voices in swelling harmonies that filled the space. After the last notes faded, Primarch Arius' resonant voice resumed to speak of sacrifice and honor.

The scope and grandeur of the ceremony far exceeded that afforded most who died in the service of the Church or the nation. Despite this, Constance Blaize was too consumed by grief to be soothed by its beauty. As she looked upon the rows of gleaming coffins emblazoned with the Radiance of Morrow, she could not help but feel the lives of these knights had been thrown away.

She lingered after the funeral, eventually becoming aware of a figure beside her. She looked up to see the familiar lined face of Battle Chaplain Brogan Corley. He had served with her for the last two years in the Third Army and had returned with her and his knights to Caspia for the ceremony.

"It was a moving service," he said. He looked up at the lines of coffins. "It is not easy for us to understand how such deaths serve the divine will. Still, they are in a better place, called to the bosom of the Prophet."

Though they enjoyed camaraderie in battle, she felt a familiar anger at his platitudes. "Because they were called to this task by Morrow we should accept their deaths?" She spoke in a low but intense tone.

The battle chaplain frowned. "We live in a time of war; theirs were not the first deaths and will not be the last."

Once again he was retreating into homilies. "Let us walk." She did not wish to trouble the grieving families with their discussion. As they left the nave and stepped into the large

entryway of the cathedral she explained, "These were not ordinary casualties, Brogan. This could have been avoided. These knights were sent to Korsk on a holy mission and stood vigil at the empress' cathedral, within sight of her palace! How is it possible the Khadorans did not intervene? It is an outrage."

He frowned uncertainly. "Cryx killed those knights, not the Khadorans."

Constance said, "The Khadorans did not want our knights there, so the empress let them die. They were betrayed—if not in deed, by inaction. Morrow expects us to act when presented with the choice to do the right thing. Isn't that the point of the Volition? The Church has indulged Khador too long."

Brogan was uncomfortable with such talk. "What would you do? March to Korsk and confront the empress? You serve the primarch directly and must exercise restraint, both in action and in word." He looked nervously at people passing by.

This was an old argument between them. "Our faith allows us to fight in the defense of our kinsmen," she reminded him. "There are Precursor Knights fighting the Khadorans. I, too, am Cygnaran born."

He grunted in exasperation. "*You* enter battle with warjacks forged on holy ground. *You* represent the greater arsenal of the Church of Morrow. It is one thing for Cygnaran knights to defend their homeland, quite another for the Sancteum to take a stand in a war between Cygnar and Khador." There were only a few warcasters pledged directly to the Church, Constance senior among them. Several others belonged to the Order of Illumination, a group that served the church but had its own agenda.

She added, "I have heard Exarch Dargule has intelligence indicating one of the cathedral priests in Korsk was killed *after* the Cryx were gone. He suspects the Khadorans murdered a priest, right in the empress' cathedral, perhaps to silence him. *That* is the respect the empress shows our faith."



He drew himself up and said, "It is one thing to allege negligence, quite another to accuse—" He broke off as he saw a junior priest approaching them with an intent expression.

The man bowed slightly when he drew near. "Constance Blaize? Chaplain Corley? My apologies, but you are summoned."

"Summoned? By whom?" Blaize asked in surprise.

"Primarch Arius," the young priest answered. Her eyes widened, and she and Brogan shared a quick look. The messenger turned and walked away, and Blaize and Brogan followed.



"Reserve forces?" She was unable to keep the surprise from her voice.

"That is correct." Primarch Arius' heavily wrinkled face was serene. "You are free to return to the Third Army if you prefer, but this is a chance to join the northern front, as you have petitioned."

She hesitated before answering. "I appreciate the honor, but I had intended to be assigned to an active company. Wouldn't I serve Morrow best by using his gifts on the battlefield?"

The elderly priest nodded patiently. "Chances for you to serve both Cygnar and the Church will arise. Matters may worsen along the Dragon's Tongue River; having you in the region would ease my mind."

Constance Blaize had lasting bonds with soldiers of the Third Army and knew they would see steady fighting, if only minor skirmishes. But the real war was in the north; even Cryx seemed distracted from its coastal raids by larger battles on the mainland. Joining the reserves would place her closer to where she wanted to be. Her hand strayed to the leather-bound tome chained to her waist. This was not the Enkheiridion—the holy book containing the teachings of Morrow and Thamar—but the Prayers for Battle. The catechism contained Morrow's philosophy on warfare together with teachings of Ascendants Katrena, Solovin, and Markus, the Martial Trinity. She was a Sword of the Church. Her place was in battle.

Arius spoke. "I intend to send someone north on the next train. Will it be you? It is your choice."

She paused only briefly. "I will go north." She could tell this was as far as the primarch would go toward authorizing her to join the main war effort on Cygnar's behalf. A Morrowan must have patience as much as courage. She met his gaze and said, "Thank you, Your Holiness." His eyes held something of paternal pride as he inclined his head.



By foot, the trip between Caspia and the Dragon's Tongue River took weeks across oft-difficult stretches of road. The train avoided such difficulties. The smoke and steam-belching engine of the *Lady Ellena*, Cygnar's fastest train, drove powerful pistons and churning wheels to devour mile after mile of steel track. Their journey to one of the northernmost stations would be completed in less than a day and a night.

Constance listened to the conversations of the regular passengers during the journey, finding it useful in assessing the mood abroad. After a stop past the trade city of Fharin the talk among the grim-faced Midlunders in the open dining car grew bleak. Constance heard tell of rationing, of areas with water shortages after wells had dried up or been poisoned, of drought and famine after fields had been burned. They also spoke of dark, monstrous things appearing from the wilds beyond the settled areas in the north to raid and pillage. Some, pointing to the despoiling of graves, whispered of witchcraft and infernalism. She heard one older passenger praise Vinter's Inquisition, although his companions admonished him.

They blamed King Leto for their troubles. Their words reflected attitudes as insidious as enemy attacks. She shared a look with Chaplain Corley, who clearly had similar thoughts.

Suddenly the car lurched alarmingly. Several people walking the aisle tumbled forward while the air filled with the horrendous screeching of grating metal on metal as the car shuddered and slowed. Constance gripped the table in front of her and fought her way to her feet. Chaplain Corley checked the passengers for injury.

As the train finally came to a halt, one of the engineers ran in and his eyes darted over the knights until he saw Constance Blaize. The engineer removed his hat. "Something's blocking the rails ahead, Captain! Could be trouble—might you come up and take a look?"

"Of course." Constance was not a captain, but she did not bother correcting him. Her rank situation was tricky, even for those in the military. By the accords between the Church and the Cygnaran Army she had similar authority as a major. In the church hierarchy she had identical courtesies as a high prelate, but while operating on the primarch's orders her command of Church military assets was almost absolute. None of this mattered to the crew of the *Lady Ellena*. She shouted to her mechanik crew chief. "Chief Hopkins! Ready the 'jacks!" He hurried back toward the cargo cars.



Knowing such an obstruction could be a prelude to ambush, she went with her attendants to her berth where her warcaster armor and equipment were stowed. By the time her warjacks had been fired up and began to gain the necessary steam pressure, she was attired for battle. The power of her arcane turbine offset the weight of the heavy armor as she strode toward the engine. She directed her 'jacks to advance along the track embankment and alert her to any trouble.

An assistant engineer opened the door at her knock to reveal a sweltering room with several grubby crewmen checking pressure dials and gauges. The senior engineer said, "Stopped in the nick of time!" He pointed to the grease-stained window. Squinting, she could make out something large lying across the tracks in front of them. "Figure with your 'jacks . . ."

Blaize nodded curtly. "How close are we to our destination?"

"Just a few miles. Straight through those hills and trees." He pointed. "Wouldn't have taken long at full steam, but now . . ." He shrugged.

Blaize considered the distance, weighing it against the time required to load the warjacks on the train again and get back up to speed. "Once we clear the obstruction and check the perimeter, we will continue on foot. Wait to get underway until we send the all-clear."

**HER LANCER RAN FORWARD AS SHE  
HURLED HER POWER THROUGH ITS  
ARC NODE TO MANIFEST AN  
EXPLOSION OF LIGHT DISINTEGRATING  
THEIR UNHOLY FLESH.**

"As you say, Captain." He snapped his fingers with a sudden thought. "Here, take these!" He seized a small wooden box from a nearby shelf. The box displayed several red warning stamps. "Flares. Fire one when you're satisfied." He showed her the tubes with their firing cords.

When Blaize jumped down from the engine, her steel guardian met her, releasing a jet of steam in greeting as it offered a salute with its sword before its visored face. Without needing further mental or verbal instruction, Gallant marched alongside her as she walked ahead of the main engine. Her other 'jacks included a freshly rebuilt Defender, two Sentinels, and a modified Lancer, all in Morrowan colors and displaying the Radiance.

While it bore the colors of the Church of Morrow, Gallant had been built on the same Cygnaran chassis as the Ironclad. The Church had its own 'jacks engineered to Sancteum specifications, but some of their battle-ready warjacks were

purchased through the Cygnaran Armory, where they had auction rights to old and damaged machines subsequently restored to fighting shape in Sancteum foundries. Gallant's emblazoned buckler and sword were unique, and over the access panels protecting its cortex, chains held a massive ironbound tome, a larger twin to the one hanging at Constance's side.

The Precursors joined up in ranks and followed as they approached the obstruction. It was immediately obvious the pile of scrap was the wreckage of multiple Cygnaran warjacks, each torn limb from limb. She mentally directed Gallant and the Defender to clear the tracks while her light 'jacks and knights fanned out.

"Trolls?" Brogan asked. They had heard there had been previous troll trouble on the line. Blaize indicated melted armor and conduits, the result of powerful unnatural acids. One of the 'jacks, an old Charger, had been torn open and its cortex was missing. Corley hissed under his breath, "Cryx."

The word had barely escaped his lips before dark forms emerged from the trees. Blaize yelled for her knights to lock shields as mechanithralls and bile thralls closed. Larger, indistinct shapes advanced behind those, shrouded in shadow. Provoked by Blaize's apprehension, her Defender fired too soon, its shot missing in the veil of darkness. She directed it to hold while she sent her Sentinels up alongside the Precursors. The warjacks' chain guns quickly spun up to speed.

"Keep a distance from the bile thralls!" she shouted. The Precursors smoothly stepped back as Sentinel bullets tore through the air. Her soldiers had experience fighting such creatures and knew the acidic substance they contained could slay a person in seconds despite any armor. The bloated corpses of the thralls were easily punctured by Sentinel staccato bursts. Her Lancer ran forward as she hurled her power through its arc node to manifest an explosion of light disintegrating their unholy flesh.

With the biles cleared, Blaize shouted "Charge!" and the Precursors surged forward swinging blessed maces against the mechanithralls. The crackle of rifle fire indicated the *Lady Ellena's* defenders had climbed atop roof perches to contribute.

The shadows melted away to reveal a Slayer helljack and a pair of Defiler bonejacks, each directed by a peculiar entity floating behind them. This large creature of blackened iron had an upper torso like a man's but no legs, just a segmented tail dangling down like an extended spinal cord. Soul cages hung from its torso, and one of its three clawed arms grasped a bladed staff. Its three skull faces radiated in various directions, green light emerging from eyes and mouths. Blaize recognized this as an overseer, a subordinate



iron lich that could empower Cryxian 'jacks with captured souls.

Her Defender fired again, the report of its cannon followed by the impact of the shell into the Slayer already rushing forward with claws outstretched. Before the helljack could reach the Defender, Gallant stepped to intercept, empowered by Blaize's will. Lasting Light, its sword, gleamed with holy radiance as it rent the helljack's armor. The Slayer clawed at Gallant, but Lasting Light had crippled one of its arms. Simultaneously Blaize directed her Lancer and a Sentinel to intercept the Defilers before they could disgorge their acid.

With the enemies fixed in place by her 'jacks, Blaize charged to drive Sun Spear into the Slayer. The momentum of the thrust behind the weapon's tempered and blessed serricsteel easily pierced the armored chassis to stab its cortex. The unholy glow in its eyes began to fade. She stepped past, alongside the nearest Precursors, and summoned spiritual energy to speed her hand as she slashed in a wide arc through three mechanithralls about to flank their line.

The three-armed overseer made a peculiar hissing sound and raised its staff to send malevolent green fire at Blaize. She ducked, and it impacted several riflemen atop the train with a caustic sizzle. They screamed as their souls were ripped from their dying bodies. Seeing the Slayer fall, the overseer seemed to sense it was overmatched and withdrew toward the trees. Blaize looked through the eyes of the Defender while the 'jack's cannon moved as if held by her own hand. The Defender's cannon bucked to send a massive shell through the lich's frame, shattering the facing skull. The being toppled with a crash of metal, and she sent the Defender to shatter its soul cages underfoot.

Inspired by their warcaster's valor, her knights dispatched the remaining thralls. The two Defilers were hammered into wreckage, and Blaize was relieved to observe her force had taken no casualties. Gallant displayed long, clawed gashes along its shoulder and buckler, but it saluted her again with its sword. She smiled and moved on.



She approached Brogan Corley where he was administering last rites to the fallen train defenders and joined him in brief prayer. She said, "That could have been much worse."

He looked toward the train. "Imagine if we had not been here." It was a sobering thought—the Cryxians would have easily dispatched the train's few defenders and killed everyone aboard. Even Blaize's well-trained knights might have been slaughtered if not for her warjacks.

"Cryxian warjacks this far south of the Thornwood . . ." Constance frowned. She did not voice her larger concern, regarding the reserve garrison nearby. The wrecked Cygnaran warjacks on the tracks had to have come from somewhere.

They found no additional Cryxians in a sweep of the perimeter. Reassured the train was in no immediate danger,



Blaize signaled to Crew Chief Hopkins, who carried the wooden box given to her by the engineer. He withdrew a wax-sealed tube and pulled the firing cord; the flare sailed high into the air, where it ignited brightly. Blaize marched her solemn force north into the trees even as they heard the high-pitched steam whistle behind them, followed by the sound of *Lady Ellena's* pistons starting to churn.



"Sweet Morrow," Constance whispered. "Is this my punishment for being too eager for battle? I rescind it. I rescind it all."

She did not realize she had spoken aloud until Chaplain Corley said, "Morrow had no part in this."

Breaking from the trees and climbing the first of several low hills had revealed a valley littered with carnage. The air was choked with the rank stench of smoke, burnt flesh, and death, made more putrid by the soggy ground after a recent rain. Hundreds of corpses lay scattered across the valley. When Blaize's force had arrived on the scene they had interrupted Cryxian scavengers at work picking at bodies and assembling more of their nightmare kind. After the scavengers were obliterated, Blaize had led the knights in a prayer to Morrow, but it had been more for their comfort than for the slain, who would require more extensive services.

She noted many Khadoran banners and uniforms amid the dead, though far more showed Cygnar's blue and gold. Her voice sounded hollow as she observed, "Khador's offensive has begun." Among the corpses she recognized the badges of the garrison she had been sent to join, which had been thought safely south of the Dragon's Tongue.

The distinct crackle of rifle fire echoed through the hills from the west. Constance looked up in surprise. "The garrison! Some few must have held!"

She was startled to feel Brogan's hand on her shoulder. "Wait!" The battle chaplain looked back to the carnage. "We must attend to these bodies. We know Cryx is here."

Constance shook her head with regret. "There are hundreds of corpses. Far too many to bury." It was true the role of the Precursors was as much to tend to the dead as to fight in battle. By the proper blessings and interment the fallen could be saved from the horror of necromancy. Some dark rites could despoil even sanctified bodies, but such profane acts required rare mastery. Fresh corpses on battlefields were Cryx's favored harvest, easily turned into the walking dead. "You would need dozens of priests to sanctify them all." She wanted as much as he to deal with the dead, but she could not conscience taking such time while the nearby garrison was in peril.

Brogan drew himself up and cleared his throat. "We could . . . burn them." He spoke the words as if they pained him. "A battlefield necessity."

"No." Constance was firm. "I will not imperil their immortal souls." While cremation would ruin the bodies for Cryx, Church teaching insisted this greatly complicated the passage of souls to Urcaen, to the bosom of Morrow and his ascendants. Even Menites, with their love of fire, did not cremate their respected dead unless the act was overseen by the Reclaimant Order. Violence could prompt souls to linger after death for days or weeks. Constance could almost feel them clustered here, still suffering. "We will return to bury them properly." The sound of rifle fire continued beyond the hills. "First, we look to the living."



They delayed only long enough for the crew chief and his team to reload the ammunition chambers on the Sentinels and Defender and ensure the 'jacks were stocked with coal from the supply wagons they had offloaded from the train. They marched across muddy ground and arrived at the old barracks, fully beset by Cryx.

The building seemed intact—it was a structure converted from an old fortress, stout and defensible. Long gunners and trenchers perched on battlements kept the dead at bay. Occasional distinct rattling indicated chain guns placed at the best vantages. Their sporadic bursts suggested efforts to conserve ammunition. The walls showed several gaping holes.

The Defender boomed and sent a shell to tear apart a massive brute thrall charging toward the breach, while the guns of her Sentinels added the noise of their hails of bullets. Her knights and Gallant charged forward. Shouts of recognition went up from the soldiers on the wall, and the garrison soldiers fired with greater frequency.

The dead eventually turned to fight the new arrivals, their sluggish response suggesting no sentient general directed them. The mechanithralls, formidable with their powered fists, succeeded in striking down several of Blaize's knights as they stood with interlocked shields. The knights held their position to buy time for the supply wagons to make it to the largest opening in the wall. Those inside scrambled to assist hauling in crates of ammunition and food. Blaize entered the fortified barracks only after finishing off the rest of the nearest undead, leaving her 'jacks to guard the breach.

Taking advantage of the fresh ammunition, the soldiers concentrated their firepower on the thralls closing on the garrison and eventually neutralized them. Constance sensed there were more Cryx lingering beyond their view,



in the shelter of nearby hills and trees. For the moment there was a lull, giving the Morrowans a chance to gauge the condition of the barracks' defenders.

Constance asked for their commanding officer. The majority of those occupying the garrison were fresh from training. They looked haggard and scared, eyes dark with fatigue. She was led to a grizzled trencher with his left arm in a sling. "Training Sergeant Giles," he introduced himself. "No officers left, I'm afraid."

"Sergeant, you have held up well." Blaize returned his salute. "But we should evacuate to somewhere safer before the Cryx attack again."

He gave a laugh that turned into a cough, wincing and holding his hand to another bandage along his side. "Evacuate? I don't think so. The men can't be moved." He waved her inward, along with Chaplain Corley, to the central bunkroom.

The bunks were filled with the wounded, at least a hundred of them, tended by several young junior surgeons and medics. Blaize inclined her head to Chaplain Corley, and he and the two other chaplains of their retinue went to lend a hand. The healing power of Morrow might enable them to restore some beyond the help of ordinary surgery, but such prayers took time. Constance was forced to accept that the sergeant was correct: there were too many to move. They would have to hole up as best they could and send for help when possible.



It was quiet for several hours. Constance and Brogan even spoke aloud the possibility they had eliminated the bulk of the Cryxian forces in the area. Yet the woods beyond the perimeter were unnaturally quiet, without even birdcall. Shadows moved beneath the trees. Hours before dawn, shambling forms emerged again from the darkness.

Blaize's first intimation an active will impelled them came when they hid their bile thralls behind mechanithralls while headed to the largest breach. Two made it through to explode in a horrifying wave of caustic acids, melting the nearest soldiers, including a line of her knights. Such deaths were particularly ghastly to Blaize because they made it more difficult to perform proper last rites and deliver the slain to their final rest. The chain gun barrels glowed with heat and created a hazy cloud of smoke as they poured fire into the waves of the dead. Blaize fought alongside her Sentinels as they pushed forward to fill the breach where the fallen still screamed in agony from the fluids melting through flesh. The 'jacks bashed aside mechanithralls with assault shields before firing into the horde.

All was chaos, yet they seemed to be holding their own until they saw a helljack scuttle out of the trees and approach the walls. They heard the distinct scream of its Harrower cannon followed by an explosion of blackness atop the upper battlement. Blaize looked up to see the explosion had obliterated one of the chain guns and its crew. She directed her Defender to fire on the helljack. Its shell smashed through the Harrower's right shoulder armor and pistons, but the Cryxian machine remained intact. She sent her Lancer running forward to extend her arcane reach. Through its arc node she summoned a burst of holy radiance to explode with blinding light, punching a sizable hole in the enemy's blackened armor. Simultaneously, Gallant crashed through intervening mechanithralls, battering them aside with blade and shield or smashing them underfoot as it closed on the helljack.

**THE CHAIN GUN BARRELS GLOWED WITH HEAT AND CREATED A HAZY CLOUD OF SMOKE AS THEY POURED FIRE INTO THE WAVES OF THE DEAD.**

Gallant arrived too late to prevent a second shot from the Mortifier cannon, its ordnance passing through the protective crenellation to obliterate the crew manning the other upper chain gun. Gallant delivered a tremendous blow with its gleaming blade to crumple the abomination's compromised hull and followed with another that rendered it to scrap. Unfortunately, the damage was done. With the chain guns silenced, waves of mechanithralls and explosive scrap thralls rushed the 'jacks. Even with Sentinels unleashing continuous fire, too many converged on Blaize's Lancer. One scrap thrall exploded directly against its legs, crippling it.

She pulled Gallant back toward the protection of the wall. Several thralls hammered the warjack, crushing its armor beneath heavy fists. Blaize sent additional explosions of holy radiance among them, leaving nothing but ash, but still more came. She fell back as the trenchers and long gunners fired from above to buy her time. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Crew Chief Hopkins making for her limping Lancer, fronted by several knights. She shouted for him to withdraw, but her voice was drowned out. A bile thrall closed on them and exploded, taking out the chief, his team, and several knights. Blaize felt a surge of grief so strong it left her numb.

She knew that wave would not be the last. When Constance reached Brogan, he offered a tattered patch. "From the last group that attacked," he said. Taken from a freshly animated mechanithrall, the badge was the same



as they had seen on the soldiers in the field of carnage they had passed through on their way to the garrison.

Blaize's heart sank as she imagined the nearly endless reinforcements Cryx could generate from that battle and this one. She turned without speaking to attend to her 'jacks. Her Sentinels were damaged, and the young soldiers struggled to reload them without Chief Hopkins. She reloaded the Defender herself but felt a sudden despair. They would all die here; she was certain of it. Clearly some major Cryxian force had unleashed itself on the nearby environs. This was likely not the main body of the force, but the ample dead on the battlefield would bolster their ranks to where they could attack indiscriminately against any fortification in reach.

As this bleak mood washed over her like icy water, she turned back to the room they had set up as an infirmary. The priests were far outpaced by the arrival of wounded, and their efforts seemed lost amid the greater misery. She felt a presence behind her and turned to see Chaplain Corley. Her voice cracked as she said, "You were right. We should have burned the bodies."

**BLAIZE WAS A WHIRLING EMBODIMENT OF CLEANSING LIGHT ALONGSIDE GALLANT, BRINGING HOLY RETRIBUTION TO THE NECROMANTIC ABOMINATIONS.**

To her surprise he shook his head. "No, you were right to think of the living." His eyes swept the wounded. "I was being pragmatic, but you kept to our teachings. When this is done, we will sanctify the dead." He sounded sincere, and she wondered how he retained hope.

While she watched, a soldier tended by the chaplains got to his feet, healed by the grace of the Prophet. He picked up his rifle and climbed back to the battlements. She and Brogan followed to check on the soldiers above. They had not surrendered their fighting spirit even though the darkness beyond the walls teemed with the dead. Too many, even if every bullet they had were to find its target. She could see acceptance and determination in the soldiers' faces; they might die here, but they would earn a place of honor in Urcaen.

Amid the field of corpses, her eyes were drawn to her shattered Lancer and the fallen Precursors nearby. Following her gaze, Brogan Corley said, "It pains me to let my brothers and sisters languish without last rites."

Constance nodded, knowing Hopkins' body was also there. "We cannot get to all of them, but we can reach some few. We can deliver those souls to a final rest, at least." She

began to call out orders to her soldiers, lining them up on the nearest side before she descended to gather Gallant, her Defender, and her remaining knights.

Amid the crackle of concentrated rifle fire she and her force surged forth from the breach. Gallant and the Defender charged to the downed Lancer at full speed, knocking aside the thralls in their way and trampling them underfoot. Her knights established a defensive perimeter even as Blaize found Hopkins, his body broken and his eyes staring into emptiness. She blinked away tears and directed the knights to shield Brogan, who began to intone his prayers. The undead converged and were annihilated, yet kept coming.

Constance looked beyond the immediate fray to see light flickering beyond the woods. A flash lit the clouds, and a blue haze hung across the treetops although dawn was an hour away. Her pulse quickened as she realized it was lightning, with no storm in the sky. Other Cygnarans fighting nearby? She turned back to Hopkins, scrambling. Where was the box? After loosening it from where it had been secured, she drew a flare. She raised it and sent a glowing, orange orb high into the sky, where it briefly lit the area like daylight. She reclaimed her weapon and returned to fight alongside Gallant.

Even with trenchers and long gunners pouring on fire, there were too many undead. Blaize was a whirling embodiment of cleansing light alongside Gallant, bringing holy retribution to the necromantic abominations. She invoked prayers to Morrow, singing from the Prayers for Battle as her knights began to fall. "We fight in your name, knowing we will find strength to bring light to the darkest hour! Within our hearts is the will to overcome any obstacle. Our Creator saw our worth when he left us naked in the earliest days, knowing we would persevere. We ask for your shielding hand, O Morrow, so we can fight on and endure against the fall of night. Let us see the dawn!" Each sentence she punctuated with sweeping strikes.

Radiance flowed from her as the prayer was answered. Her remaining knights were strengthened and shielded. Blaize felt a connection to the divine as she became a conduit for those noble warriors who had fallen, speeding their souls' passage. She could feel Morrow's benevolence as the weapons of her enemies were turned aside. Her remaining knights fought back to back even as she fought with Gallant behind her, momentarily invincible amid white radiance.

Constance Blaize struck down a massive brute thrall that had charged up to her, then looked beyond it. Movement in the distance suggested the Cygnarans fighting elsewhere in the vicinity had seen her signal. She saw a glowing mechanism striding on massive legs and topped by a series of metal coils sizzling with electricity. It was one of the imposing Storm



Striders, new and powerful technology she had never seen in action. The coils flashed with collected power it sent as sheets of lightning to obliterate the walking dead, arcing from one to the next and charring dead flesh to ash.

The Storm Strider was not alone; the entire hill pulsed with a tide of blue armor. The air was thick with ozone and white streaks of punishing electricity from their blades. Amid the storm was Lord Commander Stryker, lit from the voltaic generators on his back as Quicksilver carved through a Reaper sent against him.

A number of Cryxian 'jacks had gone toward the approaching army, away from her garrison. Lord Stryker's warjacks—Stormclads and Ironclads—surged ahead of their master to meet them, each laying to with their weapons and buckling the earth to topple enemies. A long line of storm knights threshed through the dead as a righteous harvest while thunder echoed in the valley.

The sight rallied those who survived among Blaize's escort and they fought with fresh will, determined nothing should reach their wounded comrades inside. Several squads of trenchers came forth with rifles in hand, bayonets affixed, to plunge into the thinning tide of thralls. Blaize did not even realize she had been injured by the battering fists of the dead until she felt the hand of Chaplain Corley upon her side and felt her breathing ease as broken ribs knit beneath his hand. He raised his mace and together they fought alongside Gallant until they reached the forward edge of Lord Stryker's Storm Division. Blaize and the lord commander shared a wordless moment of recognition before they turned to sweep the undead from the field.

Only when they were free of the Cryxian threat did Blaize realize her fatigue. Her shield and weapon felt heavy in her numb hands, and the inner padding of her armor stuck to her from sweat and her own blood. She regrouped with the lord commander, who listened with concern to reports from his rangers. He turned to her and spoke in clipped fashion. "We will not be able to stay to secure this location. I sent orders for wagons to see to evacuating the wounded."

"Thank you, Lord Commander." Constance bowed. "They are my foremost concern."

He frowned and said, "There is fighting all along the Dragon's Tongue. We broke through the siege at Stonebridge but expect Khadoran counterattack at any time. The fate of Point Bourne is unknown. We could sorely use you and your remaining warjacks."

Constance found herself feeling slightly overwhelmed looking into the intensity of his eyes, as every fiber of her being told her she should join him. She glanced to Brogan

Corley at her side and shook her head. "Not yet. We must see to the fallen. We cannot leave them to Cryx."

The Cygnaran warcaster surveyed the battlefield and the scope of the slain. "Very well. We'll send word requesting priests from Corvis and Bainsmarket. There will be more dead before we see the end to this." He added, "There *will* be an end to this. We will hold the northern border—with our lives if need be."

Constance felt a surge of pride drawn from shared resolve for the defense of Cygnar: her homeland, her people. She had been placed here for a reason, and that reason was true to the will of Morrow. "We will join you in that defense soon, Lord Commander. Morrow watch over you."



# CONSTANCE BLAIZE, KNIGHT OF THE PROPHET

## CYGNAR MORROWAN ALLY WARCASTER

*In the furnace of Morrow's light we seek to temper ourselves.*

—Constance Blaize

BLAIZE							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	6	7	5	15	16	9	



SUN SPEAR	
POW	P+S
7	13

<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	<b>+6</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### FEAT: DIVINE INTERVENTION

*By prayers to Morrow, Constance Blaize becomes a conduit to speed the souls of the fallen to their final rest in Urcaen. The power released in the passage of these souls protects their remaining brothers in arms as Blaize becomes a font of holy might.*

Blaize gains one soul token for each friendly living Faction warrior model

destroyed by an enemy attack or collateral damage of an enemy attack in her control area for one round. While in her control area, friendly living Faction warrior models gain +1 ARM for each soul token on Blaize. When Blaize replenishes her focus during your next Control Phase, replace each soul token on her with 1 focus point, then Divine Intervention expires.

**Animosity [Thamarite or Undead]** – This model cannot be included in an army that includes one or more models of the listed type.

### BLAIZE

**Flank [non-warcaster Morrowan]** – When this model makes a melee attack against an enemy model within the melee range of a friendly model of the type indicated, this model gains +2 to attack rolls and gains an additional damage die.

**Inspiration [Morrowan]** – Friendly Morrowan models/units in this model's command range never flee and immediately rally.

### SUN SPEAR

☞ **Magical Weapon**

☞ **Reach**

**Blessed** – When making an attack with this weapon, ignore spell effects that add to a model's ARM or DEF.

The Radiance of Morrow is more than a symbol of faith for the young warcaster Constance Blaize; her god's light fills her every thought and action. Morrow is a deity who prefers to guide rather than intervene, counting upon his mortal followers to defend the powerless from the depredations of the many evils besetting the world. Empowered by her faith, Blaize fights for her god and her nation with fervor inspired by the holy ascendants she reveres.

Born to a prosperous family in Orven, Constance felt the call of Morrow even as a small child. She looked forward to visits to the city's famous basilica with unusual enthusiasm for one so tender in years. The youngest of three siblings, she was closest to her oldest brother Corrin, who enlisted in the ranks of the long gunners of Cygnar's First Army, leaving her isolated.

### SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
<b>BANISHING WARD</b>	2	6	–	–	YES	NO
Enemy upkeep spells on target friendly model/unit expire. Affected models cannot be targeted by enemy spells or animi.						
<b>CRUSADER'S CALL</b>	3	SELF	CTRL	–	NO	NO
Friendly faction models beginning a charge while in this model's control area this turn gain +2" movement.						
<b>FLASHING BLADE</b>	1	SELF	–	–	NO	NO
This model immediately make one normal attack with one of its melee weapons against each enemy model in its LOS that is in the weapon's melee range. These attacks are simultaneous.						
<b>SUNBURST</b>	3	10	3	13	NO	YES
Models boxed by Sunburst are removed from play. Blast damage affects only enemy models.						
<b>TRANSCERENCE</b>	2	SELF	CTRL	–	YES	NO
While in this model's control area, friendly Faction non-warcaster warrior models can spend 1 focus point on this model to boost a melee attack or melee damage roll during their activations.						

### TACTICAL TIPS

**DIVINE INTERVENTION** – Normal token-gathering rules, such as the nearest available model getting the token, still apply.

**CRUSADER'S CALL** – Modifiers to movement apply only to a model's normal movement.

**SUNBURST** – Because boxed models are removed from play before they are destroyed, they do not generate corpse tokens or soul tokens.

Amid her loneliness and prayers she received her first vision. A luminous and faceless figure appeared before her in the night, and she immediately apprehended the comforting presence was a holy manifestation. Radiance suffused the dark room, banishing the shadows as Constance realized that she had a calling to answer the divine. She volunteered to become an initiate and began the process of entering the clergy.

Realizing there was something extraordinary about Constance Blaize, Orven's vicar sent Constance to attend the Sancteum Seminary in Caspia. When she first beheld the glory that was the Sancteum—the holy city and heart of the Morrowan faith—she received her second vision. A resplendent figure she now recognized as an archon of the Host of Morrow appeared near the Archcourt Cathedral pointing toward an ancient statue of Ascendant Katrena near its doors. She saw herself clad in shining armor and wielding a great spear gleaming with the light of the sun and knew what she had been born to do. Hers was not to be the way of the priest, calmly preaching sermons in the heavy quiet of a city cathedral or village.







Constance spent the rest of her youth in the Sancteum learning the Morrowan philosophies on the honorable role of the soldier and the rites and responsibilities required of the faithful in a time of war. She was taught the Prayers for Battle and immersed in the lessons of the church's Martial Trinity: Ascendants Katrena, Solovin, and Markus. Each one of these ascendants had in life been a paragon of faith and virtue, and they exemplified how to bridge the apparent divide between soldier and altruistic philosopher. She was soon initiated into the Primarch Knights, the guardians of the Sancteum. When it was discovered that Constance had been gifted with the rare power of a warcaster she was taken aside for special training and swore vows directly to Primarch Arius. She thus became a part of the church's arsenal, one entrusted to control blessed warjacks in the service of Morrow wherever the primarch and the Exordeum council required her.

Throughout her training for this appointed role Blaize remained in frequent correspondence with her brother in the First Army, where he had reenlisted and advanced to sergeant. She read with rapt interest his stories of his

experiences as a soldier, the hardships of life in the field along the border, the friends he had made in the service. Her letter inviting him to attend her investment ceremony never arrived, and she instead received condolences that Corrin had been killed in action. His squad had been assigned to patrol along the western Llaesele border, and he had fallen in one of the first battles that marked Khador's invasion and the start of the War in Llael.

Blaize was devastated by the news but had no time for grief; she was soon sent to join Cygnar's Third Army at Highgate, there to provide support to the countless towns and villages threatened by Cryx. Empowered by treaties negotiated between the Exordeum and the Cygnaran Army, Blaize rose to the challenge of leading mixed forces of church and kingdom soldiers, providing spiritual solace as well as strength of arms and increasingly skilled tactical expertise to the beleaguered coastal defenders. Her services were welcomed by Lord General Vincent Gollan of Highgate, who was also a Knight of the Prophet, and she learned much under his guidance. During this time, Blaize began to identify more with the soldiers fighting at her side, unknowingly working through her personal grief even as



## CONSTANCE BLAIZE, KNIGHT OF THE PROPHET ARMY OF LIGHT

**WARJACKS:** Cygnar non-character warjacks, Gallant

**UNITS:** Sword Knights, Field Mechaniks, Morrowan units

**SOLOS:** Journeyman Warcaster, Archduke Alain Runewood, Morrowan solos

### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** Precursor Knight units become FA U. Additionally, Harlan Versh, Illuminated One, gains Advance Deployment (A).

### TIER 2

**Requirements:** The army includes two or more Precursor Knight units.

**Benefit:** Add an attachment to one Precursor Knight unit free of cost. This attachment does not count toward FA restrictions.

### TIER 3

**Requirements:** The army includes Archduke Alain Runewood.

**Benefit:** Precursor Knight and Sword Knight units gain +2 SPD during your first turn of the game.

### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Blaize's battlegroup includes Gallant.

**Benefit:** Heavy warjacks in Blaize's battlegroup without ranged weapons gain Advance Move. (Before the start of the game but after both players have deployed, a model with Advance Move can make a full advance.)

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she felt a deeper connection to her brother. This camaraderie prompted a shift in how she began to see her role as both a Cygnaran and a sworn knight of the Morrowan Church.

After reports of the disastrous War in Llael, subsequent battles along Cygnar's borders, and even Caspia besieged, Blaize became convinced her powers could be better employed elsewhere. As Cryxian raids along the coast decreased, news of heavy Cygnaran casualties in the northern war front reinforced this certainty, and the young warcaster repeatedly requested she be transferred to a more active military theater. Feeling it necessary to remain neutral in the wars between Cygnar and Khador, Primarch Arius refused her requests to aid her embattled kinsmen.

As the threats to Cygnar escalated through the fall of Northguard and the subsequent loss of the Thornwood, some of these attitudes within the Church of Morrow began to shift. Blaize and other Cygnaran defenders of the church have had their patriotic spirits rekindled—the kingdom long counted as Morrow's most staunch ally seems at risk of imminent destruction, and they feel their dedication to

the faith goes hand in hand with dedication to their nation. Although Primarch Arius remains unwilling to go so far as to send a warcaster of the church directly against Khador, he has nonetheless consented for Blaize to join the northern effort and ensure the Radiance of Morrow is delivered to that war-ravaged region. Especially amid the horrors of war there must be those who strive to protect the innocent and see to the proper rites for the dead while at all times adhering to honorable conduct.

Blaize is a Sword of the Church. She does not revel in bloodshed, but neither does she shy away from battle in defense of Morrow and Cygnar. She stands quite willing to take on a strong role in the fight against bloodthirsty Khadorans, fanatical Menites, depraved Cryxians, and any others who would imperil innocents with their destructive disregard for human life. Few are those blessed with both her skillful command of the church's warjacks and the divinely manifested favor of Morrow, and she knows she must fulfill the destiny that has been laid upon her, no matter what comes.





# MINUTEMAN

## CYGNAR LIGHT WARJACK

*It is difficult to hide from death that comes from above.*

—Chief Mechanik Gralan Rathleagh

MINUTEMAN							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	7	6	6	14	15	—	



SLUG GUN				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
4	1	—	14	



SLUG GUN				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
4	1	—	14	



OPEN FIST	
POW	P+S
2	9



OPEN FIST	
POW	P+S
2	9

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	5
MEDIUM BASE	

### MINUTEMAN

#### 🔗 Advance Deployment

**Bounding Leap** – Once per activation, after making a full advance but before performing an action, this model can spend one focus point to be placed completely within 5" of its current location. Any effects that prevent charging also prevent this model from using Bounding Leap.

**Flak Field** – This model can use Flak Field once per turn at any time during its activation but cannot interrupt its normal movement to do so. When this model uses Flak Field, models B2B with it suffer an unboostable POW 12 blast damage roll and other models within 2" of it suffer an unboostable POW 6 blast damage roll.

#### 👊 OPEN FIST

##### 👊 Open Fist

Able to swiftly reach any part of the battlefield and obliterate the enemy with a punishing assault,

the Minuteman fills a critical role. With it the Cygnaran Army gains unparalleled mobility, as it is designed to circumnavigate any obstacle. It has become a favorite of Cygnaran warcasters, particularly those who favor rapid assault tactics in the otherwise impassable trenches of no man's land.

The Minuteman is a product of numerous advances in mechanical warfare. Utilizing an exactly designed series of compression chambers, the warjack can vent its heartfire through an arcane turbine that powers a special propulsion system in order to launch briefly into the air. It is well suited to annihilating entire swathes of infantry with its short-range grenade launchers upon landing, clearing its line of sight to an intended target. The Minuteman can then unload its dual short-range slug guns into the enemy. Each of these forearm-mounted guns brings enormous stopping power to bear, making the light 'jack capable of rending even heavy warjack armor.

### TACTICAL TIP

**FLAK FIELD** – Running or failing a charge ends this model's activation, so it cannot use Flak Field afterward.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 8' 5" / 2.4 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** DUAL SLUG GUNS, FIRE-AND-FORGET FRAGMENTATION GRENADES (FFFG)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 385 LBS / 8.2 HRS GENERAL, 85 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 605 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** CYGNARAN ARMORY

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** CYGNARAN ARMORY





# AVENGER

## CYGNAR HEAVY WARJACK

*When the enemy fears the ground beneath their feet, you've already won.*  
—Major Markus "Siege" Brisbane



**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12'7" / 8.6 TONS  
**ARMAMENT:** SEISMIC CANNON (LEFT ARM), STUN BLADE (RIGHT ARM)  
**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 750 LBS / 4.5 HRS GENERAL, 50 MINS COMBAT  
**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 607 AR  
**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY / CYGNAR ARMORY  
**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** CYGNAR ARMORY

The constantly escalating war of mechanical innovation between Cygnar and its enemies has produced ever-more powerful and lethal machinery. Armed with the groundbreaking seismic cannon, the Avenger is at the forefront of this duel of ingenuity. Its cannon fires sophisticated projectiles that unleash a localized earthquake upon impact, every round a marvel of mechanical progress. Roughly the size of a man's head, each of these shells contains a complex arcanodynamic generator, a series of intricate and precisely arranged mechanical rune plates, and a small alchemical detonator. Upon impact the detonator initiates an astonishing eruption of arcane force. The ground shakes violently with all the power of a mighty earthquake focused in a tiny area. Even should enemy combatants survive this shattering explosion, they find themselves hurled

### SEISMIC CANNON

**Quake** – On a direct hit against an enemy model, all models hit are knocked down.

### STUN BLADE

**Stall** – A warjack hit by this attack suffers the Stall continuous effect. While a warjack is suffering Stall, its base DEF becomes 7 and it cannot run or charge.

to the ground, dazed and disoriented, where they are easy targets for Cygnaran riflemen or the crushing charge of cavalry and warjacks.

The Centurion chassis was originally developed to provide not only superior durability to the reliable Ironclad, but an mechanical infrastructure

and conduits capable of supporting advanced weapons such as its polarity shield. With suitable modifications this platform proved ideal for the Avenger's expensive seismic cannon and its stun blade. The heavy Centurion armor helps ensure the Avenger can survive the counter-fire of the enemy while moving into position on the battlefield. To further complement the seismic cannon's ability to disrupt enemy movement, the stun blade is a weapon capable of slowing opposing warjacks to a crawl.

Although 'jack marshals and warcasters in training are eager for the opportunity to field the Avenger, it is almost exclusively entrusted to seasoned warcasters who have proven they will not squander its costly ammunition. The nation also takes great pains to recover key components of any Avengers that fall in battle. Cygnar is painfully aware of its enemies' ability to reverse engineer its technological advances.

AVENGER						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	12	6	4	11	19	—



SEISMIC CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	4	14



STUN BLADE	
POW	P+S
6	18

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L			R		
L	L	M	C	R	R	
	M	M	C	C		

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	





# GALLANT

## CYGNAR MORROWAN ALLY CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*Only Morrow himself could guard me better.*

—Constance Blaize

GALLANT							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
5	11	7	6	13	18	—	



### LASTING LIGHT

POW	P+S
6	17



### OPEN FIST

POW	P+S
3	14

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

### LASTING LIGHT

☞ Magical Weapon

☞ Reach

### OPEN FIST

☞ Buckler

☞ Open Fist

### GALLANT

#### Accumulator [Morrowan] –

When this model begins its activation within 3" of one or more friendly Morrowan models, it is allocated 1 focus point.

**Affinity [Blaize]** – While in Blaize's control area this model's melee weapons gain Purgation. (Weapons with Purgation gain an additional die on attack and damage rolls against models with an enemy upkeep spell on them.)

**Shield Guard** – Once per round, when a friendly model is directly hit by a ranged attack during your opponent's turn while within 2" of this model, you can choose to have this model directly hit instead. This model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects. This model cannot use Shield Guard if it is incorporeal, knocked down, or stationary.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12'3" / 6 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** LASTING LIGHT (LEFT ARM), BUCKLER (RIGHT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 582 LBS / 5.6 HRS GENERAL, 65 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 604 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY / SANCTEUM ARMORY

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** ENGINES EAST

Where Gallant strides, the light of Morrow shines. As it walks beside its mistress each strike of its blade unravels the dark invocations of the damned like shadows before the dawn. Those who would raise a hand against Blaize find Gallant rising to block their blows with phenomenal speed. The huge 'jack knocks aside the blades of the enemy, allowing Blaize to bring her righteous fury to bear.

The favored battlefield companion of the warcaster Constance Blaize, Gallant is a walking instrument of faith. Though the Cygnaran Armory first crafted the underlying chassis of the great machine, based on the Ironclad design, the Morrowan armorers of the Sancteum have made their own alterations to shape it into the weapon required of one of their most accomplished warcasters. Gallant is imprinted with the warrior philosophies extolled by Morrow and his martial ascendants. A copy of the holy catechism called the Prayers for Battle is mounted on its hull, including passages from the Enkheiridion as well as other teachings related to proper conduct in a time of war. The tome is open to pages that speak of Morrow's entreaties to his followers to protect one another from evil in all its forms.





# TRIUMPH

## CYGNAR CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*That machine has the eyes of a hawk and the itchiest trigger finger I ever saw.*  
—Crew Chief Terrence Rail



### TACTICAL TIP

**SPECIAL ISSUE** – This only gives the warjack the potential to bond to the warcaster. It does not automatically add a bond.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' 2" / 6.8 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** SCOPED HEAVY BARREL (LEFT ARM), ASSAULT SHIELD (RIGHT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 655 LBS / 4.9 HRS GENERAL, 45 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 604 AR, REFITTED 607 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY / CYGNARAN ARMORY

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** CYGNARAN ARMORY

When Major Markus Brisbane brought low the walls of Sul, he wrote his name into history. He carefully sought out the weakest parts of those massive fortifications and orchestrated a ceaseless barrage of ordnance using an arsenal of Defenders and other Cygnaran artillery. During the protracted attack, Siege came to know the idiosyncrasies of his warjacks well. One Defender in particular showed an extraordinary aptitude for targeting the weak spots in enemy defenses, almost as if by instinct. Siege came to trust the natural capabilities of the 'jack and

### TRIUMPH

**Arcane Precision** – If this model forfeits its movement during its activation to gain the aiming bonus, it ignores Stealth that activation.

**Special Issue [Siege]** – This model can be included in Siege's theme forces. It can also be bonded to Siege.

### HEAVY BARREL

**Blaster** – When this model makes an attack with this weapon, before the attack roll it can spend 1 focus point to give the attack a 3" AOE.

### ASSAULT SHIELD

② Shield

TRIUMPH						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	11	7	7	12	18	—



HEAVY BARREL			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
16	1	—	15



ASSAULT SHIELD	
POW	P+S
2	13

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L			R		
L	L	M	C	R	R	
	M	M	C	C		

FIELD ALLOWANCE		C
POINT COST		11
LARGE BASE		

soon allowed it to select its own targets, freeing himself to concentrate on other matters in the heat of battle.

Siege's appreciation for the warjack he eventually named Triumph only grew throughout the campaign. In the aftermath of the Menite withdrawal from Caspia, he made use of his limited time on leave to draft numerous improvements to his favored warjack. The warcaster worked closely with some of the finest arcane mechanics of the Cygnaran Armory to realize his vision, and soon he had an ideal warjack outfitted to his specifications. Now armed with a heavy assault shield, Triumph would be able to withstand incoming fire with near impunity as it moved into position. The crowning achievement of Siege's upgrades was Triumph's new sighting system, which links the cortex by conduits directly to a scope integrated into the warjack's cannon.

Siege rarely goes to battle without Triumph. Given his preference for the use of precision ordnance, he equipped Triumph with mechanical ammunition that can be imbued with explosive power. This combination of arcane firepower and protective shielding allows Triumph to bring the fight to the heart of the battlefield, assailing even the most heavily defended positions with a rain of shells.





# CAPTAIN JONAS MURDOCH

## CYGNAR CHARACTER UNIT ATTACHMENT

*He'll make something out of you boys. Whether soldiers or corpses, time will tell.*

—Captain Jeremiah Kraye

MURDOCH							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	6	7	6	13	14	9	



CARBINE			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	10



TRENCH KNIFE	
POW	P+S
3	9

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

**Attachment [Small- or Medium-Based Mercenary]** – This attachment can be added to a small- or medium-based Mercenary unit.

### MURDOCH

⊗ Officer

⊗ Tough

**Assault (Order)** – Affected models must charge or run. As part of a charge, after moving but before making its charge attack, an affected model can make one ranged

attack targeting the model charged unless they were in melee with each other at the start of the affected model's activation. Models that received this order cannot make combined ranged attacks this activation. When resolving an Assault ranged attack, the attacking model does not suffer the target in melee penalty. If the target is not in melee range after moving, the affected model must still make the ranged attack before its activation ends.

**Go to Ground** – Once per game while in formation during its unit's activation, this model can use Go to Ground. For one round or until they move, are placed, or are engaged, models in this unit in formation gain cover, do not suffer blast damage, and do not block LOS.

**Ranking Officer** – This model is a Ranking Officer. While this model is in play, models in its unit are Cygnar models instead of Mercenary models.

**Trencher** – This model is a Trencher model.

Dangerous times bring difficult choices. Few men in the Cygnaran Army know that better than Captain Jonas Murdoch. Leading the fiercest mercenaries to be found, Captain Murdoch ensures victory behind enemy lines—at any cost.

It is a rare man to serve over twenty years as a trencher, and this grizzled veteran has earned a deep respect tinged by fear. Murdoch is legendary both for being unflappable even in the midst of a firestorm and for his stubborn refusal to die. On one occasion he took a shot to the head and his position was captured by the Khadorans; his superiors quite reasonably assumed him dead. They learned not to give up so easily when he escaped from the prison camp and returned to his company, seemingly unaffected by the bullet he claims is still rattling around in his skull.

## TACTICAL TIPS

**ASSAULT (ORDER)** – The assaulting model ignores the target in melee penalty even if is not in melee range of its charge target after moving.

**OFFICER** – Because this model is an Officer, when it is destroyed it does not replace a Grunt in its unit. Instead either another Officer in the unit or the unit Leader becomes the unit commander.

After a lengthy career leading Cygnaran soldiers, Murdoch was chosen by Lord General Olan Duggan of the First Army for special duty. He was asked to bolster Cygnaran numbers by finding veteran mercenaries to be transformed into elite irregular fighting forces. These handpicked teams of former sell-swords bring with them an unusual assortment of skills, honed by Murdoch to carry out the bloodiest, most dangerous missions. These attacks require strong nerve and a bloodthirsty demeanor. He employs the meanest, cagiest soldiers of fortune to see them through.





# ARCHDUKE ALAIN RUNEWOOD, LORD OF FHARIN

## CYGNAR CHARACTER SOLO

*His Grace earned my trust with both the surety of his sword and the integrity of his words.*

—King Leto Raelthorne



The Lord of Fharin is one of the few men King Leto Raelthorne looks upon as a true friend, and with good reason. Archduke Alain Runewood has given up the comfort and safety of his estates in aid of his country and his king. He answers the call of his nation and is one of the greatest leaders of his generation.

Runewood's friendship to King Leto goes back many decades, but his loyalty was cemented when he was a young officer in the Cygnaran Army. Under the reign of King Vinter Raelthorne IV, he saw too many lives spent carelessly. The grim realities of battle made the young heir to the Duchy of the Eastern Midlunds realize the value of life, no matter the station. When the young prince staged his coup against his ruthless brother, Alain Runewood was proud to fight beside him.

After the coup, Runewood was entrusted to govern considerable lands once held by less loyal nobles, particularly Archduke Fergus Laddermore. Another man might have retired from active command, but Runewood refused to put down his sword. Wherever his command



### RUNEWOOD

☛ Jack Marshal

☛ Commander

☛ Fearless

**Battle Plan** – During this model's activation, it can use one of the following plans. A friendly Faction model/unit can be affected by only one plan each turn.

- **Overcome** – RNG 5. Target friendly Faction warrior model/unit. If the model/unit is in range, it gains Pathfinder ☛ for one turn.

- **Path to Victory** – RNG 5. Target friendly Faction warrior model/unit. If the model/unit is in range, it gains Fearless ☛ and +2 to charge attack rolls for one round.

- **Reveille** – Knocked down friendly Faction models in this model's command range immediately stand up. Models that were knocked down this turn are not affected by Reveille.



**Elite Cadre [Sword Knights]** – Friendly Sword Knight units gain Reform. (After all models in a unit with Reform have completed their actions, each can advance up to 3".)

**Sacrificial Pawn [Faction warjack]** – When this model is directly hit by an enemy ranged attack, you can choose to have one friendly, non-incorporeal Faction warjack model within 3" of this model directly hit instead. That model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects.

### VINDICATOR

☛ Magical Weapon

☛ Weapon Master

RUNEWOOD							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	6	7	6	13	14	10	
							
HAND CANNON							
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW				
12	1	—	12				
							
VINDICATOR							
POW			P+S				
6			12				
DAMAGE							5
FIELD ALLOWANCE							C
POINT COST							3
SMALL BASE							

fights, Runewood leads from the heart of the battle. His tactical acumen is finely honed, and his men are inspired by the sight of him swinging his heirloom blade, Vindicator, as he fights by their side.

Archduke Runewood would do anything to prevent the return of tyranny imposed under Vinter IV. He sees conspiring nobles and smells the scent of the deposed king's schemes upon them. Almost twenty thousand men fight for crown and country under Runewood in his role as general of the 7th Division of the Cygnaran Second Army and are proud to do so. His sword knights will risk all in his defense, knowing his vision of their nation's future must survive.



