



ARGOVON CAMPAIGN



The galaxy is being torn asunder, new war zones exploding into life with ever-increasing frequency. In this inaugural Flashpoint article, we present new background, rules and fiction for one such engagement: the Argovon Campaign.

WHAT ARE FLASHPOINTS?

Flashpoints are collections of articles that explore a particular region or war zone at a specific point in time. Flashpoints contain new rules for you to try out on the battlefield, plus new stories and background about the setting, giving you plenty of opportunities to theme your games. You could recreate some of the battles mentioned in the background section, convert characters based on the heroes in the stories or build a new battlefield to represent one of the theatres of war.

Flashpoints span multiple issues, and articles are always marked with the Flashpoint's symbol, making them easy to find in your copy of *White Dwarf*.

The war for the Pariah Nexus was a gargantuan undertaking, and one of enormous importance. The Necrons had unleashed a new weapon against the galaxy, one that threatened its very soul. The Argovon System was but one of many systems in the Pariah Nexus, and the war for it was as apocalyptic, revelatory and costly as any other.

This being an excerpt of the introduction to *Volume VII of The Definitive Account of the War for the Pariah Nexus*, written by myself, Esteemed Appointed Historitor Alfus Rekorik Smigh. Written aboard the indomitable *In Honour of His Sacrifice*, may she ever course the stars to smite the Emperor's foes.

The Argovon System lies to the galactic southwest of the Pariah Nexus, this fell region created by the blasphemous magicks of the Necron race. Even as I write, the xenos' hideous pylons still tower over the sector's worlds. Officially it is still known as being part of the Nephilim Sector, though few now call it that. A tragic state of affairs





– but one the glorious warriors of His Imperial Majesty's armed forces fight – even as I put quill to parchment – to reverse on so many worlds.

When Battle Group Kallides pierced the borders of this region, none knew what to expect. The effect known as the Stilling – called by some the 'soul death' – was among the most horrifying discoveries. Those so afflicted lose all hope and motivation. They are wracked by paranoia, lethargy and exhaustion. How this takes root in an individual we still do not understand. There is but one apparent safeguard – faith in the Emperor.

We suffered many losses in those early days. But, Emperor be praised, the battle group was able to rally, consolidate and achieve important victories. The tales of these – the Battle of the Gates, the Death March of Paradyce II and the Vie Almus Counter-push – can be read in other accounts. As his efforts yielded military results, Groupmaster Marran planned for the wider reconquest of the Pariah Nexus. Argovon is many light years to the galactic south of the north-west