# STORM STRIDER

## CYGNAR BATTLE ENGINE

*Let us teach them the true meaning of lightning war.*

—General Adept Sebastian Nemo

STORM STRIDER						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	10	5	6	10	18	10



LIGHTNING CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	—	15



LIGHTNING CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	—	15

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HUGE BASE</b>	

### STORM STRIDER

⚙ Construct

🔫 Gunfighter

⚡ Immunity: Electricity

**Circular Vision** – This model's front arc extends to 360°.

**Kinetic Accumulator** – When this model is hit by a melee or ranged attack made by an enemy model, it gains one power token, up to a maximum of three. During its activation, this model can spend power

tokens to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per boost.

**Repulsor Field** – When this model is hit with a melee attack, after the attack is resolved the attacking model is pushed 1" directly away from this model.

**Superconduction** – When a friendly model attacks with a ranged weapon with Damage Type: Electricity ⚡, it gains +2 to attack rolls against enemy models within 5" of this model.

### LIGHTNING CANNON

⚡ Damage Type: Electricity

**Critical Disruption** – On a critical hit on a warjack, it suffers Disruption. (A warjack suffering Disruption loses its focus points and cannot be allocated focus or channel spells for one round.)

**Lightning Generator** – When a model is hit with this weapon, lightning arcs from that model to d3 consecutive additional models. The lightning arcs to the nearest model it has not already arced to within 4" of the last model it arced to, ignoring this model. Each model the lightning arcs to suffers a POW 10 electrical damage roll ⚡.

The Storm Strider is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most unusual accomplishments of the Cygnaran Armory's stormsmiths. At rest, the great machine might be mistaken for a fixed weapon platform—but those who see it moving across the battlefield never forget the sight. A raging electrical storm envelops the machine, blinding those that stare too long as it gathers its voltaic charge. The stormsmiths who operate the metal giant from its open deck move amidst an unending cacophony of lightning strikes and thunderclaps. Crackling electrical discharges constantly arc between the spinning workings of the Storm Strider and its platform until they are unleashed from its lightning cannon.

The stormsmiths of the Cygnaran Armory labored for years to refine the Storm Strider's electrical generators, storm chambers, and related devices. They built ever-more powerful weaponry and stretched the perceived limitations of the destructive properties of voltaic energy, finally

### TACTICAL TIPS

**SUPERCONDUCTION** – Yes, this includes this model.

**LIGHTNING GENERATOR** – The lightning still arcs to models with Immunity: Electricity, it just cannot damage them. Damage from Lightning Generator strikes is not considered to have come from a hit or by a melee or ranged attack.

breaking through those expected barriers completely. The lightning cannon was the ultimate result of this increasingly theoretical research: a weapon so powerful and requiring such a massive storm chamber it was initially believed to be unrealistic for battlefield use. The project's engineers were determined, though, and they soon devised a novel design for a self-propelled mechanical platform for transporting the weapon. The Storm Strider was born.

The Storm Strider is a total weapons system; all the energy it generates can be applied without waste. Although most of this energy is channeled into the powerful lightning cannons, excess voltaic discharges flicker across the body of the machine, charging the very air in its vicinity. This ambient energy has the effect of drastically increasing the accuracy of storm weapons discharged nearby, turning blasts of electrical energy into brilliant eruptions of voltaic fury. Lightning arcs across the earth with every blast to annihilate anything in its path—even near-misses can rip apart those unfortunate enough to be standing near.

The destructive potential of the Storm Strider is matched by its unassailability. Surrounded by a powerful magnetic field and equipped with powerful kinetic accumulators, it transforms hostile fire into additional energy for its own powerful voltaic conductors. Enemies who somehow survive the withering electrical fire find their attacks with sword and mace are to no avail. The scent of ozone fills the air as the tremendous energies of the weapon surge through its attacker, irresistibly pushing them away.









# PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

## SHADOW OF DOUBT

Eastern Midlunds, Cygnar, 608 AR

The blazing inferno shone fiercely against the overcast night sky. The barn fire had reached its peak and illuminated the entire field. It roared hungrily as it sent thick smoke pouring upward.

Spotting the fire, a squad of long gunners and trenchers of Cygnar's Second Army rushed from patrolling the King's Highway to lend their aid. Several slight figures bundled in robes were passing buckets of water from the nearest well and throwing them against the flames, and the mixed squad shouldered rifles to assist the women of the farmstead.

"Where are your father and brothers?" The trencher sergeant shouted as he took a sloshing bucket from a young woman he thought no older than sixteen.

"Murdered in the invasion of Sul," she replied coldly, blades suddenly appearing in her hands. He barely had time to drop the bucket before the cold bite of metal pierced his abdomen and chest. The other women also drew slender swords. Beneath their robes they wore leather armor in the red and white of the Protectorate of Menoth, with armored greaves and bracers.

The members of the patrol who had not yet reached the well scrambled for their rifles as the nearest wall of the burning barn exploded and a heavy warjack crashed through in a spray of flaming splinters. It was a hulking Menite warjack, built on a Crusader chassis but wielding wickedly curved single-edged blades in both metal fists. From the side of the barn stepped a woman wearing warcaster armor, her eyes unyielding as she urged the warjack forward. Its blades sliced through the nearest Cygnaran soldiers, killing five men without slowing. The women put an end to the last members of the patrol before a single shot was fired.



Thyra had met with Feora, Priestess and Protector of the Flame, only a week earlier at a small shrine southwest of Tower Judgment. The Flame of Sorrow had betrayed her nervousness as she prostrated before her superior, one of the most influential Menites in the great crusades.

Hierarch Severius had taken a large portion of the Protectorate's army to Llael and most of its veteran warcasters were joined to the Northern Crusade, and defense of the Protectorate's capital and holy lands had been left to Feora. The war between Caspia and Sul had settled into a brooding ceasefire, but garrisons of both walled cities stood ready against any renewed eruption of violence. Small incursions and skirmishes periodically erupted in vulnerable regions outside the cities on both sides of the Black River; these fights were small but brutal, forcing border defenders to scramble at every alarm.

Thyra's mind churned trying to determine how she had failed her mistress. She could not imagine another reason she would be pulled from the offensive strikes. Feora bid her rise, her voice warm and reassuring. "There is a matter that needs your attention, my daughter." The term was customary from a superior among the Daughters of the Flame. Feora was the only one who could speak to Thyra thus.

She intoned, "I stand ready to do as you bid, Priestess."

"This will be an unusual operation, one that offers many possibilities of failure. I do not believe anyone else capable of this task." Feora's face was hidden behind her bronzed mask, but Thyra had learned subtle cues by which she sensed the gravity of this task. "I need you to penetrate the Cygnaran interior to reach and eliminate two heavily protected individuals. Officers in the Cygnaran Army as well as nobles within the corrupt court of the heathen king."

Thyra felt a familiar anticipation. "My team is ready."

"There are delicate arrangements that rely upon this task's success," Feora continued. "I am afraid you must endure working closely with heathens within Cygnar. Upon your triumph, we may gain additional allies and informants allowing us to act with greater ease there."



Thyra shifted only slightly, trying not to betray her apprehension. The missions she undertook required absolute confidence in her team—the slightest lapse could mean death. She could not imagine relying upon outsiders in such circumstances.

Feora raised a hand toward the Temple Flameguard behind her. They parted, allowing a preceptor to step forward escorting a familiar older man in garments similar to those of outlying Idrian tribes in the Bloodstone Marches. His rugged face was dark and leathery from exposure to the sun. That he retained his rifle and sword in the Protector of the Flame's presence suggested a degree of trust Thyra did not share.

"You have worked with Saxon Orrik before, I believe," Feora said.

"Yes, he has been a reliable guide." Thyra kept her voice neutral. She did not care for the ranger, to whom deception was second nature. Orrik simply nodded to her. He seemed at ease, with no sign of the discomforts most experienced at his age.

She said, "His experience in the wilds seems irrelevant to this task."

"His role in this will be different," Feora explained. "He will identify your targets. You must be discreet: limit your attacks to those individuals, except to preserve your life and the success of the mission. This is not the time for incidental vengeance."

"Of course, Priestess." Thyra felt abashed. Controlling her temper had been a struggle she had overcome with difficulty while learning to manipulate her warcaster talent. Feora had helped her learn to keep her emotions in check. She continued to do so as she took her leave of Feora and marched stiffly alongside Saxon Orrik to gather her sisters for the mission.



"Does setting fire to a barn and slaughtering a patrol qualify as discreet?" Saxon Orrik's voice was laden with sarcasm. "Couldn't we have just hidden in the barn?" He had rejoined the group after the ambush.

Thyra's lips compressed. "I will trust your advice deeper inside the interior, Orrik. We know how these patrols work; they would have checked the barn. Given recent events, a missing squad will not be noticed."

He said nothing, but his eyes expressed his disagreement eloquently.

Thyra had handpicked a small group of her Daughters, some for their experience, others for their unwavering

convictions. Most senior was Nicia, given the honorific of the Tear of Vengeance, a highly decorated warrior whose standing within the Daughters was almost the equal of Thyra's. Instead of the standard blades, Nicia wielded a customized weapon that resembled a long handled blade, with its haft also serving as a powerful rifle. She kept this sword cannon bundled in thick cloth to disguise its nature.

All the women wore heavy robes and hoods over their uniforms, which they deemed an affirmation of their sacred calling. Thyra bore what looked to be a peasant's pack on her shoulders to obscure the stacks of her arcane turbine. Behind them marched Blood of Martyrs, Thyra's favored warjack. They traveled by night to avoid scrutiny.

The massive, smoke-belching machine would ordinarily have drawn attention if not for Thyra's power to conceal it. By invoking the proper prayers and focusing her talent she was able to cloak the heavy 'jack in a mystical shroud. It was not invisible but had become something others would not feel the need to notice. Maintaining this required small but constant mental effort.

They made good speed deeper into the Cygnaran interior, skirting several larger towns. Finally, Orrik bade them wait while he went ahead to meet with certain unnamed collaborators.

As soon as he was out of earshot Nicia spoke her doubts. "Why should we trust this man?"

"No one asked for trust. We have a mission from Feora; this is not the time for questions." Thyra regretted her abruptness, but it served to stop any retort. They stood in strained silence until they saw people approaching, Orrik at the fore. Thyra tensed. He led almost a dozen heavily armed strangers, men with the rough look of brigands or mercenaries. Her heart began to race when she identified the symbol on their sleeves: a black barbed dagger dripping a single drop of red blood.

Several Daughters immediately went for their swords, hissing indignantly. The approaching men stopped in alarm, and several quickly drew swords or pistols. Nicia pulled her weapon free of its covering, growling, "Daggot Blades!"

Saxon made a sharp cutting motion toward the newcomers and waved them back while Thyra confronted her people. "Stand down! Immediately!" Her tone brooked no argument.

"Looks like the lasses are jumpy," said a large man with sergeant's stripes on his sleeve. He holstered his pistol. Nicia pointed her weapon in his direction, but Thyra caught her eye and gave her a stern look.



"Everyone at ease," Thyra commanded. She was struggling with her own anger. She paused to scan her team and ensure they would obey her orders, then pulled Saxon Orrik aside. Nicia followed.

Once they could speak without being overheard, Thyra said sharply to Orrik, "No one said anything about working with the Blades."

The older ranger's eyes suggested amusement. "Bad blood?"

Nicia's face was red with anger. "Several of us have lost brothers or husbands to the Daggot Blades. We have oaths of vengeance against them."

Thyra's sympathies were fully with Nicia; the Daggot Blades were exactly the sort of mercenary scum often sent across the river to raid and pillage. For a moment Thyra's mind was filled with the screams of her own village, her own family, being attacked by similar men. Gritting her teeth, she had to struggle hard to force the memory away.

Saxon sighed and spoke to Thyra. "Given your activities in the region, it isn't surprising we might encounter those you have fought before." His voice was dispassionate. "The Blades are mercenaries. They do what they are hired to do. You have your orders."

Thyra was not willing to surrender control over the situation. "My orders named no one but you. Why do we need them?"

"A fair question," Saxon allowed. "Unlike us, they are known here and are not wanted or marked for death. The man they serve is powerful and feared. They have access to safe houses, and they can get us close to your quarry."

Nicia said to Thyra, "That one at the fore with the scar across his face matches the description of the murderer of Lacelle's husband." Thyra looked over to the tall, wiry woman. Her body rigid and her face drained of blood, she was staring fixedly at the mercenary Nicia had singled out.

For a moment Thyra seriously considered ordering the requisite reprisals upon these hated men. She needed Saxon Orrik to find her targets, though, and his explanation for the use of the mercenaries seemed plausible. As much as she wanted to allow Lacelle her vengeance, Thyra was also mindful of Feora's trust in her.

She said to Nicia, "We work toward a higher cause. Personal vendettas—no matter how deserved!—must be stayed. I will hold you accountable for their actions." Nicia looked bitter but turned to speak to the Daughters.



The entire group remained on edge as they traveled to a town northwest of King's Vine called Hatherby. Thyra discovered that traveling with the mercenaries indeed made the Daughters less conspicuous. The townspeople avoided the mercenaries and did not question them as they might have questioned a group of women alone. The Blades were a godless, uncouth, foul-mouthed bunch, but a few reminders with blade points persuaded them to exercise a modicum of restraint.

The group took shelter in a drafty warehouse near the main roadway, a building owned by the Blades and used as a local base of operations. A section had been converted to barracks and armory. The doors were large enough to accommodate Blood of Martyrs, and Thyra was relieved to relax her mind from the occultation. The 'jack loomed over the mercenaries and glared with palpable hostility, encouraging them to keep their distance.

The Menites took over the barracks, leaving the Blades to fend for themselves. They settled in to wait, none feeling comfortable enough to sleep. Dawn was breaking by the time Saxon Orrik deigned to provide Thyra more information about their targets. The two men were Colonel Jiels Thornby, Earl of Grives, and Major Eldon Runewood, Viscount of Eschex. Both were officers in Cygnar's Second Army, but it was their relationship to General Alain Runewood, Archduke of the Eastern Midlunds, that mattered most to Orrik. The second target was nephew to the archduke, and both were significant vassals.

Thyra would never have questioned Feora on the significance of her targets, but she felt no such reserve with Orrik. The ranger was evasive, saying only that his "master" had allies who would benefit from these deaths and that this master had entered into an arrangement with Feora. Killing a pair of high-ranking nobles would undoubtedly help undermine Cygnaran morale, but Thyra saw there was something larger at stake. The entire arrangement bothered her on a fundamental level, as without Feora's confirmation, she had no way to know that Orrik had selected targets that would actually further the Priestess' plans. Thyra would only discover she was being manipulated after the fact.

According to Orrik, the men were en route to join the Second Army at Eastwall. They and their armed escort would stop at Hatherby to rest and resupply. Ranking officers of noble blood were known to take their ease at one of the local estates; it was there the team would strike. Orrik apparently had several of the estate servants in his pocket. The Menites watched as Orrik produced chalk and sketched the layout of the place and its surroundings. Thyra frowned thoughtfully. The man was no mere tracker or hired guide but was clearly well versed in espionage. Who was his real master?



Their planning was interrupted by one of the Blades set as sentries. "They're here," he said to Orrik with a grim expression. "You'd better take a look."

Orrik looked surprised when Thyra stood to go with him. She said, "I need to see what we're facing."

"Not in that ridiculous getup," he said, waving at her peasant's robe.

"I won't need it," Thyra said, putting it aside, "since Blood of Martyrs is staying here." She cloaked herself in the occultation. In battle it served to make her difficult to pin down under fire, but she had used it for reconnaissance many times.

Thyra saw Nicia's worried expression and reassured her, "I won't be far. Climb to the roof and cover me. Take care not to draw attention."

Orrik had already put aside the Idrian-style garments he preferred for the desert in favor of nondescript leathers. Similarly, the Blades had taken off their company badges. Together they went outside into the sunlight. A sizable crowd had gathered along the main street to watch the arrival of the Cygnaran Army as if it were a parade.

Surveying the army, Thyra felt rising apprehension. This was a far larger force than she had been led to expect. She had never seen so many sword knights outside the invasion of Sul—at least two full companies, along with a long gunner company. There were a half-dozen warjacks among them. Thyra felt the familiar tingling at the back of her mind that indicated a warcaster nearby and looked sharply to the rear of the passing column, where several warjacks clustered. Elaborately attired sword knights marched alongside banners showing their heraldry, but she did not see the warcaster. Her occultation would mask her presence, but this complicated matters significantly.

Orrik whispered, "The archduke himself!" He pointed to an older sword knight holding his helmet under his arm at the center of the distinguished group, a banner of priority behind him. This was Archduke Alain Runewood, one of



King Leto's most powerful nobles as well as the general in charge of Eastwall. Thyra felt an immediate visceral surge of hatred. Pointing toward the rear of the column, Orrik said, "That's Captain Allister Caine." She saw him at last, his turbine and armor difficult to discern under a heavy leather overcoat. He showed no sign of having sensed another warcaster nearby.

Under other circumstances Thyra would have been thrilled at the prospect of killing such a man. She was deep in enemy territory, though, with only a single warjack, while Caine was marching with a battalion alongside a Charger, a Defender, and a Hunter. Toward the fore of the column and among the sword knights were two Ironclads and a pair of Sentinels, one of which was staying close by the nobles. Orrik said, "On the positive side, our friends are right there, next to the archduke."



Thyra memorized the faces and banners, fixing them in her mind. As far as she was concerned, they were already dead. She just had to find a way to seal that fate.



"By Thamar's twins," Sergeant Jacobs of the Daggot Blades said with typical vulgarity as they regrouped, "why in blazes is Allister Caine here? Isn't there a war on?"

Thyra and Orrik had remained outside to confirm the final disposition of the army forces, finding them altogether less than ideal. None of the three nobles had retired to the compromised estate as expected, remaining instead at the army encampment that sprawled along the outskirts of town. Apparently Allister Caine had persuaded the archduke to partake in local games of chance at the largest tavern, and the entire area was crawling with Cygnaran soldiers.

Orrik had been brooding about the warcaster's unexpected arrival. He finally turned to Thyra, surmising, "The gun mage is likely here to escort Runewood to Eastwall, together with his household guard. Your activities of late have likely put them on alert." He grimaced.

The notion of relegating a warcaster to escort duty in the interior during a time of war was unthinkable to Thyra, and she suspected there was more to it. She felt distinctly ill-informed.

"What if we get ol' Runewood too?" Jacobs scratched his side as he mused, "We'd get an ungodly huge bonus for that! Imagine!"

Orrik's hungry look suggested he was thinking similarly, although Thyra doubted it was coin that motivated him. "Eliminating Archduke Runewood would be a victory beyond anything we had hoped." He shook his head and sighed. "Unfortunately, we are not equipped for such a strike."

Jacobs shrugged. "We should send word to Ladderm—" He swallowed the name at a sharp look from Orrik but muttered, "See what he thinks." Thyra's eyes narrowed. At least now she knew the identity of their master: Archduke Laddermore, another powerful Cygnaran noble.

"We have no time to confer with anyone." Orrik looked to Thyra. "Surely Feora would want Runewood eliminated. What is your assessment?"

"My orders were clear. The elder Runewood was not one of my targets." She was pleased with herself for cornering him earlier about the names. "Regardless, we're not getting to any of them as it stands." She spoke in a detached tone. "Chances of success are poor even were we to treat this as a suicide

mission. The only way this will work is to separate our quarry from the rest of the army." Jacobs and the other nearby Blades looked uncomfortable at the mention of a suicide mission.

After some further musing Orrik allowed, "We have access to the papers and seal of our local noble. I can have the head butler forge a letter offering hospitalities. It would be rude for the archduke to refuse outright. If he chooses not to attend himself, he will want to send representatives in his stead. Our targets are the most worthy to sit in his place."

Jacobs nodded eagerly. "Good idea. Could get all three in one go!"

Orrik frowned and noted, "If Runewood does attend, Caine will join him. Nevertheless, it's our best move." He looked to Thyra for confirmation.

Thyra saw no better way. "Set your plan in motion. My people will stand ready. We have only one chance at this."



They evaded the Cygnaran watch and snuck into position near the large manor house, a stout structure whose walls were stone below and handsomely carved redwood above. They kept to the shadows outside a large copse of trees and near a row of tall hedges that might obscure any commotion from the nearby town. Entering the manor itself would have presented too many risks of discovery. In the distance, they could see the fires near the tents of the Cygnaran Army outside the town limits.

Checking the faces of her sisters, Thyra saw Lacelle staring fixedly at the back of the mercenary who had been involved in her husband's death. She caught the woman's eye and shook her head slowly, pointing first at her own eyes and then at the roadway they were watching. The Daughter grimaced and complied, resetting her attention.

Thyra tensed as she heard the distinct sound of warjack engines above that of marching soldiers. From their vantage they saw several dozen sword knights approaching in formation on the road, the 'jacks just behind them. She identified an Ironclad and a Sentinel and relaxed slightly; she had seen neither alongside Allister Caine. The banners held by the escort marked them for the Earl of Grives and the Viscount of Eschex. The presence of the two warjacks complicated things. Through her mental connection to Blood of Martyrs she sensed the 'jack was eager to confront them.

The sword knights took up positions to either side of the main path, the warjacks alongside. The two in the most heavily decorated armor dismounted, removed helmets, and walked toward the stairs to the manor porch.



Colonel Thornby, the Earl of Grives, was an older bald man, while Major Eldon Runewood was considerably younger, with the solid build and square features of his uncle the archduke.

Thyra nodded to Nicia and dropped her arm. The Daughters saw the signal and were in motion even as the shot rang out from Nicia's sword cannon to pierce through the colonel's neck with a vivid spray of blood. Orrik's rifle fired only an instant later, but the shot missed; the young major was already ducking and spinning toward the sound of the noise. Thyra knew the next few chaotic moments would determine everything.

The Sentinel light warjack charged almost the instant the first shot echoed, moving toward the nobles while raising its shield to try to intercept any additional fire. Its deadly chain gun started to spin up to firing speed. Thyra was rushing forward alongside her sisters, Blood of Martyrs ahead of her.

The Flame of Sorrow invoked a prayer to Menoth even as she charged, sending a powerful surge of holy energy manifesting as golden runes surrounding herself, the Daughters, and Blood of Martyrs. By this blessing their weapons would be guided to strike true. The plan was for her subordinates and the mercenaries to attack the escort, leaving the warjacks and the targets—should they survive the initial gunfire—to Thyra.

The Sentinel became her first priority. She felt her mind occupying two places at once as she fully inhabited Blood of Martyr's cortex and felt its massive curved swords in its hands even as she felt Grief and Lament in her own. The heavy warjack crashed into the smaller Sentinel, tearing through the Sentinel's upraised shield with one blow, then slashing across with another to tear the entire arm loose. In a blur of motion, it sliced clean through the multiple barrels of the spinning chain gun and at last delivered a killing thrust into the light warjack's chest. Thyra moved swiftly past to engage the major. He brought his shield and blade up as he stepped back, his eyes widening at the sight of a Menite warcaster closing.

As the Daughters rushed the knights, the Daggot Blades fired pistols from the hillside. The Cygnarans' heavy armor, better suited to turning aside blade and spear points than bullets, deflected a few incoming rounds, but those striking flat punched through to open gaping wounds. Knights fell bleeding along the road. Those left standing were met by Daughters of the Flame.

Augmented by Thyra's prayers, the women swept through the knights, blood spraying wherever their blades danced—they found gaps under shoulders or drove sword points

through visors and beneath the chins of helmets. Nicia was a whirlwind of slaughter as she charged into a knot of sword knights, quickly slaying two with the blade of her unique weapon before turning to fire its rifle upon a third, almost tearing off his head. A knight behind her spun with his blade at the ready, but Orrik fired a shell that pierced the attacker's lower back. The knight fell to his knees, and the blade dropped from numbed fingers.

Major Runewood yelled over his shoulder to the Ironclad, which was already running forward. With a whistle of vented steam it lowered its shoulder and barreled into Blood of Martyrs. Thyra had to roll frantically aside as Blood of Martyrs soared back to crash through the brick wall of the manor's east wing. They heard screaming from within the house, then the ceiling caved in and an entire section of the façade crumbled. Before she could regain her feet, the young Runewood swung downward with his battle blade to slice deep into Thyra's side, her flickering power field running too low to deflect the blow. She let out a groan of pain even as she forced herself back to her feet, relying on adrenaline to ignore the injury.

**THE WOMEN SWEEP  
THROUGH THE KNIGHTS,  
BLOOD SPRAYING  
WHEREVER THEIR  
BLADES DANCED**

She looked to the Cygnaran noble in his ornamented armor, his eyes fierce and his sword at the ready. He backed away to allow the Ironclad to take his place. Blood trickled down Thyra's side and her breathing was labored, but she felt righteous anger and indignation. Even as the Ironclad turned toward her and raised its massive quake hammer, she rushed forward into a tumbling roll between the Ironclad's legs, landing before the major with her blade thrusting forcefully up under his chin. He tried to deflect with his shield, but Lament plunged through his flesh to skewer his brain and pierce the top of his skull.

She yanked the sword loose and turned to face his 'jack, whose eyes glowed with something akin to anger as its master fell lifeless. Its massive hammer swung sideways toward her, but she smoothly ducked and then stepped inside the hammer's reach with her blades. The blessed weapons were sharp enough to bite through warjack armor, although she knew disabling the machine would require more than hacking at its hull. She spun to leverage both her momentum and the strength of her warcaster armor into a forceful strike through one of the exposed pistons connecting its waist to its legs. It snapped with



a pop, and the 'jack toppled to one knee. She stepped swiftly around to the side and thrust Lament through its pressure boiler, which unleashed a scalding plume of steam in a shriek. It turned awkwardly toward her, raising its hammer.

A familiar voice raised in a scream of rage rose above the escaping steam. "Betrayed!" Thyra barely sidestepped the quake hammer before it smashed heavily into the earth. Looking back, she saw Lacelle with her swords through one of the Daggot Blades. At first she thought the woman had struck first, then she realized all the Daughters were under attack by their erstwhile allies. After the sword knights had fallen in the initial rush, the Blades had taken advantage of their distraction to attack the Daughters from behind. Thyra felt her rage ignite as she saw that many of her sisters had already been stabbed in the back.

Orrik shouted, "What are you fools doing?!"

Sergeant Jacobs called, "Just following orders! Help us finish them and I'll explain once we're shut of this place." A mercenary broke past Lacelle's guard and delivered a mortal thrust to her abdomen. She used her last strength to cut his throat. Several more closed warily on Thyra.

**THYRA YANKED ORRIK TO  
FACE HER. THE DESIRE TO SLIT  
HIS THROAT WAS SO STRONG  
HER VISION BLURRED.**

Thyra pointed and golden runes seized the nearest mercenary to yank him toward her with such force he was almost torn in half. She ignored the others for the moment and twisted around the Ironclad to cut the remaining pistons. With its boiler critically compromised the 'jack was finally all but useless. She could sense Blood of Martyrs struggling to free itself from the rubble of the house without success as flames spread through the interior.

She parried and evaded the thrusts of the other two mercenaries and pulled back toward the front door of the manor, which together with the west wing was still intact. Nicia joined her after dispatching several Blades who had tried to rush her, but she was limping from a nasty cut to her left leg. Her hands shook as she reloaded her sword cannon. Several mercenaries were readying pistols, having learned the folly of confronting the ranking Daughters up close. Thyra felt a moment of despair to realize the rest of her team had fallen.

She kicked open the manor door, wincing as fresh pain seared in her side. The foyer and entry hall were not yet ablaze and provided temporary cover. Saxon Orrik ran in their direction, reloading his rifle. She was behind him with Lament to his neck in an instant. Glaring out at the Daggot Blades raising pistols to fire, she waved Nicia into the foyer and backed in after, then kicked the door.

"Tell your men to back off," Thyra hissed at Orrik. "If they flee now, some of them might live."

The ranger gritted his teeth as her sword edge bit into his neck. "I wasn't part of this. I had no intention of betraying you."

Underscoring the dubiousness of this statement, Sergeant Jacobs yelled, "Let Orrik go and surrender, and no one else has to die!"

Thyra yanked Orrik to face her. The desire to slit his throat was so strong her vision blurred. "You are a liar. And worthless to me now. I'll give you a moment to pray to Menoth." Behind Orrik, in the rubble of the east wing's large dining room, Thyra could see Blood of Martyrs trying to dislodge itself from the wreckage. The warjack was stronger than twenty men, but a fallen beam pinned its arm, and other debris had trapped it in such a way that it could not bring any leverage to bear. Fire licked the edges of that room.

Orrik's said, "Remember your orders! I am the only one who can arrange matters between my master and yours. She told you to cooperate. We are on the same side!"

"I'm not an idiot! You all work for Laddermore; I heard your sergeant admit it earlier. It seems they forgot to tell you about the final part of their plan."

He shook his head. "*They* work for Laddermore—*my* master is above him! This was a mistake, and I'll see it made right. Kill me, and you unravel everything your mistress has worked to achieve."

Nicia peered cautiously out one of the windows and fired. The report was followed by a choked gasp and the sound of a body falling to the ground. She reloaded her rifle as she said to Thyra, "Don't trust him! You saw what they did!" Bullets impacted the outer wall.

Thyra was so angry her blade was already biting into Orrik's skin; it would be so easy to cut his throat and be done with him and whatever conspiracy he was mixed up in. But she held herself in check, her arm shaking with repressed emotion. What he had said was true: she needed him alive. Her own life was expendable next to the needs of Feora. If the Priestess of the Flame wished to deal with these vipers, Thyra would have to adapt. She pulled back her blade. "He lives, for now. If he helps us get out of this. Come!"



Orrik and Nicia followed Thyra as she stepped around pieces of burning wreckage to reach Blood of Martyrs. The heat was almost unbearable. "Help me!" Thyra said as she pulled at the beam pinning its arm. The piece of thick wood was lodged into a corner of the ceiling above, and the warjack's efforts to free itself had only wedged it tighter. With Thyra's augmented armor, the three were able to shove the beam sideways until it fell free. The 'jack was able to clear away the largest of the pieces of ceiling and get itself upright. Bullets clanged off its armor as it rose to its full height.

Thyra felt her veins turn to ice as she gripped her blades and unleashed her full power. Blood of Martyrs was at her left and Nicia to her right as she called on Menoth to transform the three of them into shadow, their presence as ephemeral as the souls of the faithful. They moved as one, passing through the walls of the house and through the nearest of the Daggot Blades outside to emerge wraith-like on the other side. Their form returned, they set upon the treacherous mercenaries like incarnations of slaughter and righteous vengeance. Without Thyra's invoked blessing, Orrik had clambered over the remnants of the outer wall while firing his rifle at one of the Blades outside the Daughters' immediate reach.

In moments the rest were dead, except Sergeant Jacobs. He had dropped his pistol and sword and was crumpled on the ground, begging for his life. Orrik shouldered his rifle, drew his sword, and seized the man by the collar. Jacobs' eyes rolled as he begged for his life.

Orrik said, "We'll let this one go to take his master a message." He glared at the traitor. "Tell Laddermore he almost ruined the plans of the Exile today. Next time he thinks to change our plans, he clears it with *me* first." Jacobs nodded desperately.

Thyra's eyes narrowed, and she stepped swiftly past Orrik. Her blade flashed orange, reflecting the manor fire, before it swept through Jacobs' neck. The mercenary's eyes went wide as he choked and blood poured down his chest from the gaping wound. Orrik let the body fall and turned to face Thyra, his face mottled with indignation. Thyra glared back, unrelenting. "You can deliver your own messages to Laddermore," she spat. "That man betrayed me. His life was mine, not yours."

Orrik sighed but did not argue. He looked to the growing inferno and then back toward the town. They could hear the Cygnarans raising a hue and cry. "We must flee."

Thyra was breathing hard, her side awash with her own blood, and her eyes lost focus for a moment. She was in no condition to confront Caine. "I presume you had an escape plan?"

He pointed beyond the manor. "There's a tributary of the Black River a few hundred yards north. A boat is waiting."

The three moved swiftly through the darkness with Blood of Martyrs following. A large, flat-bottomed boat was moored at the isolated pier. The grim-faced crew recognized Saxon Orrik and heeded his orders, asking no questions about the unusual state of their passengers.

They used a crane and steam-driven winch to lift Blood of Martyrs onto the boat. Once the warjack was secured and hidden in an alcove behind some quickly moved boxes, Thyra directed it to extinguish its heartfire. The Menites situated themselves nearby, and the crew pulled heavy tarps over them to hide them from prying eyes as they pushed away from the shore. Thyra and Nicia did not speak in the darkness, each of them lost in their own thoughts of the sisters they had left behind. At least the traitorous Daggot Blades had died with them. Perhaps Lacelle would rest more peacefully for that.

The scrutators would absolve the fallen Daughters and bless them in absentia, but with no reclaimers or priests to ensure their passage, would any of them reach Menoth? She shied away from the question, knowing it would only return to haunt her in the quiet hours when she could no longer evade memories of her murdered family.

She felt some satisfaction at having completed her mission for Feora, but she could not suppress her trepidation at what manner of plots the Protector of the Flame had entered related to Saxon Orrik's enigmatic "master." Ultimately, Thyra knew, she could strive only to be there for her mistress as a vigilant servant. To stand ready to spend her life in whatever way would inflict the greatest pain to the enemies of their faith. In darkness, as the boat entered the current, she wondered if she would be able to recognize friend from foe when that final confrontation was upon her.



# THYRA, FLAME OF SORROW

## PROTECTORATE WARCASTER

*Do not waste your anger in tears. Justice is found only in the truth of Menoth and the deeds of the faithful.*

—Thyra, Flame of Sorrow

THYRA	SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
	7	6	8	4	17	14	9



GRIEF	POW	P+S
	5	11



LAMENT	POW	P+S
	5	11

<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	<b>+6</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### FEAT: SHADOWS OF URCAEN

*When the Flame of Sorrow vows to bring ruin to those who have defied Menoth's chosen army, her allies transform into living shadows to strike unerringly deep in the enemy's heart.*

Immediately place Thyra anywhere completely within 2" of her current location. When a friendly Faction model activates in Thyra's control area, at the start of its activation you can place it anywhere completely within 2" of its

current location. Shadows of Urcaen lasts for one turn.

### THYRA

**Acrobatics** – This model can advance through other models if it has enough movement to move completely past their bases. This model cannot be targeted by free strikes. This model ignores intervening models when declaring its charge target.

**Elite Cadre [Daughters of the Flame]** – Friendly Daughters of the Flame models gain Vengeance. (During your Maintenance Phase, if one or more models in a unit with Vengeance were destroyed or removed from play by enemy attacks during your opponent's last turn, each model in the unit can advance 3" and make one normal melee attack.)

**Overtake** – When this model destroys one or more enemy warrior models with a normal melee attack, after the attack is resolved this model can immediately advance up to 1".

### GRIEF

☞ **Magical Weapon**

☞ **Weapon Master**

### LAMENT

☞ **Magical Weapon**

☞ **Weapon Master**

Tragedy grants strength and conviction to the survivors. Few have learned this bitter lesson as well as Thyra, called the Flame of Sorrow. Among a sisterhood united by loss, she epitomizes the strength bestowed on those who have lost everything. Thyra has become a living weapon of the Menite cause, her body and soul devoted to avenging the injustices carried out by those who oppose the Creator. She moves with a surety of purpose, the precision of her blade strikes sharpened by the focus of a mind repressing inner turmoil. She yearns to offer Menoth a proper sacrifice in the blood of those deserving vengeance.

SPELLS	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
<b>CARNAGE</b>	3	SELF	CTRL	–	NO	NO
Friendly Faction models gain +2 to melee attack rolls against enemy models in this model's control area. Carnage lasts for one turn.						
<b>OCCULTATION</b>	2	6	–	–	YES	NO
Target friendly model/unit gains Stealth ☞.						
<b>PURSUIT</b>	2	8	–	–	YES	YES
If target enemy model/unit advances during its activation, immediately after ending this movement one model in this model's battlegroup that is in its control area can make a full advance.						
<b>SILENCE OF DEATH</b>	2	6	–	–	YES	NO
Target friendly model/unit's melee weapons gain Grievous Wounds. (When a model is hit by a weapon with Grievous Wounds, for one round it loses Tough, cannot heal or be healed, and cannot transfer damage.)						
<b>STRANGLEHOLD</b>	2	10	–	11	NO	YES
A model damaged by Stranglehold forfeits either its movement or its action during its next activation, as its controller chooses.						

### TACTICAL TIP

**PURSUIT** – If an affected model made a full advance, ran, or charged during its activation, a model in this model's battlegroup gets to make a full advance.

Try as she might to banish the memories, Thyra cannot stop revisiting the bloody battle that destroyed her village and killed her family. Their deaths were senseless; the community fell prey to war simply for living in the proximity of a sizable Protectorate garrison they had hoped would protect them. Cygnaran nobles decided those Menite soldiers were situated too close to the Black River and hired several disreputable mercenary companies to assist the soldiers of Eastwall in attacking the garrison. When the garrison's Flameguard were beset, Thyra's village priest exhorted all able-bodied adults to rally to assist.

Seeing militia at their flank incensed the bloody-minded mercenaries, who retaliated with a brutal counterattack. When the militia retreated back to the village, the mercenaries followed after, killing anyone who stood in their way. Thyra was among the armed defenders in the streets and saw a barrage of indiscriminate mercenary rifle fire shred through her house. Everyone Thyra held dear died on that day, but it was the sight of her own children bleeding to death amid the ruins of her home that broke something in her mind and changed her utterly.

Thyra's powers awoke in what she sees as nothing less than the direct blessing of Menoth in answer to her anguish and prayers for vengeance. In mindless fury she set upon those who had killed her family, moving her unfamiliar blades so fluidly they seemed no longer mere weapons







but extensions of her body. She became an incarnation of retribution that moved so swiftly she could barely be seen as she leapt from the shadows to strike down every soldier in reach. Her warcaster potential had awoken, and she called upon this power without realizing it. Others among the village survivors followed her lead and zealously fought to drive away the Cygnaran mercenaries, who eventually tried to retreat. Thyra raced after them, leading the Menites as they hunted the fleeing mercenaries down like rabid dogs.

The fierce young woman devoted herself to repaying a blood debt too great to ever be fulfilled. Driven by the certainty of Menoth's approval, she devoted herself to killing heathens in the god's name. Many felt drawn to her cause, and from these volunteers she assembled a band of zealots, many of whom had suffered similar losses. These guerilla fighters had no sanction from the Menite Temple and acted on Thyra's direction. They followed her across the river in daring night raids and strikes against isolated Cygnaran outposts and towns. This might have gone on for some time if a more moderate

priest had not come to her demanding she put an end to the raids, concerned about provoking retaliations. Enraged at his attempt to halt what she saw as a divine mandate, Thyra struck the priest and drove him away. Although he lived, this assault brought Thyra to the attention of the Knights Exemplar and soon resulted in her arrest, incarceration, and pending execution. She would have quietly disappeared, if not for the intervention of Feora, Priestess of the Flame.

Intrigued by the accounts she had heard of Thyra's exploits, Feora confronted the imprisoned zealot leader, in part to test the strength of the woman's resolve. Despite her sentence, Thyra argued she had been chosen for this cause and could not surrender her purpose. Feora was able to sense warcaster power flowing through the passionate warrior and ascertained her potential usefulness. The Priestess of the Flame used her authority to set the woman free, telling Thyra she could have her vengeance so long as her anger was properly channeled. She would have to learn to identify the right places and times to strike. Feora promised to teach her the better use of her power and arm her for battles ahead.



## THYRA, FLAME OF SORROW BLACK WIDOWS

**WARJACKS:** Protectorate non-character warjacks with SPD 5 or greater, Blood of Martyrs

**UNITS:** Choir of Menoth, Daughters of the Flame, Flame Bringers

**SOLOS:** Nicia, Tear of Vengeance

### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** Daughter of the Flame units are FA U.

### TIER 2

**Requirements:** The army includes two or more Daughter of the Flame units.

**Benefit:** For each Daughter of the Flame unit in the army, one warjack in Thyra's battlegroup gains Advance Move. (Before the start of the game but after both players have deployed, a model with Advance Move can make a full advance.)

### TIER 3

**Requirements:** The army includes Nicia, Tear of Vengeance.

**Benefit:** Models in this army gain Stealth (H) during the first round of the game.

### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Thyra's battlegroup includes Blood of Martyrs.

**Benefit:** Warjacks in Thyra's battlegroup are each allocated 1 focus point at the start of your first Control Phase of the game.

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To Thyra these words were like a blessing she had not known she sought. In the following months Feora taught the young woman how to control her rage rather than either succumbing to it or releasing it, how to become a disciplined warrior as well as a fervent avenger. Thyra was given warjacks and additional support for her growing band of zealots and learned to heed Feora's orders, including when and where she could give rein to her unquenchable thirst for righteous slaughter. Those brought together with similar tales of grief became the Daughters of the Flame, entrusted by Feora to Thyra's keeping. The bond between the two solidified in these days, and Thyra took comfort in the intense camaraderie of the Daughters.

Thyra's devotion to Feora borders on the fanatical, and she trusts the Priestess of Flame completely, even to the point of fully committing to missions others might balk to fulfill. There are some among the upper echelons of the Menite hierarchy who fear crossing Feora at least in part because they know Thyra stands as her unquestioning second-in-command, ready to kill at her behest.

Thyra draws upon the fire deep within to stir her to acts of ferocious violence in combat but knows how to step back from the precipice which often tempts her to join her loved ones in Urcaen. She demonstrated her power in annihilating Cygnarans who sought to defile the holy city of Sul and in the subsequent strike deep into Caspia, and she continues to seize every opportunity to make them pay for what was done not only to her family but to those of all the Daughters of the Flame as well.

After countless bloody skirmishes and daring retaliatory raids, Thyra has clearly earned the right to stand as Feora's right hand, trusted above all other subordinates. When the Protector of the Flame requires a reckoning, whether deep in enemy lands or inside the borders of the Protectorate, it is Thyra she sends.

Thyra's obsession with vengeance is at times barely constrained—the warcaster must constantly remind herself that loss of control would mean disappointing the woman who restored her sense of purpose. Yet her intimacy with death has given her a powerful instinctual connection with Urcaen. Her enemies see her as an avenging avatar, bringing the final judgment of Menoth upon them in their final seconds. Where Thyra goes, the silence of the grave soon follows.



# SANCTIFIER

## PROTECTORATE HEAVY WARJACK

*Fear not death this day; though your graves may go unmarked, your souls are eternal.*

—Hierarch Severius

### SANCTIFIER

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	11	6	5	10	19	—



#### OPEN FIST

POW	P+S
3	14



#### GRAVE MAKER

POW	P+S
6	17

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

### SANCTIFIER

**Cenotaph** – This model gains one soul token for each friendly living Faction warrior model destroyed within 5" by a continuous effect, an enemy attack, or collateral damage of an enemy attack. This model can have up to three soul tokens at a time. During your Control Phase, you can remove all soul tokens from this model to allocate it focus points, 1 for each token removed.

**Exorcist** – While within 5" of this model, enemy models lose Incorporeal.

#### OPEN FIST

☞ Open Fist

#### GRAVE MAKER

☞ Magical Weapon

☞ Reach

### TACTICAL TIP

**CENOTAPH** – This model cannot exceed its allocation limit as a result of Cenotaph.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' / 8.5 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** GRAVE MAKER (RIGHT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 675 LBS / 5.6 HRS GENERAL, 1 HR COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 606 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** VASSALS OF MENOETH

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** SUL-MENITE ARTIFICERS

Menites. These souls resonate within a Sanctifier's blessed cenotaph, manifesting the power of Menoth in Urcaen upon the world by revealing the spectral undead and other incorporeal abominations that walk between worlds. A Sanctifier forces these creatures to solidify in the realm of the living in order to smash them beneath its grave maker as an undeniable demonstration of Menoth's power.

The battlefields of the Iron Kingdoms are places of unthinkable violence, where even death may not grant escape from the enemy. The faithful crusaders of the Protectorate of Menoth do not fear death in service of the Creator, provided their souls might join those of their brethren in the City of Man. Thus, the Protectorate dispatches Sanctifiers to the most desperate battles in order to ensure the spirits of the righteous do not fall prey to necromantic blasphemies such as enslavement by Cryx. Menites revere these walking tombs as tangible manifestations of Menoth's will on Caen. The Reclaimant order blesses each hulking warjack with silent benediction, making Sanctifiers the mechanical counterparts to those Menites chosen to usher the dead into Urcaen.

The presence of a Sanctifier indicates the Reclaimant order expects a conflict to be especially bloody regardless of whether it ends in defeat or brings victory. Each Sanctifier is armed with a simple but potent weapon—a massive cudgel in the form of a Menofix. Any enemy of the faith that ventures too near is crushed beneath this symbol of the unconquerable Creator. As battle wears on, a Sanctifier becomes a repository for the souls of numerous brave





# BLOOD OF MARTYRS

## PROTECTORATE CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*The death of the righteous is a call to action as clear as the words of the True Law.*

—Thyra, Flame of Sorrow



<b>HEIGHT / WEIGHT:</b> 12' / 8.2 TONS
<b>ARMAMENT:</b> BLADE (RIGHT AND LEFT ARMS)
<b>FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:</b> 273 LBS / 6 HRS GENERAL, 1 HR COMBAT
<b>INITIAL SERVICE DATE:</b> 584 AR, REFITTED 606 AR
<b>CORTX MANUFACTURER:</b> VASSALS OF MENOTh
<b>ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:</b> ENGINES EAST/KHADORAN MECHANIKS ASSEMBLY (MODIFIED BY THE SUL-MENITE ARTIFICERS)

A warjack absorbs and learns from the personality of its warcaster over time. Emotions bleed into its cortex, informing its behavior and disposition. It is no surprise, then, that the favored warjack of the Flame of Sorrow fights with all the bitter resolve of its mistress. The death of Menites by infidel hands spurs the machine to violence. Its hull spattered with the blood of the faithful, the 'jack wades into the midst of the enemy, turning aside their weapons with the impunity Menoth grants his servants. Blood of Martyrs unfailingly seeks out those who have laid low the righteous and delivers unto them the consequences of their transgressions. The 'jack's desire for vengeance is insatiable; the Protectorate's scribes have likened the machine to the first knights of Menoth, those who lived only to mete out retribution upon enemies of the faith.



### BLOOD OF MARTYRS

**Affinity [Thyra]** – While in Thyra's control area, this model gains Side Step. (When a model with Side Step hits an enemy model with an initial melee attack or a melee special attack that is not a power attack, it can advance up to 2" after the attack is resolved. It cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.)

**Hand of Vengeance** – When one or more friendly Faction warrior models are destroyed or removed from play by enemy attacks while within 5" this model, this model gains +2 on attack and damage rolls for one round.

**Parry** – This model cannot be targeted by free strikes.

BLOOD OF MARTYRS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	11	6	5	10	19	—



BLADE	
POW	P+S
5	16



BLADE	
POW	P+S
5	16

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L				R	
L	L	M	C	R	R	
	M	M	C	C		

<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LARGE BASE</b>	

The warjack originally entered Thyra's service in the closing months of Cygnar's occupation of Sul. The young warcaster and her forces fought tirelessly against the invaders, pushing them back street by bloody street. Although scores of her 'jacks were reduced to scrap, her favored Crusader survived. During a particularly savage engagement in which the majority of Thyra's soldiers fell, the 'jack laid into the enemy with such violence that the Cygnarans fled just when their victory seemed assured.

The young warcaster recognized that Menoth had sent this warjack to guard her and mirror the rage she felt. She rearmed it with the weapons required to carry out its holy destiny and named it Blood of Martyrs, knowing its two blades would strike down an infidel for every drop of righteous blood the enemy had spilled.



# SCOURGE OF HERESY

## PROTECTORATE CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*Witchcraft is antithetical to the Creator's law. Death is the only reward of heresy.*

—High Executioner Servath Reznik

SCOURGE OF HERESY							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
4	11	7	5	10	19	—	



PUNISHER	
POW	P+S
7	18



BLAZING STAR	
POW	P+S
5	16

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L				R
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

### SCOURGE OF HERESY

**Arcane Vortex** – This model can immediately negate any spell that targets it or a model within 3" of it by spending 1 focus point before the RNG of the spell is measured. The negated spell does not take effect, but its COST remains spent.

**Imprint: Arcane Assassin** – During its activation, this model can spend 1 focus point to gain Arcane Assassin for one turn. (When making attacks, a model with Arcane Assassin ignores focus points overboosting the target's Power Field and spell effects adding to its ARM or DEF.)

**Special Issue [Reznik]** – This model can be included in Reznik's theme forces. It can also be bonded to Reznik.

### TACTICAL TIPS

**SPECIAL ISSUE** – This only gives the warjack the potential to bond to the warcaster. It does not automatically add a bond.

**THRESHER** – The melee attacks are all simultaneous.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12'3" / 10.25 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** BLAZING STAR (RIGHT ARM), PUNISHER (LEFT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 295 LBS / 5.2 HRS GENERAL, 1 HR COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 603 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** VASSALS OF MENOTh

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** ENGINES EAST/KHADORAN MECHANICS ASSEMBLY (MODIFIED BY THE SUL-MENITE ARTIFICERS)

Reznik chose the chassis, cortex, and weapons of his instrument with care and had the Vassals of Menoth bless every component even beyond their normal rites. Sacred passages written on the walls of Ancient Icthier were intoned over the machine as its heartfire was ignited for the first time. To stand before the Scourge of Heresy is to be judged—and, if found wanting, condemned.

### PUNISHER

Continuous Effect: Fire

**Purgation** – Gain an additional die on attack and damage rolls with this weapon against models with an enemy upkeep spell on them.

### BLAZING STAR

**Chain Weapon** – This attack ignores the Buckler and Shield weapon qualities and Shield Wall.

**Thresher (★Attack)** – This model makes one melee attack with this weapon against each model in its LOS and this weapon's melee range.

Arcane invocations are dangerous and profane when performed without the Creator's strict guidance. Most mortals are too weak to utilize the blasphemous gift of magic without falling to corruption, a truth High Executioner Servath Reznik knows all too well. Scourge of Heresy aids him in his divinely inspired vigilance. The hulking warjack relishes purging the world of the occult's shadow with an intensity rivaling that of the high executioner himself. Its heartfire blazes with a terrible enthusiasm as it mortifies the flesh of the unclean with the flames of its holy blade, Punisher.





# ATTENDANT PRIEST

## PROTECTORATE UNIT ATTACHMENT

*Menoth guides all his servants, whether willing or not.*

—Hierarch Severius



### TACTICAL TIP

**OFFICER** – Because this model is an Officer, when it is destroyed it does not replace a Grunt in its unit. Instead either another Officer in the unit or the unit Leader becomes the unit commander.

The Protectorate's crusades are tremendous undertakings that stretch the limits of the small nation's resources. Although almost every able-bodied citizen can be counted upon in time of crisis, the numbers of the faithful are not always sufficient to wage the holy wars their god and his priests require of them. The war counselor's logisticians know that where the lion's skin does not reach, it must be supplemented with that of the jackal.

Many within the Protectorate frown upon hiring mercenaries, but the realities of their situation force pragmatism. Still, all within the hierarchy of the Protectorate's army are more comfortable when these godless hirelings are guided and monitored by a pious overseer. Often, attendant priests rise from the choir's middle ranks, having seen enough service to be formidable

**Attachment [Small- or Medium-Based Mercenary]** – This attachment can be added to a Small- or Medium-Based Mercenary unit.

### PRIEST

☞ **Officer**

**Prayers** – This model can recite one of the following prayers each turn anytime during its unit's activation. Each model in this unit gains the benefits listed.

- **Empower** – Affected model's weapons gain Magical Weapon ☞ for one turn.
- **March** – Affected models gain Pathfinder ☞ for one turn.
- **Warding** – Affected models cannot be targeted by enemy spells for one round.

**Ranking Officer** – This model is a Ranking Officer. While this model is in play, models in its unit are Protectorate models instead of Mercenary models.

### BATTLE STAFF

☞ **Reach**

PRIEST							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	4	4	4	13	13	9	

BATTLE STAFF	
POW	P+S
2	6

<b>DAMAGE</b>	5
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	2
<b>POINT COST</b>	2
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	



combatants but not yet being so advanced in years and spiritual power that they are more valuable behind the front lines.

In order to best control their amoral charges, attendant priests must become convincing proselytizers. While many mercenaries balk at the idea of being led by a clergyman, the miracles the priests perform are difficult to dismiss. Under a priest's psalmody, the dangerous arts of the occult cannot find purchase on his subordinates, and the land itself lies flat at his feet should Menoth will it. Weapons glowing with the power of the Creator lay waste to the unclean creatures of night and shadow. It is not unheard of for a group of foul-mouthed, bloody-minded mercenaries to fall to their knees after battle, beseeching the attendant priest to cleanse them of their sins and offer them Menoth's protection in Urcaen.



# FLAMEGUARD CLEANSER OFFICER

## PROTECTORATE UNIT ATTACHMENT

*Flame is not capricious; it merely flows to the silent rhythms of the Creator's will.*

—Preceptor Ryl Daja

### OFFICER

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	5	6	6	12	14	8



### PURIFIER

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
SP 8	1	—	12



### PURIFIER BLADE

POW	P+S
3	8

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

**Attachment [Flameguard Cleanser]** – This attachment can be added to a Flameguard Cleanser unit.

### OFFICER

**Immunity: Fire**

**Officer**

**Bushwhack (Order)** – During this unit's activation, affected models make their combat actions before their normal movement. Affected models must make a full advance as their normal movement this activation.

**Scouring Flames** – Once per game during its unit's activation, this model can use Scouring Flames. This activation, the base RNG of Purifier weapons in this unit becomes SP 10 and the base POW becomes 10.

**Sheet of Fire (★Action)** – Place a wall template anywhere completely within 5" of this model where it does not touch a model's base, an obstruction, or an obstacle. When a model enters or ends its activation in the wall area, it suffers an unboostable POW 12 fire damage roll and the Fire continuous effect . Models within the wall template gain concealment. Sheet of Fire lasts for one round.

### PURIFIER

**Continuous Effect: Fire**

**Damage Type: Fire**

Years of war have forged the Cleansers of the Flameguard into hardened soldiers. Though their order was originally created to purge the blasphemous from among the Protectorate's own subjects, these citizen-soldiers have embraced their new duties on the battlefields of western Immoren. The life of a Cleanser is often short, for enemies of the faith abhor him as a fearful reminder of Menoth's judgment. Those Cleansers who survive to become officers believe they have been preserved to guide their subordinates and ensure the order's purifying flame is directed where it is most needed.

The weapon of the Cleansers is a challenging instrument of war, but the officers of the order have utterly mastered it. During their extensive field experience they have developed

## TACTICAL TIP

**OFFICER** – Because this model is an Officer, when it is destroyed it does not replace a Grunt in its unit. Instead either another Officer in the unit or the unit Leader becomes the unit commander. This model can give the Incinerate order.

a number of techniques that exploit the ravenous nature of the fire they unleash. An officer can direct the flame of his purifier with an artistry requiring no less finesse than that demonstrated by a master swordsman. With casual ease, he releases a precise amount of fuel through his weapon upon a carefully chosen piece of ground, causing a roaring sheet of flame to ignite. The officer orders his men to add the full power of their own weapons, creating a conflagration that rises into the sky as it purges the unholy with the cleansing touch of the Creator.





# NICIA, TEAR OF VENGEANCE

## PROTECTORATE FLAMEGUARD CHARACTER SOLO

*In the hands of the righteous one blade may right many wrongs.*  
—Nicia, Tear of Vengeance



### TACTICAL TIP

**QUICK WORK** – This model cannot make the additional attack if it is still in melee.

Nicia has killed more enemies than can be counted, but she remembers every death delivered by her blade. Each adds to the litany of devotional acts she will one day recite to the Creator. She only hopes that by the time she meets her inevitable, bloody death at the hands of the infidels, she will have killed enough of them to earn a place among Menoth's endless army in the City of Man.

Only a handful of years ago she lived behind the great walls of the city of Sul with her husband, Heltus, a proud member of the Temple Flameguard. At times the love she felt for him outshone even her love for the Creator. When the Cygnarans breached the city walls, Nicia beseeched Menoth to protect Heltus in battle, but he was chosen to join the Creator's warriors in Urcaen. Overwhelmed by grief and guilt, she nearly ended her own life. Her hand was stayed by the revelation that one as unworthy as



### NICIA

🔗 **Advance Deployment**

☠️ **Fearless**

🔪 **Stealth**

**Acrobatics** – This model can advance through other models if it has enough movement to move completely past their bases. This model cannot be targeted by free strikes. This model ignores intervening models when declaring its charge target.

**Quick Work** – When this model destroys one or more enemy models with a melee attack during its combat action, immediately after that attack is resolved this model can make one normal ranged attack. Attacks gained from Quick Work do not count against a weapon's ROF.

**Rapid Strike** – This model can make one additional melee attack each combat action.

**Sprint** – At the end of this model's activation, if it destroyed one or more enemy models with melee attacks this activation it can make a full advance.

### BLADE

🔗 **Reach**

🔪 **Weapon Master**

NICIA						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
7	5	7	7	16	13	9

SWORD CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	12

BLADE	
POW	P+S
5	10

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

she could not yet join her husband in the afterlife. To be reunited with Heltus, she must prove herself as faithful and righteous a warrior as he.

Nicia joined the nascent Daughters of the Flame and dedicated herself utterly to their rigorous training. Her commitment and prowess soon surprised—and sometimes alarmed—her superiors. She fought in some of the fiercest battles of the Caspia-Sul War and quickly became a leader among her order.

She strides through combat with lethal grace, each movement gauged to bring her within striking distance of the enemy, and dispatches her foes with blinding speed. Even as she cuts through one enemy, she fells another with a shot from her cannon, wheeling her blade around for another kill. Few enemies have witnessed Nicia's murderous devotions and lived.



# VESSEL OF JUDGMENT

## PROTECTORATE BATTLE ENGINE

*No host of men can withstand the fires of judgment.*

—Hierarch Severius

VESSEL OF JUDGMENT							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
5	10	—	6	10	20	10	



DIVINE WRATH			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	—	15

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HUGE BASE</b>	

### VESSEL OF JUDGMENT

Construct

Immunity: Fire

**Admonisher** – When this model directly hits an enemy model with a melee or ranged attack, the d3 nearest enemy models within 5" of the model hit suffer a POW 10 magical damage roll.

**Destructive Power** – During its activation, this model can suffer a damage point to boost an attack or damage roll. This damage is suffered immediately after the attack has been resolved.

**Holy Reliquary** – This model suffers d3 damage points each time it activates one of the following miracles. This damage is suffered before the miracle takes effect.

- **Cleansing Aura** – This model can activate this miracle once per turn at anytime during its activation. When this miracle is activated, animi and continuous effects on models/units in this model's command range immediately expire.
- **Doors of Judgment** – Once per turn when a friendly living Faction warrior model in this model's command range is boxed by an enemy attack at anytime other than when it is advancing, this model can use this miracle. The boxed model can immediately make a full advance and can make one normal attack, then the boxed model is removed from play. The boxed model cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.
- **Eruption of Faith** – This model can activate this miracle once per turn at anytime during its activation. When this miracle is activated, enemy models currently within 2" of this model suffer continuous effect: fire and are pushed 4" directly away from this model in the order you choose.

### DIVINE WRATH

Magical Weapon

The armies of the Protectorate do not lack for signs of their god's favor, but those who witness a Vessel of Judgment delivering divine vengeance cannot doubt their crusade's power. Towering over the phalanxes of the Protectorate's armies, the Vessel is an unmistakable sight. Its ornate inscriptions gleam with an inner light, suffusing the entire structure with divine radiance. But a Vessel is not only an inspiring sight; it is capable of the most potent manifestations of Menoth's power on Caen.

Each Vessel is a reliquary containing the sacred remains of one of the Menite priest kings of old—holy warriors who performed the countless miracles that form the legends and myths of their faith. Menoth's favor renders their remains incorruptible and imbues them with holy might. They have

### TACTICAL TIP

**HOLY RELIQUARY** – If the damage this model suffers from Holy Reliquary destroys it, the miracle does not take effect.

**DESTRUCTIVE POWER** – You can use this ability as many times as you wish in the same activation.

endured through the ages, guarded in the holiest of temples. Menite pilgrims seek them out, as do enemies of the faith. In times past, those who would despoil these holy remains have been destroyed in the act. The power of Menoth still touches the remains of his greatest servants and can cast down the impure.

The use of these unquestionably sacred reliquaries in battle has fueled heated debate among the Sul-Menite priesthood. Not all agreed with the decision to deploy them in war. Although some among the Synod protested, recent threats to the faith allowed Feora, Protector of the Flame to persuade them to allow the machines prepared for the battlefield. Their immediate efficacy suggests Menoth approves the use of such great constructs as more than mere icons of faith. The power contained in the specially crafted reliquaries within the Vessels is a sign of the god's most hallowed blessing.

Dragging a Vessel to battle requires an almost miraculous strength. The most faithful zealots pull it, attended by a ranking priest praying continually to the Creator. When this priest invokes the power of the holy relics within, the great pipes of the Vessel emit an ominously deep and bone-shaking tone. The fury of the Creator envelops those who venture too close, and the impure taint of the occult dissolves in its presence. The reliquary can even stave off the hand of death for a short time, allowing the dying one last strike against those who have spilled the blood of the faithful. The power of each Vessel is undeniable, as is the ruthless will of an army that brings such weapons to battle.

Harnessing the wrath of Menoth carries a price. The invocation of such devastating spiritual power withers the remains each Vessel carries. With every fiery miracle, the ancient bones at the heart of the reliquary crumble a little more, their inviolability broken by the divine conflagrations they fuel.









# KHADOR

## CALLED TO ANSWER

Riversmet, Llael, 608 AR

Andrei Ladislav balanced atop a rickety scaffold, chisel in one hand and a heavy mason's hammer in the other. He glanced down the length of the half-built wall that surrounded Riversmet. A swarm of masons and builders clung to what was left of old battlements, their hammers creating a staccato rhythm as they cleared ruined stonework to make way for newly cut granite. Farther into the ruined city, still more men labored to repair old buildings and erect new fortifications, including a sizable fortress.

Rebuilding the broken city was a daunting task, one requiring more men—particularly skilled men—than were available. The building teams had taken drastic measures, to the point of requiring double shifts despite the meager food supplies and the intensity of the backbreaking work. Even master builders such as Andrei were forced to pick up tools rather than directing other masons, as he was more accustomed to doing.

"Madness!" Andrei whispered as he worked. He was about to bring the hammer down on the chisel when the shrill blast of escaping steam sounded. Startled, he struck the chisel head askew. Agony shot up his arm, and he cursed as he dropped the hammer. An instant later, the clang of metal striking metal echoed off the walls.

Andrei saw a man in crimson warcaster armor standing beneath the scaffold, his bearded face staring up at the senior builder. Behind the man stood the hulking metallic form of a Destroyer warjack painted mostly black, the huge cannon on its left arm pointed in Andrei's general direction. Icy daggers plunged into Andrei's gut when he saw his hammer lying at the feet of Kommander Izak Harkevich—and the small dent in his left pauldron.

"You dropped your hammer, comrade." The loud baritone of the kommander's voice was clear to Andrei even though the warcaster was thirty feet below. He stared in stunned terror as the large, bearded man stooped to retrieve the tool.

Despite being nearly sixty, he clambered down the unstable scaffolding frantically and threw himself to

the ground at the warcaster's feet. "Kommander, please forgive my clumsiness! Have mercy!" Andrei pleaded.

"Mercy?" Harkevich asked, obvious amusement in his voice. "What punishment do you expect to receive for dropping a hammer? This armor has stopped blades, bullets, and once even artillery shells. I think I shall survive your hammer, Master Ladislav. Now, get up; you need not grovel." The master builder was startled the kommander knew his name.

Andrei climbed shakily to his feet and accepted his hammer back. "Thank you, Kommander."

Harkevich waved away his thanks and turned to stare up at the wall. "You are the senior builder here, yes?" he asked. Andrei nodded, and the warcaster continued. "No mean task. The work goes slowly, though. Can you tell me why?"

The frank question surprised Andrei, and a hundred lies and half-truths leapt to mind that might answer the question.

"The laborers are being treated more like prisoners than anything else." The truth fell out of Andrei's mouth before he could stop himself. Once it was out, he felt compelled to continue. "It is hard to recruit more workers when they hear of conditions here. Even our skilled masons and artisans are complaining, particularly since our tools are inadequate. Such men are not easily replaced. What's more, hungry men do not work well, Kommander. There have been many accidents, and morale is very low." He could not bring himself to name the man responsible, but he left the implication hanging.

Harkevich nodded and frowned. "I need not tell you how important rebuilding Riversmet is to the empire." He reached out and placed one calloused hand on Andrei's shoulder. "Thank you for your candor, comrade Ladislav. I promise I will see what can be done. In the meantime, I will place some of the garrison's warjacks at your disposal." Harkevich glanced over his shoulder at the warjack behind him. "I'm sure Ivan and his brothers won't balk at hauling stone for few days."



Andrei returned the smile, and nodded. "That is generous of you, Kommander, and it will help us a great deal." One warjack was the equal of twenty strong men, and they would speed up the rebuilding process considerably.

"Never be afraid to tell me the truth, no matter how unpleasant it may be," Harkevich said. "If Riversmet is to be rebuilt, I must know the situation of those rebuilding it."

Harkevich made arrangements with a 'jack handler among the workers and introduced his 'jacks, including the Destroyer named Black Ivan that had served him for many years. Ivan did not like being separated from Harkevich and could be a bit surly when left to the direction of others. It vented a sharp whistle of steam, as it often did when agitated, then turned to follow the handler.



Izak Harkevich walked down the wide thoroughfare of central Riversmet, listening to the din of construction. When he had arrived it had been little more than a burnt ruin. Although there was still much to be done, seeing the town take shape was remarkably satisfying.

Riversmet was on the eastern edge of what was presently Khadoran-occupied Llaelese territory. During the invasion of Llael, its destruction had been arranged to demonstrate the cost of resistance. The city was razed, its buildings completely destroyed, and thousands of its inhabitants slaughtered. The barbarity of Riversmet's ultimate destruction had accomplished one important goal: the heavily fortified Order of the Golden Crucible stronghold in Leryn had yielded without siege.

Since the beginning of the occupation, Riversmet had become an increasingly sore point with the conquered Llaelese. Harkevich had seen how the memory of its destruction fueled the Resistance and made it more difficult for the Llaelese to accept Khadoran rule. It was for this reason that Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci had initiated a plan to invest in rebuilding the city, hoping to appease the displaced by providing homes and livelihoods to replace those shattered by war. The High Kommand agreed on the condition that proper defensive measures including a fortress be built there. Contributions from the Tzepesci treasury was insufficient to the task, so a number of kayazy were enticed to pour vast wealth into the city, treating this as an investment.

It would fall to Harkevich to protect the workers so that Riversmet could join the Khadoran Empire as a thriving city. It had once been a vibrant trade hub with a vital connection to Rhulic lands to the north and might be again.

It also had undeniable strategic importance, as it stood at the far edge of Khadoran lands in an area contested by the Protectorate of Menoth. The High Kommand hoped a fortress at Riversmet might be the first step in rooting out the Northern Crusade ensconced to the east along the Oldwick River at the heavily fortified city of Leryn. It was rare for a military commander to have the opportunity to see ruins become a city rather than the reverse, and Harkevich felt pride at being instrumental in this.

Unfortunately wealth alone seemed insufficient to bring this plan to fruition. The construction of the hilltop keep at the town's heart proceeded at a reasonable pace, but only because of direct pressure applied by Harkevich. Other rebuilding went in fits and starts. Much of Riversmet was still in ruins, and its exterior walls had more gaps than there was available stone to fill them. After speaking with Andrei Ladislav, Harkevich could see why progress had been slow. There was no reason why laborers should be forced to endure such deplorable conditions. Where was the money going?

As Harkevich approached the refurbished manor house where Lord Vasko Durga had taken up residence, one answer to that question suggested itself. Clearly the man considered it his right to live comfortably even if no one else in town had that luxury. Lord Durga was the kayazy who had been appointed as administrator overseeing the Riversmet construction efforts. Like most kayazy Harkevich had known, he was ruthless, pragmatic, and unafraid to use whatever means necessary to further his economic goals. It had become quite apparent Lord Durga was cutting costs to line his own pockets. Some graft was expected from Durga's type, and since Harkevich technically had no authority over civilian kayazy, the kommander had turned a blind eye to it. He was starting to think the problem was more serious than he had at first feared.

Harkevich entered the manor house and proceeded into a large sitting room. The interior was opulent, filled with furniture and other accoutrements from Lord Durga's Korsk estate. He found Durga seated behind a stout desk of exotic, polished wood, scribbling in a ledger. The kayazy looked up as Harkevich entered, his lips curling in a smile that never reached his eyes.

Vasko Durga was in his mid-fifties, although he was as fit and nimble as a man twenty years younger. He was brutally ugly, with small, deep-set eyes peering out above a squashed nose and thin, cruel lips. His face and hairless head bore the scars of a pox he had suffered in his youth, giving his skin the look of uncured leather. Flanking the desk stood two large men, each wearing heavy gray cloaks that did little to hide the telltale bulge of the wide-bladed swords they carried at their hips.





"Kommander Harkevich," Vasko said and gestured to one of the delicate chairs in front of his desk. Neither chair had any hope of accommodating Harkevich's bulky warcaster armor. "How fares Riversmet's military today?"

"Poorly," Harkevich said, ignoring the chairs, "I have learned of some startling deficiencies."

"Oh?" Vasko said. He set down his pen and sat back in his chair expectantly.

"I've spoken with one of our master builders, and his assessment of the working conditions and morale of the laborers is rather grim," Harkevich said.

"Who is this man?" Vasko asked, his face crinkling in a frown.

Harkevich knew better than to answer. Andrei Ladislav had trusted him enough to confide in him, and he wasn't about

to give his name to Vasko Durga and his two thugs. "It doesn't matter," he said. "But I trust his judgment."

"And what does this learned master builder say, Kommander? I am, of course, always concerned with the plight of those who work for me."

Harkevich smiled, trying not to make it a sneer. "Doubtless," he said. "But I am quite displeased with how slowly the construction of the city's outer walls and the buildings on the interior is proceeding. I believe this is largely due to poor labor conditions and second-rate tools."

Vasko said, "We cannot do everything at once. I have already bent over backward to accommodate the demands of the Khadoran military for your fortress."

"I would not normally meddle in civilian affairs, Lord Durga—"

"Then why are you?" Vasko interjected, his face pinched into a scowl. "I am doing what I can, Kommander. I have been involved in this sort of work for many years and know what I am about. If more men are needed, perhaps you can put the refugees flooding into the city from the south to work."

"Famished elders and children?" Harkevich asked. "Hardly a labor force to speed reconstruction. I am only asking you to consider what I've said. It is my duty to ensure defenses here are in place as soon as possible. If we can rebuild housing and get Riversmet back on its feet, more people will move here. That will give you your larger labor force, which will help all projects. But the workers need adequate food, supplies, and living conditions—none of which is currently being provided."

"As I said, Kommander," Vasko said peevishly, "I'm doing what I can. I will look into the matter."

"That is all I ask, Lord Durga," Harkevich said, pushing irritation away. He had felt similar frustration every time he had met with the appointed kayazy, who was shielded by the authority given him by the posadnik in charge of this region. Harkevich was not comfortable meddling in politics,



but the memory of the master builder's forthrightness prompted him to try one more time. "I hope things improve so I need not report delays repairing the walls to Kommandant Ivdanovich. An inspection would be . . . unpleasant for both of us." Accusing him of graft directly would require proof, but the kayazy's eyes narrowed at the veiled threat. They both knew the kommandant in charge of the occupation army had little tolerance for corruption.

Before Vasko could reply the ground shook and the dull thud of an explosion shuddered through the building. Both men turned to the floor-to-ceiling windows that looked toward the city's main gates. A plume of smoke was visible in the distance, rising above the walls and staining the clear morning sky a greasy black.

"That was artillery fire," Harkevich said, his voice grave. He stormed from the room without another word, his mind already preparing for battle. He sent a summons to Black Ivan and his other 'jacks, telling them to put aside the stones they carried.



The first thing Harkevich heard as he stepped beyond the ragged walls of Riversmet was screaming. A force in the colors of the Protectorate of Menoth waited three hundred yards from the walls amid the smoking ruins of the shantytown that had sprung up around the city. The clusters of shacks and hovels had housed many of the refugees from central Llael displaced by Cryxian raids to the south. The large force of Protectorate warjacks and soldiers had marched through the shantytown with steel and fire, sending those who could escape their wrath fleeing into the ruined city.

Not content to simply destroy their homes, the Protectorate warcaster, huge and imposing in his massive, ornate armor, had captured a number of the refugees and set them before his army on iron wracks. Their screams as they were bent and broken rose above even the hungry crackling of the fires consuming the shantytown.

Even at this distance, Harkevich recognized High Executioner Servath Reznik standing well in front of his army, leaning on a great broadsword. The high executioner, Khadoran by birth, was one of the most feared warcasters in the Protectorate. His relentless pursuit of "heretics and heathens" had earned Reznik a reputation for cruelty. He was also a highly skilled warrior and military commander.

Harkevich glanced behind him as he advanced across the open ground. His small garrison was arrayed in front of Riversmet's gates: a full company of Winter Guard supported by a three field guns, half a dozen mortar crews, and one

squad of Man-O-War bombardiers. His warjacks—three Destroyers, including Black Ivan—waited in front of the troops. A team of Widowmakers stood atop intact portions of the wall, their scoped rifles on the Protectorate force.

It was obvious Reznik sought parley, standing alone. Looking at the wracked men and women Reznik had used to make an opening statement, Harkevich considered simply opening fire.

Reznik commanded a force at least double the size of Harkevich's. The high executioner was supported by at least four phalanxes of Exemplar knights and two more phalanxes of the heavily armored Exemplar bastions. Behind the heavy infantry a full interdiction of Temple Flameguard waited in tight formation, their upright spears creating a forest of flame and steel. Farther back, protected by the infantry, stood dozens of Deliverers, ready to unleash the fury of their skyhammers. Reznik also had half a dozen light warjacks, a trio of heavy Reckoners, and an unfamiliar 'jack resembling a Vanquisher with a sword in the place of its flame belcher. As much as Harkevich longed to blast the man off the field, a parley was in the best interest of those within the city.

"High Executioner Reznik," Harkevich called out as he drew within a dozen paces. He set his gigantic, voltaic battle mace Minister on one armored shoulder, balancing the huge weapon with practiced ease. "You are trespassing on Khadoran lands."

"Territories change hands." Reznik's voice echoed from within his masked helmet. The high executioner's Khadoran was perfect, although years living in the Protectorate had flattened his accent.

"What do you want, Reznik?" Harkevich said, ignoring the barb. "You have harmed those under my protection."

"I administer Menoth's justice." Reznik replied, his gauntleted fingers curling tightly around the hilt of his great sword. "But the suffering of these few heathens is not the reason I am here." He reached down and removed a sealed metal scroll tube from his belt and brandished it at Harkevich. "I have a list of names requiring just attention: men and women who have defied the will of Menoth. Shall I read them, Kommander?"

"Save your breath," Harkevich growled. "I won't turn anyone over to you."

"Unfortunate," Reznik said, his voice hollow and emotionless. "If you were to deliver these heretics, I would leave without further incident. If you refuse, many within the city will die for your obduracy."

Harkevich took Minister off his shoulder and let its head fall to the ground with a thump. "Why not settle this now, High Executioner, between the two of us?" he said.



Reznik inclined his head toward Harkevich. "Kommander, I will indulge you if you wish, but your name is not on my list. I give you four hours to decide. Surrender the heretics to me or I will send everyone here to Urcaen."

Harkevich did not answer. He could not. It took every ounce of self-control he possessed not to order an attack. Instead, he began walking back to Riversmet's gates. The screams of those suffering on wracks followed, their pitiful cries and pleas for mercy piercing the red haze of his fury.

Fifty yards away from the city, Harkevich looked up at the Widowmaker marksmen atop the wall. He raised one gauntleted fist, and the hard reports of gunfire echoed off the stone walls. The screaming behind him came to a sudden and merciful end.



"What names?" Vasko Durga asked, frowning as he walked beside Harkevich. The streets were empty, most of the refugees and other noncombatants having moved to the center of Riversmet and the fortress under construction.

"It doesn't matter," Harkevich said.

"Reznik is no man to be trifled with, Kommander."

Harkevich snorted. "I will not submit to fanatics."

"Be reasonable," Vasko protested. "A few deaths to buy us time to complete the fortifications seems an acceptable sacrifice."

"I will not give *anyone* under my protection to Reznik," Harkevich insisted. "Not even the boy who empties your piss pot."

"It is madness to make such a decision without all the facts!" Vasko suddenly fumed. "How will you protect everyone in the city if Reznik attacks?"

Harkevich had no reply. He hated the thought that Vasko could be right: sacrificing those on Reznik's list might buy more time to prepare defenses and ultimately save lives. Reznik's force was much larger than his own, and the high executioner did not need to worry about collateral damage or protecting thousands of refugees and workers.

Moral choices aside, Harkevich was loath to submit to Reznik's demands for the simple fact that showing weakness would invite an even larger Protectorate force to test them. He had no doubt Reznik was here to collect the individuals on his list, but the high executioner's presence was also a convenient way to inspect Riversmet's condition. Harkevich already viewed the city not as the ruins it appeared to be but as the prosperous town its reconstruction would create.

Harkevich smiled down at Vasko. "Let him come, and I will show him why I am called the Iron Wolf."



*Fire!* Harkevich sent his will through the link he shared with Black Ivan and felt the sudden shock and recoil of the Destroyer's bombard discharging. He watched the arcing shell land in the middle of a group of Temple Flameguard and detonate in a burst of flesh-rending fire and shrapnel.

He had the remaining two Destroyers fire as well. While their shells landed short of the small Protectorate force storming a breach in the town wall, one struck the crumbling edge of a ruined building and toppled it. The resulting cascade of rubble was enough to halt the Exemplars' charge and crush two of them beneath stone and wood.

Luckily, Reznik had chosen to come through in a spot that was uninhabited and had as yet seen no new construction. It was a rubble-choked wasteland of collapsed buildings and weedy ruins, a place where Harkevich felt comfortable opening fire without fear of collateral damage. In addition, the lack of any significant cover and rough ground made the Protectorate advance costly and slow. Harkevich met his enemies with a token force; he had sent the majority of his troops to the center of the city where the noncombatants had fled, keeping with him Ivan, three Destroyers, a single unit of riflemen, and both field guns. Harkevich had started pounding the Protectorate force with artillery from the Destroyers and field guns the moment they'd come through the wall. He knew it was only a probing attack, but he wanted to send Reznik a clear message: trespass on what belongs to Khador, and pay in blood.

The remaining four Exemplar bastions had recovered from Harkevich's earlier attack and resumed their charge supported by what was left of the three units of Temple Flameguard. Harkevich heard the sharp burst of rifle fire behind him as his Winter Guard opened up on the Protectorate heavy infantry. Many of the Flameguard were felled by the volley, but the bastions' thick armor repelled the majority of the guardsmen's fire, allowing them to advance to within a short distance of Harkevich's forces. The Protectorate soldiers were too close for bombard fire, so Harkevich urged one of his Destroyers to charge. It crashed into the remaining Flameguard at full tilt, its executioner's axe descending again and again to slice through flesh and bone. The Protectorate forces were brave, but their weapons were no match for the thick armor and murderous efficiency of the Khadoran heavy 'jack.

The four bastions did not halt their charge, leaving the Flameguard to their fate. Their goal was clear: they were charging directly at the greatest threat, Harkevich



himself. He could not tell whether his eagerness fed Black Ivan or the reverse, but it was infectious.

Harkevich urged Black Ivan into a charge and followed. The big Destroyer did not wield the usual executioner's axe; instead, each of the fingers on its right hand tapered into a twelve-inch claw of sharpened steel. It was with this "bear claw" that Ivan tore into the bastions, slicing through armor and flesh with appalling ease. Three fell under these claws, but the fourth skirted the warjack to make for Harkevich.

Despite his bulk, Harkevich moved adroitly over rubble and corpses toward the charging bastion. The bastion's halberd had considerable reach, far more than even Harkevich's long-hafted battle mace. The warcaster spun away from the great steel blade as the Protectorate soldier lunged forward, obviously expecting a slower, clumsier opponent. Harkevich's spin carried him past the bastion's guard and allowed him to bring Minister around in a two-handed blow. Bolstered by Harkevich's focused will and the steam-driven strength of his warcaster armor, the voltaic battle mace struck the bastion's heavy breastplate like a battering ram. The armor and the frail flesh inside it crumpled. Broken but still alive, the bastion struggled to regain his feet, but Harkevich brought Minister down in an overhand blow, smashing the soldier's helmet and skull with brutal finality.

Gradually the hammering sounds of combat subsided, quickly overshadowed by the weak cries of critically wounded men. Harkevich took a deep breath and surveyed the carnage. Eight Exemplar bastions and over a dozen Exemplar knights lay dead and dying amid the rubble. Harkevich's meager force had not suffered a single casualty.

*Too easy*, Harkevich thought. It hadn't escaped his notice that the attacking force hadn't contained a single warjack. *Where is Reznik?*

As if in answer, a thundering blast shattered the post-battle hush, and a plume of crimson fire rose over the southern end of the city. A chorus of screams quickly followed the thumping bursts of deliverer rockets, and Harkevich's stomach filled with dread.

Knowing Harkevich and his warjacks could not be in two places at once, Reznik had sent a small force to occupy him while the high executioner's main force had attacked a more vulnerable position.

Black Ivan turned its head toward its master and loosed an angry vent of steam. Harkevich felt his own rage. "Follow me!" he cried and pushed his three warjacks into a dead run toward the southern end of the city, his soldiers following after.



Within the heart of Riversmet, the foundations and walls of a fortress had risen amid the rubble. The area was the most heavily fortified in the city and contained a number of buildings that would eventually house the Khadoran garrison. It was here Harkevich had sent the majority of the noncombatants in the city, as the sturdy stone buildings offered the most protection from errant artillery and gunfire despite being unfinished. By the time Harkevich arrived, however, many of the outer buildings had been reduced to burning ruin by the assault of deliverer rockets and the condemner cannons of Reckoner warjacks. He could hear the shouts and cries of those taking refuge within.

**IVAN TORE INTO THE BASTIONS,  
SLICING THROUGH ARMOR AND  
FLESH WITH APPALLING EASE.**

The majority of his Winter Guard, along with the Man-O-War bombardiers and the mortar crews, had taken position in front of the great iron gates of the fortress, doing their best to keep Reznik's warjacks and heavy infantry at bay. Harkevich's troops were pouring a steady stream of artillery fire onto the Protectorate forces and had so far kept them from closing to melee range. The ranks of deliverers that stood behind the main Protectorate force were slamming their rockets into the fortress walls and gates in an unceasing barrage, however, taking a toll on Harkevich's men.

Reznik's army filled most of the bare plaza in front of the Khadoran fortress, leaving some hundred yards of open ground between the two forces. Harkevich spied Reznik standing at the fore of his small army, heedless of the mortar shells bursting around him. The high executioner was flanked by his custom heavy warjack and two Reckoner warjacks, their condemner cannons belching fire at the Khadoran ranks and shedding enough heat that Harkevich could feel it on the stiff breeze blowing through the city.

Just as Harkevich and his warjacks emerged from one of the side streets on the plaza's eastern side, Reznik raised his right fist. The deliverer rocket fire ceased and the Protectorate infantry moved back, out of range of the Khadoran artillery. Thankful for the respite, the Khadoran line fell silent. Harkevich could see their fear and exhaustion.

In the momentary lull, Harkevich and his Destroyers moved to join the Khadoran troops massed in front of the fortress gates. Before Harkevich had made it halfway across, however, the booming voice of Servath Reznik rang out. The Protectorate warcaster held something in his right fist, and when he held out his arm and let the scroll unroll, Harkevich's heart sank.



"The following infidels will come forth and submit to the justice of Menoth!" Reznik boomed. "If these persons are brought forth, I will leave immediately. Shelter these heathens at your peril!" He paused, the weight of his threat tangible in the air. "Dmitri Raskova!" Reznik shouted. "Come forth!"

**"HE BELONGS TO MENOTH," REZNIK SAID. "BUT I WILL COLLECT HIM ON MENOTH'S BEHALF."**

The name sent a chill of horror through Harkevich's body. Dmitri Raskova was a close ally of the Tzepescis and was in Riversmet to oversee Tzepesci interests in the city. Before Harkevich could shout a response back to Reznik, he heard the sounds of a commotion near the keep's gates.

Lord Vasko Durga emerged from the Winter Guard flanked by his bodyguards. One of the hulking guards dragged the struggling form of a stocky, well-dressed man: Dmitri Raskova. He must have been near at hand, keeping an eye on the conflict for his liege.

"Fool!" Harkevich shouted as he ran toward the kayazy. He willed his warjacks to move away from him and take up positions in front of his troops, between them and the Protectorate force. Durga and his bodyguards were already walking across the plaza toward Reznik. Halfway across, Vasko halted and motioned to the bodyguard dragging Dmitri, who roughly threw the man to the ground.

Still vital seconds away, Harkevich realized to his horror that he would not be able to stop what was about to happen.

"High Executioner!" Vasko called out. "Here is the man who has defied your laws. Remember, not all in Riversmet are blind to the will of Menoth."

Reznik motioned to the troops behind him and a pair of Exemplar knights came forward across the plaza. Ignoring the kayazy, they grabbed Dmitri and dragged him toward Reznik. When the knights reached the high executioner with their prize, they pushed Dmitri down on his knees.

"Dmitri Raskova," Reznik intoned. "You have been found guilty of heresy, and by the decree of Hierarch Severius, your life is forfeit." The High Executioner's sword cut through the air in a silvery blur. Dmitri's head fell away from his body in fountain of blood, and his body pitched forward onto the dirty cobblestones of the plaza.

Harkevich had a clear view of Dmitri Raskova's execution as he raced into the plaza. He felt the warmth of rage blossom across his face. *Ivan, come to me.* He sent a mental command

to the mighty Destroyer, and the big 'jack stamped across the plaza to stand by its master. The warcaster met Vasko Durga as he returned with his bodyguards.

"Stand aside, Kommander," Vasko said as he neared. "I did what had to be done, for the good of the city. His life will buy safety for hundreds, if not thousands."

Harkevich held the haft of Minister in a death grip, trying to control his rage. Beside him Black Ivan clenched its bladed fingers together with a sound like enormous shears opening and closing. "For the city?" Harkevich cried. "You acted only to save your own skin!"

"No! I merely had the will to do what you would not."

The steel voice of Servath Reznik once more filled the plaza. "Andrei Ladislav!" the high executioner intoned. "Come forth!"

The name of the master builder he had spoken with earlier in the day tore into Harkevich's gut like a dagger. Fortunately it seemed Ladislav was not as close on hand, although ugly murmurs went through the civilians behind the soldiers. Harkevich had no doubt some among them would be willing to throw others at the feet of the high executioner.

Vasko turned to whisper to one of his bodyguards, but Harkevich seized him. "Would you now hand over one of our master builders?" Harkevich said to Vasko. "A man incredibly valuable to our reconstruction efforts, to die like a dog at Reznik's feet?"

Vasko shrugged, clearly discomfited by the warcaster's gauntlet on his arm. "We have more builders."

The kayazy's dispassion for consigning an innocent man to death disgusted Harkevich. "You do not have the authority to send anyone else to their death. This is a military confrontation, and I am now in charge."

"For a military commander, you are quite squeamish," Vasko said, a sneer on his thin lips. "You—"

"Lord Vasko Durga!" Reznik shouted the third name on his list without waiting for the second individual to be sent forth.

Vasko's face went white. His piggish eyes grew huge, and his mouth fell open in horror. "Wait . . . wait . . ." he mumbled, backing away from Harkevich. His two bodyguards drew their swords with twin metallic hisses as they stepped in front of him.

Seeing the naked steel in the hands of Vasko's bodyguards was all the provocation Harkevich needed. "Ivan, take them," he said softly. Black Ivan responded immediately. Its clawed hand slashed out, cutting the first in half at the waist and splattering Vasko and the other bodyguard with gore.



That man, loyal to the last, pushed Vasko behind him and futilely raised his sword. Ivan took him apart with a single swipe of its claw.

"Enough," Harkevich said as he urged the warjack to step away from Vasko, who had fallen to his knees before the great machine, begging for his life. Harkevich stalked up to the cowering kayazy emissary and grabbed the man by his cloak. "This is for the good of this city, Lord Durga," he hissed. He began moving across the plaza, dragging Vasko by his cloak.

"No!" Vasko cried and tried to regain his feet. Harkevich turned and knocked the struggling kayazy senseless with his gauntleted fist, then continued on his way.

"Here," Harkevich said as he threw the unconscious form of Vasko to the ground at Reznik's feet. "This belongs to you."

"He belongs to Menoth," Reznik said, and Harkevich heard the slightest hint of amusement in his voice. "But I will collect him on Menoth's behalf."

"That is all you're getting, Reznik," Harkevich said between clenched teeth.

"There are more names on my list," Reznik responded.

"I doubt any are more important than Dmitri Raskova and Lord Vasko Durga."

"True," Reznik conceded. "Yet I have a sacred duty to bring these heathens to justice. You have seen how steep the price is for those who deny me."

Harkevich smiled. "If you'd like to continue our skirmish, High Executioner, you are in a bad position. You have more men than I, but your force stands in an open plaza and everything of consequence in the city is behind my guns and my warjacks. Press on and you may gain victory, but I promise to make *you* pay a steep price for it." The Khadoran's eyes showed no hint that he was feigning confidence in the strength of his position.

Reznik was silent for a moment as he surveyed the disposition of the Khadoran force. His eye fell on Durga, just beginning to stir, and Harkevich could almost see the scales tipping in his mind. When he spoke, his voice held no amusement. "Perhaps my duty is fulfilled . . . for now."

The truth of the menace behind Reznik's words was a cold weight in Harkevich's gut. "I think you know the way out, High Executioner," he said.

Harkevich turned his back on the Protectorate warcaster and began walking back toward his own line. Behind him he heard Vasko Durga's voice suddenly ring out. "Wait! I can pay you! Wait! I—" The sound of Reznik's sword humming through the air and the thud of it striking flesh ended the kayazy's pleas with grim finality.

Harkevich saw that many of the refugees and workers had emerged from the fortress. Among them was Andrei Ladislav, the senior builder supervising the reconstruction of Riversmet's wall. Harkevich walked up to the aging builder and shook his head. "I must apologize, comrade Ladislav. I have knocked down quite a bit of your work. However, since you will be in charge of the rebuilding process from now on, I promise you will have the resources you need to repair the damage." Harkevich knew he technically lacked the authority to make such a decision, but at the moment he did not care. Let the posadnik argue, if he dared. Riversmet was under the protection of Izak Harkevich; if kayazy wished to profit from it, they would have to convince him they were not lining their pockets to the detriment of Khador.

"You honor me, Kommander," Andrei said with a bow of his head. The man took his mason's hammer from his belt and patted it. "I will do my part. At least broken walls and buildings can be rebuilt . . ." he said, letting his gaze linger over the departing ranks of Protectorate soldiers.

" . . . While broken lives are much harder to repair," Harkevich finished, following Andrei's gaze.





# KOMMANDER HARKEVICH, THE IRON WOLF

## KHADOR WARCASTER

*Harkevich is a living instrument of war. He does not simply make battle with the enemy but orchestrates their systematic destruction.*

—Supreme Kommandant Irusk

HARKEVICH							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	7	7	6	15	16	8	



HAND CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	—	12



MINISTER	
POW	P+S
7	14

<b>FOCUS</b>	6
<b>DAMAGE</b>	18
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	C
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	+5
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

their activation within his control area can charge or slam power attack without spending focus. If a model in Harkevich's battlegroup in his control area declares a charge or slam against an enemy model, it can make a normal ranged attack before advancing. Hour of the Wolf lasts for one round.

### HARKEVICH

**Field Marshal [Pathfinder]** – Models in this model's battlegroup gain Pathfinder.

### MINISTER

**Magical Weapon**

**Beat Back** – Immediately after a normal attack with this weapon is resolved during this model's combat action, the enemy model hit can be pushed 1" directly away from the attacking model. After the enemy model is pushed, the attacking model can advance up to 1".

**Critical Stagger** – On a critical hit, the model hit loses its initial attacks and cannot make special attacks for one round.

### FEAT: HOUR OF THE WOLF

*Kommander Harkevich, the Iron Wolf, advances alongside his warjacks as part of an indomitable pack. His will is so strong that nothing can stand in their way during the Hour of the Wolf. Neither enemy fire nor obstacles can slow him or his warjacks as they drive forward to deliver a perfectly coordinated final assault.*

While in Harkevich's control area, models in his battlegroup gain +3 ARM. Models in Harkevich's battlegroup beginning

### SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
<b>BROADSIDE</b>	3	SELF	CTRL	—	NO	NO
Models in this model's battlegroup currently in its control area can immediately make one normal ranged attack. Attacks gained from Broadside do not count against a weapon's ROF. Broadside can be cast only once per turn.						
<b>ESCORT</b>	2	SELF	CTRL	—	YES	NO
Warjacks in this model's battlegroup beginning their activations in its control area gain +2" movement. This model gains +2 ARM while one or more warjacks in its battlegroup are within 3" of it.						
<b>FORTUNE</b>	2	6	—	—	YES	NO
Target friendly Faction model/unit can reroll its missed attack rolls. Each attack roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Fortune.						
<b>JUMP START</b>	1	SELF	CTRL	—	NO	NO
Models in this model's battlegroup that are currently in its control area stand up and are no longer stationary. Affected models can turn to face any direction. Models that were knocked down this turn are not affected by Jump Start.						
<b>RAZOR WIND</b>	2	10	—	12	NO	YES
A blade of wind slices through the target model.						

### TACTICAL TIP

**Hour of the Wolf** – If a model has abilities that allow it to make ranged attacks, it can still make those attacks. The Behemoth, for example, can make a ranged attack from Hour of the Wolf, charge, and then make the attacks allowed by the Sub-Cortex ability.

**Field Marshal** – This includes this model.

**Beat Back** – The attacking model can advance even if the enemy model is destroyed by the attack.

**Critical Stagger** – Remember that a model that cannot make special attacks cannot make power attacks.

**Escort** – Modifiers to movement apply only to a model's normal movement.

Khador's Iron Wolf has earned a reputation as a peerless master of heavy armor on the battlefield, a war hero beloved by his men and respected even by the enemies of the Motherland. Where Izak Harkevich and his iron army marches, the enemy finds itself hounded, outmaneuvered, cornered, and eventually obliterated by overwhelming firepower. His commanding voice rises above the din of battle to exhort his men to victory, followed by the roar of his Destroyers' bombards. His unblemished record of success has earned him the respect of the soldiers serving under him despite the uncompromising nature of life under his command. His men say his drills are bloodless battles and his battles are bloody drills—a tough compliment but one he has earned from a lifetime of military service.

Harkevich has nothing but the highest expectations of his men, who endure grueling training until they can fight seamlessly alongside his warjacks. Few things arouse

his wrath as much as a Khadoran who does not love the Motherland enough to work hard and bring the best of his or her abilities to bear, whether that person is a farmer, a merchant, a soldier, or a noble. Every citizen must shoulder their share of the burden to strengthen the Khadoran Empire.

Harkevich's warcaster talent was recognized early during his service in the Winter Guard under the reign of Lord Regent Simonyev Blaustavya. He had immediately taken to the life of soldiering and had already been considering a permanent career in the military. From a farming family near Khador, he knows he would have led an ordinary career as a lifetime Winter Guardsman if not for his gift. Because of this upbringing, he feels a closer affinity to the citizens he protects and the enlisted men risking their lives on the front line than he does to the ranking officers to whom he reports. He believes being a warcaster does not elevate him above his men but requires him to shoulder a greater responsibility for their lives. Coming from a family line that for centuries worked the Khadoran soil, Harkevich







feels a primal attachment to the Motherland. Those unlucky enough to be born in other kingdoms are to be pitied.

As a Winter Guard Harkevich had shown he had a keen mind for organization and efficiency, able to keep many tasks in mind as he assisted his superiors in directing the men. Entering into officer and warcaster training at the Druzhina in Korsk, he soon demonstrated the exceptional capability to divide his attention to simultaneously direct a half-dozen or more warjacks, a level of control ordinarily requiring years to attain. Ranking kommandants were eager to put his abilities to work in the field and sent him to fight alongside the border legions. Kommander Harkevich honed his skills in over a decade of conflict alongside the 1st, 4th, and 5th Border Legions during countless skirmishes against both Ordic and Cygnaran forces.

This extensive service had already established Harkevich's reputation by the invasion of Llael, when he helped seize the city of Elsinberg alongside Kommanders Tarovic and Kratikoff. He considers himself lucky to have, in the main, served with officers who understand their responsibilities

and respect the lives of civilians. Elsinberg itself was barely damaged during the battle that resulted in the surrender of its leaders, and has since shown every sign of smoothly integrating into the Khadoran Empire, a fact Harkevich credits to the civil treatment of its people. Nothing would please him more than to see Llael a productive arm of the Khadoran Empire, its citizens glad to serve the empress, its farmlands fertile with crops rather than churned into mud by soldiers' boots, burned by Menites, or defiled by the undead.

While he has witnessed the horrors of war firsthand, Harkevich has not allowed those experiences to compromise his sense of honor. A number of battles in the Llaelese campaign brought him into disagreement with senior officers over what he saw as needless brutality inflicted upon both enemy combatants and the civilians of the region. Harkevich was stationed at the captured fortress of Redwall soon after the Butcher's assault and the subsequent massacre. He knew that the Llaelese could ultimately be fruitful citizens of the empire but that brutality would not win their hearts. Even measures he considered a necessary expedient, like the razing of Riversmet,



## KOMMANDER HARKEVICH, THE IRON WOLF WOLF PACK

**WARJACKS:** Khador non-character warjacks, Black Ivan

**UNITS:** Battle Mechaniks, Man-O-War units, Winter Guard units

**SOLOS:** War Dog, Man-O-War solos, Widowmaker Marksman, Winter Guard solos

### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** You gain +1 on your starting roll for the game.

### TIER 2

**Requirements:** Harkevich's battlegroup includes Black Ivan.

**Benefit:** Friendly models/units can begin the game affected by Harkevich's upkeep spells. These spells and their targets must be declared before either player sets up models. Harkevich does not pay focus to upkeep these spells during your first turn.

### TIER 3

**Requirements:** This army includes two or more weapon crew units.

**Benefit:** For each warjack in Harkevich's battlegroup, place a heavy wreck marker anywhere within 20" of the back edge of Harkevich's deployment zone after terrain has been placed but before either player deploys his army. Wreck markers cannot be placed within 3" of a terrain feature or another wreck marker.

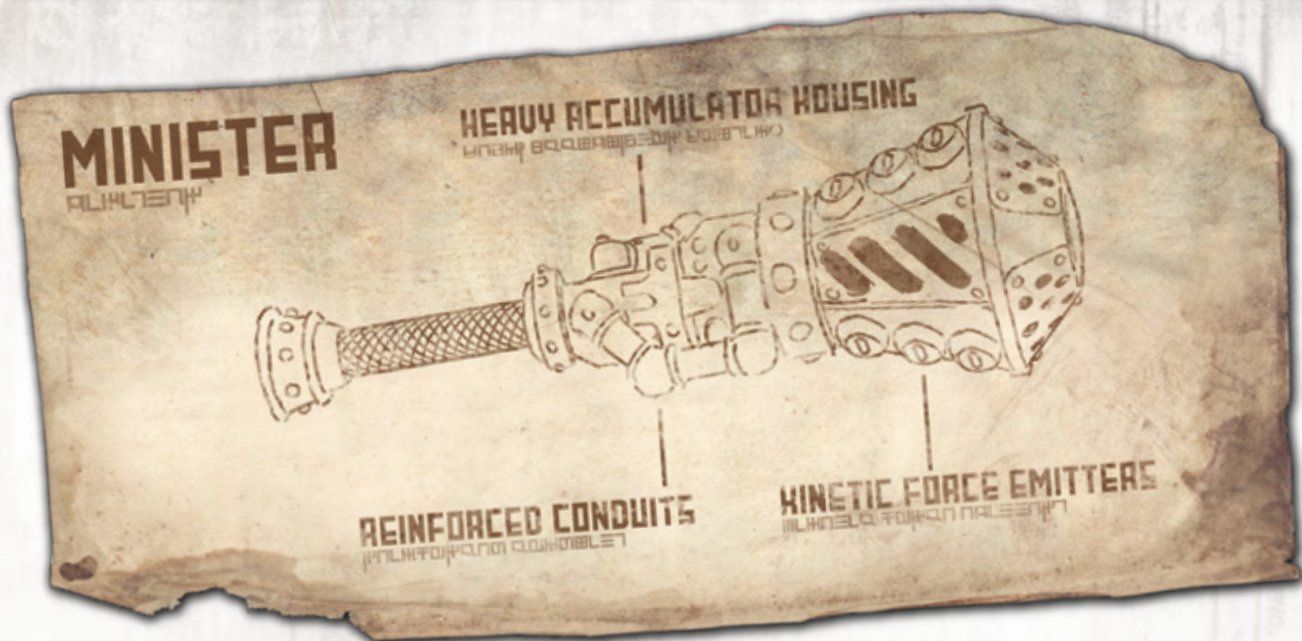
### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Harkevich's battlegroup includes three or more warjacks.

**Benefit:** Reduce the point cost of warjacks with ranged weapons in this army by 1.

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troubled him. He eventually came to acknowledge the destruction of Riversmet likely saved tens of thousands of lives in Leryn, but he has long considered such cold calculus to be a measure of last resort. The exact methods used in the eventual destruction of Riversmet, including unleashing doom reavers upon its last holdouts, he views as particularly deplorable.

Harkevich is ever mindful of the value of his men's lives and prefers to let his warjacks endure the greatest share of the risk in battle. In his tactics, his warjacks are not present to support his army but rather the reverse. Harkevich is a skilled kommander of men, though, and employs his soldiers primarily to steer the enemy into the guns of his 'jacks, to fix foes in place on ground of his choosing, and later to mop up the routed enemy after their morale is broken by the overwhelming force brought against them.

To best implement his tactics, Harkevich has kept up to date on all developments from the Khadoran Mechanics Assembly, constantly determining the exact limits and capabilities to best use every warjack in Khador's arsenal. The Iron Wolf is also famous for his ability to move large numbers of warjacks at an unprecedented pace to arrive where the enemy least expects him. He is a master of logistics and coordinates the delivery of coal and other supplies to facilitate his forced marches, showing willingness to march alongside his 'jacks day and night and to use any means at his disposal to reach his objective. He takes full advantage of advance reconnaissance, preferring to personally survey the ground he intends to fight upon before a battle. His professionalism has earned him the commendation of Supreme Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk, who has also acknowledged his significant contributions to Khadoran tactics.

In recognition of his accomplishments and skill, Harkevich has been sent to eastern Llael to secure the region for the empire while the majority of the Khadoran Army marches south to confront Cygnar along the Dragon's Tongue River. He has been given the honor of standing as a bastion at the forefront of Khador's contested territory with the Protectorate of Menoth's Northern Crusade. With his warjacks at his side, Harkevich intends to make his enemies pay dearly for every inch of soil they try to wrest from the Motherland.





# DEMOLISHER

## KHADOR HEAVY WARJACK

*The fixed position will become a thing of the past once we can bring our biggest guns to the enemy's doorstep.*

—Karchev the Terrible

DEMOLISHER						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	12	6	4	10	25	—



SHOULDER CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
8	1	4	15



SHOULDER CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
8	1	4	15



SHIELD FIST	
POW	P+S
4	16



SHIELD FIST	
POW	P+S
4	16

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L			R		
L	L	M	C	R	R	
	M	M	C	C		

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

### DEMOLISHER

#### Gunfighter

**Armored Shell** – While one of its arm systems is crippled, this model's base ARM is 21; while both its arm systems are crippled, its base ARM is 17. If this model makes an attack, its base ARM is 17 until the start of its next activation. This model's arms cannot be locked.

**Bulldoze** – When this model advances into B2B contact with an enemy model during its activation, it can push that model up to 2" directly away from it. A model can be pushed by Bulldoze only once per activation. Bulldoze has no effect when this model makes a trample power attack.

**Girded** – This model does not suffer blast damage. Friendly models B2B with it do not suffer blast damage.

#### SHIELD FIST

##### Open Fist

**HEIGHT/WEIGHT:** 11' 5" / 16.9 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** TWIN SHOULDER CANNONS (INTEGRAL)

**FUEL LOAD/BURN USAGE:** 1,200 LBS / 4 HRS GENERAL, 40 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 606 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** GREYLOARDS COVENANT

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** KHADORAN MECHANIKS ASSEMBLY

engineering, Khadoran mechaniks developed a way to integrate the cannons, which in turn led to breakthroughs in cortex design to maximize their use. The specialists of the Greyloards Covenant refined the firing routines of the cortex to allow it to stabilize itself even in the midst of punishingly close combat and to fire at targets outside the melee. The Demolisher's shoulder cannons also carry some of the heaviest ammunition of any warjack weapon system. The great weight of the 'jack is itself a weapon; its hulking form provides all the cover of a mobile artillery emplacement for those who accompany it. Any who fight beside a Demolisher benefit from the brutal strength of the Motherland itself.



There is no such concept as "excessive force" to the armies of Khador. The Demolisher embodies this philosophy perfectly. This truly massive warjack is an intimidating sight as it moves across the battlefield deflecting even direct artillery fire. With armor almost half a foot thick in places, speed is an unnecessary luxury. When the hulking 'jack finally reaches its position, its tremendous, plated arms drop to reveal integral cannons. Though this makes the warjack briefly vulnerable, the staggering destructive force it unleashes ensures no enemy survives to return fire. A Demolisher in action embodies the guiding philosophy of the Khadoran military mind: endure and annihilate.

The Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly has long grappled with the challenge of delivering short-range but powerful ordnance on the battlefield. Such weapons draw tremendous attention from the enemy and make easy targets for massed firepower. The incredible armor of the Devastator chassis provided a suitable vehicle, however. Through brilliant



# BLACK IVAN

## KHADOR CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*Ivan and I both fight with utter devotion: him for me, and me for the Motherland.*  
—Kommander Harkevich



**HEIGHT/WEIGHT:** 11' 7" / 9.6 TONS  
**ARMAMENT:** BOMBARD (LEFT ARM), BEAR CLAW (RIGHT ARM)  
**FUEL LOAD/BURN USAGE:** 845 LBS / 4 HRS GENERAL, 55 MINS COMBAT  
**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 596 AR, REFITTED 605 AR  
**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** GREYLOARDS COVENANT  
**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** KHADORAN MECHANICS ASSEMBLY

A lumbering, coal-black engine of destruction, the warjack called Black Ivan is a peerless instrument of war. The machine strides the battlefield like a living thing, sidestepping incoming fire while unleashing its own devastating barrage of firepower. Once in striking range, Ivan barrels into the enemy, knocking aside anything in its path and shredding both flesh and steel with savage ferocity.

Black Ivan is the prized companion of Kommander Harkevich, a warcaster renowned for his tactical ingenuity and resourcefulness in the field. Having fought countless battles alongside Harkevich, Ivan has learned to anticipate its master's will and execute it with brutal efficiency, allowing the warcaster to concentrate on commanding his other forces in the field. A further mark of their close connection is the calming effect Harkevich's presence exerts on the belligerent warjack, which greatly increases its natural accuracy in battle.



### BLACK IVAN

**Affinity [Harkevich]** – While in Harkevich's control area, this model gains boosted ranged attack rolls.

**Bulldoze** – When this model advances into B2B contact with an enemy model during its activation, it can push that model up to 2" directly away from it. A model can be pushed by Bulldoze only once per activation. Bulldoze has no effect when this model makes a trample power attack.

**Dodge** – This model can advance up to 2" immediately after an enemy attack that missed it is resolved unless it was missed while advancing. It cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

### BOMBARD



**Arcing Fire** – When attacking with this weapon, this model can ignore intervening models except those within 1" of the target.

### BEAR CLAW

**Open Fist**

**Critical Brutal Damage** – On a critical hit, gain an additional die on this weapon's damage roll against the model directly hit.

Over the years Ivan has undergone countless repairs and modifications. For example, after the warjack lost its axe by burying it in a Cygnaran Centurion, Harkevich ordered the axe replaced with a mighty grappling claw—a weapon his spirited warjack could not lose. The most dramatic changes to the machine, however, have occurred within its cortex, where the warjack's sheer tenacity enables it to surpass the expected limits of its physical form. While other Khadoran warjacks plod across the battlefield, Ivan wills itself to move with singular haste. The sooner it reaches the enemy, the sooner it can strike.

BLACK IVAN							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
4	12	6	5	12	20	—	
							<b>BOMBARD</b>
RNG		ROF		AOE		POW	
14		1		3		14	
							<b>BEAR CLAW</b>
POW				P+S			
4				16			
<b>DAMAGE</b>							
1	2	3	4	5	6		
	L			R			
L	L	M	C	R	R		
	M	M	C	C			
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>							<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>							<b>10</b>
<b>LARGE BASE</b>							





# TORCH

## KHADOR CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*The enemy is wise to cower in their trenches, but Torch will burn them out like rats from a nest.*

—Kommander Strakhov

TORCH							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
4	12	7	5	10	20	—	



FLAMETHROWER				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
SP 6	1	—	12	



SPIKED FIST		
POW	P+S	
4	16	



RIP SAW		
POW	P+S	
6	18	

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L			R		
L	L	M	C	R	R	
M	M	C	C			

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	10
LARGE BASE	

### SPIKED FIST

☞ Open Fist

### RIP SAW

**Sustained Attack** – During this model's activation, when it makes an attack with this weapon against the last model hit by the weapon this activation, the attack automatically hits.

### TORCH

☞ Gunfighter

☞ Immunity: Corrosion

☞ Immunity: Fire

**Relentless Charge** – This model gains Pathfinder ☞ during activations it charges.

**Smoke Bombs (★Action)** – Place a 3" AOE cloud effect in play. Its center point must be within 1" of this model. This AOE remains in play for one round.

**Special Issue [Strakhov]** – This model can be included in Strakhov's theme forces. It can also be bonded to Strakhov.

**Virtuoso** – This model can make melee and ranged attacks during the same combat action. When this model makes its initial attacks, it can make both its initial ranged and melee attacks.

### FLAMETHROWER

☞ Continuous Effect: Fire

☞ Damage Type: Fire

### TACTICAL TIP

**SPECIAL ISSUE** – This only gives the warjack the potential to bond to the warcaster it does not automatically add a bond.

**HEIGHT/WEIGHT:** 11' 7" / 9.9 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** FLAMETHROWER (LEFT ARM), SPIKED FIST (LEFT ARM), RIP SAW (RIGHT ARM), SMOKE BOMBS (INTEGRAL)

**FUEL LOAD/BURN USAGE:** 805 LBS / 4 HRS GENERAL, 50 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 600 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** GREYLORDS COVENANT

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** KHADORAN MECHANIKS ASSEMBLY

lumbering machine is perfectly equipped to deal with all the challenges of trench warfare. Obstacles and wreckage are torn apart beneath its saw, and its powerful legs and internal stabilization system allow it to hurdle nearly impassable terrain in order to reach its targets. As it comes ever closer, its integral grenade launchers propel smoke bombs into the air, obscuring its form before it delivers incinerating death to the huddled ranks of the enemy. Strakhov's new doctrine of war is fully expressed in Torch, his ideal weapon of pitiless destruction.



If there is a nightmare common to soldiers across western Immoren, it is the horror of trench warfare. Soldiers who see Torch descending upon their position watch that nightmare come to life in ten tons of flame-spitting death. Torch was created specifically to fight through blasted trenchworks and foxholes. It seeks out its targets with fearsome eagerness, moving through enemy positions like a great mechanical predator. Excess steam vents with a terrifying hiss as the warjack descends into midst of its enemies, burning and cutting them down with brutal efficiency.

Torch is the product of Kommander Oleg Strakhov's exacting designs, a warjack capable of accompanying him on the most difficult missions behind enemy lines. The



# BATTLE MECHANIK OFFICER

## KHADOR UNIT ATTACHMENT

*A swordsman carries steel in his hand; a mechanik, in his heart.*

—Crew Chief Vilna Noors



### TACTICAL TIPS

**GRANTED: MAN-O-WAR MECHANIK** – This model cannot repair itself.

**OFFICER** – Because this model is an Officer, it is the unit 'jack marshal while it is in play. When it is destroyed it does not replace a Grunt in its unit. Instead the unit Leader becomes the new unit commander and 'jack marshal.

The battle mechaniks of the Khadoran army are no mere support specialists but hardened veterans who have taken part in as many battles as regular troops. Their critical task is one of the most dangerous to be found: repairing warjacks in the midst of combat. Officers with combat experience are highly valued, and those who specialize in the maintenance and battle repairs of the vaunted Man-O-War korps are trained in the use of the steam-powered armor themselves. Trusted subordinates in tow, the battle mechanik officer accompanies his men into the heart of war to carry out necessary repairs, often by the skin of his teeth. Every battle mechanik officer knows his tools are as important to Khadoran victory as the weapons of the men whose armor he keeps functional.

In addition to significant time spent in combat, each officer is expected to be a master of his trade. By the time a senior mechanik is given a command, he has mastered all the

**Attachment [Battle Mechanik]** – This attachment can be added to a Battle Mechanik unit.

### OFFICER

⚔ Officer

**Granted: Man-O-War Mechanik** – While this model is in play, models in its unit can make a Repair special action to attempt to repair damaged Man-O-War models as if they were warjacks. Models in this model's unit with Assist Repair can make an Assist Repair special action to assist in the repair of Man-O-War models.

**Lash** – This model and friendly warrior models B2B with it cannot be knocked down.

**Repair [9] (★Action)** – This model can attempt repairs on any damaged friendly Faction warjack. To attempt repairs, this model must be B2B with the damaged warjack and make a skill check. If successful, remove d6 damage points from the warjack's damage grid.

OFFICER						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	9	6	4	11	16	9



### WRENCH

POW	P+S
4	13

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MEDIUM BASE</b>	

tools and machines of mechanical warfare utilized by the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly, including the command of battle-ready warjacks. His skill with repair and fabrication must be superlative, but it is his ability to maintain the notoriously dangerous Man-O-War armor that is his most valuable asset.

Every Man-O-War soldier assumes a great risk each time he dons his armor. The mechaniks' presence ensures no man's armor becomes disabled, trapping the soldier within. With incredible swiftness the mechaniks pull scalding armored plates from the suit to perform their miraculous repairs. In short order they can return even a highly damaged suit of Man-O-War armor to near-total functionality, no mean feat in the chaos of battle. Accompanied by a mechanik officer and his crew, a unit of Man-O-War soldiers gain all the resilience of the mighty warjacks they fight alongside.







# KAYAZY ELIMINATORS

## KHADOR ALLY UNIT

*I have heard life is cheap on the streets of Korsk. Apparently assassins are not.*

—Prince Neplakh Vanar

LEADER & GRUNT						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
7	5	7	4	15	11	9



ASSASSIN BLADE	
POW	P+S
4	9

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5 EA</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LEADER &amp; GRUNT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### LEADER & GRUNT

#### Stealth

**Acrobatics** – This model can advance through other models if it has enough movement to move completely past their bases. This model cannot be targeted by free strikes. This model ignores intervening models when declaring its charge target.

**Duelist** – This model gains +2 DEF against melee attack rolls.

**Gang** – When making a melee attack targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit, this model gains +2 to melee attack and melee damage rolls.

**Side Step** – When this model hits an enemy model with an initial melee attack or a melee special attack that is not a power attack, it can advance up to 2" after the attack is resolved. This model cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

### ASSASSIN BLADE

**Combo Strike (★Attack)** – Make a melee attack. Instead of making a normal damage roll, the POW of the damage roll is equal to this model's STR plus twice the POW of this weapon.

Eliminators are consummate professionals who constantly refine their lethal arts. They spend countless hours training their bodies and steeling their minds to their murderous purpose. An eliminator's every step is taken with calculation: no motion wasted, no sound betraying their intentions. A partnered pair moves in tandem, each anticipating the other's every move. When the time comes to perform their bloody services they do so with a grace that would seem like ease were anyone present to observe it.

Since the expansion of the Khadoran border, the kayazy have found themselves increasingly entangled in the affairs of the army. Accordingly, individual kayazy now often hire eliminators to aid those commanders in whose success they have a special interest. Though eliminators spend most of their careers cutting throats in darkened hallways and alleys, they are equally talented at dealing death on the battlefield. Slipping among the press of combatants, eliminators evade their enemies with mocking grace until closing in to deliver the killing blows.

When the kayazy require a killing done with discretion and assurance, they turn to the eliminators of the Korsk underworld. No mere thugs, eliminators practice their deadly trade with the finesse of the finest artists. They hold their criminal peers in disdain, sneering at those who require strength of numbers to ply their bloody trade. In a loose tradition, most eliminators prefer to work in pairs, choosing their professional partners with the same care they exercise in selecting their blades, for their lives and livelihood depend on the choice no less.





# KOLDUN KAPITAN VALACHEV

## KHADOR CHARACTER UNIT ATTACHMENT

*Men can be motivated to fight by many things. Valachev prefers fear.*

—Koldun Kommander Aleksandra Zerkova



### TACTICAL TIP

**MAGIC ABILITY** – Performing a Magic Ability special action or special attack counts as casting a spell.

**OFFICER** – Because this model is an Officer, when it is destroyed it does not replace a Grunt in its unit. Instead either another Officer in the unit or the unit Leader becomes the unit commander.

Kapitan Valachev is known for a grim pragmatism notable even among the Greylords of the Prikaz Chancellery. Tasked with carrying out the most secretive of missions, he is a specialist in commanding irregular soldiers such as mercenaries and pardoned criminals. His men have no illusions about their hopes for survival but consider their chances better than if they crossed the merciless Valachev.

Although Valachev is an accomplished arcanist, his real brilliance rests in political intrigue backed by an unflinching will to carry out any task. These traits brought him to the attention of the Prikaz Chancellery early in his career. The Chancellery has use of ambitious men—particularly those as motivated as Valachev by political power as occult study. The Chancellery soon

**Attachment [Small- or Medium-Based Mercenary]** – This attachment can be added to a Small- or Medium-Based Mercenary unit.

### VALACHEV

☞ **Officer**

**Greylord** – This model is a Greylord model.

**Magic Ability [7]**

- **Disbinding (★Action)** – Enemy upkeep spells on this model and/or its unit immediately expire.
- **Frostbite (★Attack)** – Frostbite is a RNG SP 8 magic attack. Models hit suffer a POW 12 cold damage roll ❄️.
- **Zephyr (★Action)** – Models in this unit that are in formation can immediately advance up to 3". They cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

**Ranking Officer** – This model is a Ranking Officer. While this model is in play, models in its unit are Khador models instead of Mercenary models.

### SABER

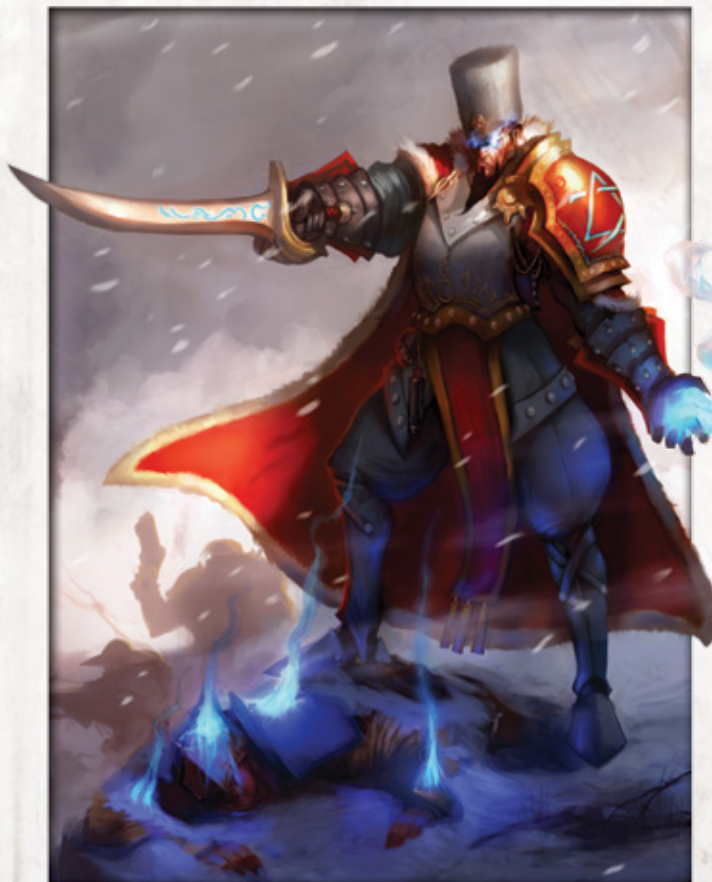
☞ **Magical Weapon**

VALACHEV						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	5	6	4	13	13	9



SABER	
POW	P+S
4	9

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	



inducted him into the depths of their shadowy training, and he emerged one of Khador's premier operatives.

Before the invasion of Llael, Valachev led handpicked bands of mercenaries on missions deep within Cygnar and Ord. Many of the mercenaries he led were only barely willing soldiers who received nominal pay and felt motivation primarily due to the Prikaz Chancellery's extortion as exerted through Valachev. Some were taken from the gulags of the Winter Guard because they possessed a necessary set of skills. Survivors were well paid and in most cases had their records wiped clean.

Valachev's objectives are so secret that only he and his masters in the Prikaz Chancellery know them. He arrives among the staff tents of a kommander or kommandant without deigning to explain his plans. With saber and spell Valachev obtains victory for his country and ensures that one day he will take a place among the secret powers of his nation.





# GUN CARRIAGE

## KHADOR CAVALRY BATTLE ENGINE

*The ideal weapon of total war, for the modern battlefield calls for speed and decisive firepower.*

—Supreme Kommandant Gurovaldt Irusk

GUN CARRIAGE							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
7	12	6	5	10	20	10	



HEAVY CANNON				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
12	1	4	14	



HEAVY CANNON				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
12	1	4	14	



MILITARY RIFLE				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
10	1	—	11	



MOUNT	
POW	
12	

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HUGE BASE</b>	

declaring and resolving attacks with this weapon, this model's front arc extends to 360°.

### MOUNT

**Knockdown** – When a model is hit by an attack with this weapon, it is knocked down.

**Trampling Hooves** – This model can charge and make charge attacks with this weapon. During a combat action it did not make a charge attack, this model can make one melee attack with this weapon.

Smashing through enemy lines with bone-crushing speed, the Gun Carriage is the perfect weapon to support Khador's massed shock attacks. The rolling thunder of the charging horses' hooves is punctuated to devastating effect by the terrible report of its massive guns. Soldiers are crushed into the earth as it shatters formations, its crew firing the colossal guns at point-blank range.

Everything about the Gun Carriage is calculated to intimidate the enemy. Painted in the traditional imperial red of Khador, it gives every appearance of an iron fortress being pulled into battle by a pair of steel horses. The sight alone gives foes pause, but the deafening sound of its two heavy cannons firing strikes fear into the hearts of the most stalwart knights and the most hardened veterans. The ordnance fired by each cannon is unthinkable destructive, as each blast annihilates everything over a wide area. Such is the power of each explosion that even the ground is deformed, a testament to the undeniable power of the Khadoran Empire.

### GUN CARRIAGE

#### Construct

**Power Attack Trample** – This model can make trample power attacks.

**Weapon Platform** – This model can make melee and ranged attacks in the same activation. When this model makes its initial melee attacks or a power attack, it can also make its initial ranged attacks. This model can make ranged attacks even while in melee.

### HEAVY CANNON

**Crater** – The AOE is rough terrain and remains in play for one round.

### MILITARY RIFLE

**Rear Attack** – When

### TACTICAL TIP

**REAR ATTACK** – This does not enable this model to target models in its back arc with charges.

Khador has long utilized armed carriages of various configurations in war. Some of the earliest examples of field artillery used at the end of the Orgoth Occupation were little more than Khardic siege guns dragged on horse-drawn sleds. As warjacks rose to prominence, armored war wagons went out of favor in many parts of western Immoren, but the simplicity of the horse-drawn gun appealed to the Khadoran military mind. Because a carriage could carry guns too large for even a warjack, their utility was never questioned in Khador.

The huge carriage is drawn by a pair of the powerful Khardic or Umbrean draft horses, bred to be as large and physically powerful as possible. The horses themselves are as heavily armored as possible, ensuring that even this most vulnerable portion of the carriage can weather concentrated enemy fire.

The resilience of the Gun Carriage is equaled by its destructive power. A crew of Winter Guard work feverishly within its cramped confines to load and fire the main guns. With skill gained from long months of training followed by battle experience, the crew are capable of firing the massive guns with great accuracy even while racing headlong toward the enemy. Another Winter Guard serves as a spotter and sharpshooter, taking careful aim from a precarious position atop the carriage at any who attempt to slip past its main guns. This is a duty reserved for the most talented marksmen of the guard, as they must be able to compensate for the constant jarring of their position.









# CRYX

## NO DIGNITY FOR THE DEAD

Iron Highway Between Skirov and Korsk, 608 AR

The *Khardic Colossal* was aptly named, a train with a main engine larger than any other in western Immoren. It stood nearly twenty feet in height, a massive block of steel with thick, armored plating covering the complex arrangement of steam-driven cranks, rods, and arms that powered the massive wheels pulling the long chain of cars.

There were faster trains, but none capable of bearing such a heavy load. The *Colossal* was frequently tasked to haul entire cars filled with fresh-built warjacks, Man-O-War armor, or other massive pieces of machinery to be assembled elsewhere as well as endless crates of rifles, artillery, and other military hardware. It was fronted with a wedge-shaped ram and outfitted with spikes that enabled it to break through any obstruction. Interspersed with the cargo cars were others dedicated specifically to defense. The train had several enormous swivel field cannons and mortars, each crewed by dedicated rotations of the Khadoran Rail Korps. Stationed alongside these were several former Widowmaker snipers. Working for the Rail Korps was a respectable way to earn coin among those who had retired from military service.

Attacks on Khadoran trains were rare, but the High Kommand took the integrity of its rails seriously. Both Man-O-War soldiers and trained 'jack marshals accompanied the Rail Korps on every major shipment, along with several older but battle-ready warjacks. For this particular train a pair of armored Gun Carriages was also assigned as escort. These massive battle carts maintained a steady pace to either side of the tracks.

The unusually strong complement of defenders was due to one of the rearmost cars, an armored container bearing the sigils and symbol of the Grey Lords Covenant. Lengths of thick black cloth decorated with the symbols of the Khadoran Empire, the Menofix, and the Morrowan Radiance draped the exterior. Situated respectfully within the compartment lay heavy, polished-wood coffins containing the remains of twenty-three Grey Lords, including several from powerful and politically connected families.

It would not do for so esteemed a company of corpses to be shipped to Korsk unceremoniously. They had languished for weeks at Fort Brunzig as preparations were arranged for a specially outfitted railway car to convey them to a state funeral in Korsk, paid for by Great Vizier Blaustavya as a special benevolence. Consideration had also been given to the fact that these Grey Lords had perished on Khadoran soil, in a well-fortified bunker deemed impregnable. Word of the Prikaz Chancellery initially trying to make the bodies disappear had leaked, prompting uproar. The only way to assuage the furor was a funeral of proper gravitas.

One individual grateful for the Khadoran love of ceremony and the time-consuming efforts that had delayed the funeral was Lord Exhumator Scaverous of Cryx. He stood not far from the tracks northwest of Shattered Shield Lake, looking out from the opening of a freshly excavated cave descending into the earth behind him, from which was emerging his sizable force. Behind him loomed the helljack Erebus, a Slayer redesigned and augmented to Scaverous' specifications.

The necromancer Darragh Wrathe waited close by, astride his undead steed and flanked by a line of nightmarish soulhunters. His voice rasped through his iron breathing mask, "I must soon return to Lich Lord Venethrax. I cannot linger."

The necromancer had demonstrated a certain reluctance on the mission. Wrathe's true master was Lich Lord Terminus, who had ordered him to join Venethrax. It seemed Wrathe could no longer tolerate receiving orders from anyone of lesser stature. "Once the objective is secured you have my leave to depart."

The train released steam in a piercing whistle. Scaverous fancied he could smell the corpses coming closer, each a treasure trove awaiting his key at their locks. The metallic insectoid appendages along his chest clicked and moved in constant agitation, a sign of the iron lich's excitement. The wickedly sharp blades affixed to the guide chain of his scythe Avernus spun and growled as he tested the



weapon. The lord exhumator made silent calculations and judged the timing to be right. "Now!" He pointed Avernus forward, and the Cryxians surged into motion.



The interruption of his work a few days earlier had not been welcome. He had previously been sent north to apply his specialized expertise in aid of Lich Lord Venethrax's project by wresting intelligence from ancient corpses plundered from the crypts below Hellspass. Studying the bodies of multiple generations of engineers, he had discovered they had been part of a secretive cabal tasked to maintain the ancient subterranean machinery securing a dormant athanc. By the lore Scaverous extracted, he had gained the insight to help devise an ingenious, massive transport mechanism for the athanc. A team of Mortenebra's necrotechs was already at work creating this intricate machine.

Scaverous had next turned to examining other corpses in the crypt, including the sanctified remains of ogrun that had lain untouched for thousands of years. It was a rare and exciting opportunity to gain insight into a largely unknown period of the region's history. Moreover, some of the bodies showed potential as new variants of thralls. The challenge all this represented was one Scaverous was eager to meet.

The bones—particularly the skulls—of the dead held imprints that could be reconstructed into an echo of a person's consciousness, personality, and knowledge long after the body died. These shades were often intractable, but Scaverous knew better than any of his peers how to force compliance and extract deep secrets. He savored nothing more than the acquisition of lore from the dead. In death minds were laid bare, with every living distraction stripped away.

When the weighty door of the lord exhumator's improvised laboratory had been pushed rudely open, he had whirled in a temper, reaching for Avernus. "I said no interruptions!"

He checked his tirade in an instant, recognizing the looming form. The metal mask with its moving plates and the shrouded silhouette identified Lich Lord Malathrax. The lich lord asked, "Do you object to my presence, Scaverous?"

Scaverous raised his clawed hands in emphatic negation. "Of course not, my lord!" The lord exhumator's tasks fell squarely within Malathrax's domain. "You are curious about my work? I believe I am close to discovering vital clues to some of the enigmatic external partners who secured the athanc recovered by Lich Lord Venethrax." As master of covert intelligence, Malathrax was one of the few entities who could apprehend the significance of Scaverous' great work.

The metal leaves of Malathrax's ever-shifting mask transformed into the face of a leering beast, and the glowing lights of his eyes flared. "That is a task you must put aside for now. I have another requiring your immediate attention."

The lord exhumator looked back to the stone slabs with their rows of carefully arranged skulls, several held in black metal clamps set amid concentric silver circles inscribed with rows of tiny, exactly placed runes. "This is not a good time for interruption, my lord."

The lich lord's eyes glowed ominously. "This is an immediate priority. A train will soon disembark from Fort Brunzig with the corpses of two dozen members of the Greylords Covenant, including several of high rank. We cannot let this opportunity pass; never before have we had the occasion to seize so many secrets at once."

Scaverous froze, the small row of metal limbs along his chest momentarily halting in their rhythmic twitching. "Interesting," he said. "Still, I could dispatch minions to recover the bodies while I continue my work . . ."

Malathrax drifted into the room with an aura of menace, and Scaverous wavered. "Do you refuse this task?" His tone was dangerous.

The lord exhumator was an iron lich built on a powerful frame, one eminently built for combat. He possessed considerably more mass than Lich Lord Malathrax, yet he stepped back and raised his clawed hands in submission. The power and mystical might of the lich lords went beyond the physical. "No. It only seemed logical to delegate."

"I am delegating to *you*, Scaverous. You are *my* minion. We need your expertise on the site, to ensure the preservation of the lore within these bodies."

For a moment Scaverous considered the thrill of having Malathrax's own skull for scrutiny but immediately forced himself to focus on the task at hand. He had to admit that dozens of Greylords ready for examination offered an unprecedented opportunity. He allowed, "It has been some time since we have had an inside look at Greylords Covenant operations."

"That is the least of what we might learn," Malathrax said. "This group was tasked to an expensive project, one secret even from the Prikaz. All information on their activities was sequestered, as were all records related to the assault resulting in their deaths. They provoked Ios to send its military might outside its borders for the first time in recorded history. I *must* know the nature of their work." His mask flipped to the face an angelic child.

Scaverous considered how little they knew of Ios. The ancient corpses that had so occupied him until now seemed almost irrelevant, or at least a matter he could return to in good time. "And so you will. I will leave at once."





Scaverous' forces poured from the cave opening at his command, rushing across the open ground toward the oncoming *Khardic Colossal*. Scaverous, Erebus, and a single Reaper moved swiftly, empowered by their green, glowing furnaces. They were quickly outpaced by the lord exhumator's bonejacks, including Stalkers, Deathrippers, and a number of Scavengers. These last flew on tattered wings, kept aloft by a unique application of unholy sorcery fueled by concentrated necrotite. Several Stalkers and Scavengers were relegated to a pair of triple-faced iron lich overseers.

The soulhunters were faster yet and galloped ahead alongside Darragh Wrathe. They fell into a wedge formation, veering sharply away from the rest to approach the tracks on a perpendicular path. They would be first to encounter the railway juggernaut, whose steam whistle now shrieked as if in challenge.

The driver of the nearest escorting Gun Carriage saw them and urged his horses to a full gallop, turning to intercept. The carriage's powerful cannons tracked the undead steeds, and there was a flash as they fired, rocking the vehicle from the recoil. The nimble soulhunters wove evasively as they closed, and the high-explosive shells failed to strike them directly, instead landing aground with concussive bursts that ripped craters in the soil. Several were hit by sharp fragments of debris but rode on with the disregard of the dead. Darragh Wrathe drew on his necromantic power to transform them into black shadows, spectral and insubstantial, able to leap across the battered earth without difficulty.

The train engine with its armored ram screamed past on the track, pulling its coal car immediately behind and others painted with the Anvil symbol of Khador behind that. The soulhunters, still wraithlike, split into two groups at Wrathe's direction, five launching straight through the onrushing train to pass unharmed to the other side. As they galloped to intercept the second Gun Carriage, they left the necromancer's shroud and took on solidity. Shrieking incomprehensibly, they clashed into the armored steeds with scythe and sickle, but the Gun Carriage had the greater weight and momentum and the Khadoran steeds smashed through one of their number on impact. The far Gun Carriage retaliated, its blasts tearing through dead flesh and obliterating two more of the soulhunters, but not before the horse team was slashed and faltered, sending the massive carriage tumbling. Its ammunition stores exploded in a blast powerful enough to annihilate the remaining soulhunters and cave in the steel wall of the nearest train car.

Other blasts followed as guns atop the *Khardic Colossal* opened fire, but these shots went over and wide of the swiftly moving soulhunters. A mortar shell detonated near Scaverous, its shrapnel bouncing harmlessly off his armor and power field. One of the flying Scavengers was nearly hit but easily banked aside, letting the shell pass through the air it had occupied. The Scavenger ripped its fangs into the men crewing that gun. Several nimble Stalkers leapt up with scraping sparks as their clawed legs found purchase on the roof of the train, and they rushed along its length toward the next nest of defenders. A pair of sharpshooters scored precise shots on one but were then set upon by the rest.

The soulhunters on Scaverous' side of the tracks took on flesh alongside the closer Gun Carriage's steeds, hacking into the shrieking animals with merciless precision. Darragh Wrathe unleashed a powerful blast of hellfire to explode along the upper deck, where a member of the Rail Korps had been stationed with a rifle. The soldier screamed, green fire eating his flesh as he fell from the swiftly moving carriage. The battle carriage's guns boomed again as they fired point-blank into the nearest of the soulhunters to tear them apart, but its team of horses had been badly wounded. One staggered and tripped, pulling down the other. The weight of the carriage yanked it loose from the team's harness, and it rolled briefly before coming to a halt. The soulhunters alongside it hacked at the armored door with their scythes, their blows only denting the metal. The cannon on the nearest side continued to turn in its swivel and fired another devastating blast, annihilating one of them.

Scaverous let Erebus run in that direction but kept a tight mental leash on the helljack. He knew too well its bloodthirsty tendencies. It barreled with tremendous force into the armored carriage and raked the metal panels with great claws, eager to get to the living within. It easily tore the armored door off the hinges and caved in the side of the carriage, but Scaverous immediately clamped down mentally to command the 'jack back. Erebus let loose a shriek of disappointment but did as bid, resuming its loping strides alongside the train. The occupants of the Gun Carriage were left to the soulhunters, but the undead cavalry were quickly blown apart by mortar and sniper fire.

Darragh Wrathe now galloped alone on his undead steed near the train, scythe in hand, untroubled at the destruction of his escort. The two iron lich overseers were almost in position, and Scaverous urged his Deathrippers forward. While the Scavengers and Stalkers continued to neutralize weapon crews, the train rushed onward. Likely its engineers thought themselves in the clear; the bulk of



the train had already passed the Cryxians. The lord exhumator only had eyes for the funeral-shrouded car, close to the rear. Only a cargo car and the brake van followed it.

Scaverous raised his chain scythe to signal. Peering through the eyes of his nearest Deathripper, he gathered power to summon a surge of destructive energies and send it across the bonejack's arc node to strike the coupling between the two railcars. The massive mechanism of hardened iron did not give way. At his bidding the two iron lich overseers raised their staves and released their own dark fire, melting through more of the metal as the train barreled past. Darragh Wrathe rode into position and added his invocation. Green balefire consumed the hitch, and the mechanism snapped with a wrenching groan.

The longer segment of the train began to pull away, the overseers following after it. The Reaper launched a harpoon to sink into the side of the funeral car, its length of chain unwinding. Erebus leapt forward and sunk its claws clean through the metal sides. Both helljacks dug in their metal feet to gouge trenches in the earth. Neither was an ideal anchor, but the combined weight helped slow the cars as the rest of the *Khardic Colossal* screamed onward.

Several dozen mechanithralls were running to join the lord exhumator from the cave, sent as reinforcements in fending off any additional defenders. Darragh Wrathe rode alongside the slowing Greylord car.

Scaverous eagerly closed on the car even as he directed his will and power to guide Erebus and the Reaper. Erebus tore the chains securing the doors and scrambled inside. These cars came to a stop, and the Reaper moved to stand watch outside with the bonejacks and mechanithralls. As Scaverous looked down the track a metallic shriek indicated the front of the train braking, but he knew massive trains like this relied on additional brakes in the rearmost car, which they had separated. Braking with only the engine car would take time, and anyone disembarking



would still have to deal with the iron lich overseers and the bonejacks embattling the train's forward defenders.

By his calculations, Scaverous knew he had sufficient time to do what was required. He felt rising excitement at the notion of the Greylord corpses awaiting him as he clambered into the dark funeral car. He was surprised to see Darragh Wrathe dismount and follow him inside. At his look the necromancer explained, "I am keenly interested in your work, Lord Exhumator. I have studied the matter; I can assist in your preparations."

Scaverous knew Wrathe had a reputation for skill in the art, through he was skeptical of any still-living mortal's expertise, given the centuries required for mastery. "Perhaps you can be of use," he allowed.

Wrathe inclined his head. "Your expertise in this arena is well known. It would be an honor to learn at your side."



Scaverous found his sudden courtesies suspicious but decided Wrathe might have a genuine thirst for knowledge. "We must proceed with greater haste than I prefer. We do not have the luxury to transport so many bodies, so we will recover only the heads. Separate them, but preserve as much of the upper spinal cord as possible—and take care not to damage the skulls."

The darkness inside the car did not impair them. Erebus was already at work cracking open and tipping over the ornate wooden coffins, sending bodies falling heavily to the floor. "Handle them carefully!" Scaverous scolded. "This is precious cargo! Leave a coffin intact to hold the heads we salvage." Erebus obliged and slid a coffin over to receive Scaverous' cargo. While Scaverous could stow a few skulls in the cavity of his rib cage, its space was insufficient to the quantity they were acquiring.

With an expert eye, Scaverous judged the bodies had been dead at least a month. Still, compared to the ancient and mummified remains the lord exhumator had been manipulating recently, these were quite fresh. The information in their skulls would rise easily to the surface, but the echoes of their personalities would be strong, resentful, and reluctant to part with secrets.

**FLESH SLOUGHED AWAY,  
THE GREY LORD'S FACE AND  
SCALP FELL TO THE FLOOR LIKE  
A DISCARDED GARMENT.**

He triggered Avernus to growl to full cutting speed and set upon the nearest corpse. The weapon quickly cut through flesh and bone with only a slight change in timbre. As the head and upper spinal cord came loose, the distinct Grey Lord hat fell to the floor. Scaverous carefully placed the head into the open coffin set aside for that purpose. He moved onto the next, waving Wrathe to assist with the grisly work. Erebus proceeded with marginally more care, stacking the bodies at one side of the car while tossing emptied wooden coffins out the car door. Wrathe's blade was less efficient than Avernus, but he showed aptitude at handling corpses and soon added his own prizes to the coffin.

Scaverous was so fixated on this process that he dismissed the mental warnings from his Reaper that enemies were closing. He expected soldiers from the forward portion of the train, but they would advance cautiously rather than rush to their deaths.

Scaverous took closer heed after his Reaper sent a mental alarm that it was being *fired upon*; the train's defenders should still have been far out of range. As he extended his

mind to the helljack he saw it evade an incoming bombard shell. The explosion blasted into the open door adjacent to Scaverous and the coffin they had been filling. Once again the blast and its shrapnel clanged harmlessly off his power field, but he looked down in startled dismay to see the stash of heads they had been accumulating entirely blown apart. The nearby floor and wall were covered with bone and wood fragments, shredded flesh, and brain matter. "Erebus! Go!" The helljack was already leaping out the open door. Scaverous used his power to layer protective magic across its armored chassis, greatly augmenting its resilience. Looking through the Reaper's eyes, Scaverous saw that the new threat had not come from the forward portion of the train but from the car immediately behind theirs. He should have considered that possibility.

A small squad of Rail Korps riflemen had climbed to the top of that car to fire from above. This alone did not present much of a problem, but in addition a number of Man-O-War soldiers had clambered down, including both shocktroopers and Demolition corpsmen carrying great mauls that glowed blue with cold. Scaverous' expectation that the brake car held only engineers was clearly wrong; it contained a significant garrison for aft protection. With the Man-O-War troops was a kovnik and beside him, a Destroyer warjack with a smoking bombard. An ancient Berserker jumped down from the open car doors with a pair of axes in hand. Both 'jacks were responding to the verbal orders of the kovnik. Scaverous impelled one of his Deathrippers to rush forward as green runes of power circled his clawed hand. He sent his power forward as a ripple of entropic energy amid the foremost Man-O-War. Black energy wriggled like worms to tear through the metal armor.

Scaverous turned to Wrathe, who had his scythe in hand and was looking out the door, invoking his own destructive necromancy. "Deal with them! I require more time!"

The necromancer nodded once and leapt down to mount his rusty steed as he took mental control of the mechanithralls surging forward to attack. The Man-O-War struck by Scaverous' spell fell quickly under the steam-powered fists and metal-rending jaws and claws of his 'jacks. Wrathe invoked a wave of sickness to sap the strength of the living enemies nearby. Their retaliation was nonetheless brutally effective against mechanithralls and bonejacks. Another explosion rocked the funeral car as the Destroyer fired on the Reaper.

Scaverous could not watch the fray—his mission was in jeopardy. He must be selective. He searched through the corpses, looking closely at rank insignia and the degree of finery on robes and adornments until he found what he sought in an ornate coffin Erebus had not yet reached: an older man with a long beard and bearing the runic symbol of a koldun lord. Beside him lay a rune-inlaid axe, and a



silk cord bound a scepter into the clasp of his dead hands. Scaverous wasted no time examining his belongings but triggered Avernus again. With a grinding noise and a spray of embalming fluid and dead flesh, the head came free.

Holding the fleshy head in his hands, Scaverous eyed it critically and then spoke words of ritual power as he carved runes into the pliant skin with one of his metal claws. He felt great distaste at conducting this rite hastily, without the proper materials and tools, but Lich Lord Malathrax had sent him to answer certain questions. He compensated for finesse with raw power. His eyes glowed bright green as he invoked the necromancy and compelled the remnant shade imprinted in this vault of a once-great mind to manifest. He ignored the warning of his Reaper as the Berserker set upon it with powerful axe blades, carving deeply into its chassis.

A dark silhouette came into being before Scaverous as the shade took on the semblance of a dignified koldun lord, standing regally and imperious as he once had in life. His eyes were black and hard. Scaverous spoke in fluent Khadoran, "You will obey me, shade, and answer my questions. Defy me and I will deliver unending agony." Had there been any witnesses in the dark car they would have seen Scaverous speaking only to the mangled head grasped in his claw.

The koldun lord's expression was defiant as spoke in a spectral voice, "I think not, fiend! You address Koldun Lord Klovechi! I do not fear you." His eyes darted around the car to take in the tumbled corpses. "What horror is this? Where am I?" Shades were rarely cognizant of their surroundings, and their small perception of the world was flawed at best, but a mind trained in the occult sometimes retained limited awareness.

The lord exhumator ignored the question and continued his ritual. Bands of darkness shaped like hoops of razor-edged steel closed in on the koldun lord and wrapped tight around him. Scaverous said, "Describe to me the last moments of your life. Why did the Iosans attack your fortress?"

The shade brazenly raised a hand to invoke words of power. Scaverous had seen such attempts before and knew it would not work. Death severed such powers. He was therefore startled to see icy blue runes appear around the shade's fingers and the spectral bands wrapped around the koldun lord shatter to ash. The lord exhumator hissed in disbelief. His eyes scanned the chamber, and he saw thin lines of runic power gleaming across the finery of many of the Greylords. Their baubles and pendants, their ornaments of rank and station—all carried residual potency. Destroying them would take too much time.

The entire funeral car lurched from a massive impact, and its armored wall dented inward and split open, spilling daylight inside. The Reaper had collided there as the

Berserker hacked into it mercilessly with its axes. Scaverous felt the helljack's heartfire dying. The last blow crushed its cortex, severing his contact with its mind. Erebus leapt to rake claws into the Berserker. The battle seemed to be going poorly, but he could not interrupt his interrogation with the willful shade, not now.

As the shade stood imperious and unaffected by the warcaster's will, Scaverous sensed something unusual about the way his necromantic energies were interacting with the skull in his hands. He summoned manifested decay to surround his clawed grip as wriggling worms of energy that bored through the head in his grasp. Flesh sloughed away, the Greylord's face and scalp fell to the floor like a discarded garment. Now the skull was laid bare to his attentions. The shade of the koldun lord scowled at him, only now apprehending the nature of the head in the warcaster's hands. "What black magic are you about, fiend?" Scaverous did not answer as he raised the skull to examine what seemed to be Khadoran runes inscribed in thin lines of silver metal set into the skull itself. Had this been done while the man was still alive? He had never heard of such a procedure, but it would have been painful beyond imagining.

The exact purpose of the runes was difficult to apprehend fully, but he suspected they had been intended to shield the koldun lord's mind in life and in death. If so, the Greylords Covenant was taking extraordinary efforts to protect its secrets, perhaps due to the Prikaz Chancellery's concerns over increased espionage from foreign powers.

Scaverous could not see how to unravel this new defensive measure quickly. The approach most likely to lead to success would be to pry loose the metal laid into the skull, after isolating it from any Greylord ritual accoutrements. He did not have time for this, though, and he would not risk damaging the skull.

As if discerning the pattern of the lord exhumator's thoughts, the shade spoke again. "Begone, abomination! Trouble no more the bodies of my brothers and sisters. Flee while you can!" He invoked some of his order's ice magic, and temperatures plummeted as a bolt of raw cold sprang from his ghostly fingers to strike at Scaverous. These energies were easily dispersed across the warcaster's power field, but it was still an irksome display of willfulness.

Outside, the mechanithralls and bonejacks had taken a toll on the Man-O-War corpsmen, but most had been annihilated in return. The Berserker was down, finished in a charge by Darragh Wrathe, but the Destroyer closed on Erebus with its executioner axe. One of the bonejacks yet survived, but its legs had been shattered by an ice maul. Scaverous sent his power through its still-intact arc node once again, turning Erebus ghostlike and spectral.



At his mental urging, the helljack rushed forward to slip past the Man-O-War soldiers and Destroyer, whose blows passed harmlessly through its body, to strike the ranking kovnik. Erebus took on solidity as it reached forward with both claws and ripped the kovnik in half amid a spray of gore.

Across the runes that connected the 'jack to Scaverous, the warcaster received the fallen mortal's soul. Those of other Man-O-War soldiers soon followed. He used the power of these dead to send more destructive energies through the arc node, withering one of the Rail Korps riflemen atop the rear train and sending that man's life-energy to reanimate a fallen mechanithrall. Erebus became locked in a clash with the Destroyer, which remained dangerous even without the direction of its master. Scaverous felt the shade struggling in his mental grasp as even this degree of distraction endangered the interrogation.

The walls of the rail car had become increasingly compromised, and as Scaverous moved within the interior he stepped into the line of sight of the riflemen atop the rear car. They concentrated their fire in the direction of his glowing necrotite furnaces; several shots rang off his iron ribcage, and one penetrated his inner workings. What concerned the warcaster, though, was the bullet that pierced the skull he held in his hand. Scaverous hissed as he backed quickly away from the opening, cradling the cracked bone. "No! No . . ."

He peered at the skull and saw the bullet had pierced clear through the frontal bone plate and out the parietal, sending webs of fracture lines from both the entry and exit points. Even as he conducted this examination the manifested shade staggered and began to fade. Although constructing a partial shade from a damaged skull was possible, it was far more difficult and rarely allowed for the recovery of significant intelligence. Scaverous felt his failure keenly and clenched his hand without thought, scraping the bones against one another.

The entire façade of the koldun lord changed: his attire became ragged, his hair unkempt, his eyes milky. "What is happening? Why is it so dark? Did we fail? I set it in motion, as soon as I realized we were beset . . ."

Scaverous tilted his head at the shade with sudden interest. Could this behavior relate to the damage that had just occurred? The shade was fading, yes, but the koldun's thoughts had become even further addled once the integrity of the skull had been broken and the runes disrupted. Scaverous transformed himself into a less substantial form and stepped into the shadows, hoping to exploit this confusion. He pressed with a metal claw along one of the widening cracks in the skull.

The shade immediately moaned and grasped his head, then staggered forward wearing a look of tremendous confusion. "Koldun Kommander Zerkova? Is that you?"

Outside, Erebus had taken a powerful slash from the Destroyer. As much as he hated to divert any of his attention from the shade, Scaverous impelled his will into the helljack to empower its claws. The rest of the Man-O-War soldiers had succumbed to the fists of the mechanithralls, but those were then shot to pieces by the riflemen on the roof. Wrathé wheeled his steed and turned his attention on the shooters, sending blasts of hellfire to burn them one by one.

Scaverous asked the rapidly fading shade, "Why did the Iosans attack? What happened in those last minutes? What did they seek?"

The koldun lifted his spectral hands to claw at his face. "I do not know how they found us, but the relic is safeguarded! They won't get to it, Kommander. It will be sent on, per your instructions. I will obey my vow. We will take as many of them with us as we can. Now, go!"

Scaverous felt rising excitement even as the shade began to disperse. "Where? Where did you send the relic? Confirm!"

"The facility below Skirov is secure." He staggered back as if hit. "No! . . . So dark . . . cold . . ." With those last words the shade dissipated completely. Scaverous scowled. How much priceless information had been lost because of his limited time with the koldun? But perhaps he had enough to satisfy Malathrax.

Finished annihilating the Destroyer, Erebus leapt with bestial enthusiasm atop the last train car, whose roof buckled under its weight. Its claws sliced through the final rifleman, sending another soul feast to Scaverous.

Through the eyes of his crippled Deathripper, Scaverous saw Khadorans gathering outside the distant forward section of the train. Blasts of necromantic fire indicated the iron lich overseers were at work, but they would not be able to hold the defenders long. Scaverous could not simply abandon the remaining Greylord corpses at his feet. He triggered Avernus and quickly carved through the necks of several ranking Greylords, tucking their heads into his ribcage before leaping down from the car.

Scaverous rushed for the cave entrance, waving for Erebus and Wrathé to follow. He waited only for the bulk of his forces before he collapsed the opening of the tunnel behind them. Even as he turned to make his way back to Cryx feeling pangs of regret that he had not salvaged more from the funeral car, his thoughts were already on the work ahead of him in his laboratory.





He reported to Lich Lord Malathrax at a small underground complex amid the mountains southwest of Hellspass, among the Thundercliff Peaks. He was startled to see that the eldritch Goreshade had joined the lich lord. A sizable contingent of bane thralls and knights stood watch on the surface guarding the cavern's various entrances. Bane Lord Tartarus drifted among the banes like a king of the dead, paying the lord exhumator no attention.

Scaverous offered the barest courtesies to Goreshade. Although he respected the eldritch's skill, it was unclear how Goreshade ranked in the Cryxian halls of power and which lich lord he served—if any. Both these matters made Scaverous uncomfortable, but Malathrax indicated Goreshade would join them as an expert on matters Iosan. The eldritch listened closely as Scaverous related the details of what he had learned from the shade of the koldun lord as well as from subsequent interrogations of the other corpses.

"I need time for a thorough examination of the remaining Greylords. I expect to discover useful details regarding the Iosan attack. I do not expect to learn much about this Nyss relic they were studying, however; it seems Kommander Zerkova kept those details to herself. The relic emanated extreme cold, but it was resistant to examination and they learned little else. Given their use of winter magic it's understandable the Greylords found it fascinating."

Lich Lord Malathrax pondered this and turned to Goreshade. "Your assessment of the attackers?" Scaverous suspected he was testing the eldritch.

Goreshade answered without hesitation. "The Retribution of Scyrah. From the forces described by the dead, it would seem the Dawnguard has joined them, with myrmidons. This means Houses Nyarr and Shyeel have stopped pretending they are not bound to that once-outlawed sect. There is desperation in the halls of power in Ios."

Malathrax seemed satisfied at this answer. "What of this Nyss relic? Can you identify its nature or why the Retribution of Scyrah risked so much to acquire it?"

"No. Its connection to the Nyss might be enough for them."

Malathrax's mask clicked over to become a serene child. "That this relic was sent to Skirov is fortuitous." He turned to Scaverous and said, "Goreshade and I were planning an attack on the garrison there, seeking to draw Khadoran attention away from Hellspass while Lich Lord Venethrax begins the tedious process of moving his prize. Now there may be a better way. Why expend our resources when we

can use the Retribution as a diversion? They are already stirring in Khador. They may strike again for a chance to recover a relic so important to them."

Goreshade spoke again. "My lord, I do not think we should abandon our plans. If the Retribution can be manipulated into attacking Skirov, the ensuing confusion may provide the opportunity to acquire the relic ourselves. I volunteer to lead that effort. Our forces stand ready."

Lich Lord Malathrax waved an iron-clawed hand indulgently. "Very well. I am skeptical whether this relic has any real value; bring it to me when you secure it. Lord Exhumator, assist Venethrax once he begins to move. For now, continue your examination of the remaining Greylords. Report anything you find."

Scaverous inclined his head. "Of course, my lord." He took his leave, hastening toward the laboratory where the rotting heads of several Greylords awaited him. Something in Goreshade's posture and tone when discussing the Nyss relic had struck him as slightly peculiar, but thoughts of such matters quickly faded as he plunged back into his work.





# LORD EXHUMATOR SCAVEROUS

## CRYX WARCASTER

*All secrets are laid bare in the grave, all mysteries revealed when bones are stripped of the flesh.*

—Lord Exhumator Scaverous

SCAVEROUS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	8	6	4	14	17	7



AVERNUS	
POW	P+S
6	14

<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	<b>+5</b>
<b>MEDIUM BASE</b>	

### FEAT: BLACK GATE

*Through profane rites known by only a few masters of necromancy, Lord Exhumator Scaverous tears an opening in the shroud between life and death to release a backlash of foul energies inimical to life. This unholy surge empowers the magics of death wielded by his allies while hindering the feeble arcane efforts of his enemies.*

While in this model's control area, friendly Faction models gain boosted magic attack rolls. When Scaverous casts a spell, reduce the COST of the spell by 1. When an enemy model casts a spell or uses an animus while in Scaverous' control area, increase the COST by 1. Black Gate lasts for one round.

### SCAVEROUS

**Terror**

**Undead**

**Cull Soul** – This model gains one soul token for each living enemy model destroyed within 2" of it. When this model replenishes its focus during your next Control Phase, replace each soul token on it with 1 focus point.

### AVERNUS

**Magical Weapon**

**Reach**

**Thresher (★ Attack)** – This model makes one melee attack with this weapon against each model in its LOS and this weapon's melee range.

Soldiers of the Iron Kingdoms hope that if they die in battle their deaths will be quick, granting release from agony. Those who fall beneath the reaping blade of Scaverous, the Lord Exhumator of Cryx, are denied even that final hope. While fierce in battle, it is his command of Cryxian necromancy that makes him truly formidable. The souls of the dead are both ammunition and fuel for Scaverous. Those slain and cast aside are fortunate compared to any possessed of special lore, whose skulls and souls he preserves for horrific necromantic interrogation.

Scaverous has served the Nightmare Empire for many centuries. His mortal life as a historian and arcanist who dabbled in the black arts was but a harbinger of the work that has consumed him since. Bestowed the gift of undeath for his obsession with and skillful pursuit of knowledge, Scaverous was immediately put to work, first in the Archive of Skell and later abroad to gather intelligence. He spent decades specializing in those exacting necromantic arts

### SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
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**DEATH WARD** 2 6 – – YES NO  
Target friendly Faction model/unit gains +2 ARM. If an affected warjack is damaged, you choose which column suffers the damage.

**EXCARNATE** 3 10 – 13 NO YES  
When a living enemy warrior model is boxed by Excarnate, remove it from play. You can then add one Grunt to a friendly Faction small-based undead unit in this model's control area. The Grunt must be placed in formation and within 3" of this model.

**FEAST OF WORMS** 4 10 4 12 YES YES  
While in the AOE, enemy models suffer -2 ARM. The AOE remains in play as long as upkeep is paid.

**GHOST WALK** 3 6 – – NO NO  
Target friendly model/unit gains Ghostly for one turn. (A model with Ghostly can advance through terrain and obstacles without penalty and can advance through obstructions if it has enough movement to move completely past them. An affected model cannot be targeted by free strikes.)

**ICY GRIP** 2 8 – – YES YES  
Target enemy warrior model/unit without Immunity: Cold ❄️ suffers -2 DEF and cannot run or make special attacks.

**TELEKINESIS** 2 8 – – NO \*  
Place target model completely within 2" of its current location. When Telekinesis targets an enemy model, it is an offensive spell and requires a magic attack roll. A model can be affected by Telekinesis only once per turn.

### TACTICAL TIP

**CULL SOUL** – A model can have more focus points than its Focus as a result of Cull Soul.

**THRESHER** – The melee attacks are all simultaneous.

**EXCARNATE** – The boxed model does not provide a soul or corpse token. The new Grunt can activate the turn it is put into play.

required to unbind the tongues of the dead, to manifest their shades from echoes left on their bones and force from them answers to his questions.

Undead immortality has given Scaverous the potential to learn every secret, every piece of lost lore, every forbidden rite lost to history, and he is willing to pay any price for that sum of knowledge. His master, Lich Lord Malathrax, has observed his efforts with approval, particularly as these vital secrets began to result in unmistakable advantages for Cryx. It was because of these gains that Scaverous was gifted with the honor of iron lichdom and entered the Cryxian elite.

Scaverous' experiments have consumed an untold number of corpses and souls. No longer can the whims of a willful spirit deny him information. Through carefully inscribed runes and the manipulation of the energies separating Caen from Urcaen, Scaverous can compel virtually any spirit to give up its memories. He was at the forefront of creating a previously unknown discipline known as forensic







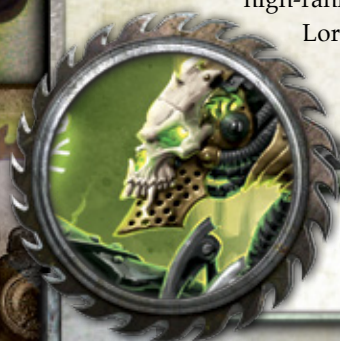
necromancy. These techniques have been passed to a number of the empire's most promising necromancers, all laboring for Lich Lord Malathrax plumbing intelligence from the bodies and souls of the dead. None of these practitioners can approach the accomplishments of Scaverous.

When the Orgoth immolated themselves rather than fall to Toruk's armies, Scaverous was sent to assist Terminus in ransacking the ruins of Drer Drakkerung. The smoldering corpses of the Orgoth held a rich harvest. It was largely through his efforts that so much of their terrible occult secrets fell into the hands of Cryx. When the secrets of the soul cage were extricated from the souls of the Orgoth, the power of the Nightmare Empire grew incalculably. Similarly, only a few lifetimes later it was Scaverous' work on the mainland that yielded up the secrets of the Cygnaran arc node to Cryx.

In his role as the foremost forensic necromancer, Scaverous spends more time lurking in the Iron Kingdoms than many high-ranking undead of Cryx. When Lich Lord Malathrax requires the retrieval of

valuable corpses or other well-protected necromantic items it is Scaverous and his helljacks he sends. Scaverous relishes these opportunities, as he has an insatiable hunger for lore. He has been accused by certain peers of a tendency to be distracted down odd byways in his pursuit of potential information, but many times this habit has allowed him to pluck loose the keys to the most deeply buried mysteries.

He has acquired many secrets and pieces of information he holds entirely to himself and has not shared even with Malathrax, as he savors the delight of conversations with the dead to which only he is privy. He secretly longs not only to learn as much as possible but to hoard that information as his own. Nothing gives Scaverous greater satisfaction than knowing that which all others have forgotten. The moment he is exposed to lore unknown to him, he feels driven to explore it in its full scope and depth. His thirst for lore is insatiable, and he keeps a number of his favored repositories—the skulls of his subjects—with him at all times, held within the ribcage of his torso. He has been seen muttering and plotting with them, speaking to voices only he can hear.



## LORD EXHUMATOR SCAVEROUS FUNERAL RITES

**WARJACKS:** Cryx non-character warjacks, Deathjack, Erebus

**UNITS:** Mechanithralls, Necrosurgeon & Stitch Thralls, Cryx units with Magic Ability

**SOLOS:** Necrotechs, Scrap Thralls, Skarlock Thrall, Cryx solos with Magic Ability, Wraith solos

**BATTLE ENGINES:** Wraith Engine

### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** For every helljack in the army, add one Necrotech solo to the army free of cost. These solos ignore FA restrictions. Free Scrap Thralls are not included along with the Necrotech.

### TIER 2

**Requirements:** The army includes the Withershadow Combine.

**Benefit:** Models in this army with Soul Taker each begin with one soul token.

### TIER 3

**Requirements:** The army includes one or more Wraith Engine battle engines.

**Benefit:** Wraith solos in the army gain Advance Deployment (A).

### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Scaverous' battlegroup includes Erebus.

**Benefit:** Your deployment zone is extended 2" forward.

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There are few who can claim to truly understand the lord exhumator. Even among the horrors of Cryx he is something of an outsider, as his necromantic peers judge his absorption and preference for conversing with the ancient dead to be a rather uncouth obsession. In Scaverous' estimation, though, all other conversations pale in comparison, even those with the most learned of the undead. Secretly he longs to gain access to the skulls of Cryx's own lich lords, each of whom he knows to be a treasure trove of accumulated occult lore, although he is careful to keep such desires hidden lest they be mistaken for treasonous ambition.

Scaverous feels no qualms about indulging in carnage in the pursuit of his goal. The living are less than uninteresting to him; they cannot be properly processed until they are dead. It is often expedient to pry secrets from a freshly gathered soul, and on occasion Scaverous is tasked with capturing, killing, and interrogating such individuals. In other circumstances a target corpse is ancient and well protected deep in enemy heartlands. Scaverous personally leads hand-selected battlegroups to acquire these subjects. The further Cryx can extend its reach, the easier it becomes to venture into previously untapped graveyards and tombs, thus opening a wealth of lore to the lord exhumator. Every skull he gathers is an inexhaustible tome in his private library.



Scaverous has access to singularly potent death magic, refined over centuries. Through the exertion of his will he can weaken the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead, causing a surge in the black energies upon which necromancy thrives in order to augment his own arcane power while sapping that of any who stand against him. He has also mastered a technique whereby he can seize the energy of a freshly harvested soul to immediately reassemble and animate a fallen undead warrior in his army. These terrible acts are nothing to an entity as dedicated to unearthing the secrets of the grave as Scaverous. No atrocity can be committed in the pursuit of such an encompassing knowledge.





# SCAVENGER

## CRYX BONEJACK

*It is the hunger of the grave given form.*

—Lich Lord Asphyxious

### SCAVENGER

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
7	7	7	4	16	13	—



### SNAPPING JAWS

POW	P+S
4	11

### DAMAGE

1 2 3 4 5 6

H	C	C	C	C	M
H	H	M	M		

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	4
MEDIUM BASE	

### SCAVENGER

**Finisher** – This model gains an additional die on damage rolls against damaged models.

**Flight** – This model can advance through terrain and obstacles without penalty and can advance through obstructions and other models if it has enough movement to move completely past them. This model ignores intervening models when declaring its charge target.

**Sprint** – At the end of this model's activation, if it destroyed one or more enemy models with melee attacks this activation it can make a full advance.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 6' 4" / 1.5 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** SNAPPING JAWS (HEAD)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 35 LBS NECROTITE, 61 LBS COAL / 18 HRS GENERAL, 3 HRS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** UNKNOWN

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** UNKNOWN

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** UNKNOWN

The living denizens of western Immoren learned long ago to watch for death rising from beneath the ground, but now they are discovering that it also stalks them from darkening skies. Scavengers descend into the ranks of man's armies, driving them before their ragged mechanical wings and snapping beaks.

Foul necrotechs imbue the cortex of each Scavenger with an insatiable hunger for flesh and steel. Scavengers hunt for living victims, whose flesh they shred before returning to the air dripping trails of gore. The bonejacks take an unwholesome joy in seeking out the wounded and the dying, not content to pick flesh from the dead like the vultures they resemble.





—*Gorshade the Cursed*

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# EREBUS

## CRYX CHARACTER HELLJACK

*It hungers for death, for souls to feed its master.*

—*Master Necrotech Mortenebra*

EREBUS							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	10	7	5	14	18	—	



DEATH CLAW	
POW	P+S
6	16



DEATH CLAW	
POW	P+S
6	16

			DAMAGE			
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		L			R	
L	L	M	C	R		R
		M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	8
LARGE BASE	

damage roll, the POW of the damage roll is equal to this model's STR plus twice the POW of this weapon.

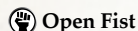
## EREBUS

**Affinity [Scaverous] –** When this model destroys a living enemy model while in Scaverous' control area, Scaverous gains the destroyed model's soul token.

**Overtake** – When this model destroys one or more enemy warrior models with a normal melee attack, after the attack is resolved this model can immediately advance up to 1”.

**Poltergeist** – When an enemy model misses this model with an attack, immediately after the attack is resolved you can choose to push the enemy model d3" directly away from this model.

## DEATH CLAW



**Combo Strike (★Attack)** –  
Make a melee attack.

Instead of making a normal

Every helljack possesses a terrible hunger for violence, but the insatiable bloodlust of the machine called Erebus marks it out even among the Cryxians. Born of Skell's black iron forges, Erebus knows only the hunger of its master, Lord Exhumator Scaveros, and the desire to serve him. It moves on the battlefield with the dark intent of a predator, murdering all in its path and gathering their souls to fuel Scaveros' arcane powers. The unclean channels of its cortex hum with savage instincts, and its black iron claws twitch endlessly, even when Erebus sits idle.

Scavorous spared none of his considerable acumen in the necromantic arts when he set about constructing his iron servant. He performed powerful rituals and desecrations upon the 'jack's inert chassis, shaping and twisting its consciousness. The machineries of soul extraction lie buried beneath its armored plates.

## TACTICAL TIPS

**AFFINITY [SCAVEROUS]** – Because Scaverous is the model gaining the soul token, use his location when determining which model eligible to claim the destroyed model’s soul token is closest to it.

**COMBO STRIKE** – This ability cannot be used while either of this model's arm systems is locked. A model with a crippled weapon system cannot use it to make chain attacks or special attacks, including power attacks.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT: 11'10" / 6.5 TONS**

**ARMAMENT:** TWIN DEATH CLAWS (LEFT AND RIGHT ARMS)

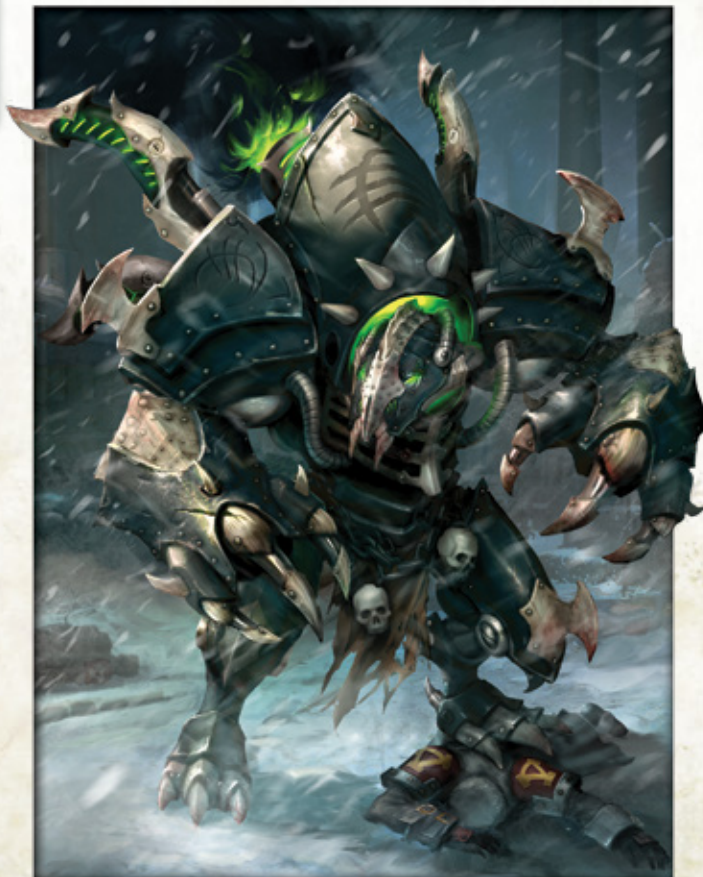
**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 100 LBS NECROTITE, 205 LBS COAL / 12 HRS GENERAL, 2 HRS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** UNKNOWN

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER: UNKNOWN**

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN: UNKNOWN**

The lives Erebus has claimed leave the helljack steeped in the spiritual detritus of a thousand bloody deaths. Invisible to most, this spectral effluvium envelops the machine, lashing out at those who strike its blackened carapace. No weapon of man can repel Erebus, any more than the sharpest steel can stop the inevitable slide into the grave.





—*Lich Lord Terminus*



control of the other warjack, turning it on its companions before they escape into the wilds of Urcaen.

MALICE							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	10	7	6	13	17	—	

BARBED HARPOON				
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW	
8	1	—	14	

DEATH CLAW	
POW	P+S
6	16

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	





# REVENANT CREW RIFLEMAN

## CRYX WEAPON ATTACHMENT

*Still as death and with cold eyes unblinking, they have aim regrettably true, lads.*

—Jan Herreo, bosun's mate

RIFLEMAN							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	6	5	4	13	12	7	



LONG RIFLE			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	—	10



CUTLASS	
POW	P+S
3	9

<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 RIFLEMAN</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>UP TO 2 ADDITIONAL</b>	<b>1 EA</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### Attachment [Revenant Crew of the Atramentous] –

This attachment can be added to a Revenant Crew of the *Atramentous* unit.

### RIFLEMAN

☑ Combined Ranged Attack

☠ Undead

**Death Ties** – If this model is destroyed while in formation, return it to play at the beginning of your next Maintenance Phase. Place it within 3" of the unit commander. If the unit commander leaves play

before this model returns to play, then remove this model from play before choosing a new unit commander.

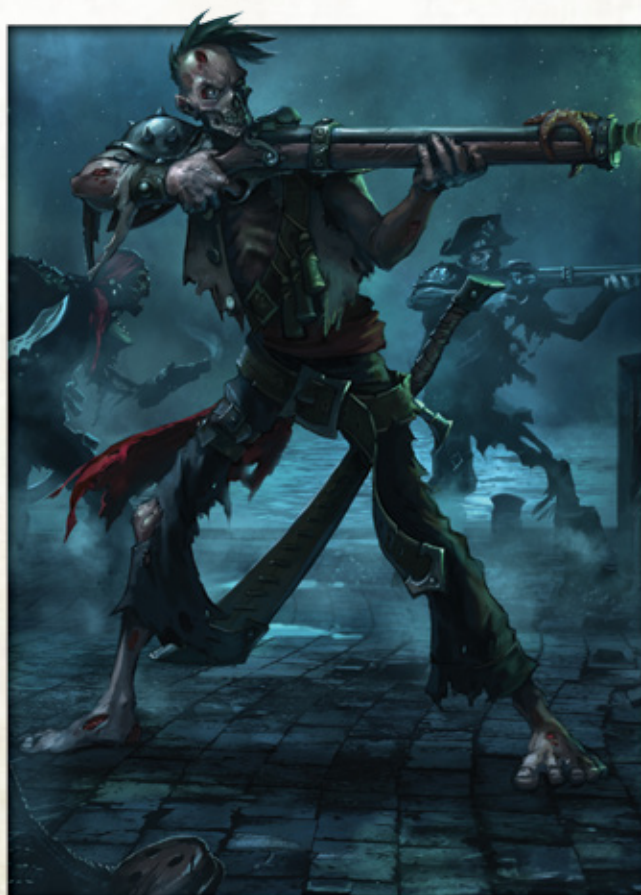
**Gang** – When making a melee attack targeting an enemy model in melee range of another model in this unit, this model gains +2 to melee attack and melee damage rolls.

**Point Blank** – During its activation, this model can make melee attacks with its ranged weapon, with a 0.5" melee range. Do not add this model's STR to damage rolls made with ranged weapons. Charge attacks made with ranged weapons are not boosted.

The slow appearance of riflemen among the crews of the Ghost Fleet is a disturbing, if subtle, hint that even the dead can adapt. As the revenant crew has grown over time, an increasing number of the cursed sailors of the *Atramentous* have carried their weapons with them into undeath. Additionally, other members of the ghostly crew have claimed weapons from the hands of their victims, who grasped them as they died. The same unnatural curse that preserves the revenants from destruction also protects their weapons from total dissolution. Once a weapon falls into the hands of a revenant, it will be jealously guarded for eternity.

The riflemen are important members of the Ghost Fleet's terrifying crews. Often found high in the riggings, they display great skill in shooting down their victims from aloft, and they prove terribly effective in boarding parties and shore attacks. Scattered among the ranks of other revenants, riflemen pick off enemy officers and forward scouts, eliminating the possibility of such foes reporting whatever intelligence they may have gathered.

The support of just a few riflemen turns a band of Cryx's unliving pirates into truly nightmarish opponents and extends the range of the pernicious revenants beyond that of their typical victims. When the time comes for the revenants to make their final assault, the riflemen accompany them, jumping over the bow or through an island fort's gates. They cackle eerily as they take aim and fire their ghostly shot into the swirling melee. The luckiest victims die instantly; those who are only wounded may awaken aboard a cursed ship, at the mercy of a damned crew, offered the dire choice to join or perish.





# IRON LICH OVERSEER

## CRYX SOLO

*In time, all serve Lord Toruk. No soul escapes his notice, no battle his attention, no shed blood his thirst.*

—Iron Lich Vociferon



### TACTICAL TIP

**MAGIC ABILITY** – Performing a Magic Ability special action or special attack counts as casting a spell.

An iron lich overseer exists to extend the will of its masters and their machines beyond their ordinary reach. It slowly turns as the battle unfolds to allow each of its three faces to survey the enemy as it unleashes volleys of soul-claiming arcane fire, all the while hissing commands to the helljacks that follow it to war. These machines draw on the vitality of the souls they harvest to fight with terrible ferocity.

The first overseers were created in the aftermath of the annihilation of Drer Drakkerung, when the Orgoth war witches unleashed unparalleled destruction upon the Cryxian army. The lich lords left no tool to decay, no matter how badly damaged. This included powerful necromancers who had suffered massive physical and mental trauma but were not entirely destroyed. Because of their unique skills and arcane talents a method was found to preserve them.

The restructured liches are composite beings with a single body and a unified consciousness. The restoration



### OVERSEER

- ★ Commander
- ★ Jack Marshal
- ★ Terror
- ★ Undead

**Circular Vision** – This model's front arc extends to 360°.

**Magic Ability [7]**

- **Cloak of Darkness (★Action)** – This model gains Stealth (👁️). While warjacks this model controls are B2B with it, they also gain Stealth. Cloak of Darkness lasts for one round.
- **Dark Fire (★Attack)** – Dark Fire is a RNG 10, POW 12 magic attack. When a living enemy model is destroyed by Dark Fire, this model gains its soul token regardless of the proximity of other models.

**Soul Matrix** – While in this model's command range during their activation, warjacks controlled by this model can spend soul tokens on this model to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per attack or boost.

**Soul Taker** – This model gains one soul token when a living enemy model is destroyed within 2" of it. This model can have up to three soul tokens at a time. During its activation, this model can spend soul tokens to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per attack or boost.

### FELL STAFF

- 🔮 Magical Weapon
- 🔮 Reach

OVERSEER							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	7	6	3	14	16	9	

FELL STAFF			
POW		P+S	
6		13	

<b>DAMAGE</b>	8
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	2
<b>POINT COST</b>	3
<b>MEDIUM BASE</b>	

process ensures some degree of cooperation, and in time these competing personalities merge into a single mind—undeniably insane, but with heightened awareness as well as amplified cognitive and arcane powers. Following the success of these initial experiments, the lich lords began using the consciousness-blending process as a means of punishing effective but willful servants.

At its core, an overseer is powered by a complex necromechanical apparatus known as a soul matrix, which allows it a nearly unparalleled affinity with the warjacks it commands. Given the divided state of the overseer's mind, fueling this power requires a continuous influx of the souls of the slain.



# WRAITH ENGINE

## CRYX BATTLE ENGINE

*It is no mere machine; it is a force of destruction sent to consume our enemies, body and soul.*

—Master Necrotech Mortenebra

WRAITH ENGINE							
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD	
6	10	7	4	10	18	10	



### SCYTHING BLADE

POW	P+S
5	15



### SCYTHING BLADE

POW	P+S
5	15

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HUGE BASE</b>	

AOE cloud effects on the table anywhere completely within its command range, one AOE per soul token spent. The cloud effect remains in play for one round.

**Soul Collector** – This model gains one soul token when a living enemy model is destroyed in its command range. This model can have up to three soul tokens at a time. During its activation, this model can spend soul tokens to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per attack or boost.

**Unhallowed** – While another friendly Faction model is Incorporeal (☠) and in this model's command range, the other friendly Faction model gains +2 ARM and does not suffer blast damage.

**Wraith Walker** – At the end of your Control Phase, this model can gain Incorporeal (☠) for one round unless it gained Incorporeal during the last round.

### SCYTHING BLADE

☞ Reach

The Wraith Engine is an imposing testament to the raw power and perverse brilliance of Cryx. Unleashed upon the enemies of the Dragonfather, it is guided by a malignant intelligence bound to diabolical machineries. It lurches across the battlefield with the terrifying clamor of grinding steel and the incessant wailing of the discarnate dead caged within its frame. Untethered to a fixed, cohesive form, the Wraith Engine slips between spectral and corporeal states, sometimes seeming to vanish from the world entirely only to reappear elsewhere, all the while sowing death and despair throughout the enemy's ranks.

The living are wise to flee the Wraith Engine. Those who do not are cut down like wheat before the scythe, their souls reaped to feed its hideous engines. Each part of the machine is inhabited by tortured, fragmented spirits trapped for eternity within its confines. It is suffused with the power of the grave; an echo of the Void manifests in its presence and strengthens the ghostly dead that

### WRAITH ENGINE

☠ Terror

☠ Undead

**Apparition** – During your Control Phase, place this model anywhere completely within 2" of its current location.

**Dark Shroud** – While in this model's melee range, enemy models suffer –2 ARM.

**Ectoplasm** – During this model's activation, it can spend one or more soul tokens to place 3"

### TACTICAL TIP

**WRAITH WALKER** – This model loses Incorporeal when it makes a melee or ranged attack.

walk in its shadow. Its malignance saps the vitality of the physical world, rotting iron and spoiling flesh that ventures too closely.

The Wraith Engine's present form draws on knowledge gleaned from centuries of necromantic research and refinement; Cryxian scholars have extensively studied the nature of the Void and the dread underpinnings of occult power. Lich Lord Tenebrous has stood at the forefront of these efforts, never hesitating to coerce and threaten the most brilliant and depraved minds of the Scharde Islands to labor on his private projects. In the Wraith Engine they succeeded in creating a terrible machine that draws power from refined necrotite and from the pure, malevolent energies of the Void to distort the very fabric of the physical world.

Cryxian necrotechs ritually sacrificed hundreds of living victims in the creation of the Wraith Engine, employing an exacting process that bound the spirits within the machine's numerous receptive components. Necrotechs had etched these mechanisms with blasphemous, binding runes, amalgamating the spirits into a collective machine intelligence loyal only to its Cryxian masters. Its animating souls forsaken by the gods and suffering unimaginable torment, the nascent construct seeks only to murder the living and glut itself on their souls.

As this hideous apparatus powers up, it begins to oscillate between the physical world and the nightmare of the Void. Tendrils of shadow manifest around it, feasting upon light itself as the engine roars. Merely the presence of this abomination wounds the mortal world. The raw energies of the Void manifest in the air around the machine, clouding its victims' eyes and weakening their resilience. Knowing the Wraith Engine's mindless thirst for death will never be slaked, its masters keep it chained until it can feast unhindered on the field of battle.









# RETRIBUTION OF SCYRAH

## PRIDE OR REDEMPTION

Northeastern Khador, 608 AR

At Lord Arcanist Ossyan's urging, the myrmidon Hypnos fired a metal sphere from its shoulder turret at the satyr. The shot exploded into the bipedal goat creature with tremendous power, sending rippling waves of black energy to tear through two of the spear-wielding humans charging alongside it. Empowered by internal arcanikal emitters, the projectile had been surrounded by a pulsing nimbus of shadowy energy that sapped the satyr's energy and left it bewildered as Ossyan's Banshee closed to impale its chest with a heavy void blade. The smaller blade in its other hand followed immediately. The myrmidon stepped back as the massive beast staggered, bleeding profusely, and fell twitching to the snow-covered earth.

Looking for other enemies, the lord arcanist regretfully observed the battle was ended. Human and beast corpses lay across the rugged hills. Ravyn swept her weapon Hellebore through the last of the foes, hooded humans wearing bronzed armor. Her myrmidons were shattering a profusion of ornately carved pillars of stone surrounding the clearing; the mage hunters took up positions around the perimeter, crossbows in hand.

"They were not much of a threat," he said. He had expected his first clash outside Ios would be more involved.

Ravyn's expression was cold. "Do not underestimate druids; they have given us trouble before. These we caught by surprise."

He nodded thoughtfully and said, "You fight well."

Showing no reaction to his compliment, she glanced at the downed satyr behind him and his bulky myrmidons with their unusual weaponry, entirely different from those employed by House Shyeel. She said, "You have proven you know how to kill. But it will take more than that to demonstrate you are a true friend of the Retribution."

Ossyan had joined her only a few days before and found her suspicion grating. She was determined to think the worst of him. "I would think you would see the value of another Hallytyr assisting your cause." He spoke of

House Vyre, one of the ruling houses of Ios, albeit one whose reputation had suffered in recent decades.

"Other Hallytyr did not provoke the War of Houses." He felt his face redden. "House Vyre will find no warmth from those of us who fought in that needless war." She stared with menacing intensity.

Ossyan had anticipated hostility, but it surprised him how little time had diminished the hatred. House Vyre had purged itself of all remnants of those dark days and had done all they could to prove their worth to Ios. He inclined his head. "Most of us were not villains. I fought for my house because I was young and thought it my duty to follow orders."

Ravyn stepped toward him with a scowl. "Every member of House Vyre is responsible for those atrocities." Hypnos stepped forward protectively alongside Ossyan and stared at Ravyn with clenched fists. She ignored it.

Ossyan compelled the myrmidon to back away. He said, "Those who did not obey were executed. Should we all have fallen on our blades?"

"Perhaps it would have been better if you had." After a moment something in her eyes relented and she looked away, as if she felt she had gone too far.

The lord arcanist had not spoken the entire truth. Although he had never bloodied his hands on innocents, he had stood silent during Ghyrrshyld's "experiments." He had seen children taken into laboratories, never to return. Only some had been soulless. Like others, he had thought the experiments were a necessary expedient for their race's salvation. They had not understood the depths of Ghyrrshyld's madness. Ossyan felt no need to share this private shame. "All I ask is for a chance at redemption—not only for myself but for the Vyre soldiers now pledged to the Retribution."

Ravyn straightened and sighed. "The assistance of your house is welcome, but absolution is not mine to grant. Scyrah will judge you in the end." The words cut



through him. She signaled to one of her ranking mage hunters. "Strike Force Commander Nyshyl, attend."

The woman was extremely lean. Everything was sharp-edged about her: her features, her short and spiked hair, even her demeanor. She bowed to Ravyn. "Yes, Eternal Light?"

"This is Lord Arcanist Ossyan Vyre. Include him on your patrols." To Ossyan she said, "Heed Nyshyl's counsel; she knows this area and you do not. My opinion of you depends on her assessment when next we meet." Ossyan locked eyes with Nyshyl and found them flinty.

Ossyan said, "Patrol? I thought the force I brought might be put to better use."

Ravyn's smile was prim. "Khador is vast. Your bumbling might draw the Greylords out. I go west to Khardov. Station your soldiers at the Klywen base. Should I need your myrmidons, I will send word." She turned her back on him in dismissal, and he swallowed a retort.



Ossyan learned in the days ahead that most of the sect's mage hunters were in Khador, desperately searching for the once-shunned god of the Nyss, the father of winter. The god's frozen vault could be anywhere; Khador was ten times the size of Ios, and a third was rugged mountains.

After days of marching in silence Nyshyl eventually began to ask questions. Most seemed to suggest her disapproval. When on the eighth day she asked, "How did you manage the crossing into Khador?" he heard the unspoken addition, *"... given you are utterly incapable of subtlety and were accompanied by noisy myrmidons."*

He answered, "We used tunnels near Laedry, an abandoned human mine that intersected an older web of caves."

"Loathsome things lurk in those depths. I am surprised you made the journey without incident. Fortune favors you." Here she implied, *"Those with luck have no need of skill."*

Ossyan spoke automatically. "Fate dances on puppet strings for those who weave reality's skein."

She looked at him and asked, "A House Vyre maxim?"

"Yes. Our house makes its own luck." The actual explanation was more involved, but he expected she had no interest in esoteric philosophy.

Before she could reply a sound to the northwest caught their attention. Nyshyl readied her crossbow and slipped away with her mage hunters, communicating in silent signals with their hands. Ossyan hastened to follow. The ease with which the mage hunters glided between trees and thorny undergrowth made him feel clumsy. He gathered his

inner power to shift his perception of reality, of the flow of time, and executed a technique allowing him to slide through small gaps in the ordered sequence of moments. This greatly accelerated the speed of his steps and reactions. He bade his myrmidons follow more cautiously.

He almost ran past one of the mage hunters hunkered behind a fallen log watching through a break in the trees ahead. Down a short incline and along a thin, winding stream a conflict was ending. By the stream lay the mutilated bodies of a half-dozen Winter Guard. A Greylord was scrambling up the bank followed by hulking, shadowy forms. The Greylord tripped and fell.

One of the pursuers raised a heavy serrated axe over his head and brought it down with a meaty thunk. "Bane thralls," hissed one of the mage hunters. Amid the shadowy undead was a gaunt shape, lacking the thick and heavy plated armor of the others. It was a walking corpse with pallid skin traced by countless unsavory black runes. Ossyan's studies told him this must be a skarlock thrall. The creature snatched a satchel from the fallen Greylord, then hissed indistinct words and waved to the trees on the opposite bank.

"Strike!" Ossyan called without hesitation. His senses and reactions were still augmented by the time-slipping invocation, and he shot forward from between the trees as a blur. Several of the less experienced mage hunters obediently fired crossbows, but their bolts went astray, lost in the shadows surrounding the armored dead. Nyshyl ordered, "Get closer before firing or strike with blades!"

The warcaster felt naked without his myrmidons, which were still pushing through the trees, but he knew he could not wait. He extended his left fist, covered by the massive machinery of his chronophage cannon, and fired a blast at the skarlock. The focusing orb of his cannon blazed like a miniature sun as an energy lance pierced the creature and exploded an unfolding ripple of disruptive field energies, slowing the nearest bane thralls. The skarlock crumpled as the burning lance seared a hole through its chest.

The bane thralls hissed and turned to confront him, eyes gleaming green with baleful light. He did not hesitate, emboldened by his augmented reflexes as well as his armor's power field. The curved blade of Locus carved cleanly through the nearest thrall. He easily dodged two incoming axe blows, but one attacker anticipated his shift to the left. He felt its axe's edge bite through his power field and nearly through his warcaster armor. He finished the thrall with a wild sideways slash. The mage hunters fought smoothly side by side to eliminate the rest.

Ossyan's hands shook as he looked down at the deep notch carved into his armor. He felt an unnatural cold seeping into his skin from where the thrall's axe had





nearly penetrated, but there was no blood. Nyshyl gave him an inscrutable look, but her slight nod conveyed grudging respect.

His myrmidons smashed through the undergrowth on the opposite shore. Hypnos leapt across the stream to arrive at his side, its posture suggesting affront that he had put himself in harm's way. Ossyan set the myrmidons to sweeping the nearest trees for additional Cryx. The mage hunters followed suit, with only Nyshyl lingering. She said, "We have never run into Cryx in this area."

Ossyan's eye fell on the satchel the skarlock had stolen from the Greylord. He tore open a flap and found a thick stack of papers stamped with official sigils. He broke the seals and flipped through the papers, discovering he could make no sense of the writing. "This isn't Khadoran," he said as the mage hunter approached. "It looks similar, but

it's nonsense." He handed her the documents. She studied them in silence, pausing only when a subordinate approached to report the nearby woods clear of Cryx.

Finally Nyshyl looked up. "They are ciphered. We broke this code years ago."

"Are the contents relevant?" Ossyan felt his pulse rising.

Nyshyl hesitated before replying, "One is from the Greylord Zerkova to subordinates in Skirov. It mentions needing to personally confirm safe delivery of a vital research specimen. It is vague, but . . ." She looked up at him. "This may be just the clue we were seeking."

Ossyan's mind was already hurtling ahead. "What do we know of the Greylords in Skirov?"

"They have no significant presence there that we knew of. Greylords prefer to hide their laboratories underground; this one might have gone unnoticed by our agents. Intelligence suggests Zerkova lacks the cooperation of her superiors, so she may have kept this secret even from them." She swallowed. "We must inform Ravyn."

She made as if to move, but he seized her arm. "Wait!" She looked down at his hand and he released her. "How strong is the Khadoran Army in Skirov?"

"A modest force," she answered reluctantly. "Less than a thousand, spread between several district and outer wall outposts as well as the central garrison. Mostly Winter Guard, although they do have warjacks. A prison called Khardstadt outside the city has its own garrison, including Widowmakers. Why?"

Ossyan felt gathering potential, with a tingling in his fingertips and a blurring around the edge of his vision. His family line had the power of occasional divination and prophecy. He felt certain that events conspired to place him here, now. When he had set forth from Ios he had told himself he would risk his life to achieve acclaim and respect for House Vyre and erase the stain of the War of Houses. He had not thought he would be tested so soon.



He looked her in the eyes and used his most persuasive voice. "We must seize this opportunity. We do not know how long until Zerkova arrives, and the Greylords may notice their courier missing. Ravyn is hundreds of miles away. My soldiers are close and ready for battle."

Her eyes widened, and she shook her head. "You do not have enough men. Even if you did, this is too large a matter for you to decide."

"We have myrmidons of House Vyre! We have soldiers prepared to lay down their lives! Skirov has a town garrison, likely fat and lazy so far from the front line. We do not need to defeat them all, only break through to our objective. If we strike hard and fast, they will withdraw. I can make that happen." He held a hand up and summoned a swirling mirror-bright orb of energy that caused her hair to stand on end as a tickling sensation crawled across exposed skin. "We will not fail," he said as the orb faded and he lowered his hand.

The display unsettled her, and she looked between him and his myrmidons. "If we cannot locate Ravyn, we should look for Lord Vyros of the Dawnguard or another ranking leader."

Frustrated, he stepped closer to her and spoke with almost-manic intensity. "Sometimes individuals shape history at moments called crisis points. Momentum gathers through the flow of time—through a sequence of events—like the water in a river that swells after a rain. Some people can ride this flow, direct it. Those who shape the world are those who make bold decisions when the pressure of history is behind them. *Everything* hinges on these decisions. Those whose will fails them at these crisis points invite disaster." As he spoke he was remembering when he should have trusted his conscience and exposed Ghyrrshyld, early in the War of Houses. He had quailed, and thousands had suffered. He would not repeat that mistake. "We have found our goal. I will return to Klywen, gather my house, and begin the attack—with or without you."



As Ossyan readied his house soldiers, Nyshyl pulled aside one of her most trusted mage hunters. "You must take word to our superiors. Kaelyssa, Garryth, or another senior strike force leader. Be swift, and impress upon them the urgency."

He stared at her and asked, "Are you joining him in this madness? We should let him fail alone."

"I tried to warn him we do not know enough about Skirov. I pressed for time to gather more information, but he refused." She shook her head. "Despite this, if Nyssor is here I must witness what transpires. Our leaders must know what happens so they can pick up the trail."

He nodded grimly. She pressed the satchel they had recovered from the Greylord courier into his hands and watched him rush away.



Within hours of Ossyan's return, the Vyre houseguard were ready to march toward Skirov. The artificers had even completed one of the Arcantrik Force Generators they had brought from Ios in pieces. These were among the major weapons House Vyre had brought to the Retribution, and the House Vyre consul had ordered Ossyan to demonstrate their power as soon as possible.

Nyshyl stared in awe at the apparatus, which towered to twice the height of the myrmidons. Enjoying her reaction, Ossyan explained that the underlying mechanisms were not dissimilar from the great field generators utilized by House Aiesyn to maneuver giant blocks of stone, or from those subsequently modified by Shyeel for assembling warjack components. House Vyre had adapted Shyeel technology to manifest and hurl tremendously destructive fields of force across the battlefield. The crew manipulated these rending fields via linked control apparatus in their gauntlets, which they could also use to temporarily negate the pull of gravity on the machine. It could float several feet off the ground when in transit or repositioning from one firing location to another. It did slightly slow their march on Skirov, but only marginally.

As the assault on Skirov proceeded, Ossyan quickly showed his skill at anticipating the enemy. When the defenders saw them approach, they sealed their gates and began to fire the wall cannons. Ossyan sent his myrmidons to shatter the main gatehouse as mage hunters clambered over the wall to neutralize cannon crews. His houseguard riflemen advanced in disciplined teams, forcing the Khadorans to hunker down or be shot off the battlements. Several old Juggernauts and Destroyers emerged from the splintered gates to retaliate but were met by the armor-piercing shots of heavy rifle teams. Hypnos and Ossyan's other heavy myrmidons fired field-empowered weaponry and closed to finish the Khadoran 'jacks. Arcanists quickly mobilized to replace damaged myrmidon components and weld rents in armor.

Houseguard halberdiers rushed through the remains of the gates to storm the stairs and seize the battlements. The Winter Guard riflemen retreated to other positions, firing sporadically. The Arcantrik Force Generator levitated forward and settled into firing position. Its arms flexed, and swirling field forces gathered as the generator wheel spun and sparked. This energy was unleashed to sunder stone with rending blasts of power, causing panic and chaos among the outer defenders.



Ossyan and his myrmidons advanced to confront reinforcements rushing toward them along the main street. The lord arcanist invoked energy runes to augment the projectiles fired from his myrmidons. Where they tore apart Winter Guard, those soldiers exploded with such tremendous kinetic force they shredded through their nearby peers. Halberdiers marched forward behind overlapping shields to close on those who remained.

Nyshyl joined him as riflemen hurried forward to seize advantageous firing lines. Ossyan anticipated Khadoran reinforcements from the main garrison as the shock of the initial attack wore off. She shouted over the tumult, "What of the soldiers at the prison? There are hundreds more there."

Ossyan smiled and extended his hand to send a glowing bolt through the neck of a sniper atop the roof of a nearby building. "I sent the Stormfall Archers and a few riflemen to keep them busy."

"Outnumbered by so many? How can that suffice?"

He explained, "Their priority is preserving the prison, and there is no reason for them to emerge from a secured position. They won't know our numbers. After a few exchanges of fire, both sides will settle into tense waiting." She seemed baffled that he would proceed on nothing more than his predictions; it was not the Retribution way to operate without reconnaissance. He hoped to demonstrate how predictable enemies were when understood.

**HE RUTHLESSLY SENT MYRMIDONS  
TRAMPLING THROUGH THEM,  
TOSSING BODIES ASIDE AND  
CRUSHING OTHERS UNDERFOOT.**

As the battle through the streets continued, he was proven correct: no reinforcing soldiers came from the prison. Ossyan impressed upon his officers the importance of keeping citizens off balance. "Remember," he instructed, "every Khadoran adult is a potential soldier. They volunteer in their youth. All have been trained, and many have weapons. Still, it will take time for them to organize. Do everything you can to dissuade them from gathering." He sent teams of ghost snipers prowling the rooftops to either side of the garrison approach with instructions to look for armed bands of citizens and shoot the leaders. "Anyone who barks an order, strike down. Leave the civilians unless fired upon."

Skirov was an old city with many stout buildings of stone, its rugged people bred from warrior stock. Ossyan knew

not to underestimate them. He had spent considerable time studying the cultures and histories of the human nations. He knew Skirov to be a city noted for the piety of its people; many were of the harsh Menite faith, and even the Morrowans were militant. He was careful not to fire on churches or temples lest religious sentiments become inflamed. He carved a quick path to the central army garrison at the heart of the city, the intended destination of the coded message they had intercepted.

The garrison marched forth against them, reserve Winter Guard in Khador's red and black, but their faces held no fervor and their officers sounded shrill facing the barrels of House Vyre riflemen. Their shaky lines collapsed under charging halberdiers closing from the flanks. As Ossyan had predicted, these rear-guard soldiers lacked the resolve of those on the front lines. He ruthlessly sent myrmidons trampling through them, tossing bodies aside and crushing others underfoot. Several more 'jack marshaled Khadoran heavies were sent, but Ossyan coordinated the firepower of his machines and heavy rifle teams with consummate precision. There was nothing like the Arcantrik Force Generator in these lands, and they could not seem to understand the shimmering waves of energy it unleashed. Ios had long practice exploiting outsiders' fear. The defenders routed before even half had fully engaged.

Ossyan sent halberdier squads to ensure those withdrawing stayed scattered and checked the soldiers he had earlier positioned against expected reinforcements from the western walls. They had not seen movement from that quarter. He saw smoke beyond the garrison building and turned to Nyshyl, who had been fighting with crossbow and blade near him. "Were any of your strike teams sent ahead?" She shook her head. With no time to investigate, he put the smoke out of his mind. His officers brought the rest of his soldiers into position for the final push. Ossyan and Hypnos were at the lead as they smashed through another line of faltering Winter Guard. The Khadorans broke and ran, several dropping weapons as they fled, and the path to the squat stone garrison was cleared. Ossyan knew he must not be complacent; even without militia, the armed Khadorans greatly outnumbered his men. When they realized that, he would be in trouble. They were reeling from the assault, but that would not last.

Ossyan and the mage hunters went into the garrison first. Although Hypnos was reluctant, Ossyan bade his myrmidons wait outside; the garrison floor was not built to accommodate their weight.

After a few minutes of looking through rooms he heard shouting and rushed toward the source. He entered a room in shambles—a storage area, as shown by shattered boxes.



A set of metal trapdoors had been set into the floor to seal off a wide stone descending stairway. These had likely been hidden behind the boxes but were now torn loose. The stone steps were half-shattered by the weight of some massive tread. The wide doorframe leading into the room showed damage as well; something bulky had smashed through. Along the steps lay the bodies of Greylords, and all was silence below. Taking in the scene as she arrived, Nyshyl said grimly, "Someone has been here."

"The smoke!" Ossyan rushed toward the back of the garrison, along a trail of debris from whatever had passed this way, including more dead Winter Guard. Amid them were other corpses—ancient, blackened plate armor containing the skeletons of the long dead. The rear entrance to the garrison had been blown inward. A bleeding Khadoran slumped against the wall, groaning. Ossyan swept past, mentally summoning his myrmidons.

He drew again upon his power to perceive the shifting tides of possibility around him. Earlier all the major lines of fate had pointed toward his victory. Now the web was disrupted. He had been asking the wrong questions. Some bright sun of destiny lay ahead of him, beyond the garrison, and all the strands gathered in that direction. Was this the influence of the frozen god or something else, something dark and terrible? The streams of time swirled into a roaring vortex. Ossyan realized his path had been caught in these currents. He began to feel a cold certainty that he had been manipulated. Seething, he released his vision and returned to ordinary sight. He became dizzy and stumbled as he walked into the daylight, seeing wrecked buildings and the signs of some other battle nearby, one unrelated to his soldiers.

Nyshyl reached out to steady him. "Lord Arcanist, are you all right? We should summon your thanes—"

Ossyan could not stop. He could not let the enemy escape, not when they were so close. The rest of her mage hunters were here, and his myrmidons were crashing through the garrison at his summons, but most of the Vyre houseguard were on the other side of the garrison, securing the perimeter. He heard gunfire and fighting ahead.

They rounded the next building and saw a column of Cryx charging the Khadorans who had made the mistake of confronting them. There were bane thralls and bane knights, their forms ghostly and horrific, each adorned in blackened armor. A larger figure at their fore commanded them in the hisses of some forgotten tongue. Behind them, nearer Ossyan, was a stout wagon with steel-reinforced wheels; upon this sat a massive, square vault of white marble as beautiful and bright as the banes were dark. Its surface was inset with runes in gleaming silver, forming a script similar to Shyr, the language of Ios. It was Aeris, the

sacred script of the Nyss, known only to their priests and sorcerers. Ossyan felt a jolt as he realized this was their goal. All of the Retribution was scouring Khador seeking the very stone he beheld.

Nightmare steeds of dead flesh and machinery pulled the wagon, each with a torso like a man, topped with a monstrous face, and wielding scythe and sickle. Flanking these were crab-like helljacks. Ossyan felt a tingling in the back of his mind as his eyes fell upon an armored entity next to the wagon. It was no bane, but neither was it alive. It held an uncommonly long and beautiful sword that left a trail of frost in its passage. The creature turned toward Ossyan, showing a sunken face and glowing eyes. A gleaming sigil on its forehead declared it accursed by the gods. Its armor was inscribed with green sigils, and attached to the back armor protruded spikes and exhaust pipes emitting a stench: a warcaster's arcane turbine fed by necrotite. Ossyan realized this had to be Goreshade, he who in life had been Ghyrshyld, House Vyre High Consul and self-proclaimed Narcissar of Ios.

Dread ran through him with a rush of old memories and shames. These thoughts stopped him in his tracks, along with the awareness that his myrmidons had not arrived and he had only a few mage hunters with him. He tapped into an inner reserve of bravado and shouted, "Goreshade, be gone! You shall no more profane that which is too holy to endure your touch!" Even as he spoke he knew the weakness of his position was obvious.

The eldritch tilted his head and delivered what sounded like a sepulchral laugh. Ossyan raised his right fist and fired a lance of power in a bright blaze. Not at Goreshade, but at one of the nightmarish steeds pulling the heavy wagon. The beam tore a massive chunk of flesh from its flank while a pulsing wave of time-distorting energies surged out, washing over the soulhunter next to it as well as Goreshade himself, making their motions sluggish.

The mage hunters fired their crossbows, several targeting the wagon's steeds to topple both undead creatures. Others fired at Goreshade, and several augmented bolts passed cleanly through his power field to sink into his armored torso. The eldritch's laughter choked off to a hiss of rage. The Leviathans fired a volley of iron spikes, but with his accelerated perception Ossyan anticipated them. He stepped to the left and then leaned to the right as they flew past. One came close enough to pierce his power field but glanced off his warcaster armor with a spray of sparks. The helljacks were already stepping toward him on arachnid legs. Goreshade also approached, slowed by the remnants of the chronophage cannon's energies but advancing steadily. A number of bane thralls and knights in the rear turned to face them as well.



Ossyan looked to where Nyshyl was reloading her crossbow. Her lips were compressed in a hard line and her face looked pale and bloodless, but her hands were steady. He felt a sudden and unexpected admiration for her courage.

He saw clearly that they were all about to die. His attack on Skirov had been executed with brilliantly calculated haste, but he should not have left the garrison ahead of his myrmidons and soldiers. He raised a hand and invoked his power, letting runes spread from his hand to cover Nyshyl and her team with arcane energy. He felt as if a spike drove into his head as his arcane energies surged unexpectedly. The eldritch grinned; clearly this was some manifestation of Goreshade's power. Ossyan ignored the pain. "Run!" he shouted to Nyshyl. "Now!"

Nyshyl looked at him in surprise and quickly assessed the situation. Then she gave a shrill whistle and the mage hunters pulled back, firing as they went. One of the Leviathans targeted her with a shot, but thanks to Ossyan's arcane efforts, she easily evaded it.

Ossyan turned and pointed first at one Leviathan and then at the other to gather his will and send bolts of disruptive energy at each. He gritted his teeth against the rending pain that invoking magic near Goreshade provoked. The helljacks froze, their systems temporarily scrambled. Ossyan drew Locus and stepped forward to meet Goreshade, knowing every step hastened his own death.



Augmented by the enchantment Ossyan had bestowed, Nyshyl felt capable of unprecedented speed. She had made an accurate tactical assessment of the situation and followed orders, but still she felt distressed at leaving Ossyan to face the eldritch alone. But what could she do? A part of her knew she should withdraw their force from Skirov immediately. They could continue the hunt once the rest of the Retribution was with them.

Ossyan would be dead by then. She had to admit that seeing Goreshade there, amid his banes and helljacks, had provoked a singular and tremendous fear. She was too young to have fought in the War of Houses, but she had heard the stories. Ghyrrshyld was spoken of as a nightmare figure, a warning against occult obsession. She had been secretly relieved to abandon Ossyan to his fate.

She remembered what he had said of decisions and crisis points. It had seemed nonsensical, but she understood it now. She made herself think as a mage hunter and calmly assess Goreshade's force. She had seen the vault of Nyssor. She could not live with herself if she left now.



Goreshade slashed his blade before him as if to test its balance, leaving a wake of snowflakes behind it. He said in fluent Shyr, "You wear the Vyre sigils—you must be a distant cousin or nephew. A lord arcanist, so young? House standards are not what they were."

Ossyan raised his chronophage cannon, hoping to blast the eldritch before he closed. Goreshade became shadow just as Ossyan's lance passed through the smoky darkness. More shadows emerged to latch onto Ossyan, sending black ripples along his armor and creating patches that vanished entirely. A chill invaded his bones.

Suddenly Goreshade reappeared from the darkness and was upon him, his long blade striking. Ossyan parried and attempted to evade, but his motions were clumsy next to the eldritch's refined skill. He had been relying too heavily on his time manipulation, which he now maintained on Nyshyl and her mage hunters. Blades met with a ringing jolt, and Locus was wrenched from his grasp. The next moment the eldritch's ice sword breached his power field and armor to pierce through his side and out his back. Ossyan gasped but felt only tremendous cold, as if his body were encased in ice.

Goreshade withdrew the sword, blood transforming into icicles along its edge. Ossyan could not move, and he labored to breathe. The eldritch said, "You spent too much time in study, not enough learning to fight. Typical."

Ossyan fought through the numbness to croak, "Just finish me."

"I think not. You are of my blood. I have a better fate in mind. You will die, to be reborn as I was, ageless and cleared of doubt." His glance went to the marble vault. "I will be the salvation of our people, and you will bear witness."

Ossyan's myrmidons came running at full speed, weapons charging with deadly potential. Goreshade moved behind Ossyan and held his sword's edge to the lord arcanist's throat. The myrmidons slid to a stop. "I won't restrain them," Ossyan said defiantly. "Kill me now, or they will destroy you! Death is preferable to what you have planned."

"So you say," the eldritch whispered, "but the desire to live still burns in you. Else why did they stop? It is your will that guides them." The Leviathans had shaken off the earlier disruption Ossyan had invoked and now stepped toward the Vyre myrmidons.

Ossyan gritted his teeth, finding he could not bring himself to give the mental directive for his myrmidons to attack, to



throw his life away. The eldritch smirked and dragged him toward the wagon, nodding to several soulhunters to begin to haul it again.

At that moment Nyshyl and her squad burst from the trees. The Arcantrik Force Generator floated into view as it drifted around the low building behind them. The mage hunters fired phantom seeker bolts at Goreshade through the intervening wagon, the bane thralls, and Ossyan himself. Most missed, but two landed and staggered the warcaster enough that he let go of Ossyan, who lurched away. The Force Generator thrummed, and a pulse of rippling energy smashed into the eldritch, knocking him back into the marble vault. There was the sound of approaching footsteps—dozens, hundreds—as the houseguard ran around the barracks and began to fire rifles. Goreshade growled in frustration and vanished into shadow.

The lane erupted into battle chaos. Ossyan sent his myrmidons forward and guided their attacks even as he staggered back, still bleeding, putting distance between himself and the Cryxians. The Banshee and Hypnos crashed into the Leviathans. The Banshee emitted a discordant wail to unravel any arcane magic Goreshade might have been preparing. The Daemon fired its vortex cannon at one of the soulhunters near the wagon. The field pulled the nearest banes inexorably toward it before exploding them into hunks of rotted meat and bone.

Ossyan summoned arcane power to encompass the clearing, turning every enemy into a magnet for incoming fire. Shots that would have missed instead unerringly found their targets. The banes hacked down his Banshee and delivered punishing blows to the Daemon and Hypnos but were torn apart in turn by retaliating myrmidons and halberdiers. Slumped against the wall of the nearest building, Ossyan became so preoccupied directing his myrmidons that when Nyshyl arrived at his side he was startled to realize the battle had ended.

He coughed and winced as she checked his injury. "I'll live," he said. "Where is Goreshade?"

"Gone," she answered grimly. "Escaped."

"We've not seen the last of him," he said as she helped him stand. He directed his surviving myrmidons to seize the wagon, and his officers shouted orders as they prepared to depart. Ossyan could not allow himself to consider the enormity of what they had done—and still must do. His eyes slid from the marble vault, finding it painful to look upon. The palpable cold that radiated from it seeped into the bones of everyone who stood near. Its icy touch reminded Ossyan unpleasantly of Goreshade's blade. It was difficult to fathom that the salvation of Ios might rest within something so cold. Winter had never been favored in Ios.

His obsession about earning the Retribution's respect for House Vyre seemed inconsequential now. This marble vault represented a seed of hope, the chance his people could avoid oblivion. Ossyan was too afraid of what he might see to enter his meditative trance and look at the strands of history and fate around the vault. For this moment at least, he decided to let the future remain uncertain.

He saw Nyshyl staring at him with a measured look. "You are not what I expected," she said slowly. "Ravyn was right to allow you a chance to prove yourself."

Their eyes drifted to the wagon and its monumentally valuable cargo. Ossyan felt again the tugging of destiny's strands. He mused, "Gods willing, we will all have a chance to redeem ourselves in the days to come."





# LORD ARCANIST OSSYAN

## RETRIBUTION WARCASTER

*Time has been no friend to our people, but it can be even deadlier to our enemies.*

—Lord Arcanist Ossyan

OSSYAN						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	5	5	6	15	15	8



CHRONOPHAGE CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	—	13



LOCUS	
POW	P+S
6	11

<b>FOCUS</b>	7
<b>DAMAGE</b>	16
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	C
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	+6
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### FEAT: GRAVITY WELL

*Lord Arcanist Ossyan taps into the vast lore of House Vyre to bend the natural laws to his will. Shaping gravity with consummate skill, he transforms his enemies into magnets for incoming fire, while the foes' own feeble projectiles are deflected to land far from their intended targets.*

While in Ossyan's control area, enemy models roll one less die when making ranged attack damage rolls. When resolving a ranged attack damage roll against

an enemy model while the enemy model is in Ossyan's control area, friendly Faction models roll one additional die. Gravity Well lasts for one round.

### CHRONOPHAGE CANNON

#### Magical Weapon

**Temporal Distortion** – After resolving an attack with this weapon that directly hit an enemy model, center a 4" AOE on the model directly hit. The AOE remains centered on the model hit even if it moves and remains in play for one round. If the affected model is destroyed or removed from play, the AOE leaves play. While in the AOE, models suffer -2 DEF. A model beginning its activation in the AOE cannot run or charge that activation.

### LOCUS

#### Magical Weapon

**Dispel** – When this weapon hits a model/unit, upkeep spells on that model/unit immediately expire.

The fundamental laws of reality twist and bend beneath the will of Ossyan, Lord Arcanist of House Vyre. His arcane mastery is unnerving to lesser minds, which are intimidated by the audacity required to wield the very laws of nature as weapons. With a gesture time itself bends to his whim, and he can alter his perception to see otherwise invisible manifestations of the convergence of fate. Armed with perfect foresight he is a deadly arcanist and battlefield general. His myrmidons and soldiers move with the assurance of destiny as he unleashes House Vyre's sophisticated armaments upon the enemies of the Retribution.

House Vyre has come late to the Retribution's cause, but Lord Arcanist Ossyan played a key role in seeing this come to pass. While he answers to Consul Alyssa Vyre, who rules the house, he is himself a high-ranking member of the direct

### SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
<b>ADMONITION</b>	2	6	—	—	YES	NO
When an enemy model advances and ends its movement within 6" of target model in this model's battlegroup, the affected model can immediately advance up to 3", then Admonition expires. The affected model cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.						
<b>ARCANTRIK BOLT</b>	2	10	—	12	NO	YES
A warjack damaged by this attack becomes stationary for one round.						
<b>CHRONOMANCER</b>	2	SELF	CTRL	—	YES	NO
While in this model's control range, models in its battlegroup gain Future Sight. (A model with Future Sight can boost attack and damage rolls after rolling.)						
<b>QUICKEN</b>	3	6	—	—	YES	NO
Target friendly model/unit gains +2 SPD and +2 DEF against ranged and magic attack rolls.						
<b>SHATTER STORM</b>	2	6	—	—	YES	NO
When target friendly Faction model/unit directly hits and boxes an enemy model with a ranged or melee attack, center a 3" AOE on the boxed model, then remove that model from play. Models in the AOE are hit and suffer an unboostable POW 8 blast damage roll.						

### TACTICAL TIPS

**DISPEL** – Because they expire immediately, upkeep spells that had an effect when the model was hit or damaged will have no effect.

**SHATTER STORM** – The boxed model does not provide a soul or corpse token.

bloodline. It is by proof of his genius that he has risen to direct House Vyre's formidable arcane arm, and he has been responsible for many of its recent arcanikal innovations. His reputation and clout within the house allowed him to persuade the consul that joining the Retribution must be done in order for their house to regain its former glory and compete with its foremost rival, House Shyeel. House Vyre is one of the few major Iosan houses capable of fabricating the powerful myrmidons essential to the nation's security, but its reputation was indelibly stained when the former narcissar, Lord Ghyrrshyld, provoked the War of Houses and sent all of Ios spiraling into an unprecedented and brutal civil war. In the decades since the end of that bloody conflict House Vyre has endeavored to restore its name but has been unable to wash itself clean of this dark legacy. While Ossyan used political arguments to persuade his pragmatic consul that the Retribution's popularity would help reclaim House Vyre's strong standing, his own motives for joining the Retribution are deeper and far more personal.

The terrible deeds of Ghyrrshyld weigh heavily upon most members of House Vyre, but the lord arcanist feels them particularly keenly. Ossyan was a young arcanist and officer during the War of Houses, and although he was not directly





THE  
WARRIOR



responsible for the worst excesses of House Vyre, he worked in the facilities where Ghyrrshyld conducted depraved experiments on Iosan children. Ghyrrshyld asserted these occult activities were necessary to discover the source of the Iosan soulless problem, but Ossyan had grave doubts about what was transpiring behind sealed doors. Nonetheless, like others of his house he stood silent and did not try to stop the experiments. In the days after Ghyrrshyld's fall, House Vyre purged itself of its worst criminals and any other remnants of unholy occult apparatus. They sought to rebuild their legacy and reputation as the foremost arcane experts in Ios, bending their skills toward more acceptable applications of arcanika such as refining their myrmidon designs. It was in this time that Ossyan rose to prominence for his ingenuity and genius, all the while remaining filled with guilt over the horrors he might have stopped had he possessed sufficient courage.

Spending as many hours studying history as working with his house's foremost arcanikal experts, Ossyan cultivated his powers considerably in these

years. He developed unique theories regarding the flow of time and the way history is shaped through the mechanism of decision. To Ossyan time is simply another form of energy, like heat or force. He theorized that certain individuals with uniquely strong personalities and wills could manipulate its flow, even unknowingly. This, to his mind, was what others interpreted as destiny. He learned to view the world through the lens of probability, seeing momentous events shaped by the ego of great individuals, for better or ill. While his house had fallen into ill repute, Ossyan knew they could rise above it if given the chance to rectify the course of Iosan history. It was this line of research and experimentation that eventually led Ossyan to a certain sympathy with the Retribution. Although he knows Ghyrrshyld was deranged, he agrees with the former narcissar on one point: a war with humanity over the survival of Ios is inevitable. To survive what would come, Ios must not only arm itself but also be willing to march beyond its borders and reclaim its destiny by force.

With mankind the most likely enemy against which his house's myrmidons will be deployed, Ossyan has sought



## LORD ARCHANIST OSSYAN

### THE HOUR OF WAR

**WARJACKS:** Retribution non-character myrmidons without force field damage boxes, Hypnos

**UNITS:** Stormfall Archers, Houseguard units, House Vyre units

**SOLOS:** Arcanist, Ghost Sniper, Syls Wyshnalyrr, The Seeker

**BATTLE ENGINES:** Arcantrik Force Generator

#### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** You gain +1 on your starting roll for the game. Additionally, increase the FA of Arcanist solos by +1 for each myrmidon in Ossyan's battlegroup.

#### TIER 2

**Requirements:** The army includes two or more Houseguard Rifleman units.

**Benefit:** Add an attachment to one Houseguard Rifleman unit free of cost. This attachment does not count toward FA restrictions.

#### TIER 3

**Requirements:** The army includes two or more Arcanist solos.

**Benefit:** For each Arcanist solo in the army, one myrmidon in Ossyan's battlegroup gains Advance Move. (Before the start of the game but after both players have deployed, a model with Advance Move can make a full advance.)

#### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Ossyan's battlegroup includes Hypnos.

**Benefit:** Friendly models/units can begin the game affected by Ossyan's upkeep spells. These spells and their targets must be declared before either player sets up models. Ossyan does not pay focus to upkeep these spells during your first turn.

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to learn everything he can about them. He realized he could not view all of humanity as identical but must ascertain the individual strengths and weaknesses of each human culture and nation. He studies mankind so he can predict them, and prediction requires deeper understanding—not simply knowing numbers and troop strengths, but grasping the complex roots of the events that have shaped human history. A predictable enemy can be more easily defeated, exploiting their inherent flaws and unconscious patterns.



Ossyan was not in the least surprised when the discovery of Nyssor's frozen vault prompted a surge in popular support for the Retribution of Scyrah throughout Ios, as he had expected their rise to prominence. After Houses Shyeel and Nyarr joined their fates to that of the Retribution, the course required for redemption became clear to him: his house must also commit itself against mankind. Sitting passively would ensure they faded into obscurity.

The arrangement between House Vyre and the Retribution would never have transpired without the lord arcanist's orchestration. Not only did he persuade his consul of the need to keep House Shyeel in check, he has personally delivered singularly formidable weapons to the Retribution, including additional myrmidons and the Arcantrik Force Generator. In return, all he seeks is a chance for his house to prove its worth and cast aside the pall of the War of Houses. The upper echelons of the other *hallytyr* see this sudden show of support as a purely political move, but Ossyan is genuinely committed to the Retribution's cause. He intends to do everything in his power to ensure no single leader can again put selfish interests above the welfare of Ios. The lord arcanist views peers like Dawnlord Vyros and Adeptis Rahn with wary skepticism, distrusting their motives and ready to counter anything they do to elevate their houses while exploiting the Retribution.

When House Vyre finally joined Houses Nyarr and Shyeel in alliance with the Retribution, Ossyan volunteered to lead their strike forces himself. He sees this as an opportunity not only to exonerate his house of its bloody past but also to attain personal redemption. He is quite willing to throw himself into danger and risk his own destruction if it means expunging his soul of the guilt that plagues him. He desires nothing more than to prove himself worthy of Ios' people.





# ASPIS

## RETRIBUTION LIGHT MYRMIDON

*To walk beside an Aspis in battle is to enjoy the safety of a defensive fortification.*

—Dawnlord Vyros

### ASPIS

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	8	6	5	12	16	—



REPULSOR	POW	P+S
L	3	11



REPULSOR	POW	P+S
R	3	11

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L	G	G	R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD DAMAGE	10
FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	4
MEDIUM BASE	

### REPULSOR

**Beat Back** – Immediately after a normal attack with this weapon is resolved during this model's combat action, the enemy model hit can be pushed 1" directly away from the attacking model. After the enemy model is pushed, the attacking model can advance up to 1".

A marvel of Iosan force mastery, the Aspis is an unmistakable sight on the battlefield. It is equipped with complex arcanikal devices on each of its hands, allowing it to manipulate its own protective force field. As the incoming fire of the enemy approaches, the myrmidon automatically moves its hands to reshape and strengthen its shield, applying fighting techniques similar to those employed by the battle mages of House Shyeel. The Aspis reacts with tremendous speed, its cortex having been specifically conditioned for this ability. It stands ready to intercept enemy fire directed at nearby allies and will utilize its force manipulators to assist in this protective function, literally catching bullets with its field before they strike. When it comes upon the enemy, the Aspis focuses the energy of its shield into force projections emanating from its fists. It can then use these weapons to smash even larger enemies back, hurling them away from its ward to be picked off at leisure.

### ASPIS

**Field Dependent** – While its Field Generator system is crippled, this model loses Phoenix Field and Shield Guard, and the Repulsors lose Beat Back.

**Phoenix Field** – Remove d6 damage points from this model's force field after resolving continuous effects during your Maintenance Phase.

**Shield Guard** – Once per round, when a friendly model is directly hit by a ranged attack during your opponent's turn while within 2" of this model, you can choose to have this model directly hit instead. This model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects. This model cannot use Shield Guard if it is incorporeal, knocked down, or stationary.

### TACTICAL TIPS

**BEAT BACK** – The attacking model can advance even if the enemy model is destroyed by the attack.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 9'1" / 2.3 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** TWIN REPULSORS (BOTH), PHOENIX FIELD (FIELD)

**PEAK OPERATIONAL DURATION:** 2.4 HRS COMBAT

**ARTIFICER:** HOUSE SHYEEL





—Garryth, Blade of Retribution

### ARTIFICER: HOUSE VYRE

**Critical Grievous Wounds** – See above.

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# DAEMON

## RETRIBUTION HEAVY MYRMIDON

*All things can be bent to one's will. It requires only the proper force.*

—Lord Arcanist Ossyan

DAEMON	SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
	5	10	6	5	12	19	—



VORTEX CANNON	RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
	10	1	*	12



HEAVY RUNE FIST	POW	P+S
	5	15



LIGHT RUNE FIST	POW	P+S
	3	13

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

### VORTEX CANNON

#### Magical Weapon

**Vortex Blast** – If this attack misses, nothing happens. If it directly hits an enemy model, before making the damage roll, push models within 2" of the model hit 2" directly toward it in the order you choose. Then center a 3" AOE on the model hit. Models hit suffer a POW 12 damage roll.

### HEAVY RUNE FIST

#### Magical Weapon

#### Open Fist

**Blessed** – When making an attack with this weapon, ignore spell effects that add to a model's ARM or DEF.

### LIGHT RUNE FIST

#### Magical Weapon

#### Open Fist

**Blessed** – See above.

### TACTICAL TIP

**VORTEX BLAST** – The model directly hit only suffers one POW 12 damage roll.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' 11" / 6.8 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** VORTEX CANNON (INTEGRAL), HEAVY RUNE FIST (LEFT ARM), LIGHT RUNE FIST (RIGHT ARM)

**PEAK OPERATIONAL DURATION:** 2 HRS COMBAT

**ARTIFICER:** HOUSE VYRE

point. This released energy mimics gravity, creating an inconsistency in what Vyre artificers refer to as "the anchor of Caen." Those few soldiers who have survived its effects describe a terrible feeling of being warped as the nature of space itself was pulled out of place and their very being was distorted. In comparison, a death beneath the myrmidon's massive fists might well be considered merciful. Though each of these fists is affixed with nodes that help channel energies to disrupt the crude magics of other races, they are also brutally powerful weapons in their own right.

The Daemon can be seen at the vanguard of any onslaught led by House

Vyre. It has fast become one of the Retribution's foremost assault myrmidons. Heavily armored and carrying complex, brutal weapons, the Daemon epitomizes House Vyre's approach to myrmidon design. Vyre artificers have diverged significantly from those of House Shyeel in their arcanikal studies, and they manipulate force in a very different manner. Whereas Shyeel uses accumulated energy stores to project a defensive field for warding away incoming attacks, Vyre instead uses the bulk of those energies to empower the weapons of their myrmidons.

A Daemon's vortex cannon seems to defy the laws of nature when it fires; its projected energy field inspires terror as much for the way it bends and swallows the light as for its devastating power. The Daemon was one of the first House Vyre myrmidons to show the destruction that could be achieved by creating a dense field of distorted energies to hurl into the enemy's midst, rippling outward from a central





—Dawnlord Vyros

### ARTIFICER: HOUSE VYRE

House Vyre was feared in recent times for its part in the War of Houses, and the occult principles under which its arcanika was refined sit uncomfortably in the memories of those who witnessed the atrocities of that conflict. The house is now allied with the army of the Retribution of Scyrrah, but the Sphinx is a visible reminder of the days when Ios was torn by civil war, and not all warcasters are comfortable with the sight. Nevertheless, the Sphinx provides a tactical advantage that the more pragmatic

 Open Fist

SPHINX

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	10	6	5	12	19	—



RUNESPEAR CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	12



HEAVY FORCE CLAW	
POW	P+S
6	16



LIGHT FORCE CLAW	
POW	P+S
4	14

		DAMAGE					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
	L				R		
L	L	M	C	R	R		
		M	M	C	C		

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	7
LARGE BASE	







# HYPNOS

## RETRIBUTION CHARACTER HEAVY MYRMIDON

*The energies of the arcane are paradoxical: both fragile and puissant. Hypnos is prepared to sunder them with force delicate in the making and violent in its application.*

—Lord Arcanist Ossyan



**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' 10" / 6.5 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** HEAVY ARCANO-PULSE FIST (LEFT ARM), LIGHT ARCANO-PULSE FIST (RIGHT ARM), PHASE GUN (INTEGRAL)

**PEAK OPERATIONAL DURATION:** 2 HRS COMBAT

**ARTIFICER:** HOUSE VYRE

It is the prerogative of House Vyre's lord arcanist to personally design and fabricate the myrmidon most suited to accompany him in battle. Hypnos is the result of Lord Arcanist Ossyan's exacting work, a labor for which he spent years exploring tomes detailing the underpinnings of myrmidon cortexes in search of ways to modify them and improve them for his needs. Such adjustments also introduce room for more individualized behavior to develop, which Hypnos shows in its behavior. It is more inclined to act on its own than other myrmidons; it will sometimes patrol of its own accord near Ossyan, searching for potential threats to its master. Between battles it stares at other myrmidons, constantly observing and analyzing the inner flows of their energies.

Ossyan worked to forge an insoluble connection between himself and Hypnos, one that would allow it to draw



### HYPNOS

**Arcnode**

**Affinity [Ossyan]** – While in Ossyan's control area, this model's ranged weapon gains Void Lock. (A model directly hit by a weapon with Void Lock cannot channel spells, be allocated focus, or be forced for one round.)

**Sacred Ward** – This model cannot be targeted by enemy spells.

#### PHASE GUN

**Magical Weapon**

#### HEAVY ARCANO-PULSE FIST

**Magical Weapon**

**Mechanical Seizure** –

When a warjack is hit by this weapon it becomes stationary for one round.

#### LIGHT ARCANO-PULSE FIST

**Magical Weapon**

**Mechanical Seizure** – See above.

#### HYPNOS

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	10	7	6	12	19	—



#### PHASE GUN

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	3	14



#### HEAVY ARCANO-PULSE FIST

POW	P+S
6	16



#### LIGHT ARCANO-PULSE FIST

POW	P+S
4	14

#### DAMAGE

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

**FIELD ALLOWANCE** C

**POINT COST** 9

**LARGE BASE**

energy from the lord arcanist and become an extension of his capabilities. This applies beyond the installation of its arc node; the lord arcanist can trigger otherwise hidden relays within Hypnos' cortex to allow this synergistic flow. In his presence the myrmidon's phase gun is imbued with synchronized energy; those struck by it become nonconductive to mystical channeling, thwarting the use of arc nodes as well as the delicate synergy between warbeast and warlock.

Supplemented with its potent phase gun, Hypnos is capable of delivering rending force via the disruptive fields applied to the projectiles it fires with great accuracy. Each of its fists is armed with force projectors specifically built to interfere with the cortexes of warjacks. Even a glancing blow from these weapons can stagger a warjack in mid-stride as its cortex signals are overloaded, causing it to seize up and become helpless.





# HEAVY RIFLE TEAM

## RETRIBUTION HOUSEGUARD WEAPON CREW UNIT

*The seemingly strongest armor is ultimately vanity; all strength is flawed.*

—Houseguard Issyr Falwyn Lys

### LEADER

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	4	5	5	13	13	8



### HEAVY RIFLE

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	—	7



### SWORD

POW	P+S
3	7

### GRUNT

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	4	5	5	13	13	8



### SWORD

POW	P+S
3	7

**FIELD ALLOWANCE** 2

**LEADER & GRUNT** 2

**LEADER LARGE BASE**

**GRUNT SMALL BASE**

### HEAVY RIFLE

**Armor Piercing** – When calculating damage from this weapon, halve the base ARM stats of models hit that have medium or larger bases. This weapon gains +2 to damage rolls against models with small bases.

**Light Artillery** – This weapon cannot be used to make attacks or special actions during activations this model moves. This model cannot gain the aiming bonus when attacking with this weapon and cannot charge. If this model attacks with this weapon during its activation, it cannot attack with any other weapons that activation.

**Range Finder** – While B2B with the Grunt in this unit, this model gains +2 to attack rolls with this weapon.

These teams are drawn from the ranks of the houseguard riflemen. Most often they are veterans who have displayed a remarkable calm under fire. Because their typical targets are warjacks and other armored foes able to respond with extreme force, it is critical that the rifle team's every shot counts. The primary task of the rifle teams is to provide heavy but mobile support for other houseguard elements, but in recent months the Retribution has tasked them to accompany mage hunter strike forces as well. The rifle team cripple heavy armor as mage hunters close on enemy warcasters, and together they swiftly neutralize the might of the enemy.

The concentrated fire of houseguard riflemen becomes even more dangerous when their target has already been badly damaged by a heavy rifle round. The weapon itself is a marvel of Iosan gun ballistics and arcanika, employing a heavy nonexplosive shot forged of tempered steel intended not to blast an enemy apart but to pierce through armor leaving a gaping hole. Utilizing an integral force generator this shot is accelerated to a frightening velocity, far beyond that achieved by ordinary rifles.

A thunderous report followed immediately by the sound of shattering steel is the first indication of the presence of a houseguard heavy rifle team. Towering warjacks stagger, their armor punctured and internal mechanisms devastated by the gun's massive rounds. Far behind the front line, the team works in tandem to choose and dispatch each target. The pair's spotter carefully takes sight with specialized instruments and aids the gunner in the constant calibration of his weapon's complex sighting apparatus. From the secure hold of the cannon's bipod, the gunner can be certain that his aim is steady and nearly flawless. No sooner has he pulled the trigger than the spotter reloads the gun, already sighting their next target.





# HOUSE SHYEEL ARTIFICER

## RETRIBUTION BATTLE MAGE SOLO

*The most inscrutable forces of the natural world are weapons at our disposal.*

—Artificer Vlyss



### TACTICAL TIPS

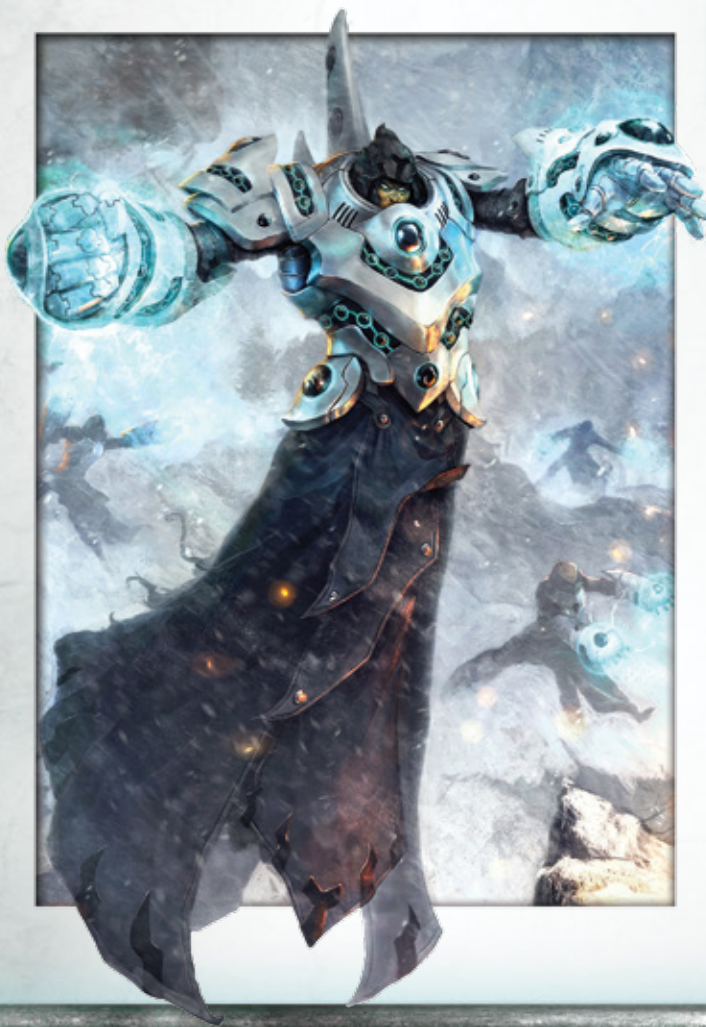
**MAGIC ABILITY** – Performing a Magic Ability special action or special attack counts as casting a spell.

**POLARITY FIELD** – Remember, if a model cannot be charged, it cannot be slam power attacked.

**BEAT BACK** – The attacking model can advance even if the enemy model is destroyed by the attack.

House Shyeel's influence within the Retribution of Scyrah is a direct result of the ingenuity of its artificers; it is their labor that produces the majority of the Retribution's myrmidons. The most talented artificers go beyond this to explore other applications of their craft. These studies unlock secrets beyond the ken of even their fellow magisters, allowing them fine manipulation of the forces of attraction and repulsion. Though directing these forces is delicate work, the consequences are anything but: each artificer is capable of invoking great destruction upon his foes.

As the Retribution's war continues, more of House Shyeel's artificers have joined their brethren on the front lines,



### ARTIFICER

**Pathfinder**

**Force Barrier** – This model gains +2 DEF against ranged attack rolls and does not suffer blast damage.

**Magic Ability [6]**

• **Force Wall (★Action)** –

For one round, while within 3" of this model, friendly Faction models gain Force Barrier.

• **Magno Blast (★Attack)** – Magno Blast is a RNG 10, POW 13 magic attack. If the attack hits an enemy model, before resolving damage immediately push models within 2" of the model hit 1" directly away or directly toward the model hit in the order you choose.

• **Polarity Field (★Action)** – For one round, this model cannot be charged by a model beginning the charge in this model's front arc.

### POWER GAUNTLET

**Magical Weapon**

**Beat Back** – Immediately after a normal attack with this weapon is resolved during this model's combat action, the enemy model hit can be pushed 1" directly away from the attacking model. After the enemy model is pushed, the attacking model can advance up to 1".

ARTIFICER						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	9	7	4	12	17	9

POWER GAUNTLET	
POW	P+S
4	13

<b>DAMAGE</b>	8
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	2
<b>POINT COST</b>	3
<b>MEDIUM BASE</b>	

seeking to establish remote sites for the construction of myrmidons. Proximity to battle offers many opportunities for these potent arcanists to test the limits of their mastery, and accordingly they gladly join the fray. Surrounding themselves with potent fields of force, they hover among their allies. The air hums in their presence, and with gauntlet-enhanced gestures, they conjure invisible fields to shield their allies or tear the enemy apart. Those who oppose them find themselves slowed, or their weapons and armor cling to them as if bound with invisible chains. The artificers look haughtily upon the results of their work, the terrible destruction wrought no more than the result of idle experiment.





# ARCANTRIK FORCE GENERATOR

## RETRIBUTION BATTLE ENGINE

*It is not necessity that spurs innovation, but vengeance.*

—Adeptis Rahm

ARCANTRIK GENERATOR						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
4	10	—	7	10	19	10



TELEFORCE CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	—	14

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HUGE BASE</b>	

weapons gain +2 RNG this turn. If this model gains the aiming bonus, while B2B with this model friendly myrmidon models also gain +2 RNG on their range weapons for one turn.

### TELEFORCE CANNON

#### Magical Weapon

**Ammo Type** – Each time this weapon is used to make an attack, choose one of the following abilities:

- **Blasted Earth** – This activation this weapon's base POW becomes 16 and it gains AOE 4. This weapon's AOE is rough terrain that remains in play for one round.
- **Momentum** – Instead of suffering a normal damage roll, a small- or medium-based, non-incorporeal model hit by this attack is slammed d3" directly away from this model. The POW of the slam damage roll is equal to the POW of the weapon. The POW of collateral damage is equal to the POW of the weapon. In addition to suffering a normal damage roll, large-based models hit by this attack are knocked down.
- **Rapid Fire [d3+1]** – When you decide to make initial attacks with this weapon at the beginning of this model's combat action, roll a d3+1. The total rolled is the number of initial attacks this model can make with this weapon during the combat action, ignoring ROF.

The Arcantrik Force Generator is a machine that defies the very fabric of reality. Seen from afar, it squats amongst the Iosan army like some huge and patient insect. Its shimmering fields encompass the generator's operators, who endlessly calibrate and tune the mighty arcane instrument. As they set the generator's field to the required frequencies, the large metal disk at its core spins up to speed, crackling with power, and an unsettling feeling washes over those nearby. Rubble and other small objects are lifted up, suspended inches above the ground as the generator begins its firing sequence. The air grows thick, and with a gut-churning sensation the generator discharges its accumulated energy in either several smaller pulses or a single blinding, roaring blast that can smash through warjacks and walled fortifications with equal ease. For truly dangerous targets, the generator's operators bring it close to an overload to produce a cataclysmic burst that leaves the earth sundered.

### TACTICAL TIP

**RANGE BOOSTER** – Weapons with RNG "SP" are not affected.

When House Vyre joined the Retribution of Scyrah in its bloody war, Retribution leaders saw the house's exotic and deadly arcanika as its main contribution. The Arcantrik Force Generator was key to convincing the Retribution of House Vyre's value. The weapon demonstrates the cunning way House Vyre can modify existing arcanikal field generation technologies in innovative ways. The underlying generators employed by the device were first created by House Shyeel to lift massive components during myrmidon fabrication. Arcanists of House Vyre applied their lore to create specific discordances in once carefully balanced fields, creating unparalleled forces of destruction.

Lord Arcanist Ossyan unveiled the massive construct before the Retribution's leadership, explaining it as the logical combat application of certain force manipulation principles long explored by Vyre artificers. A range of effects could be derived from its unique field generations, allowing its operators to respond to a variety of battlefield conditions with appropriate force. Additionally, the Arcantrik Force Generator is able to travel under its own power, if slowly. Its field can be manipulated to cause it to ignore the pull of gravity and hover just above the ground along a chosen course. Showing keen awareness of the needs of the Retribution, Ossyan also demonstrated how the great devices could be disassembled for deployment to Retribution bases hidden among the lands of humanity, where Vyre arcanists can easily and quickly reassemble each force generator for war.

The Arcantrik Force Generator has had a profound impact on both the Retribution and its enemies. Human armies are terrified by the very sight of the unusual machine as it employs inexplicable energies to tear the earth apart and deliver swift death.









# MERCENARIES

## DESPERATE MEASURES

Rhydden, Llael, 608 AR

Captain Amador Damiano surveyed the road ahead. There wasn't much to see—just miles of scorched Llaelese fields, the occasional shattered building, and empty villages strewn with corpses. Sighing, he bit into one of his remaining apples and focused instead on its sweet taste and crunch. The fruit reminded him of his family estate, and he had only a small bushel with him. Ord had always been a poor kingdom, but compared to the situation in Llael, it was a paradise.

"You going to hog all those apples, Captain?" Lorio Jaspar asked as he walked up. Jaspar was a young man, handsome and dark-featured, and a fellow Ordsman. He wore the armored plates of a halberdier, but the single black pauldron on his left shoulder marked him as a Steelhead lieutenant.

Damiano replied, "I brought these to make the march more bearable. I'm paying you well enough; you should have done the same." He finished and tossed the apple core away. "If that makes me a hog, so be it. What are we all but well-armed pigs eating from a very large trough, anyway?"

"I think the Llaelese would prefer fewer swine in their pigpen, sir," Jaspar said. "We're risking a lot being here."

Damiano shrugged. "At least we're on their side this time. The Khadorans haven't pushed east, and with Cryx raiding the countryside I doubt the Resistance will be ready to field any major offensives right away, whatever our patron might believe." He sighed. He had been pushing his men with back-to-back contracts, and their enthusiasm was flagging. They were hoping for a change of pace with light guard duty. Damiano by contrast savored battle; it was in his blood.

Damiano felt pride as he surveyed his men hunkering in the dirt alongside the road to eat, make repairs to equipment, or simply take a quick rest after the hard march from Merin in central Ord. He had helped forge these Steelheads into a singularly professional fighting force, superior to the rabble out of Tarna, Ceryl, or Ternon Crag. They included a full mixed company of halberdiers and riflemen. In addition he commanded four warjacks: three Mules and his personal

heavy, Rocinante. Each one was over a hundred years old but maintained in top condition.

"Looks like the refugees have appointed a spokesperson." Jaspar pointed to a tall, bearded man approaching with a small girl. They were walking from a group of some fifty villagers who had been meekly following the soldiers since Greywind Tower. Damiano's company had passed several such groups on their trek through Llael. Most were survivors of Cryxian attacks fleeing toward any cities with garrisons strong enough to keep the walking dead at bay.

The man's hair and beard were in a style popular among the Llaelese wealthy, but his clothing was torn and stained. The girl behind him wore a tired yellow dress, and her face was a mask of grime. Damiano nodded to the Steelheads who had intercepted the pair, and they were allowed through.

"Captain," the bearded man said, bowing low. "My name is Barygan Faryll. Thank you for speaking with me."

"Is that your metal man?" the little girl asked suddenly, pointing at the hulking form of Rocinante standing nearby.

Damiano ignored Barygan's whispered shush and smiled at the child, who he guessed to be around seven years old. "That is Rocinante," he said. "Would you like to say hello?" She nodded slowly, her blue eyes awed. "Go ahead," he continued. "Don't be afraid." She moved past him, her face filled with excitement.

Over the many decades, Rocinante's cortex had taken on a number of personality quirks. The strangest of these was the machine's peculiar reaction to children; Rocinante seemed to like them and even gravitated to them. Damiano had noticed the warjack lingering over the corpses of children they'd encountered on their march, gently prodding their small bodies as if trying to wake them from a deep sleep.

Rocinante reached out one giant hand to the girl. She grasped one of its metal fingers in both her hands and shook it up and down. "Hello, Rocinante. My name is Jolia," she said hesitantly. The warjack loosed a long, low rumble of steam.



"Captain," the girl's father said, trying to recapture Damiano's attention, "we need food. Please. The undead destroyed our village days ago. We have nothing."

"I'm sorry," Damiano said, shaking his head. "All the food I have is reserved for my men."

"Surely you can spare something," Barygan pleaded. "For the children. Anything."

Damiano kept his expression set. "What if I parceled out our supplies to everyone who asked? Then comes the day we must fight, possibly to save your family, and my men are weak from hunger. I cannot risk them to help you."

Barygan's face filled with despair. "Then what can we do?"

Looking at the young girl, Damiano could not help but remember the corpses of children they had seen. "Seek mercy from the Khadorans," he suggested. "They seized this kingdom; you are their responsibility."

"We were already turned aside from Merywyn. The Khadorans care nothing for our suffering." His face darkening, the man continued, "It seems what I have heard of the Steelheads is true. You are little more than parasites." He turned to collect his daughter.

Damiano frowned, then called after him. "Barygan." The man looked back, mistrustful. "If you wish to follow, we will protect you until Rhydden. You may find charity there."

Barygan scowled but nodded before calling, "Jolia!" The girl reluctantly left Rocinante's side and hurried to join him, stopping with wide eyes when Damiano held one of his apples out for her. He pressed it into her hands and stepped back as Barygan walked with her to rejoin the others.

When the soldiers resumed their march, the refugees followed after them. Periodically Damiano spotted the young girl lingering near Rocinante. He slowed the pace just enough for the ragged line to keep up.



"At least there's a wall," Lieutenant Jaspar said as the Steelheads drew within sight of Rhydden. "Cannons, too."

The city sat in a small valley surrounded by fields that had once held wine grapes for wine but now supported wheat, corn, and other food crops. A stout stone wall encircled it, punctuated by the barrels of light cannons, and armed soldiers stood on its battlements. Rhydden had gone from a picturesque, pastoral city to a heavily fortified stronghold, the only significant bastion of the struggling Llaeese Resistance. For all intents and purposes, these were the only truly Llaeese lands left. Their duke had become the most prominent leader of the Highborn Covenant, those nobles

willing to sacrificing personal wealth to hire mercenary support in their efforts to liberate their kingdom.

Damiano called a halt while he surveyed the city. Jaspar came alongside and added, "Stout wall, soldiers and artillery, unrazed fields. That bodes well."

"Did you expect to find our employers already slaughtered?" Damiano asked.

Jaspar shrugged. "With the garrison here as well as our Steelheads, we might survive long enough to get paid."

"Bah!" Damiano waved away the lieutenant's concerns. "You can spend your time worrying, and I'll see about putting a dent in the duke's wine cellar."



"This wine is excellent, Lord Delryv," Damiano said as he held out his glass for more. He noted that Duke Gregore Delryv refilled the glass himself, despite his wounds. The duke was a short Rynnish man with salt-and-pepper hair and a neatly trimmed beard. Fresh bandages were wrapped around his head and—judging from the stiffness of his posture—his chest. The duke had explained he had been injured in a recent clash with Khador while assisting Resistance forces closer to Merywyn. Damiano admired that the man had clearly been in the thick of things. A stern woman serving as his attendant kept an eye on them from nearby. She had warned the duke not to strain himself, but he had insisted on greeting Damiano personally.

"It's my last bottle of that vintage," Delryv said. "Another casualty of this bloody occupation." He raised his glass in salute. "I wanted to thank you for escorting those refugees. They have joined our community."

They sat in the duke's study, one of the few large rooms within Lord Delryv's estate that had not been transformed into a barracks. It was spartanly appointed, with plain wood floors and furniture more appropriate to a military man than a wealthy noble.

Damiano took a sip of his wine and thought of Jolia and her father. Likely the man had given the noble an earful about being refused food. Returning to the matter at hand, he said, "You don't expect to initiate an offensive anytime soon?"

Lord Delryv shook his head. "Things have been bad for us recently. With Marshal d'Elyse and the Amethyst Rose gun mages looking into a Cryx attack near Laedry, we've been left vulnerable. That last fight went poorly. If Khador had any idea how diminished our defenses were . . ."

Damiano set his glass on the desk. "Glad to help. What military assets do you already have in the city?"





"Roughly five hundred footmen with rifle and sword. They're ready to do what's necessary to protect the city. In addition, we have a small contingent of Cygnaran soldiers—trenchers and long gunners, primarily—who were left behind after Merywyn fell. D'Elyse has a larger force with her, but casualties have been heavy."

"What about artillery? Warjacks?"

"We've got cannons on the walls, as you've seen," the duke said. "As for warjacks, the marshal left us three Vanguard."

Damiano nodded. "Your fortifications are sound; together we could repel a sizable enemy force. Perhaps when more of your men have recuperated, we can plan a coordinated attack on some juicy Khadoran target."

"Still seeking glory, Damiano?" a silky feminine voice asked from behind his chair.

Damiano turned to see the slim, dark-haired form of Anastasia di Bray enter with the grace of a stalking cat. He had no doubt a brace of throwing knives were hidden somewhere on her person. The two men stood to greet her. The duke winced as he moved but waved away his attendant. Damiano pretended not to notice, his attention on the new arrival. "A pleasure to see you again, Mistress di Bray. It's been, what, two years?"

"Since you collected your fee in Elsinberg and then left it for the Khadorans? Yes." There was acid in her tone.

"My men and I were hired to guard Earl Vassis. When he put his hand cannon in his mouth and pulled the trigger, the job ended. One platoon of Steelheads wouldn't have made any difference to Elsinberg."

"A warcaster always makes a difference. You know that."

"Come now," the duke pleaded. "We are all on the same side. There is no need to relive the past."

The duke wavered slightly on his feet. His attendant made a noise and came to check on him, and Damiano noticed blood seeping through his jacket. The woman said firmly, "You are

straining the duke. You will have to leave now."

"My apologies, Your Grace," Damiano said and drained the last bit of wine from his glass. He bowed slightly to Anastasia. "I should see to my men." He could feel her steely gaze boring into his back as he walked away.



"Damn," Damiano cursed. "What the blazes are *they* doing here?" It was the next day and he stood atop the battlements of Rhydden's walls looking to the north. The wide road that led to the city gate was filled by Exemplar knights, the elite heavy infantry of the Protectorate of Menoth.

"Shall I give the order . . .?" Jaspar gestured to the nearest cannon and its crew, one of ten that faced the northern approach to the city.



"Not yet." The Protectorate soldiers—Damiano guessed there were almost two hundred—had halted a good distance from the gates. "There haven't been open hostilities yet between the Resistance and the Northern Crusade. Let's not change that if at all possible." A small group of knights moved away from the main body, one bearing a white standard. "There. You see?" Damiano pointed to the small group advancing to within a hundred yards of Rhydden's gates. "Let's go have a chat with our guests," Damiano said, grinning.

The midday sun was shining brightly when Damiano stepped beyond the walls of Rhydden. The sun gleamed off the polished armor of the knights, giving the entire army a glowing halo of reflected light.

Behind Damiano two hundred halberdiers followed, spread across the road and into the fields alongside it in ordered ranks. The halberds could be suddenly lowered with a single command, creating a bristling wall of razored steel. The hulking form of Rocinante lumbered alongside Damiano, the chains securing the cannon jangling. It rested the axe in its right fist over one shoulder.

Damiano called a halt fifty yards from the Protectorate delegation and walked the rest of the way with Rocinante. One of the Exemplars carried the twin swords of a seneschal, likely the ranking commander.

"Good day to you, Seneschal," Damiano called amiably. "What brings you to Rhydden this fine day?"

The seneschal raised the visor on his elaborate helm, revealing a young face. He walked forward a few paces. "Who are you?" he asked.

"Forgive me. I forget my manners," Damiano said with a wry grin. "I am Captain Amador Damiano, and my Steelheads are protecting Rhydden. This is not a good time for a visit."

"A mercenary," the soldier spat. "I am Seneschal Tyvius Marden. I bring word that the Northern Crusade extends a shielding hand to the faithful of Rhydden and its temples. A Cryxian menace gathers west of here. We require you to open your gates to us."

Damiano frowned. "Seneschal Marden, it grieves me you have come all this way for nothing, but the city of Rhydden is already protected."

"You will not allow us entry?"

"I'm afraid we simply cannot accommodate you," Damiano replied. "However, I will speak with Duke Delryv and inform him of your warning. And your offer of support."

Seneschal Marden glanced up at the high walls of Rhydden, now lined with Steelhead riflemen and the metal forms of

three Vanguard. He grimaced. "Understand it is my duty to protect the temples of Rhydden. We will not be deterred." He turned on his heel and walked back to his waiting ranks.



"We cannot let them into the city, Your Grace," Anastasia di Bray said emphatically. "They simply seek to reinstate an armed presence here." They spoke from below the battlements. Sentries above looked toward the waiting knights, whose numbers had increased over the last two days as additional phalanxes had joined them from the north.

"If they only wish to secure the Menite temples . . ." Lord Delryv said, seated in a chair that several of his soldiers had carried out for him. He looked pale and his voice was weak. "Their presence would strengthen us against possible attacks, particularly if this warning about Cryx is true."

"I'm skeptical about that," Damiano said. "We came from the west, and we saw nothing on the scale he mentioned. I think Mistress di Bray might be right on this one. Those knights looked like the vanguard of an invasion force."

Anastasia placed one hand on the duke's arm. "We tried to work with the Protectorate, and for our pains they seized Leryn. I have been inside that city and seen its transformation. You do not want that repeated here, Your Grace."

The duke faced Damiano. "The situation was tense when the Northern Crusade was here before, but they honored their agreements and left us in peace"

Anastasia spoke again. "Whatever courtesies the Menites offered us before, we can't expect them again. Leryn was their goal then. Now that they have their stronghold, they do not need—or want—us here. They need fertile farmland, and that is precisely what you possess."

"Your Grace," Damiano added, "you hired me to protect this city. If those knights mean you harm and you open your gates to them, I won't be able to effectively intervene. I've fought Exemplars before; you don't want to face them in close quarters, having given up perimeter defenses." The duke frowned as if he'd swallowed something sour.

The duke sighed and rubbed his temples, then nodded. "You have made your point. I will speak with the grand exemplar."

Anastasia shook her head. "Not in your condition, Your Grace. Allow me to speak for you."

It clearly bothered Duke Delryv that his wounds hindered him, but he eventually nodded. "State my refusal with due care; I would avoid a confrontation. Damiano, accompany her."



Damiano smiled. "Of course. Don't worry; this force is all bluster and no bite. If we show them we won't just roll over, they will look for easier pickings elsewhere."



Standing at the fore of an army gleaming white and pure in the early morning sun was Grand Exemplar Kreoss. With the leader of the Northern Crusade waited rank after rank of Exemplar knights and the heavily armored Exemplar cinerators, their great flaming blades creating heat shimmers in the air before them. It was an army of steel and flame, an army that outnumbered the defenders of Rhydden two to one.

Whatever Damiano might have expected in response to his refusal of Seneschal Marden, it was not to see what looked like the entire contingent of Knights Exemplar for the Northern Crusade led by the grand exemplar himself come knocking on Rhydden's front door. Damiano took some comfort in the fact that Kreoss hadn't simply started burning everything in sight. In fact, it appeared the grand exemplar was in the mood to talk.

He did not go to meet with Kreoss alone. Behind him his Steelheads fanned out in battle formation. A solid core of halberdiers supported by the Mules formed the middle of Damiano's army, while riflemen interspersed with more halberdiers flanked the heavy center. Vanguard roamed within the army's right and left flanks. Rocinante walked on Damiano's right, Lieutenant Jaspar and Anastasia di Bray on his left.

"It could be worse," Anastasia said as they approached. "It could be Reznik trying to gain access to Rhydden. Or Severius. At least Kreoss is relatively reasonable—for a Menite on crusade." These words were not much comfort.

When they had drawn within fifty yards, Damiano called a halt. They left Jaspar at the head of the army and walked out to meet Kreoss halfway between the two armies. Rocinante lumbered alongside his master.

Grand Exemplar Kreoss moved away from his army accompanied only by his ornately decorated warjack, Fire of Salvation. He carried his weighty spear Justifier in his right hand.

"Greetings, Grand Exemplar," Anastasia said. "I am Anastasia di Bray, and I speak for Duke Delryv. He bids you welcome and wishes to know your business."

"Mistress di Bray." Kreoss inclined his armored head toward her.

"And I am Captain Amador Damiano," the mercenary said after seeing Anastasia did not intend to introduce him.

"Captain. I have heard of your exploits," Kreoss said in a deep and disapproving tone.

"I'm favored by fortune, some would say," Damiano responded, smiling. "I'm surprised to see you here, Grand Exemplar." Anastasia glared at him and shook her head, clearly trying to silence him, but he pretended not to see.

"You do not appreciate the gravity of this situation. A battle looms that will threaten all the faithful," Kreoss said. "I will not allow slaughter in Rhydden to bolster Cryx."

"Your concern is appreciated—" Anastasia began.

Damiano spoke over her. "As I told Seneschal Marden, Rhydden is well protected."

"You command a capable force, Captain." Kreoss gestured to Steelheads behind Damiano. "I fear they will not suffice against what Cryx brings to bear, however. I only wish to extend the protective hand of Menoth."

"Like you did for Leryn?" Anastasia demanded.

Kreoss sighed. "The people of Leryn opened their gates to us and welcomed us when they heard the voice of Severius. I would like to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, but we *will* enter Rhydden." There was obvious frustration in his voice, and beside him Fire of Salvation took a single step toward Damiano, making Rocinante bristle.

"Grand Exemplar," Anastasia said smoothly, regaining her composure, "the Resistance and the Protectorate have worked together successfully in the past. You can aid the faithful of Rhydden by securing the area outside its walls. Leave the battlements to Rhydden's defenders."

"That will not do." Kreoss shook his head. "I must inspect and protect the temples personally, to ensure they are not profaned. Your mercenaries must disarm and leave this area."

Damiano did not at all like how the conversation was proceeding. While he had felt confident he could defeat the smaller force of knights, the army alongside Kreoss was another matter. "One moment, Grand Exemplar." He took Anastasia's arm and turned to speak with her in a low tone. "Our bluff is called. He's not budging."

Anastasia's eyes narrowed. "What bluff? We can't let them in. Rhydden is the last home of the Resistance. It must be preserved!" Her voice took on a dangerous edge. "Are you renegeing on your contract?"

Closer to the grand exemplar, Rocinante shifted its weight from one leg to the other as it eyed Fire of Salvation. Its movements suggested it was picking up on its master's agitation, but Damiano was too busy scowling at Anastasia



to notice. "No member of my family has ever reneged on a contract! We have to face facts. We don't have the manpower to hold off this kind of force."

"If they attack, you will defend Rhydden, per your contract." Anastasia stepped in close, fists clenched.

"My patience grows thin," Kreoss said, his voice ringing. "Give me your answer, or—" He cut off as Fire of Salvation stepped forward again in response to the shifting of Rocinante, whose cannon had drifted to point toward the Protectorate machine. Rocinante reacted immediately to the advance. There was a sudden ear-shattering boom as its heavy cannon split the air. The explosive ball struck Fire of Salvation on its right shoulder, twisting the 'jack around. Damiano's eyes went wide as he realized how this would be viewed.

Behind him Jaspar screamed orders, and a snapping fusillade of rifle fire sounded as the Steelheads followed their captain's apparent lead in initiating a full attack. A dozen Exemplar knights crumpled to the ground.

"Pull back! Form ranks!" Damiano yelled. At the same time he clamped down on Rocinante mentally and forced the 'jack to withdraw with him toward the Steelhead lines.

Damiano and Rocinante took their place in the center of the main halberdier core. He noticed Anastasia had vanished, but this was not surprising; she had quick reflexes and was likely making her way to forewarn the duke. The clatter of armored men was shockingly loud, but Damiano's Steelheads were well trained, and they quickly presented a sea of lowered halberds, steel spikes gleaming in the sun.

Kreoss had withdrawn to the center of his own front ranks, surrounded by the heavily armored Exemplar cinerators. Damiano could feel the tension in the enemy lines. Their ranks shifted like a living thing, with the subtle movements of two thousand men aching for violence. The battlefield was silent for a moment, and then Kreoss raised one gauntleted fist into the air. The Protectorate ranks surged forward, an avalanche of ivory armor and shining steel.

"Good gods, there are a lot of them!" Jaspar said. He was armed in a similar fashion to the warcaster, and he held a long, heavy-bladed falchion in his right hand and a plain but well-made hand cannon in his left. "But they're charging in like they've never seen a pike hedge before."

"Those cinerators care little for our halberds. Their armor will protect them from the brunt of it," Damiano said.

Jaspar watched the oncoming tide of Protectorate soldiers with worry in his eyes. "What do we do, then?"

"I'll hold the front. You start organizing the back ranks for a retreat." The lieutenant nodded and disappeared into the wall of armored bodies.

The first ranks of knights were only fifty yards away, and Damiano called out to his men. "Hold the line! Don't let one of those bastards through!"

The Protectorate line slammed into the Steelheads, their much larger force spilling around the edges of Damiano's flanks to surround the mercenaries on three sides. The Exemplar cinerators smashed through the front line with limited casualties, although point-blank bursts from interspersed riflemen eventually took a toll. Others poured into the gaps left by the slain. Where cinerator blades struck down halberdiers, fire erupted across those nearest, eating through the Steelhead line.

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Rocinante and two nearby Mules largely protected Damiano from the initial charge, and he pushed them to fire their cannons directly into the swarming ranks of knights. He then urged two lighter Vanguard units to move up to the crumpling ranks of the Steelhead front line, hoping to hold it a few more moments.

The pounding thunder of cannons filled the battlefield as the Mules and Rocinante fired, placing their shots directly behind the first two ranks of Protectorate soldiers as directed by Damiano. Armored bodies went flying, broken and bleeding. The ensuing chaos would keep reinforcements from bolstering the Protectorate front line currently engaging the halberdiers, perhaps buying them time to retreat toward Rhydden before suffering overwhelming casualties.

Kreoss, Fire of Salvation, and a pair of Crusaders were tearing apart the Steelhead left flank. The Protectorate warcaster and his warjack had already scrapped two Vanguard units, and Steelhead corpses were falling all around them. Damiano advanced toward Kreoss but kept his warjacks firing. The heavy 'jacks had cleared a ragged swath through the Protectorate line, and their weapons kept the area around him fairly free of enemies. The Llaelese cannon crews atop the wall had finally opened up on the Protectorate, lobbing explosive shells into their midst.

In the chaos of the battle, Kreoss had yet to react to Damiano's approach, and the Steelhead warcaster knew his



only chance at protecting his men against the overwhelming odds lay in taking the fight directly to the grand exemplar. Endangering their leader would force the Protectorate to withdraw at least temporarily, giving the Steelheads the chance to retreat toward the battlements.

Damiano urged his warjacks to a charge and ran with them as they pounded across the battlefield toward Kreoss and his 'jacks. The grand exemplar and Fire of Salvation whirled around at the last minute to face the new threat. Damiano joined his mind to Rocinante's cortex to guide the massive battle blade in the warjack's right fist. Rocinante barreled into Fire of Salvation, slamming aside the Protectorate 'jack's mace with its cannon and then smashing its battle blade down. The blade bit into Fire of Salvation's shoulder and caused the warjack to stagger, leaving Kreoss momentarily exposed. Damiano urged Rocinante to press the attack against Fire of Salvation and used his Mules to occupy the Crusaders. He regretted risking his major battlefield assets, but it was the only way he could hope to close on Kreoss.

Kreoss brought Justifier around in a whirling strike as Damiano charged in to engage. The Steelhead captain caught the tip of the heavy spear on the edge of Glory and barely turned it aside, then stepped forward inside the spear's reach for a powerful slash to Kreoss' armored head. Kreoss reacted skillfully, driving the blade built into the butt-end of Justifier into Damiano's breastplate. The blade did not penetrate, but the mercenary stumbled back, drawing his long-barreled hand cannon Judgment.

He regained his balance and steadied Judgment's barrel as he aimed below Kreoss' breastplate, just above the cuisse, where only lighter chain protected the hip joint. Before he could pull the trigger, a ragged chorus of dismayed cries rose from the rear of the Protectorate army.

Damiano pulled his attention away from Kreoss, who had turned his head toward the rising clamor as well. A horrid green glow shone behind the Protectorate army, and the sick weight of dread settled in his gut. The glow advanced, growing in intensity, and Damiano heard the thunder of thousands of marching feet.

He was surprised to see Anastasia approaching, having worked her way expertly around several knots of embattled combatants. "It's Terminus, the lich lord," she panted, "and more walking dead than I have ever seen."

Cryx had come to Rhydden.



"You can't do this!" Anastasia di Bray shouted. "If Kreoss is overrun, Rhydden will quickly follow." She had painted a bleak picture of the Cryxian force, which included a sizable contingent of helljacks and bonejacks in addition to a wide variety of Cryx's nightmarish abominations.

"My first duty is to my men!" Damiano shot back. "I will not throw their lives away needlessly."

The arrival of Cryx had distracted the Menites enough for the Steelheads to disengage and withdraw to just outside the city walls. Beyond, Kreoss and his army were locked in mortal combat with a massive Cryxian army led by the towering necromechanical monstrosity that was Lich Lord Terminus, his tattered wings spread wide. Damiano guessed the Cryxian force was double the size of his and Kreoss' combined. He had to admit, Kreoss knew how to command. His knights had shown no signs of breaking and were holding the Cryx at bay. But the situation looked untenable. Before the inevitable collapse of the Protectorate force, Damiano was determined to get his men as far as possible from this place.

"You would leave the folk of Rhydden to that horror?" Anastasia asked, pointing to Terminus as he slaughtered multiple knights with each sweeping strike of his sword.

Damiano shouted, "How will throwing the lives of my men at Terminus help Rhydden? If its people have any sense they will flee out the eastern gate. I suggest you do the same."

"Where will we run? To Ios? Death is all you will find to the east!" she shot back. She pointed back to the battlefield and spoke fervently. "If we join our men with Kreoss' and get behind these battlements, we will have a fighting chance. The defenses here are strong, but the soldiers we need to man them are dying out there. You can save innocent lives, Damiano. This doesn't have to be like Elsinberg."

Damiano scowled. "A moment ago you wanted to keep them out!"

Her eyes revealed her own fear. "That was before the Cryx threat became real. The Menites are at least living, breathing men. We must work together."

"There is a chance we could hold them off, sir," Lieutenant Jasper said. He'd been listening to them argue as he watched the nearby battle rage. "The men would follow you." Damiano rounded on his second, surprised at what he was hearing. Jasper shrugged at his look. "We're not going to get paid if the duke dies. And Mistress di Bray is right. There's no easy escape from this." He pointed to the sea of Cryxians preparing to swallow Kreoss' army.

Damiano gritted his teeth, and once more the thought arose of the little girl and her father, likely cowering behind the walls. "So we're all cornered, eh? Sometimes you get



to pick your battles, sometimes you don't." He looked to Anastasia and found himself affected more than he would have expected by the fear in her expression. He squared his shoulders. "Very well, I suppose we should make a proper fight of it."

"What now, sir?" Lieutenant Jaspar asked, eager for orders.

"Now, Jaspar, we do something very, very stupid."



Damiano spotted Kreoss and Fire of Salvation on the right flank of the Protectorate army. They were fighting two helljacks, coal-black monstrosities of machine, bone, and necrotic power. Two more lay scorched on the ground, Fire of Salvation's work. Damiano had been able to maneuver his halberdiers and rifleman around the right flank of the two battling armies without drawing the attention of either.

"Lieutenant," Damiano said to Jaspar, "Rocinante and I are going to pull Kreoss' ass out of the fire. Hit those damn mechanithralls—" he pointed to where a swarm of the half-machine, half-corpse horrors were hammering away at the largest contingent of knights left on the battlefield, "—and crush them between you and those knights."

"Understood, sir," Jaspar replied and started ordering the ranks of Steelheads behind him. They moved as a single entity toward the fighting, the lieutenant in the lead with the two battered Mules and the pair of Vanguarders that remained.

Damiano watched them for a few seconds. The Steelheads were out in the open without infantry support, but he needed them to draw away the Cryxian thralls so he could reach Kreoss. He heard the shouts of his Steelheads as they joined the battle, and he and Rocinante pushed forward. He saw the Protectorate warcaster drive his battle spear clean through a squat bonejack, skewering the necromechanical beast like a giant, skeletal insect. Fire of Salvation was battling one helljack, and another moved toward Kreoss.

*Fire!* Damiano sent the mental command to Rocinante, guiding its shot, and the warjack's cannon boomed. The projectile smashed directly into the chest of a Slayer driving toward the grand exemplar. Bits of metal, bone, and necrotic sludge splashed out as the force of the cannonball knocked the helljack backward. Damiano urged Rocinante straight at the staggered helljack. Rocinante rushed past Kreoss and brought its battle blade around in an arc, slamming the sharp steel into the Slayer's torso. The helljack came apart at the waist, its pieces tumbling to the ground with one last mechanical spasm. A few yards away, Fire of Salvation reduced the other Cryxian horror to a scorched wreckage.

Grand Exemplar Kreoss leaned wearily on his battle spear. When he saw Damiano approaching he straightened and raised his spear in salute. "I am surprised to see you here, Captain," he said.

"I've heard the coffers of the Northern Crusade are quite deep." Damiano smiled ruefully. "If we survive this, you'll know how valuable my men and I can be. I can't help you against the fine people of Rhydden, of course, but there are more glorious battles to wage." Kreoss inclined his head.

Kreoss and Damiano turned to where a mingled group of Exemplar knights and Steelhead halberdiers fought side-by-side against the tide of undead as they backed toward the city gates. As if spotting the warcasters Terminus suddenly raised his enormous blade in their direction. As the Cryxians surged forward, his wings unfurled and he leapt into the air to fly inexorably toward them, his silhouette momentarily blotting out the sun.





# CAPTAIN DAMIANO

## MERCENARY STEELHEAD WARCASTER

*Blood shines gold.*

—Damiano family motto

DAMIANO						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	6	7	6	15	16	9



JUDGMENT			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	—	12



GLORY	
POW	P+S
6	12

<b>FOCUS</b>	6
<b>DAMAGE</b>	16
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	C
<b>WARJACK POINTS</b>	+6
<b>COINS</b>	5
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

### FEAT: CONQUEST

*After waiting for battle to reach its peak, Captain Damiano unleashes his sorcery to empower his soldiers' sinews with inhuman strength. At his command the army charges forward to cleave through enemy ranks, heedless of retaliatory harm. Impelled by his will, Captain Damiano's men fight past all limits and will not rest until their conquest is assured.*

While in Damiano's control area, friendly Faction models gain +3 STR and ARM and can only move or

be moved during your turn. Conquest lasts for one round.

**Mercenary** – This model will work for Cryx, Cygnar, Khador, and the Protectorate.

### DAMIANO

**Paymaster [Steelhead]** – During this model's activation, you can mark one or more coin boxes on its card. For each coin box you mark, you can use Paymaster once. When you do, choose one of the following incentives. Incentives are RNG CMD and can target only friendly Steelhead units. A Steelhead unit can be affected by an incentive only once per turn. When all five of its coin boxes have been marked, this model loses Paymaster for the rest of the game.

- **Battle Maneuvers** – Affected models gain Reform this turn. (After all models in a unit with Reform have completed their actions, each can advance up to 3".)
- **Money Shot** – Affected models gain +2 to ranged attack and damage rolls for one turn.

### JUDGMENT

**Magical Weapon**

**Blaster** – When this model makes an attack with this weapon, before the attack roll it can spend 1 focus point to give the attack a 3" AOE.

### GLORY

**Magical Weapon**

Every mercenary has his price, but for Captain Amador Damiano, coin is not the allure but only a tool for equipping and motivating his men for battle. Damiano fights for glory, fame, honor, and the certainty that he will in time become a living legend. He would sooner accept modest wages for a difficult but daring contract over being paid a small fortune to sit idle standing guard. He takes a satisfaction from battle he can find nowhere else—not from facing danger, but from overcoming it. Damiano lives for the moments when defeat looms but he finds that one solution, that one bold move,

### SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
--	------	-----	-----	-----	----	-----

**CONVECTION** 2 10 – 12 NO YES  
When Convection destroys a living enemy model, allocate 1 focus point to a warjack in this model's battlegroup that is in its control area.

**DEADEYE** 2 6 – – NO NO  
Target friendly model/unit gains an additional die on each model's first ranged attack roll this turn.

**DEATH MARCH** 3 6 – – YES NO  
Target friendly unit gains +2 MAT and Vengeance. (During your Maintenance Phase, if one or more models in a unit with Vengeance were destroyed or removed from play by enemy attacks during your opponent's last turn, each model in the unit can advance 3" and make one normal melee attack.)

**SURE FOOT** 3 6 – – YES NO  
Target friendly Faction model gains +2 DEF and cannot be knocked down. While within 3" of the affected model, friendly Faction models also gain +2 DEF and cannot be knocked down.

**WARPATH** 2 **SELF CTRL** – YES NO  
When a friendly Faction model in this model's control area destroys one or more enemy models with a melee or ranged attack during its activation, immediately after the attack is resolved, one warjack in this model's battlegroup that is in its control area can advance up to 3". A warjack can advance only once per turn as a result of Warpath.

### TACTICAL TIPS

**PAYMASTER** – Each unit can only be affected by a single Incentive each turn.

**CONVECTION** – A warjack cannot exceed normal focus allocation limits as a result of Convection.

to bring victory. Some see him as brashly overconfident or needlessly extravagant, but in battle after battle he has earned the adoration of his men who know he can often achieve what they thought to be impossible.

Damiano must constantly weigh the needs of his men against his thirst for adventure and glory. He has found the balance required to inspire the men, paying them well for their services while impressing them with his bold and unconventional tactics. While Damiano enjoys taking risks, he savors life and does not idly spend the lives of those in his command. He believes it is his responsibility to see that his finest warriors rise to greatness at his side.

His reputation and bold approach have attracted the more daring and adventurous Steelhead mercenaries to seek him out, and many of his officers are as eager for fame as their captain. These men still expect to be paid what they are worth but are also willing to embrace daring plans and difficult contracts. They take added satisfaction from being among the most accomplished members of their far-flung mercenary company. Each of Damiano's lieutenants has a strong personality and his own style, but the Ordric warcaster unites them and leads by example. Because his







men understand the value of his leadership, they thrive on natural competition as each tries to outdo the others and impress their captain with their ingenuity and courage under fire.

Damiano is discerning about his choice of contracts, although he occasionally tempers his drive for greatness with prudence to maintain the morale of the men. Those willing to pay his rates get no mere hired blade but a conqueror-for-hire with his own formidable retinue of warjacks and an army of skilled soldiers. Damiano leads his men with humor and aplomb, exhorting them to seize the day and live for the moment. His confidence and bravado inspires as much loyalty in his men as the coin they are paid.

Perhaps his unusual attitude toward the mercenary life arises from being born to it, unlike most of his peers who took up the trade by necessity or the vagaries of fortune. For generations the Damiano family has raised aristocrats of war, forming a mercenary dynasty that has produced some of the most notable fighters for coin in western Immoren.

The Damianos trace their family's

rise in fortune to the years after the Orgoth were repelled and the Corvis Treaties were signed. When the nations of the Iron Kingdoms first fell to internal disputes, they did so through hired intermediaries, and the founder of the Damiano mercenary tradition gained great wealth from contracts with first one side and then another.

Family wealth waxed and waned over the centuries, but even in the poorest times the Damianos managed to retain their ancestral estate in central Ord. More recently family coffers have been filled by the constant strife of the region's escalating wars. Unlike others born to wealth, their young men and women do not live lives of leisure but are expected to further the family's riches on the battlefield. Damiano was raised on the legends of his ancestors and from an early age burned with the desire to meet or exceed their examples.

The sorcerous spark has always been strong within the Damiano family, but it has become particularly concentrated in the last few generations. Amador Damiano is the third heir in succession to manifest the warcaster talent, an exceedingly rare phenomenon. His father arranged for the boy to receive extensive tutoring and training in 'jack



## CAPTAIN DAMIANO

### FREE COMPANY

**WARJACKS:** Mercenary non-character warjacks, Rocinante

**UNITS:** Steelhead units

**SOLOS:** Steelhead solos

#### TIER 1

**Requirements:** The army can include only the models listed above.

**Benefit:** Steelhead Heavy Cavalry units in this army become FA 2. Additionally, reduce the point cost of Steelhead Heavy Cavalry units by 1.

#### TIER 2

**Requirements:** This army includes three or more Steelhead units.

**Benefit:** Your deployment zone is extended 2" forward.

#### TIER 3

**Requirements:** This army includes Stannis Bocker.

**Benefit:** Place Stannis Bocker and Steelhead Heavy Cavalry units after normal deployment. These models are placed at the same time as your models with Advance Deployment (◆) (if any). These models must be placed within your normal deployment zone.

#### TIER 4

**Requirements:** Damiano's battlegroup includes Rocinante.

**Benefit:** Friendly models/units can begin the game affected by Damiano's upkeep spells. These spells and their targets must be declared before either player sets up models. Damiano does not pay focus to upkeep these spells during your first turn.

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handling, the arcane arts, broadsword dueling, and Ordric combined-arms battlefield tactics. Amador feels keenly that being the third Damiano heir in a row with the warcaster talent means his star is in ascension and that nothing can stand in the way of his ambition. He truly feels favored by chance, which brings a confidence that occasionally borders on recklessness.

The family once ran their own mercenary outfit, but Damiano's grandfather sold this interest and linked their fortunes to the rapidly expanding Steelhead Mercenary Company. The Steelheads have since maintained agreements with the Damianos to provide chapter-of-choice considerations and fast advancement to upper ranks. Amador began as a lieutenant of the Steelheads in Berck and was quickly promoted to captain and moved to the Merin branch. He proved himself more than worthy of his fee even as he earned a reputation for grandiose boasts. Although he made his initial fame out of Merin, he is not tied down; he has made contacts and earned favors at Steelhead branches across western Immoren. Bravos and career mercenaries eagerly seek him out in hopes of joining in his conquests.

Damiano has hired his services across western Immoren, fighting on behalf of—and sometimes against—nearly every major power in the region. He was particularly active in the War in Llael, carefully negotiating short-term contracts that allowed him to have fought on several different sides by the time Cygnar was forced out of that kingdom. His magnanimous demeanor and shrewd negotiating skills have enabled him to maintain professional ties with paymasters who understand that a mercenary's loyalty is only as durable as his contract.

Though his troops are disciplined, Damiano is no tyrant. Provided they heed him in combat and do not draw the attention of the law or bring shame to the Steelhead name, his men may do as they please on their own time. He encourages them to enjoy the benefits of the unique freedom afforded by the mercenary life, including enjoying their time away from the field of battle and spending their money as it suits their fancy. Damiano enjoys his own luxuries, and at times his behavior can be indolent. His ornate armor is comparable to some of the heirlooms cherished by Ordric castellans. He savors quality food, expensive wine, and refined female companionship. Away from the battlefield Damiano has been known to lead his men in rousing drinking songs, provoke insufferable nobles to battles of wits, and engage in occasional random acts of generosity to those whose lives have been shattered by war. His mood and temperament are mercurial, as befits a man who seems at times larger than life.

Yet once Damiano has agreed to a contract, he deploys his company with the precision of the greatest Ordric generals. His Steelheads march in perfect lines and are as responsive to commands as any regular army infantry. Damiano leads from their midst, inspiring them with his presence, his sorcerous powers, and his skill with the blade. His ancestral weapons, Judgment and Glory, flash in the sun as Damiano leads his men to inexorable victory and the riches that follow.







# ROVER

## MERCENARY HEAVY WARJACK

*Those pikemen think they're gonna tangle the old girl up where she can't shoot 'em and then cut her apart. That's gonna be good for a laugh in about ten seconds.*

—Sam MacHorne

### ROVER

SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	11	6	5	10	18	—



SHIELD CANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
10	1	—	14



SHIELD	
POW	P+S
1	12



BATTLE AXE	
POW	P+S
6	17

DAMAGE					
1	2	3	4	5	6
	L			R	
L	L	M	C	R	R
	M	M	C	C	

FIELD ALLOWANCE	U
POINT COST	8
LARGE BASE	

### ROVER

**Point Blank** – During its activation, this model can make melee attacks with its ranged weapon, with a 1/2" melee range. Do not add this model's STR to damage rolls made with ranged weapons. Charge attacks made with ranged weapons are not boosted.

### SHIELD

② Shield

Built on a chassis design in use for a century and a half, the Rover possesses a combination of brute force and high durability that has long made it a staple of mercenary companies. The towering shield the warjack carries affords it excellent protection; add to that its powerful short-ranged cannon, and the 'jack is ideal either

for holding a flank or at the fore of an assault. "Sending the Rovers in first," backed by lines of heavily armored fighting men, is a textbook mercenary tactic. When the 'jack engages the enemy, its shield easily pitches aside those not crushed on impact as its cannon blows apart more formidable foes at point-blank range. Enemies who refuse to fall quickly are felled soon enough by its heavy axe. Mercenary troops wait for it to tear a hole through the enemy line before spilling out to engage the disoriented survivors.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' 1" / 8.2 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** SHIELD CANNON (LEFT ARM), BATTLE AXE (RIGHT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 685 LBS / 5 HRS GENERAL, 55 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 485 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** ENGINES EAST

The Rover is one of the first warjacks built specifically for mercenary use. Three decades after the Nomad received widespread adoption by the Cygnaran Army, Engines East exploited a contract loophole to develop the Rover, modifying the design just enough for it to be considered new. They pitched and sold the resulting 'jack directly to mercenary companies, who eagerly paid well for military-grade hardware. The Rover was a lucrative design for Engines East—if also a sore point with the Cygnaran Army.

The powerful Rover remains a ubiquitous sight on the battlefields of the Iron Kingdoms; besides being rugged and reliable, it utilizes parts still readily available on the open market. Like the Nomad, this warjack is favored by the mechanics entrusted to keep it running in the field.





# ROCINANTE

## MERCENARY CHARACTER HEAVY WARJACK

*I could not ask for a soldier more loyal or a weapon as deadly.*  
—Captain Amador Damiano



### TACTICAL TIP

**AFFINITY [DAMIANO]** – This model can make this ranged attack only if it is no longer engaged after destroying the enemy model.

**HEIGHT / WEIGHT:** 12' 1" / 8.3 TONS

**ARMAMENT:** CANNON (LEFT ARM), BATTLE BLADE (RIGHT ARM)

**FUEL LOAD / BURN USAGE:** 690 LBS / 5 HRS GENERAL, 55 MINS COMBAT

**INITIAL SERVICE DATE:** 481 AR, REFITTED 544 AR

**CORTEX MANUFACTURER:** FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY

**ORIG. CHASSIS DESIGN:** ENGINES EAST

The warjack Rocinante has served the Damiano family for over a hundred years. Originally a Nomad, this 'jack was first acquired by Lucian Damiano, the Ordric captain who started the family mercenary tradition. The 'jack eventually passed to the first warcaster of the line, Cervantes, who modified it into its present form. Cervantes' legendary career brought great fame and fortune to the family before Rocinante eventually passed to its newest master, Captain Amador Damiano.



### ROCINANTE

**Affinity [Damiano]** – While in Damiano's control area, this model gains Quick Work. (When a model with Quick Work destroys one or more enemy models with a melee attack during its combat action, immediately after the attack is resolved it can make one normal ranged attack. Attacks gained from Quick Work do not count against a weapon's ROF.)

**Defensive Strike** – Once per turn, when an enemy model advances into and ends its movement in this model's melee range, this model can immediately make one normal melee attack against it.

**Guard Dog** – While this model is within 3" of its warcaster and is not knocked down or stationary, its warcaster cannot be targeted by free strikes and gains +2 DEF against melee attack rolls, and models attacking the warcaster do not gain back strike bonuses.

### BATTLE BLADE

Reach

ROCINANTE						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	11	7	6	10	18	—



#### CANNON

RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
14	1	3	14



#### BATTLE BLADE

POW	P+S
6	17

DAMAGE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	
	L			R		
L	L	M	C	R	R	
	M	M	C	C		

FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	9
LARGE BASE	

Upon the completion of his training Amador Damiano refueled Rocinante and ignited its heartfire. The warjack roared to life for the first time in over a decade, responding to its new master as though it had served him for years. In the hazy confines of Rocinante's venerable cortex one generation blurs into the next, each successive master seen as a continuation of the one before.

The Damianos have painstakingly maintained Rocinante. Its armored plates gleam with gilt scrollwork bearing the family's ancient mottos, such as "Blood shines gold," "Sworn word, sworn deed," and "No strike left unpaid." Its cannon stems from the days of Cervantes Damiano, who commissioned the weapon's creation. In battle, the aged 'jack can hack down one foe to clear a firing lane for its bellowing cannon to shoot the next. Those who come too near are felled by its great battle blade as Rocinante places its body between its allies and the enemy.





# OGRUN ASSAULT CORPS

## MERCENARY RHULIC UNIT

*Round that hill and lay into them, boys! Show them you're a damn sight more mobile than their big guns!*

—Gorten Grundback

LEADER & GRUNTS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	8	6	5	12	15	9



BATTLECANNON			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	3	12



HAND AXE	
POW	P+S
4	12

<b>DAMAGE</b>	8 EA
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	2
<b>LEADER &amp; 2 GRUNTS</b>	6
<b>LEADER &amp; 4 GRUNTS</b>	9
<b>MEDIUM BASE</b>	

**Mercenaries** – These models will work for Cygnar and the Protectorate.

### LEADER & GRUNTS

☒ Combined Melee Attack

☒ Combined Ranged Attack

Hailing from the southern fortresses of Rhul, the Ogrun Assault Corps is one of the most demanded mercenary regiments in the Iron Kingdoms.

open a gap in an enemy's position, through which they subsequently hurl themselves. They enter melee with brutal enthusiasm, taking advantage of their size and strength to carve a swath of destruction through their foes.

Ogrun of Rhul live inextricably tied to local dwarven clans, and ogrun view Rhulic clan lords as equivalent to their own *korune*. Because of this, many families of ogrun have moved into the border fortresses, where the two races train side by side. Ogrun travel from across Rhul to enlist in the Assault Corps, which first made a name for itself at Horgenhold as an all-ogrun fighting force. It has since expanded, and its members soon learned to fight smoothly alongside such units as the Forge Guard and the Hammerfall Gun Corps. As with those groups, the Assault Corps saw the value in selling their services abroad both to hone their fighting skill and to earn coin they send back to their families. Amid mankind's bloody wars, they have earned a name as being among the finest soldiers money can buy.





# SYLYS WYSHNALYRR, THE SEEKER

## MERCENARY SEEKER CHARACTER SOLO

*There are as many battlefields as there are paths to truth.*  
—Sylys Wyshnalyrr



### TACTICAL TIP

**ATTACHED** – This model cannot be reassigned if its warcaster is destroyed or removed from play.

**SPIRITUAL CONDUIT** – Channeled spells and spells with a RNG of SELF, SP, or CTRL cannot gain this bonus.

Not all people of Ios follow the Retribution of Scyrah and its bloody vendetta against human arcanists. One major Iosan religious sect believes the secret to reviving their fallen gods lies hidden beyond the borders of Ios itself. These are the Seekers, and Sylys Wyshnalyrr has been among their number for more than a human lifetime, endlessly searching for a hint that might save his people.

A scholar well versed in the arcane arts, Sylys barter his talents to the armies of the human nations in exchange for access to their libraries and safe passage across their lands. Given his attention even the most puissant warcaster would find his own sorcerous ability strengthened, an invaluable edge in battle.



**Mercenary** – This model will work for Cygnar, Khador, and the Retribution.

### SYLYS

**Attached** – Before the start of the game, attach this model to a friendly warcaster for the rest of the game. Each warcaster can have only one model attached to it.

**Arcane Assist** – If its warcaster is in this model's command range during your Control Phase, the warcaster can upkeep one spell without spending focus.

**Arcane Secrets (★Action)** – RNG 3. Target this model's warcaster. If the warcaster is in range, it gains an additional die on magic attack and magic damage rolls for the next spell it casts. Discard the lowest die in each roll. Arcane Secrets lasts for one turn.

**Retribution Partisan** – When included in a Retribution army, this model is a Retribution model instead of a Mercenary model.

**Spiritual Conduit** – While its warcaster is in this model's command range, when the warcaster casts a spell and is the point of origin for the spell, the spell gains +2 RNG.

### STAFF OF SEEKING

☞ Magical Weapon

☞ Reach

SYLYS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	4	5	4	13	13	9

STAFF OF SEEKING	
POW	P+S
3	7

<b>DAMAGE</b>	5
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	C
<b>POINT COST</b>	2
<b>SMALL</b>	

For many years Sylys stayed aloof from the politics of Ios, shunning the Halltyr, the Fane of Scyrah, and the growing popularity of the Retribution of Scyrah equally. Over time, however, he grew to know the cruelties of war committed by every nation, causing him to question his belief in a peaceful solution to Ios' peril. Recent events that have stirred new allies to join the Retribution have prompted Sylys to reconsider the sharp divide between the sects, and he has consented to provide Retribution agents certain information he gathers while abroad. Thus he retains his original goal while serving the armies of the Iron Kingdoms but also listens for intelligence to pass on to his Retribution contacts.





# RAGMAN

## MERCENARY THAMARITE CHARACTER SOLO

*Death is feared only by those too weak to make it their servant.*

—Lord Mylo di Northryne, "The Ragman"

RAGMAN						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
6	5	6	4	14	12	9



WALKING STICK	
POW	P+S
3	8

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FIELD ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>POINT COST</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SMALL BASE</b>	

**Mercenary** – This model will work for Cryx, Cygnar, and Khador.

**Animosity [Morrowan]** – This model cannot be included in an army that includes one or more models of the listed type.

### RAGMAN

**Pathfinder**

**Magic Ability [7]**

- **Bone Shaker (★Attack)** – Bone Shaker is a RNG 8, POW 12 magic attack. When this spell boxes a living or undead non-warcaster, non-warlock enemy warrior model, you can immediately take control of the model and make a full advance with the enemy model followed by a normal melee attack, then the boxed model is removed from play. The boxed model cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.
- **Death Field (★Action)** – This model gains Dark Shroud. While within 3" of this model, friendly models also gain Dark Shroud. Death Field lasts for one turn. (While in the melee range of a model with Dark Shroud, enemy models suffer –2 ARM.)

**Sacrificial Pawn [living]** – When this model is directly hit by an enemy ranged attack, you can choose to have one friendly, non-incorporeal living model within 3" of this model directly hit instead. That model is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects.

### WALKING STICK

**Magical Weapon**

Shrouded in rags and tattered clothes, the figure known as the Ragman has become a creature of dark legend. He is most often seen lurking among the detritus of fresh battlefields, carefully studying death in its countless manifestations. He can spend weeks at a time haunting the ruins left in the passing of great armies. Bartering his services to generals and kings, he asks only for the chance to walk where death has tread.

The Ragman hides the truth of his noble birth behind the remnants of a tattered mask. Lord Mylo di Northryne is a Thamarite sorcerer and follower of Scion Delesle, the patron of necromancy and death. Once the head of a small cult based in the north of Llael, for years he limited his activities to the lands dominated by his family and took pains to conceal his arts. Since the Khadoran occupation, however, he has taken the opportunity to greatly expand his research. Lord Northryne viewed the dissolution of his country, a tragedy to many, as the blossoming of a great possibility.

## TACTICAL TIP

**MAGIC ABILITY** – Performing a Magic Ability special action or special attack counts as casting a spell.

Assuming the guise of a dispossessed wanderer, Northryne made his way to the smoking ruins of Riversmet. Protracted battle had reduced the once-great city to a charnel field. The multitude of corpses spoke to Lord Northryne without words. Each of them told a unique story, the contortion of their faces and limbs in rigor mortis whispering tales of the death that had come for warriors, peasants, merchants, and nobles alike. He spent months walking among the ruins, moving from habitations that had collapsed to sepulchers, from mass graves to plague pits, studying death in all its manifestations. When the Khadoran occupiers began the reconstruction of that shattered country, his morbid fascinations had only been whetted.

Following the war, he became a common sight at the mercenary camps that dotted the heartlands of the Iron Kingdoms. With soft words and impeccable politeness, he made his dark talents available to the most desperate of military commanders, asking only that in return for his services he be allowed to walk unhindered and unobserved through the blasted battlefields once the fighting had ceased. Disquieting as this proposition was, few turned down his services.

The Ragman has chosen a solitary path of dark ascension; he knows the knowledge gleaned from studying the dead eyes of the slain brings him closer to his true path than any instruction by his necromantic peers. The dead move at his whim, corpses rising from where they have fallen to do his bidding.





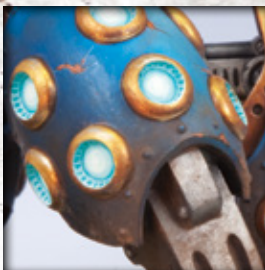




# CYGNAR MODEL GALLERY



**STORM  
STRIDER**  
Battle Engine







**TRIUMPH**  
Heavy Warjack

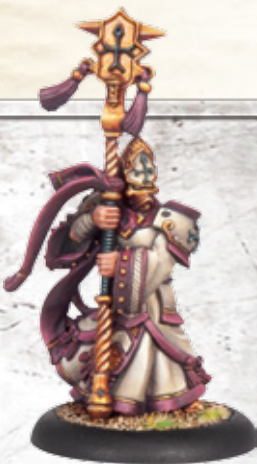


**CAPTAIN JONAS MURDOCH**  
Unit Attachment

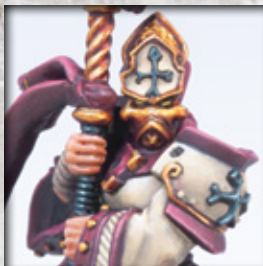




# PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH MODEL GALLERY



**ATTENDANT PRIEST**  
Unit Attachment



**FLAMEGUARD CLEANSER OFFICER**  
Unit Attachment





**BLOOD OF MARTYRS**  
Heavy Warjack



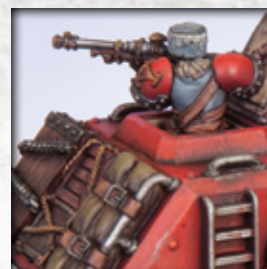
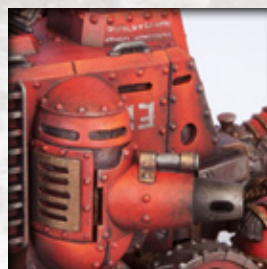
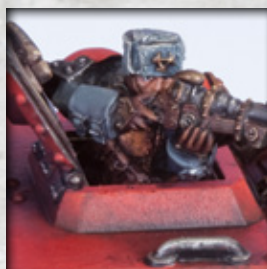
**SCOURGE OF HERESY**  
Heavy Warjack







# KHADOR MODEL GALLERY



**GUN CARRIAGE**  
Battle Engine





**KOLDUN KAPITAN VALACHEV**  
Unit Attachment



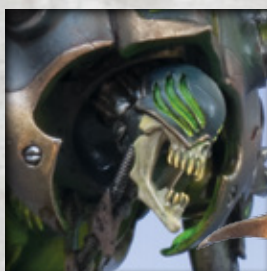
**TORCH**  
Heavy Warjack



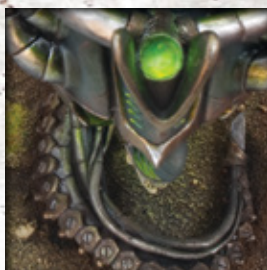




# CRYX MODEL GALLERY



**WRAITH ENGINE**  
Battle Engine







**SCAVENGER**  
Bonejack



**MALICE**  
Helljack



**REVENANT CREW RIFLEMAN**  
Unit Attachment







# RETRIBUTION OF SCYRAH MODEL GALLERY



**ARCANTRIK FORCE  
GENERATOR**  
Battle Engine





**HEAVY RIFLE TEAM**  
Unit



**HOUSE SHYEEL ARTIFICER**  
Solo



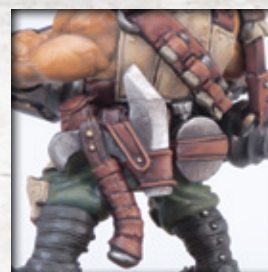
**DISCORDIA**  
Heavy Myrmidon





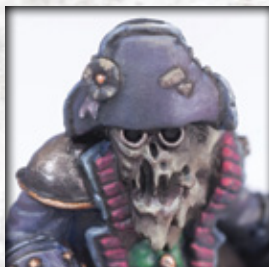


# MERCENARY MODEL GALLERY



**OGRUN ASSULT CORPS**  
Unit





**RAGMAN**  
Solo

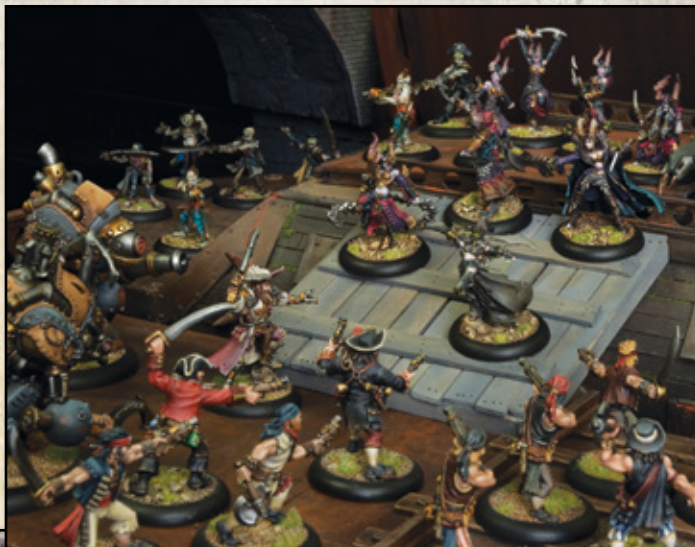




# FUEL THE ENGINES OF WAR









# PAINTING BATTLE ENGINES

Although it may seem like battle engines require their own painting techniques due to their size and use of resin parts, the painting guides in the *Forces of WARMACHINE* books work as well for them as they do for warjacks. If you neglect to assemble and paint these massive models piece by piece, though, you're going to run into trouble. Since painting a battle engine takes many hours, you'll be handling the model a lot. That can cause damage to the paint job if the model is not properly mounted to some sort of temporary handle, so pay close attention to our tips on assembly.

One of the nice things about painting battle engines is their size. At such a large scale you can experiment with elaborate painting methods for areas that might be more straightforward on smaller models. This guide focuses on techniques that will allow you to supplement your standard paint scheme and turn your battle engine projects into fun and rewarding challenges.

## ASSEMBLY TIPS

Nothing will make your battle engine project easier than the proper mounting and assembly of your model. Painting a fully assembled, unmounted battle engine presents several challenges, including paint chipping and breakage; it can also make it difficult to reach deep areas on the model. In general, it is good practice to mount each subassembly to a handle (a wooden dowel is ideal) before undercoating it with Formula P3 Primer. Crew models should always be mounted to a dowel and painted separately from the battle engine. Don't worry about painting areas that would be in complete shadow, such as the bottom of the Gun Carriage or the inner walls of the Vessel of Judgment's wheels. Areas like these would not be exposed to the light and should be painted Tamar Black.



It is best to paint the Wraith Engine in a number of stages. Wait until you finish painting its glowing innards to assemble the ribcage, then move on to painting the main body. Assemble and attach the arms only after fully painting the main body.



The carriage portion of this Gun Carriage has been mounted to a handle so it can be painted separately from the crew and horses.



We have started painting this Arcantrik Force Generator without the crew and pylons. We will paint those pieces separately and attach them at the end of the process.



## COLOR MODULATION

When painting battle engines with large, open areas of uniform color, such as the Arcantrik Force Generator or Gun Carriage, maintaining visual appeal can be tricky. Color modulation is a way of making these monochromatic expanses visually appealing, and it works by using slightly different tones of the same color on various panels. The differences may seem subtle but lend enough variety to keep the look interesting.

### GUN CARRIAGE

The Gun Carriage features two-tone color modulation that starts with the standard Khador red formula on some parts and adds a pinkish red that simulates sun-bleached paint on others.

**Step 1)** Start by basecoating the majority of the armor plates with Khador Red Base. For the armor that will have the bleached paint effect, instead basecoat with a mix of Khador Red Base and Midlund Flesh.

**Step 2)** Add Sanguine Base to both basecoat colors and use this to shade the armor plates of both surfaces.

**Step 3)** Add a small amount of Umbral Umber and Coal Black to the previous mixtures for a second layer of shading to both surfaces.

**Step 4)** Add a drop of Brown Ink and a drop of Turquoise Ink to the previous mixture and apply additional shading.

**Step 5)** Use a mix of Khador Red Base and Khador Red Highlight to highlight the areas that feature Khador's standard red. For the pinkish sun-bleached areas, highlight with a 2:1 mixture of Midlund Flesh and Khador Red Base instead.

For your second highlight, mix Menoth White Highlight into the mixture you used on the basic red areas, and mix Ryn Flesh into the pink mixture you used on the color modulated areas.

**Step 6)** Apply multiple light glazes of Red Ink mixed with lots of water. This layer unifies the two colors and completes the effect.

	Coal Black		Red Ink
	Umbral Umber		Turquoise Ink
	Sanguine Base		Midlund Flesh
	Brown Ink		Ryn Flesh
	Khador Red Base		Menoth White Highlight
	Khador Red Highlight		





**ARCANTRIK FORCE GENERATOR**

The color modulation on the Arcantrik Force Generator uses three tones of white. To keep the process simple and maintain similar colors, start with three different basecoats. For each shading and highlighting step, add the same colors to each basecoat mix. Though subtle, color modulation can add a lot of appeal to the white panels of this battle engine.








**Step 1)** The bluish basecoat is the standard Retribution mix of Underbelly Blue and Morrow White. For the pinkish-white basecoat, mix Carnal Pink and Frostbite. For the beige-white basecoat, mix Menoth White Base, Carnal Pink, and Underbelly Blue in roughly equal amounts.

**Step 2)** For the initial shading, mix Cryx Bane Highlight into each of the basecoat mixtures.

**Step 3)** Add Ironhull Grey to the mixtures from the previous step for additional shading.

**Step 4)** Mix small amounts of the original three basecoat colors into Morrow White. Apply these three new mixes as highlights to their respective areas.

**Step 5)** Apply a final highlight of Morrow White mixed with water and mixing medium to all the panels.

	Carnal Pink		Morrow White
	Frostbite		Ironhull Grey
	Underbelly Blue		Cryx Bane Highlight
	Menoth White Base		





## SOURCE LIGHTING

For some models you may want to paint an effect that simulates light being cast from a light source. The barely contained energy of the Arcantrik Force Generator and the charnel fires contained in the belly of the Wraith Engine create excellent opportunities to feature this technique. Depending on the aesthetics of your model, the strength of the light source may vary, so it is best to keep the effect subtle.

### ARCANTRIK FORCE GENERATOR

The omnipresent glowing elements in the Retribution paint scheme can pose a challenge due to the small size of the grooves and channels that house the arcane glow. Because the channels of the Arcantrik Force Generator are so much larger, you can paint them more easily and add some extra detail at the same time.

**Step 1)** Mix a wash of Arcane Blue, Carnal Pink, mixing medium, and some water. Apply this to the grooves between panels. Paint the edges of






the panels with the same mixture to create the suggestion of softly glowing light.

**Step 2)** Apply some energetic patterning to the bottom of the grooves using Menoth White Highlight.

**Step 3)** Add Menoth White Base and mixing medium to the Arcane Blue and Carnal Pink mixture used in step 1 and paint the new mixture into the grooves. Apply it thinly enough that the Menoth White Base patterning shows through.

**Step 4)** Accentuate the patterns from step 2 with more Menoth White Highlight.

**Step 5)** Use Meridius Blue to outline the grooves and separate them visually from the paneling.

	Meridius Blue		Menoth White Base
	Arcane Blue		Menoth White Highlight
	Carnal Pink		





## WRAITH ENGINE

The Wraith Engine should look like it is glowing from within, with the eye slits, steam vents, and chest cavity being the source of the light. It is best to paint the glowing parts and their surrounding areas first.

**Step 1)** Prime the model using Formula P3 Black Primer and allow it to dry. Then spray the chest, the inside of the ribcage, and the areas where light would fall with Formula P3 White Primer.

**Step 2)** Carefully paint the eye slits, smoke stacks, and any other vents that will glow with Menoth White Highlight.




**Step 3)** Wash the general area of illumination and the inside of the ribcage with a mixture of Green Ink, Yellow Ink, and Necrotite Green.

**Step 4)** Use Menoth White Highlight to apply highlights cast by the light source. Avoid highlighting the tattered cloth that wraps

around some of the pipes; because it is a non-reflective surface, it will be less illuminated by the light source.

**Step 5)** Wash the area in Yellow Ink with a small amount of Green Ink mixed in, again, avoiding the tattered rags. After the previous was has dried, mix a drop of Green Ink with some Armor Wash. Apply this to the recesses to help visually separate the pipes from each other.

**Step 6)** Glue the ribcage onto the main body and use Thamar Black to cover any mistakes and areas of overspray. With the glowing areas finished, you can paint the rest of the model using the guide in *Forces of WARMACHINE: Cryx*.

	Thamar Black		Armor Wash
	Necrotite Green		Green Ink
	Menoth White Highlight		Yellow Ink



1



2



3



4



5



6



## STORM STRIDER

The Storm Strider shown here has been nearly completed with the techniques described in *Forces of WARMACHINE: Cygnar*. Now it is time to paint the model's glowing storm nodes.

**Step 1)** Basecoat the inside of each storm node with Menoth White Highlight.

**Step 2)** Apply a wash of Arcane Blue mixed with water and mixing medium. Apply the wash evenly to the nodes and avoid excessive pooling.

**Step 3)** Highlight with a mixture of Arcane Blue and Menoth White Highlight. Start in the center and move out in a swirling pattern to give the storm nodes an extra touch of voltaic activity.

**Step 4)** Add more Menoth White Highlight to the mix and apply another layer of highlighting.

**Step 5)** Apply the final highlights with undiluted Menoth White Highlight. The storm nodes should have a bright blue glow.



Menoth White Highlight



Arcane Blue



1



2



3



4



5



## WEATHERING

When painting small-scale models such as troops or solos, keep your weathering subtle or omit it all together. On large models like the battle engines, however, you can feature weathering more prominently to significantly add to the realism of the piece. Weathering techniques are as varied as the climates and terrain of the Iron Kingdoms, so take time to experiment. Here are a few example weathering techniques to get you started.

### STORM STRIDER

The Storm Strider features a two-stage weathering technique that involves simulating rusty chips in the fresh paint and dirt and mud on the stomping legs of the mighty machine.

**Step 1)** Over a finished blue surface draw paint chips freehand with Thamar Black. Try various shapes and patterns to give a varied appearance to the chipping.

**Step 2)** Apply Bloodstone to the interior region of each paint chip while carefully leaving a thin outline of black around the perimeter. This will create the illusion that the chip is recessed into the surface.

**Step 3)** Continue to refine the illusion by painting a thin line of Frostbite mixed with Cygnar Blue Highlight to the bottom edge of each chip.

**Step 4)** Apply a dot of Khador Red Highlight to the rusty portion of each chip to simulate an irregular surface. Now your chipping is complete!

**Step 5)** For the dirt and mud, start by applying diluted Battlefield Brown via a wash, the spatter technique, or a combination of the two to achieve a mud-splattered effect.

**Step 6)** Apply multiple layers of highly diluted Gun Corps Brown to the mud in a stippled pattern.

**Step 7)** Apply some final stippling with a layer of diluted Beast Hide on the areas immediately around the rivets to simulate dust sticking to the moisture that gathers there.

Thamar Black

Frostbite

Bloodstone

Khador Red Highlight

Battlefield Brown

Gun Corps Brown

Beast Hide

Cygnar Blue Highlight





## GUN CARRIAGE

The Gun Carriage has a different type of chipping than the Storm Strider. It is meant to simulate an old, battle-weathered paint job that has taken some punishment.

**Step 1)** Apply a mixture of Exile Blue and Battlefield Brown in a haphazard way to the sharp edges and areas around the rivets.

**Step 2)** For additional weathering, apply a mixture of Umbral Umber and Coal Black in the same way as for step 1.

**Step 3)** Simulate scratches by applying Cold Steel in random slashes.

**Step 4)** Ease the transition between weathering and scratches by glazing the area with diluted Brown Ink.

Exile Blue

Coal Black

Cold Steel

Umbral Umber

Battlefield Brown

Brown Ink





# THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

## PART TWO

### THE BLOODSTONE MARCHES, FALL 608 AR

Magnus ignored the deep pain in his hip and right leg as he lunged forward, trusting his brace to absorb the shock. His opponent reacted with quick reflexes as he deflected Foecleaver with the edge of his lighter blade. The black-haired youth smoothly turned this into a riposte, jabbing at Magnus' side, which might have been effective if they had been fencing and the warcaster not wearing armor. Magnus gave a cruel smile as the blade scraped ineffectually against a metal pipe at his waist. He stepped forward, swatting the sword aside with his mechanical arm to sink into the dirt a few paces away.

The warcaster expected that to be the end of it, but the boy still had some fight in him. He dove to the right, taking up his blade as he regained his feet—an impressively nimble move given he was also wearing armor, only slightly mechanically augmented. He ruined it by forecasting his lunge with his expression. Fast and strong, the boy forced the older man back with the next sequence of blows. Magnus deflected strikes nearing his head and allowed his warcaster armor and power field to take the brunt of the rest. He was unscathed in the end.

The warcaster smiled and saw the boy's cheeks redden with anger. Despite Magnus' mocking expression, he was impressed. Thanks, no doubt, to the inquisitors who had tutored him, the young man was already a consummate swordsman. Nowhere near on par with his father, but he had the potential. Talent with the blade came easily to his family line—even Leto had the gift. But talent meant little, by itself. Magnus opened his guard to encourage a reckless thrust and clamped onto the lad's wrist when he fell for the ruse, trapping his arm. Magnus butted his head straight into the boy's forehead, sending him reeling to trip and land on his backside, his head bleeding.

The youth hurled his sword down and rubbed his head. "Thamar's teeth!" he cursed. "This is a waste of time!"

Magnus walked closer with Foecleaver in hand and loomed ominously over the younger man. The setting sun behind the warcaster cast his heavily scarred face in shadow. "Learning the sword is a waste of time?"

The young man glared at him. "It doesn't matter against your warcaster armor. One mistake, and my life is forfeit. You can be sloppy and take whatever risks you please!"

Magnus held out his mechanical hand, and after a slight hesitation the younger man seized it to be helped back to his feet. Rather than releasing, Magnus tightened his

grip. The black-haired youth winced as metal fingers pressed into his flesh. "I have seen a warcaster beaten by a man with only a blade."

"Kingslayer? That blade is hardly ordinary."

Magnus let go at last and said, "Nor is he who wields it." He nodded toward the sword the youth held. "Your sword is not Kingslayer, true. But it is mechanically augmented to gather the kinetic force of your swings into an invisible second edge. This does more than protect its metal from nicks and scratches. You can penetrate a warcaster's power field with that blade, with the right swing—and the will."

The youth looked skeptically at the sword in his hand. While lighter than Foecleaver, it was a brutish implement, hammered of mismatched steel from many different sources. Its bolted-on guard and pommel were blocky and had no graceful lines. Yet it carried conduits and rune plates exactly laid by Magnus, connected within its hilt to a slender but potent customized accumulator. Its single edge was made of hardened steel stolen from Khadoran warjacks. The armor he wore was similarly assembled, built for real combat. Magnus did not care that his ward lacked appreciation for his handiwork; he would have trusted the blade before hundreds of prettier lengths of metal. The boy would learn its quality in time.

The youth's upbringing had been sheltered. He had been taken from his mother at a tender age and had spent his boyhood in the company of schemers and plotters. Inquisitors had done what they could to prepare him, but they were lesser men, and some lessons had to be learned firsthand. The youth was arrogant, complacent with his untested skills. He was nearing manhood, though in Magnus' eyes he was still little more than a boy. Not yet seventeen, he was tall and strong, though still lanky. He resembled his father more than his uncle, thankfully. He had the raven-black hair and the square features, but his eyes were more devious than bold. He might become formidable, if he lived long enough.

Magnus said, "You understood the lesson. You cannot afford even a single mistake. When you are flawless, we can stop." He did not give the black-haired youth time to think but simply advanced, striking with Foecleaver.

They sparred amid the dusty hills southeast of the Marchfells that looked down on the Black River to the west. The ominous shape of Tower Judgment was visible to the south, looming atop the higher hills. Magnus had chosen this place for its perils, as a small stretch of barren land surrounded by potentially hostile powers. The area had no true masters, although recently warlike bands of well-



armed farrow had been on the march nearby, territorial and ready to commit violence. The Protectorate of Menoth was just south, its patrols likely aware of their presence.

To the northeast were the skorne, whose dominion was expanding as they lay claim to lands mankind considered unfit for life. Magnus was not certain of his standing with those invaders now. It was possible they would still accept him as a hired blade despite the overthrow of their Conqueror. Magnus was not eager to face the paingiver who had—amidst excruciating agony—opened his eyes to the futility of the decades he had spent serving Vinter Raelthorne IV. A bitter, albeit necessary, lesson.

Across the river to the west lay Cygnar and the forces of the usurper king, where Captain Allister Caine hunted for any sign of him or his ward. Magnus had spent the last several months avoiding contact with old associates, wary of being tracked as he prepared for the next step. More important than anything was establishing the proper rapport with this young man, in whose bloodline rested Magnus' best and last chance to reclaim his destiny.

Staying hidden from both enemies and allies had been difficult and draining, but the stakes were high. He had recently heard from one of his more reliable agents about momentous events afoot. Cygnar's Fourth Army stirred, moving to eastern garrisons. The nobles still loyal to Vinter Raelthorne IV had been meeting in secret. Assassins sent by the Protectorate of Menoth had murdered two of the vassals of Archduke Alain Runewood, a staunch ally of Leto Raelthorne. Vinter was making his move; Magnus could sense his presence, the long shadow he cast. There was no room for mistakes.

He fought blade-to-blade against the boy until the youth collapsed from exhaustion, the sword unresponsive in his numb hands. Magnus was weary himself, despite the aid of his warcaster armor, but he took efforts to conceal it. He also hid the agony of his old injuries, the knots of his aging frame. As the moon Calder rose he relented. "Enough, Julius. Sleep. We wake before dawn."



The heavily guarded wagon caravan had made good time along the King's Highway, with King's Vine ten miles behind them and the long stretch before Fort Falk ahead. It traveled with three warjacks as escort and two of the wagons filled with Cygnaran Army soldiers against incidents on its way to Corvis.

Suddenly an obliterator rocket landed in front of the lead wagon with a tremendous detonation that tore apart the road and toppled the two Chargers walking at the fore,

severely damaging one of them. The draft horses hauling the heavily laden wagon whinnied in fear, their eyes rolling, and as a shrill officer's whistle pierced the air they began to pull the wagon off the road to the right. Magnus had been hiding just off the roadway and was ready for this. He moved in front of the team, unnerving them. They tottered and reared, then tried to pull away to the side, losing momentum and slowing the wagon.

He leapt up onto the driving board, where the soldier riding escort was already standing and drawing his sword. Foecleaver hacked into his shoulder and carved deep into his chest, ending that aspiration. Magnus pulled him roughly off the wagon to fall to the ground, where his body was run over by the wagon wheels. The driver gave a startled yelp and did Magnus a favor: he jumped off the other side. He landed poorly, twisting his leg, and was hit by his own wagon.

**A SECOND OBLITERATOR  
ROCKET HAMMERED INTO  
THE REAR WAGON EVEN AS  
LONG GUNNERS LEAPT OUT  
THE BACK WITH RIFLES READY.**

The sword knights in the next wagon and the long gunners in the third were already scrambling in response to their commander's whistle. Magnus seized the reins and sought to bring the horses under control, his mind already divided among his 'jacks. A second obliterator rocket hammered into the rear wagon even as long gunners leapt out the back with rifles ready. The entire wagon was consumed in an explosion, taking all but a few of these defenders with it.

Magnus' Talon endured one shot from the less damaged of the two Chargers, which was regaining its feet, but then rammed into the Cygnaran 'jack with its stun spear. The first Renegade closed from that direction as well, its Shredder spun up to speed and growling.

The Ironclad alongside the middle wagon had been outside the radius of both blasts. Its glowing eyes locked onto the Talon and Renegade, and it ran in that direction with its quake hammer. Magnus pointed his mechanical hand at it to invoke runes that were a manifestation of misfortune. Just as it reached the Talon there was the pounding of a heavier machine as a Mangler charged toward it. The Ironclad was unable to avoid the clash as the Mangler smashed into it, first with its whirling wrecker flail and then with an augmented punching spike. The wrecker tore armored plating loose from the



Ironclad's upper chassis and battered its head while the spike drove deeply into the mechanisms of its left arm, shattering pistons intended to drive its hammer.

Magnus finally stopped the wagon and turned to see Julius step out from behind a boulder to stab one of the long gunners who had survived the second obliterator blast. The youth had a slightly shocked look as he delivered the killing thrust. *His first kill?* It seemed likely. A second long gunner drew his own sword, gave a desperate yell, and made a clumsy swing. Julius still looked dazed, but his training took over. He parried and immediately riposted to stab the second soldier through the chest. The long gunner dropped his weapon and hung there for a moment, held by Julius' sword. The young man stepped back and let the corpse fall.

The Ironclad smashed feebly at the Mangler with its hammer, but its power was compromised by its damaged arm. Its fist dented the warjack's torso, but the Mangler finished it with another powerful blow of its punching spike, then whirled toward the sword knights charging toward it. Several had seen Julius and closed on him instead. Impelled by Magnus, the Mangler seized the initiative and swept its flail in a wide arc, letting the chain fully extend to tear through the first wave of knights closing in. Those behind them rushed inside the 'jack's reach to hammer it with their battle blades. The thick armor on the machine took a beating, and its arm with the punching spike lost a vital piston, but it endured.

**AT LAST MAGNUS SAW THE  
EXPRESSION OF PANIC HE HAD  
BEEN ANTICIPATING: THE BOY  
FINALLY REALIZED HIS LIFE  
WAS IN REAL PERIL.**

Magnus felt a moment of rare nostalgia. It had been years since he had made a raid like this without support beyond his warjacks. He had become accustomed to having Croe, Boomhowler, or Broucker at his side, along with their skilled underlings. It made him recall what life had been like when he was first on the run—starving and lean, attacking Cygnaran supply caravans for the materials to cobble together his 'jacks out of spare parts and salvage.

The warcaster savored the sensation of tremendous power as he inhabited the Mangler to sweep its flail through the sword knights before it. Two managed to evade its strike, but were quickly finished by his closing Renegades. He withdrew his mind from their cortexes to watch with his own eyes as the last few remaining, including their officer, closed on the boy. He had cause for concern: three against one was poor odds, even for an experienced swordsman.

Julius looked past the knights and caught the warcaster's eye, his apprehension clear. He clearly expected Magnus to leap down from the wagon to join the fray, or at least send a warjack.

Magnus sat still, reins in hand, and gave the boy a cold look. The youth's eyes widened as he realized he was on his own. At last Magnus saw the expression of panic he had been anticipating: the boy finally realized his life was in real peril.

The last knights were too focused on their foe to realize how still the battlefield had become. One lunged and Julius almost fell in his haste to avoid the blade. He withdrew quickly—too quickly—without watching his path. But then his expression darkened and he leapt forward like a striking viper to catch the knight under the helmet with the point of his sword. The mechanical blade punched through the man's gorget, and blood spilled down his chest. The boy spent a dangerous moment staring at the result of his violence and did not react quickly enough to the other knight, who slashed into his side with a sweeping strike. Julius twisted partially away and the armor held, but the blow made him stagger to the side, wheezing. Magnus knew such a hit would leave a mark, even through armor. Perhaps it would serve as a reminder to the boy of what could happen if he did not stay focused.

Julius gave up ground as the elder officer closed from the other side. As he circled away he again lunged toward the junior knight in an aggressive attack, leveraging a heavy blow to knock the Caspian battle blade aside, but the knight raised his shield to deflect the next strike and then retaliated with a swing the boy barely parried in time. Fighting a skilled man with a shield was not easy, and here were two. The only way it could be managed was to keep both enemies occupied, a draining proposition. Julius fell back again. With the uncertain ground, though, the more he moved, the more likely it became that he would stumble and provide a fatal opening. Magnus' sorcerous power was at his fingertips, and he discreetly moved one of his Renegades closer to bring its arc node in reach.

With a cry Julius charged the officer, executing a sweeping slash. The veteran narrowly got his battle blade up to block. Julius immediately reversed himself to swing at the younger knight closing on his left, cutting just above the man's shield. The mechanical blade clanged into the man's helmet, sending it flying off his head to clatter to the ground. The knight reeled and blood poured from his broken nose. Julius followed with a downward hack that split the man's skull and made a ruin of his face. *They'll want a closed-casket funeral for that one,* Magnus thought.

The officer yelled in rage and made a powerful horizontal strike, but Julius ducked below its edge as the man overextended past him. Julius thrust at his exposed



right side, at the mailed gap below the breastplate. Links parted, then flesh, prompting the knight to lurch and gasp. Julius struck at him repeatedly, each blow stronger than the last, until he battered the knight's blade aside and the man tripped to fall onto his back. Julius took his sword in both hands and chopped decisively against the middle of his enemy's breastplate, opening armor and chest alike like a walnut.

Julius panted heavily and held a hand to his side as he stumbled back to the wagon where his mentor sat with a bored expression. Magnus gave a slow clap. "Nicely done. We'll make a swordsman of you yet."

"You could have helped! How would letting me die forward your goals?" Despite his words, Magnus could see his righteous acrimony giving way to the addictive exhilaration of victory.

"Had you died here," Magnus said, "you would not be the man Cygnar needs."

Julius glared back. "I will never be my father. No matter how you try to mold me into him."

"No, you will not. And I do not want you to be."

The boy reached down to tear a strip of cloth from the tunic of a nearby body and wiped the gore from his blade. "A king should not do everything himself," he continued. "I should lead others in battle rather than expect to kill every adversary by my own hand." Despite his words, Magnus saw a change in Julius' attitude: he held himself a bit straighter, and the way his hand lingered on the weapon after sheathing it suggested attachment to the blade now that it had proven itself.

"You will command," Magnus acknowledged. "Still, a shrewd leader is ready should his subordinates fail him. No one cares about your life as much as you do. Never trust anyone else to save your skin. Not those who have sworn to serve you, not me, not anyone."

Julius climbed to join Magnus on the wagon bench. He watched as the warcaster directed his 'jacks to clear the Cygnaran wrecks obstructing the path. Looking at the grisly remains of the sword knights, he said, "It seems wasteful to spend my time killing my future subjects."

"Become hardened to spilling the blood of your countrymen. You must seize power in order to rule. For that, you need an army."

"I thought you were providing one," Julius sneered.

Magnus stood and pulled a tarp back from the heavy crates filling the back of the wagon. He seized the lid of one and heaved it open with his mechanical arm, shattering the lock. Within lay row upon row of pristine bullion, each

brick stamped with the symbol of the Leryn-Corvis Bullion Exchange. Julius' eyes widened at the sight, and Magnus said, "With enough gold, we can buy as large an army as we require." He dropped the lid and threw the tarp back over the crates. With a flick of the reins he guided the wagon off the main road and down a dusty path that would take them to Ternon Crag.

## NORTHERN POINT BOURNE

Deneghra advanced on the outer trenches feeling the anticipation of hatching plans long in the making. She savored the sensation of power as she mentally touched the warjacks and undead under her dominion. Asphyxious she could feel at a greater distance behind her, a font of power at the center of the army they had assembled together. She wanted to savor the first contact, particularly as she had realized a Khadoran warcaster lingered here.

At her bidding the undead created from the remnants of an ambushed Cygnaran patrol marched to engage the Khadorans from the northeast. To preserve their appearance most were simple, animated thralls. Among them were several scrap thralls her necrotechs had prepared. It had been expected there might be sentries here, but the group awaiting her looked to be considerably more diverting.

Deneghra became spectral as she silently approached the nearest Kossite woodsman standing watch. He was oblivious to her presence until the point of Eclipse drove through his back and emerged out his chest. He did not even have time to gasp before he died, his soul ripped loose with a silent scream to be seized by one of the soul cages at her waist. A subordinate warwitch siren named Kayress neutralized the next-closest Kossite, and Deneghra and those she commanded entered the outer trenches unobserved. It helped that the Khadorans were occupied shooting down mindless thralls.

She enjoyed watching their distraction as she approached the Khadoran warcaster from behind, bidding her warjacks follow. She was well versed in cloaking her mind and their cortexes from other warcasters, a talent honed against her sister. Warcasters became overly reliant on the senses of their warjacks and on feeling the tremors of mental commands sent between their rivals and peers. Most broadcast mental commands far more loudly than was necessary. Deneghra worked more subtly, sending only the barest whispers of thought to the cortexes of her machines.

A Destroyer advancing through the maze of trenches while firing in support of the kommandos spotted her as she moved past the walls of the nearest bunker. It launched a shell that soared overhead to explode behind her, its blast neutralizing only one of many bane knights closing on the assault kommandos.





The alerted warcaster turned to face her. He swiftly leapt over the back of the trench and dropped to one knee to sight down a sizable multi-barreled firearm. Deneghra recognized Kommander Strakhov, a reputedly cunning Khadoran. She went wraithlike just before he fired twice in quick succession, the weapon bucking with recoil. The two sizable shells passed harmlessly through her spectral form. Deneghra made a dismissive sound and said, "I thought you were a better shot, Kommander."

He cursed back at her in Khadoran, and she laughed as she willed two of her Deathrippers to rush him, their jaws open and eager. A Reaper strode forward just behind them and launched its harpoon, hoping to spear the warcaster and drag him back, but he leapt to the side and it sank harmlessly into the ground instead.

She felt as well as saw him summon his sorcery to augment a 'jack that barreled her direction through a haze of smoke to her right. It had a powerful rip saw on one arm and a large fist backed by a guttering flamethrower on the other: Strakhov's personal warjack, Torch. It ran in front of him to intercept one of the Deathrippers and hurl it aside with a spiked fist before turning its rip saw on the Reaper to grind through its armor. Pressing downward with inexorable strength,

it sawed the helljack nearly in half. Behind Deneghra, Nightmare's glowing eyes fixated on Torch as it leapt over a line of sand bags.

The second Deathripper scrambled around to the outside. As it neared Strakhov, Deneghra sent power rippling through its arc node to invoke a curse upon Torch that summoned a whirlwind of shadows to envelop it, weakening its thick armor as its form became translucent. Her next invocation summoned spectral chains to wrap tightly around Strakhov's torso and arms, limiting his movements and making him easier to sense for Deneghra and her minions. The Deathripper was on Strakhov in a moment, biting through his power field and armor to latch onto his arm with its teeth, drawing blood. The warcaster drew his trench sword and hammered repeatedly at the pernicious bonejack until it fell apart.

Nightmare leapt toward Torch with a rending shriek and tore into it with blackened claws. The helljack ripped through chest plating compromised by Deneghra's curse and knocked aside its spiked fist as its flamethrower ignited to send a spray of fire toward the Cryxian warcaster. The volatile fluid washed across the helljack's chassis instead, setting it afire. Keeping its attention fixed on its chosen victim, Nightmare struck repeatedly,



tearing through the Khadoran heavy with devastating ease. Torch toppled back, its hull rent by the helljack's claws. Its flamethrower guttered out, and its rip saw ground to a halt.

Deneghra closed on Strakhov, thrusting with Eclipse. He tried to parry, but the spectral chains around him slowed his movements enough for her to get past his guard. Her weapon penetrated his power field to sink into his lower abdomen. He swiped at her with his sword, but she was beyond his reach. She pulled Eclipse back in both hands for a killing strike, but he raised a palm and surprised her with a powerful blast of concentrated arcane force that sent her flying back into the next trench.

She snarled as she stood and invoked a caustic spray of acidic venom that washed over him. He lifted his armored forearm to cover his face, and the acid merely sizzled and dripped from his alchemically treated armor, leaving him unscathed. He lifted his riot gun. The move was predictable, but it forced her to become spectral rather than closing as the weapon fired twice more to send bullets through her shadowy essence.

Before she could mentally urge Nightmare to intercept him she heard the Destroyer's bombard fire. Strakhov had timed the shot well; the incoming shell came for her just as she could no longer sustain her wraithlike state. Not being entirely a creature of spirit, she could walk in that form only briefly. She leapt away, but the explosive shell sprayed her with shrapnel and a wash of heat. Her dead flesh suffered no pain, but she could feel pieces of jagged metal ripping through her. She temporarily lost her concentration, and the spectral chains fell loose from Strakhov. He sprinted toward the nearest bunker.

Nightmare saw the Destroyer as the more immediate cause of her distress and acted of its own accord, giving a howl of rage as it leapt across the trenches toward it. Feeling vexed at its willfulness, she followed Strakhov and arrived at the bunker doorway just in time to see him duck into a tunnel descending into the ground.

She saw the incendiary device he threw just in time to leap back before it exploded, filling the bunker with fire and collapsing the tunnel behind him. Deneghra stepped forward and surveyed the rubble, considering turning wraithlike and passing through. She had no idea how far the cave-in extended, though, and entering an unfamiliar passage in that state was too risky—she would be destroyed if she reformed amid rock and debris.

Nightmare endured a solid hit from the Destroyer's executioner axe before slashing the Khadoran 'jack apart, its right claw ripped through heavy chest armor to penetrate its cortex. Deneghra called the willful helljack

back to her, seeing that her bane knights had finished off the assault kommandos. She beckoned to them and ordered, "Kill the Khadoran warcaster!" The spectral dead disappeared into the earth blocking the passage. Deneghra had no expectation they would succeed, but ultimately it did not matter. Even if he reached the Khadorans inside Point Bourne, his injuries and report would only demoralize them.

She looked back to the Thornwood where Asphyxious' army was emerging in its full glory. The lich lord was at their fore, surrounded by helljacks, bonejacks, and an unending horde of various thralls, wraiths, and other forces. Looming above the army on either side of Asphyxious was a pair of Wraith Engines. Deneghra raised Eclipse in salute and pointed toward the breach in Point Bourne's wall. She used her power to knit the damage done to her dead flesh, and soon it was as whole as it had been the day she had been reanimated.

## **LERYN, SEAT OF THE NORTHERN CRUSADE**

Hierarch Severius sat resplendent on his throne adjacent to the Covenant of Menoth. The raised platform supporting them was in the audience hall of the unfinished cathedral that had once been Leryn's Thunderhead Fortress. His attendants were arrayed behind him, heads respectfully bowed, still as statues, as were Devouts augmented at great expense to enable their heartfires to ignite at a moment's notice. Knights Exemplar and Exemplars Errant stood watch discreetly from alcoves, and waiting on the hierarch's right was Vice Scrutator Vindictus. All watched as a road-weary visitor was escorted into the chamber and made his obeisance. This man wore the mask of a scrutator, but his simple vestments marked him as one of junior rank.

Hierarch Severius bid him rise and approach. "Scrutator Jakaril, what news from Imer?"

The scrutator stepped closer, to within a proximity of the hierarch forbidden to other castes. Jakaril was part of a network tasked to provide information from the cities in the Protectorate homeland. He detailed what he knew of a meeting between Feora, Priestess and Protector of the Flame, and a stranger in black armor. After Jakaril finished, Severius asked, "How was this confirmed?"

"We seized three members of the Priestess' personal escort," Jakaril said. "One had an excellent memory, once persuaded. He was unable to overhear the conversation between Priestess Feora and the stranger, but he heard the orders she gave afterward. I have a list of reassignments among her garrisons." He offered a sealed scroll, which Vindictus accepted at Severius' gesture.



"Thank you, Scrutator Jakaril." Severius spoke in a calm voice. "Await me outside. I will send orders to the capital with you." The scrutator bowed deeply and withdrew.

After the doors closed, the hierarch turned to Vindictus. "Travel south and arrange a meeting with our Priestess of the Flame and the Synod. They may need a gentle reminder she has not been empowered to act as head of state in my absence. I will send word to Visgoth Enjorran Sollers at Tower Judgment to provide whatever forces you need. Be aware that Feora appointed many of that garrison's officers. You can rely upon Visgoths Juviah Rhoven, Var Bodalin, and Delcon Veshier. I am less certain of the others. Keep me apprised."

Vindictus bowed. "I will see it done, Your Holiness."

**A HUGE SECTION OF THE PIKEMEN WERE COOKED INSIDE THEIR PLATE ARMOR, SMOKE POURING FROM SLITS IN THEIR HELMETS.**

### NEAR CORVIS, THE CITY OF GHOSTS

"Brace for impact!" Captain Larson shouted as the ship listed to the side, its hold filling with water through several gaping holes torn through its hull below the waterline. The captain veered for the gentlest stretch of riverbank on the north side of the Dragon's Tongue. The beach could not accommodate a ship of this size but would allow him to hit ground with the least danger to passengers and crew. Incidental rifle fire pinged off the hull, rails, and deck.

Major Victoria Haley adroitly negotiated the rolling deck as they neared the shore, checking on the trenchers along the rails firing rifles into the trees. "Grab rails!" she shouted, seizing a nearby rope with her mechanical hand. The trenchers paused firing to hold on while the deck lurched and the air filled with the sound of shattering wood and protesting metal. The prow struck the sandy banks and dug in, listing dangerously. A crewman at the fore lost his grip and went hurtling over, landing awkwardly and screaming as he broke his leg. Bullets from among the trees brought an abrupt end to his suffering. The boat continued to creak and groan. Crewmen ran in every direction while the captain screamed orders.

Haley let them worry about the state of the boat and focused on neutralizing the enemy fire. She erected a powerful field of arcane energy around herself and her trenchers with a distortion that would rob incoming projectiles of their velocity. Bullets entering that sphere slowed considerably, making it theoretically possible to see and evade them before they struck.

She found Lieutenant Mortimer, who led the platoon. He reported, "Can't see them in the trees, sir! Probably Widowmakers." To his right the squad's sniper was peering through his scope. He fired, but his shot pierced only wood. Haley invoked glowing runes to manifest around the barrels of the trenchers and bade them fire again, her magic augmenting their accuracy and making it easier for them to spot the Khadoran riflemen hiding between the trees. She drew her hand cannon to assist, and after two volleys the incoming fire lessened considerably. The lieutenant gave her a grateful look.

The boat tipped with the loud groaning of tortured wood. Haley made her way across the deck to the crane, where the crew was desperately working to haul her warjacks over the railing. They managed to get one of the Minutemen off and set it down hard. Haley reached out with her hand and drew on her sorcery to seize Thorn with her mind and steady the 'jack as the crane swung it wildly over the edge. There was an ominous rumble and shaking of the deck underfoot, but the disciplined crew kept working. With Haley's telekinetic assistance, another Minuteman was hauled and released over the side before the captain shouted, "All hands abandon ship!"

The trenchers scrambled over the rail to jump the rest of the way into the sands. Haley leapt off as well, using her power to ease the landing. She was already in mental contact with her light warjacks and sent them away from the riverbank as the upper deck of the riverboat broke from the lower. The remains of the broken vessel were caught by the current and drifted downstream; luckily, the bulk of the crew had gotten clear. Haley's trenchers took shelter among the boulders along the bank and again fired into the trees, but the Khadorans had either withdrawn or been killed. An enthusiastic shout went up as the trenchers spotted troops rushing toward them from the east—a squad of CRS rangers.

While the new arrivals spoke to her trencher lieutenant, Victoria Haley checked on Captain Larsen. His head was bleeding, and he stared at what was left of his broken vessel with a forlorn look. "I'm sorry about your boat, Captain. But thank you for getting me this far," she said.

"Nothing to apologize for. You weren't the one firing those cannons. My men and I will hump it to the city; we're almost there." He pointed his chin back toward the bend in the river. Haley knew they were quite close to Corvis, though the city was obscured by a sloping hill beyond the steep bank on the south side. If not for several well-camouflaged field gun emplacements they would have made it. The captain added, "Give 'em hell for us, Major."

Haley could not spare the time to escort the captain and his crew to the city but ordered a squad of her trenchers



to see to their safety. She approached the swift sergeant leading the rangers, a seedy-looking man of short and lean stature who had introduced himself as Farrety. "I need to get to General Nemo, Sergeant. Know where to find him?"

Sergeant Farrety rubbed the scruff on his chin. "I can take you to him, sir. Khadoran attack underway now. They been working to surround Corvis, but ol' Nemo's been keeping 'em on their toes." He grinned, showing a large gap where one of his front teeth used to be. "Follow me."

The rest of the platoon joined her and her 'jacks as they followed the rangers away from the riverbank. They used a nearby copse of woods to screen their movements as they got closer to the city. The distant sound of rifle and cannon fire came from several directions.

The swift sergeant filled her in on the situation as they walked. "Whole lot o' reds up here on the north shore, but the general's been at 'em since they started, not letting 'em get too comfortable. Last night they managed to put heavy cannons on the ridge to the northeast, outside the range o' ours, high enough to fire on the walls." He pointed as he spoke, toward where the deeper roar could be felt as much as heard. "Been chewing up the walls something fierce. General Nemo sent most o' the 2nd Division northwest to pin down the main army." He pointed back behind them, where the heaviest rifle fire rang out. "He's leading a smaller force to take the cannons. We could wait closer to Corvis for him. Safer that way."

"No." Haley was adamant. "I have to reach him immediately."

He shrugged and continued onward. Haley sent her warjacks out ahead of them, the two Minutemen to the right and left with Thorn straight ahead.

They entered a murky region of Widower's Wood. It was swampy ground, and none of them except the rangers negotiated it with grace. They had to navigate one particularly bad section near a muddy stream before the ground sloped upward out of the murk to a sizable hill. The sounds of the cannons had become extremely loud.

As when she had met with Deneghra, Haley kept her senses at their keenest, continually reaching out with her mind. She thought she could sense Nemo in the near distance, but she could not be sure. Her heart beat with apprehension; it would be easy for a stealthy force to pass them unseen amid the noise and the murk. The rhythm of the cannons faltered, and she heard the sound of battle joined upslope.



General Adept Sebastian Nemo commanded his battlegroup with a cold dispassion that came from decades on the front line, ignoring the screams of the dying as Khadoran officers struggled to bring order to their men. His lightning-shrouded Centurion crushed Winter Guard underfoot as it closed on the nearest of the squat and heavyset cannons and drove its fully extended mechanikal spear through the iron barrel. Lightning arced outward to electrocute one of the nearest crewmen. Their eye on toppling the thick, warded walls of Corvis, the Khadorans had brought artillery considerably larger than what they ordinarily employed in the field. As soon as Nemo had attacked on their flank, individual crews had scrambled to turn the heavy guns toward the Cygnarans, but such great cannons were not easily repositioned. This was fortunate, as their ordnance was singularly powerful.

Bolstered by sophisticated amplifiers integrated into his warcaster armor as well as by the specialized apparatus of his nearby Squire, Nemo projected a tremendous force field that served to redirect enemy shells and dampen explosive fire near him. Direct hits from those tremendous cannons would still be instantly lethal. The storm knights of the 4th Regiment of the First Army fought on both his flanks, although their line was ragged to the left where a platoon of pikemen had charged into them from the side of the sloping hill.

The storm knights smoothly stepped aside to let the Thunderhead pass as Nemo directed it straight into the mass of the Khadorans in heavy armor. The great coils atop its back began to crackle and hum as arcs of electricity flowed along its frame, gathering at the smaller coils along its fists and then letting loose in a rippling outpouring of deadly energy. The voltaic pulse was bright enough to flash light across the hilltop as lightning streamers blazed over the insulated armor of the Stormblades, leaving them untouched. The Khadorans were not so fortunate; a huge section of the pikemen were cooked inside their plate armor, smoke pouring from slits in their helmets. Those few who survived this assault were set upon by knights wielding storm glaives. Several storm gunners stepped forward to fire their underslung weapons and send additional lightning streaking into the Khadorans who had weathered the main pulse.

The Stormblades and Stormguard to Nemo's right fought alongside his Stormclad to carve through Winter Guard and cannon crews with merciless efficiency. The Stormclad smashed its massive blade into a Destroyer even as Nemo sent a pair of Fireflies ahead to fire streams of lightning at the riflemen defending the entrenched artillery command post. Walking ahead of the general were several stormsmiths who called down deadly strikes from the heavens.





One of the great cannons farther back fired just as Nemo's Centurion closed on it. The 'jack raised its mechanically empowered shield to receive the huge metal sphere, which shattered clear through and nearly tore its arm off. Nemo invoked an intricate arcane pattern through his Lancer's arc node to bolster the heavy warjack, letting flows of conjured energy temporarily serve in the place of shattered machinery. Impelled by Nemo's will, the Centurion charged forward and knocked aside several soldiers, then ruined the Khadoran cannon with a single spear thrust.

The Lancer advanced, and Nemo used its arc node as a fulcrum to invoke a powerful explosion of electrical energy into the tightest knot of the Khadoran defenders. He saw they had nearly cleared the way to the command post, although one of his Fireflies had succumbed to a volley of Winter Guard blunderbuss and rocket fire. Nemo's men were stretched out along a long line, and his 'jacks were spread wider than was ideal. He found himself operating at the limits of his own considerable reach, even with the aid of his Squire. He stepped forward and made adjustments.

General Nemo had predicted Kommander Sorscha Kratikoff would be protecting this cannon emplacement. She had been seen at the vanguard during the initial assault on Corvis' outer defenses but had since been elusive. While her absence made his job easier, he had armed his force with the expectation of facing an enemy warcaster. Every 'jack and soldier accompanying him diminished those available to the rest of the 2nd Division, who were presently fighting a grueling pitched battle against the larger Khadoran force to the west. Commander Garven, who led that force, had the assistance of Captain Jeremiah Kraye, but as yet Nemo did not know how many and which Khadoran warcasters were committed to besieging Corvis. Until they had proper reconnaissance, engagements outside Corvis' walls were risky. The general felt a pressing need to finish here so he could assist the division in withdrawing back to the city.

Even with his mind tightly linked with the Thunderhead

supporting the storm knights, he felt a small twinge of alarm. He immediately pulled his attention back to his surroundings and turned on a purely instinctive impulse. It took a moment for him to realize he had felt the brush of a foreign and hostile cortex, but this gave him some small forewarning before two black-armored Cryxian Stalkers emerged from the shadows of the trees behind him. The insectoid machines were the most difficult 'jacks to detect, even for someone of Nemo's heightened sensitivity. They moved with eerie silence and tremendous speed on slender, needle-like legs.

He threw a switch with his thumb to send a surge of power from his arcane turbine to Fulger through its connecting cables. The mechanisms at the head of the staff whined with accumulated energy as he blasted a powerful galvanic bolt at the Stalker to his right. The bolt hit its skull-like head and sent rending energies through its fragile chassis while the tractor field held it in place.

There was no time to do anything about the second one, which leapt the last several feet to barrel into him, hissing. Nemo was knocked off his feet and struggled to breathe as



it stabbed at him with its forward legs, each cutting easily through his power field. One sliced through the armor of his upper left chest, and the other pierced his abdomen. He gasped in pain and sought to extract himself while trying to knock the 'jack away with Fulger. A sudden, intense spasm exploded in his lower back, and his vision swam with spots.

He was keenly aware of how far he had allowed his warjacks to roam. The Thunderhead was battling several Iron Fangs and could not disengage, but his Lancer turned back toward him. Nemo knew it would arrive too late. Another figure, pale and gaunt within a voluminous robe, rushed him from the shadows; he saw bare arms covered with black runes that seemed to wriggle across its dead flesh, and it wielded a wavy-bladed dagger. It sprinted in a strangely hunched posture. Shadow-wreathed bane thralls came behind it with ready axes.

Nemo regained his feet and staggered away from the Stalker, which clicked its bone teeth and prepared to spring. Try as he might to marshal his thoughts, concentration slipped away as if slicked in blood, making it difficult to assess his injuries. It did not seem as though his lung had been pierced, but he was bleeding profusely. His movements felt sluggish when he tried to dodge aside as the Stalker came at him again. Simultaneously its master rushed him with the knife, as if the two were competing for the killing blow.

He noticed the feel of familiar Cygnaran cortexes only after a Minuteman crashed down in front of him, landing after using its innovative propulsion system. The Minuteman could draw on a warcaster's energy to drive an engine akin to an arcane turbine that vented compressed heartfire, allowing soaring leaps. It landed in the path of the second Stalker to fire a pair of slug guns directly into the slender necromechanical construct. The heavy slugs tore the machine to pieces.

There was a rippling distortion and a strange tearing sound from an explosion amid the bane thralls, a vortex of singular arcane energy Sebastian Nemo recognized instantly. Two of the banes caught in the blast were torn apart, while the others slowed as if mired in mud-thick water. A second Minuteman landed amid them and unleashed grenades to detonate around itself. Rifle fire tore apart the other Stalker.

The dark assassin had tumbled away from the blasts but then closed on Nemo with preternatural speed, lips pulled back to show razor-sharp, blackened teeth. Major Victoria Haley came into Nemo's view as she moved to intercept, lunging with Echo. Her warjack Thorn was at her side.

The assassin managed to evade both Haley and Thorn but was forced to turn to deal with them. It stabbed and slashed

with its dagger in a wild series of long-armed strikes. A noxious liquid ran along the edge of the blade and sizzled where it struck the ground. Haley expertly evaded the first slash and intercepted the second with Echo. She grimaced in pain as a third managed to get inside her reach to slice her leg. The weapon seemed to bypass her power field entirely, and the blade's edge parted the plated armor on her leg with unnatural ease. A blistered red line oozed where it had pierced the skin.

Nemo scowled in anger and lunged forward, momentarily forgetting his own wounds. The entity did not see him as he raised Fulger and brought it crashing down. The creature's skull fragmented with a hollow crunch. Its body collapsed, tendrils of lightning from Fulger still playing along its form. Trenchers and rangers added their support alongside the two warcaster's 'jacks to gun down the remaining bane thralls from close range.

Embroided in their continuing battle with the Khadorans, few of the Cygnarans ahead had noticed the plight of their general. Cygnar now had the upper hand, and the Stormguard captain and senior veterans of the forward squad had reached the command post. Soldiers on the perimeter continued to fight, but the Cygnarans had the momentum.

Nemo turned on Victoria Haley. "What in blue blazes are you doing here, Major? You're supposed to be in Point Bourne!" Speaking caused fresh pain from his wounds.

Haley grimaced and leaned on her spear, her breathing also labored. "Is that a thank you for saving your life, sir?"

He shook his head. "Convenient timing, I must say. You will have to explain, Major. After we've finished clearing the Khadorans here."

She stumbled and fell to one knee, her expression confused. She seemed to be struggling under the weight of her warcaster armor. Thorn stepped closer, its head cocked to one side. Nemo spied the bleeding gash across her upper leg; the skin around the wound had darkened, and tendrils of black spread outward from it. "That can't be good," he muttered. Ignoring his own pain, Nemo slipped an arm under hers and grabbed her waist. "Come, Major, on your feet!" he ordered as he hoisted her up. Together they limped toward his soldiers. The trencher lieutenant who had arrived with the major rushed forward to assist, supporting her under her other arm.

Looking at Haley's listless face, Nemo was struck by how pale she was and saw that she was shivering. He could not help but think of all the young officers he had seen die under his command over the years. He yelled to one of his nearest men, "Find the regiment battle chaplain! Hurry!"



## THE KOVOSK HILLS, KHADOR

It was not difficult for Goreshade to locate the Cryxian convoy as it made its way south through the Kovosk Hills, heading toward the largest cavern entrance in their subterranean network. Accompanying the eldritch was Bane Lord Tartarus along with his lieutenants, Kortesh and Suneater. A handful of bane thralls followed, their numbers drastically reduced from what they had been. The eldritch knew he would restore his force in time, but his mood was bitter as he surveyed the throng led by Lich Lord Venethrax.

The undead army was arrayed around an enormous, multi-wheeled transport. The conveyance was pulled by a dozen soulhunters and several helljacks, but it moved slowly, its iron wheels leaving deep furrows in the soil. A number of stitch thralls had been tasked to follow behind and do what they could to obscure the tracks. The base of the wheeled platform comprised thick beams of iron-banded wood, several layers deep. A dozen large steam engines were bolted into this wide base, each churning industriously. They had been heavily modified from their original state, reinforced with blackened steel and adjusted to burn necrotite instead of coal. The green glow of the necrotite fires poured from them through countless vents and apertures.

**THE ELDRITCH CONSIDERED THE  
INEXORABLE PASSAGE OF TIME,  
AND NYSSOR SLIPPING CLOSER TO  
IOS WITH EVERY SECOND.**

At the center of the machinery atop the platform, several interlocking bronze and steel hoops spun and whirled so their arcs created the impression of an ever-moving sphere within which a mystical energy field crackled and sputtered. At its core was a metal cube six feet on a side, suspended invisibly. The cube reminded Goreshade of the vault he had been recently denied. Allegedly, within *this* cube rested a similarly priceless prize. Lich Lord Malathrax and Lord Exhumator Scaverous walked together within the column, not far back from the platform. Behind them came several lesser wagons containing supplies and gear, including one piled with ancient, withered corpses extracted from the crypt below Hellspass as well as the specialized apparatus required by the lord exhumator for his work.

Lich Lord Malathrax saw Goreshade approach and stepped away from the column to meet him. He said, "The distraction at Skirov worked perfectly. The Khadorans in the region rushed at once to reinforce Skirov and we easily left Hellspass without interference. Were you able to recover the Nyss relic?" His mask showed the face of a child, but his glowing eyes took in Goreshade's diminished escort.

The eldritch knew it was obvious he had returned empty-handed. He replied sharply, "The Iosan forces responded with greater speed and force than anticipated."

"A pity," Malathrax noted, although his eyes quickly strayed back to the steel cube within the swirling energy field on Venethrax's platform. It was clear where his main interests lay. His mask clicked into its demonic visage. "It is an intriguing matter. I find it difficult to believe whatever they sought could be purely symbolic, given the resources expended to secure it."

Goreshade knew better than to underestimate the mind of the entity before him. The question was whether he could somehow manipulate Malathrax into providing him additional forces to confront the Retribution army before they reached Ios. There was a narrow window during which the House Vyre arcanist and his allies might be thwarted. Mulling this over, Goreshade decided he could not risk revealing the value of the Nyss vault; he could not let Nyssor fall into Malathrax's hands. He answered slowly, "I do not believe its value is symbolic—not to Ios, or the Nyss. But I have seen nothing to suggest it would be useful to *our* needs, beyond being dangled to lure the Retribution."

Malathrax seemed to have difficulty tearing his eyes from the machinery containing the dragon athanc. He asked, "Do you have any better idea what the relic might be?"

"Perhaps," Goreshade said. "Before they left Ios, the Nyss lived in a city called Darsael, which fell into ruin. The relic may date from that time, or even from the Lyossan Empire. Its inscriptions might describe arcane techniques from Lyoss that were subsequently lost."

This prompted some interest from the lich lord. "We should acquire the corpses of Iosan artificers for Scaverous. Too bad you could not have recovered any. Perhaps next time." His mask returned to the guise of the serene child. "I will call on you again, Goreshade, and soon. I presume I can rely on your services?"

Goreshade inclined his head. "Of course, my lord."

The lich lord drifted back to the column while the eldritch considered the inexorable passage of time, and Nyssor slipping closer to Ios with every second. He needed another ally, someone who could discreetly gather a force to intercept the Retribution. His eye landed on Lord Exhumator Scaverous, who had fallen back to inspect the wagons containing his mummified cargo. Goreshade's eyes narrowed, and he strode in that direction.

## THE LOCKS OF POINT BOURNE

Kommander Karchev received reports of gunfire north of the river just when they had finished locking down the southern city and night was about to fall. He accepted this



information stoically, knowing from long experience that every war brought unexpected developments. Karchev surveyed his battered warjacks, most of which had been in pristine condition the day before. The only ones now fit for immediate battle were a Destroyer, two Juggernauts, and a Devastator. Others could fight but needed serious repairs, and those he left behind. He gathered the Man-O-War soldiers and battle mechaniks of his immediate command and marched north toward the lift bridge that had allowed them to cross the river.

Most of his Man-O-War soldiers were in poor shape, almost as bad as the 'jacks; their steam-powered armor showed great gaping holes, and several had damaged joints or half-functioning weaponry. The hardened soldiers within did not complain, but they were clearly worn down. The entire force had expected to encamp for a much-needed rest, and those same soldiers now faced the grim possibility that their day's work might not be done. They were exhausted and hungry and in no mood for added patrols.

Karchev was aware of this, in the same way he was aware of the levels of coal and water in the warjack frame he wore as a second skin. He did not disregard the mood of his men, only registered it as another indicator of combat readiness. He gauged them ready. They were Khadorans. They would endure.

As his force passed the river wall and descended the ramp toward the broad lift platform across the lock, he saw an unusual sight across on the other shore. He continued watching for several moments until he could be certain. A ragged band of what looked like Winter Guard and assault kommandos were staggering toward him. Several were assisting the wounded. Among them was a man who had to be—Karchev could see the stacks of his arcane turbine—Oleg Strakhov, who was limping severely. He looked hunched and weary, and he moved as though every step pained him.

The bedraggled group made its way across the lift bridge, several shouting in relief to see Karchev, his warjacks, and Man-O-War troops on the other side. Karchev let the soldiers pass and waited patiently for Strakhov. There was no question the man had seen action. He was bleeding from multiple deep lacerations, and blood-soaked grime covered his entire body. Additionally, his belt was empty of cinder bombs, and it looked as though he had used most of his riot gun ammunition. Then there was the very obvious and equally disturbing absence of the warjacks that had been accompanying him.

"Where's Irusk?" Strakhov rasped. "I need to warn him."

"The *supreme kommandant* is at his kommand post, near the military quarter."

One of the mechaniks had the sense to hand the warcaster a canteen, and Strakhov drank deeply before he spoke again. "A massive Cryxian army followed us. We need to muster our forces. Everyone. They'll be here soon. I got holed up in some tunnels . . ." He shook his head. "No time to explain."

"The lift," Karchev asked, waving at the lock he had just crossed. "Can you lower it?"

Strakhov winced and shook his head. "Had to destroy the controls after we activated it."

Karchev glowered toward the north shore, where amid the nearest streets he saw the smoke and distinct green glow of machines powered by necrotite. He said, "I will hold them. Our army is scattered among the occupied districts; assembling them will take time." Strakhov hesitated, still looking north, until Karchev shouted fiercely, "Go!"

The least wounded of the men who had arrived with Strakhov stayed with Karchev while the injured warcaster and the others went south, toward the kommand post. Karchev looked back to the walls above the ramp and saw a scattered line of Winter Guard riflemen and some few Widowmakers. Not enough, but more would arrive in time. They had situated one mortar team and a pair of field guns but had not yet had time to properly man this wall. A few moments earlier the most pressing concern had been the possibility of squaring off against the sizable Cygnaran garrison holed up in the military quarter.

The kommander ordered his bombardiers to fire on the lift and added his Destroyer's bombard to the shelling. As he feared, the thick steel platform was only slightly pocked by the blasts. It had been constructed to bear the weight of multiple steamjacks with loads of building supplies and would withstand significantly more punishment than his troops could quickly dispense, at least without being able to reach the support struts underneath. He ordered his men to cease firing and preserve their ammunition for the imminent battle.

There was a tense lull as Karchev stared across the water of the lock to the street opposite, where he could see the enemy gathering. Dusk had fallen and the streets darkened as countless pinpricks of green light gleamed in the shadows, each pair a set of inhuman eyes. They seemed to be waiting. On Karchev's side it was quiet except for the various clanking and ratcheting sounds of his mechaniks at work. They were seizing every available moment to attend to Karchev's battered warjacks and the Man-O-War armor. A few additional squads of Winter Guard and Iron Fangs arrived and took up positions. Their peers greeted these arrivals warmly, but Karchev remained focused on the undead.



Stepping to the fore of the roof atop one of the taller buildings immediately across the river was a familiar shape, last seen by Karchev atop the Temple Garroth in the Thornwood: Lich Lord Asphyxious. The lich's entire body was limned with sickly, green energy, and he held his spear imperiously as he surveyed the massing forces on either side of the river as if they had been gathered for his personal entertainment. Karchev's lip curled and he felt fresh anger to see Asphyxious, clearly too cowardly to join the battle directly. The undead surged into motion as if responding to some unseen or unheard signal.

They swept forward toward the ramp with the heedless disregard for danger only possessed of the walking dead. Karchev's Destroyer and the mortar crew fired into their midst, followed shortly by Man-O-War bombardiers. Mechanithralls were blasted apart by the dozens, but more rushed forward in their place. Behind them came helljacks, bonejacks, and other insubstantial creatures half-hidden in shadow. Looming larger than the rest was a nightmare monstrosity Karchev had never seen, moving on a squat, serpentine tail and with long arms ending in steel-clawed hands each the size of a man. Despite its bulk the entity was difficult to perceive as it shimmered and blurred, occasionally fading from view only to reappear closer. Other spectral forms flew forward distinct from the mechanithralls, including machine wraiths. Ghostly bane knights ignored the lift entirely to drift serenely across the surface of the river.

Karchev drew upon the power of his arcantrik turbine. Harnessing this energy, he filled his warjacks with an arcane embodiment of his rage, manifested by circles of red runes surrounding their weapons. He pointed his axe Sunder toward the water where the largest cluster of bane knights rushed forward and released an explosion of swirling fire to consume them. Khadoran artillery continued to rain down on the ramp where the mechanithralls clambered over the blasted remnants of others of their kind. The machine wraiths steered wide of Karchev's arcane inferno as they crossed the water, hungering to leap inside the minds of his Juggernauts. The rune-imbued ice axes of those warjacks swept with unerring accuracy and reached even the wraiths' spectral forms to annihilate them in a cascade of unhallowed shrieks. Bane knights following after suffered a similar fate.

Karchev impelled his closed Devastator to step forward to block the lift platform. Obeying, it moved directly into the path of the mechanithralls that had made it through the shelling. Their steamfists hammered repeatedly into it with a sound like the beating of metal drums, delivering powerful augmented blows that managed to dent its nearly impervious armor, but it withstood the attack. As more thralls crushed forward against it Karchev gave it the

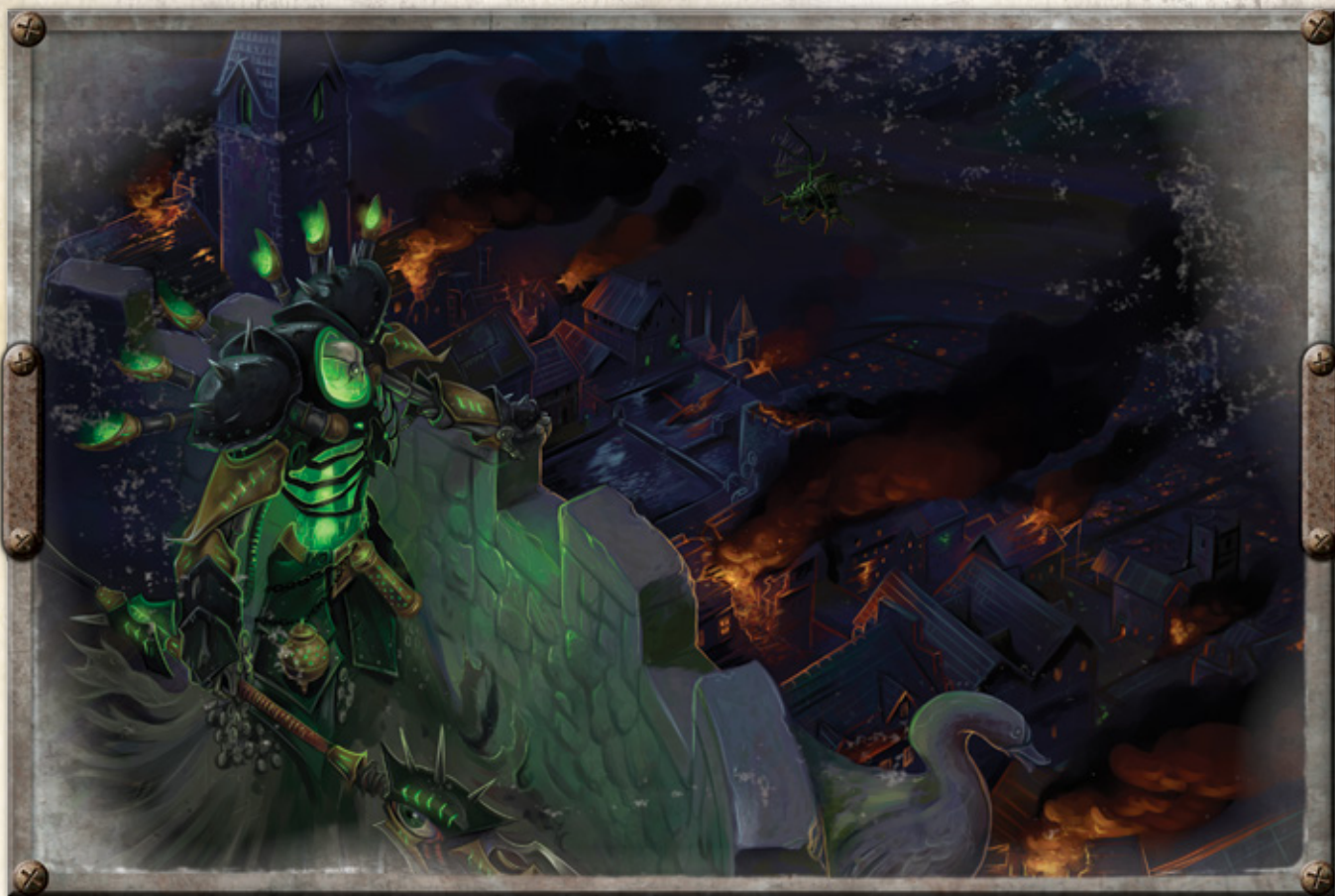
mental order to open and unleash its rain of death. Its arms pulled apart with the grinding sound of heavy machinery engaging, and its grenade tubes were revealed. It initiated a multi-staged launch of dozens of grenades that burst with a deafening roar to annihilate every thrall within several yards of where it stood.

Even as this blast hit the Cryxians trying to cross the lift and additional explosions from mortar fire erupted amid those farther back, a pair of Leviathans surged out of the river directly in front of Karchev's 'jacks. The Juggernauts immediately set upon them, laying to with weighty ice axes. Karchev chopped into the nearest with Sunder, tearing through the crab-like helljack and then sending its metal carcass back into the depths. Gunfire broke out behind him, and through the Destroyer's eyes Karchev saw that several pistol wraiths had manifested on the upper wall, having crossed the river elsewhere and emerged to execute Widowmakers and Winter Guard officers. Even as the second Leviathan was hacked to bits, a Harrower clambered forward to launch a shrieking projectile that exploded amid the mortar crew, consuming them in darkness. Man-O-War bombardiers closed upon it with growling chain blades, chewing through its chitinous armor of steel, but it cut through several in a great, sweeping rake of its scythe-like claw.

Elsewhere along the river lock, grappling hooks bit stone and revenants clambered onto the platforms. Karchev guessed they had been offloaded by some ghostly riverboat at the western end of the locks and had worked their way inward underwater, having no need to breathe. Additional revenants, bane knights, and other spectral dead were likely penetrating the wall elsewhere in the occupied districts. A freshly arrived unit of Iron Fang pikemen charged the nearest revenants to run them through. While valiant, such an act was almost futile, as the fallen became spectral, fell back to their quartermaster, and resumed flesh once more. Other creatures had found the river no barrier, including flying bonejacks that resembled vultures.

There was an inhuman shriek, and a swiftly moving form leapt across the bridge. It appeared to be a rune-inscribed Slayer with long bladed claws. Its blackened armor already bore numerous slashes, but it seemed undeterred. It charged toward the opened Devastator to slash the warjack's exposed innards and shred it into ruin. It then moved past to the stone road abutting the lift, glowering hatefully at Karchev. He struck down with Sunder to open a rippling crevice in the stone, causing the entire ground to shake underfoot and temporarily knock the helljack off its feet. He directed his nearby Destroyer to finish the thing. The warjack stepped forward and swung down with its executioner axe but landed only a glancing blow before the helljack regained its feet.





Meanwhile the monstrous Cryxian battle engine became insubstantial and dug its claws into the river's surface to pull itself swiftly across the river. It reformed on the other side and raked through the nearest Man-O-War bombardiers, buckling armor and rending flesh to feast on those men's souls. Its gluttony for fresh souls was so great it even seized those from other soldiers killed in its proximity. A horrendous chill seeped from it; frost gathered on the weapons and armor of those near, and the very air around it seemed to fill with shadowy miasma. Its giant, clawed hands shredded men with gruesome enthusiasm. Karchev sent his Juggernauts to attack it, expending his sorcerous power to imbue the weapons of his warjacks with his escalating rage.

He almost did not see the woman approach, she was so small and insubstantial amid a multitude of larger horrors. The witch sped across the water with inhuman speed, at one with the shadows. He saw her only just before she reached and passed straight through him, filling what remained of his flesh with loathing and a seeping chill that curdled his blood. He swept Sunder toward her as she emerged behind him but caught only the metal barbs along her back as she spun to face him, a bladed polearm in her hands. Soul cages dangled from her waist, across which was a dreadfully stitched scar. She wore warcaster

armor, and upon her head she wore a large, ornate helmet shaped as if formed from draconic scales. She was the wraith witch, Deneghra.

Deneghra took on solidity as she thrust at him with her weapon, a feeble strike he might have thought amusing if not for the darkness gathered at its point. The blade barely penetrated the armor protecting his torso, but his stomach experienced a sudden wrenching nausea and his vision blurred as some dark portal swallowed him momentarily and then disgorged him several yards away. He regained clear vision only to see that he was teetering over the lock filled with water from the Dragon's Tongue River. He could do nothing as he toppled slowly but inevitably into the icy grip of the water.



Deneghra smirked watching Karchev the Terrible teeter over the brink and fall into the lock with a tremendous plume of water. Her smile faltered when his great warjack hand clamped onto the edge of the embankment, shattering webs into the stone but hanging on. The edge of his axe bit next to it, and she stepped back as he pulled himself out of the water in front of her.



A haze of mist surrounded his warjack frame as the river water was atomized by a surge of arcane power that flowed outward to empower the Juggernauts battling with the enormous Wraith Engine. A half-destroyed Leviathan managed to seize one of them in its claw and hurled it into the water, where it sank to the bottom, its heartfire extinguished. The other dealt a crushing strike with its ice axe deep into the Wraith Engine's torso, and the shrieking forms of tormented souls spilled loose, fleeing their prison. The Destroyer sent to tie up Nightmare delivered a powerful blow into the side of its torso before Deneghra impelled her unique Slayer to transform to ghostly shadow and disengage. Mechanithralls and other undead spilled across the lift, rushing to beset both the Destroyer and the nearest Man-O-Wars soldiers.

Karchev swung Sunder, and she barely leapt to the side before it split the stone and wedged itself deeply where she had stood. Nightmare in its ghostly state streaked past the nearest Juggernaut to seize Karchev in its claws from behind, making it difficult for him to extract the axe or retaliate with his warjack fist. Without hesitation Deneghra leapt up onto Sunder and then kicked off the axe to vault higher up Karchev's arm. With an outpouring of necromantic energy she infected him with shadow, focusing not on his warjack frame but on the living flesh within his armor. His body became spectral even as she entered that state herself.

Holding Eclipse in her left hand, she reached with her ghostly right hand straight through Karchev's armor as if it were not there to seize his neck. With a single, powerful yank she hauled him bodily out of his machine shell, his own form as insubstantial as hers as it pulled away from the hoses and tubes attached to his vital organs. She dragged his withered and limbless torso down to the ground just before they both became solid.

Karchev gasped, his eyes bulging. She smiled sweetly, savoring the agony he must feel, so deprived of the systems that had for decades preserved his life. "Do not fear, Alexander," she said. "There is much for you and I to discuss. I won't let you die."

The air around him shimmered with a sudden wave of heat as he glowered at her with such raw hatred that it became palpable. She had no time to back away before the air was rent by an explosion of tremendous sorcerous power, sending both her and Nightmare flying back. Nightmare skittered across the damaged roadway and nearly fell into the lock waters, while Deneghra soared across the pavement to smash into the wall below to the ascending ramp. She crumpled to the ground, many of her bones broken, and smoke rose from her torn skin.

She saw Nightmare crawl toward Karchev's helpless form, the helljack's legs mangled from the blast, and raise a single clawed hand to extinguish his life. She froze the 'jack with her will and stopped it in time; she had no intention of giving the Khadoran warcaster the easy escape of death. Inhabiting her Slayer's cortex, she tightened its clawed fingers into a fist instead and backhanded Karchev's head: a careful, judicious blow, although still almost cracking his skull. The 'jacks he had been controlling suddenly stopped from the mental backlash as he fell unconscious.

The nearby Khadoran defenders were overwhelmed by the undead. Necrosurgeons began sorting the corpses to replace mechanithralls that had been destroyed in the crossing. Deneghra focused her necromantic energy into knitting her flesh again, realizing she had come very near true death in that last blast. The discharge had created a small crater in the stone beneath the crippled warcaster, and the damaged Wraith Engine that had been fighting near him had been torn apart. The maddened spirits that had inhabited its frame fled into the darkening night.

She found the most senior of the nearest necrotechs and pointed to Karchev. "Find a way to keep him alive." The necrotech waved to several of its peers and they immediately gathered, speaking excitedly as they got to work. Several pulled forth lengths of the black piping they utilized for bloat and bile thralls, while others began disassembling Karchev's abandoned warjack chassis to plunder the mechanisms of its interior.

Deneghra looked up, across the river to where Lich Lord Asphyxious watched. He stared in her direction a long moment, then turned and withdrew from the roof.

### SOUTHERN POINT BOURNE

There was precious little time to react after Supreme Kommandant Irusk received Strakhov's warning before the Cryxian army came flooding into the southern city. The warcasters had barely begun to spread the alarm and distribute orders to gather their dispersed squads. It became immediately apparent that the unique nature of the undead allowed them far easier ingress into the city than any conventional army could have managed.

Machine wraiths, pistol wraiths, and bane knights crossed through walls between checkpoints and began sowing chaos: Destroyers and Juggernauts turned on their masters, key officers were gunned down, and isolated units were surrounded and annihilated. A sizable force of revenants landed west of the town and made their way up the locks to climb into the city. Leviathans, Harrowers, and Desecrators did similarly, some guided and bolstered by iron lich overseers. Dozens of Scavenger bonejacks flew over the city's southern walls to strike isolated posts.



When the Khadorans learned that a much more concentrated horde of the undead had swarmed into the streets along the central waterway, they had to conclude Kommander Karchev had been overrun before they could reinforce his position. The blood left Irusk's face as he surveyed the smoke rising from the streets to the north and began to hear screams. Civilians had begun to panic, and many tried to flee. Others barricaded themselves in their homes. The Cryxians seemed focused on killing those found in the open, but that would change in time.

It was clear to Irusk that the Cryxians had predicted him, had orchestrated this attack on the heels of his own offensive. A keen intelligence was behind these abominations, one he believed he knew all too well. He had been expertly played. He should have suspected as much after Strakhov's discovery of the nearby tunnels, but he been overly eager to consider the matter settled. They had managed to drive away the first Cryxians that had emerged after that attack and had collapsed those tunnels. He had not dreamed there could be so many more of them here.

The air was filled with the clamor of shouted orders and running feet as subordinate officers organized the men. Tired as they were, the soldiers responded as professionally and quickly as Irusk would have expected. Drills and training took over, providing order and discipline. Each man looked to his weapons and the officer above him, putting aside thoughts of the horror that swept through the town and brothers in arms at posts that had already been overrun.

Strakhov had been attended by Irusk's most skilled battle surgeon and looked considerably better now that his wounds were bound. He had taken control of several warjacks that stood ready as part of Irusk's reserves. He turned to Irusk and said, "Kommandant, we must march on Kommander Karchev's position! We can reach him."

Irusk shook his head, his mind still reeling at the estimate of casualties, particularly after he had taken such pains to preserve life during the assault. "Karchev did his duty. If he lives, it will be by his own wits and will. We must find a more secure position to hold. We are too exposed here."

Strakhov's face showed nothing of his usually jovial expression, and his eyes eloquently expressed his feelings on abandoning a living legend of the Khadoran Army. He collected himself and nodded sharply. He took the map from Irusk's hands and traced it with his fingers. "There are only a few possibilities . . ."

Irusk jabbed a finger at a district near the western gate. "Here. This market square. Poorly constructed for street traffic, but ideal for us. Only two major routes of entry,

with large gateways we can barricade. There are high government buildings on this southern perimeter that will afford good firing positions."

Strakhov considered the map and agreed. "That would allow us to fall back to the western gatehouse as required, and there should be food stores." He looked at Irusk. "We will need to determine a way to deal with the wraiths and the banes."

"I already have Koldun Lord Barovich working on that problem; leave it to the Greylords. Let us be on the move."

The supreme kommandant put the hastily conceived plan in motion immediately. He knew they would have to fight to reach the position he had just identified. The delivery of decisive orders down the chain of command had an instant restorative impact on the men, and they began to move in crisp order. Yet amid the martial bustle and preparation Irusk could not shake the feeling of impending doom; in his mind's eye he vividly saw Empress Ayn Vanar's disapproving stare. He had faced that cold fury before and had been surprised to live to remember it.

There would be time for self-recrimination later, once he had done all he could to save the lives of his men and improvise a plan to restore some of their position. He forced his attention back to the movement of his army. As the troops began their dangerous retreat through the city, their marching steps could not drown out the agonized screams of the dying.





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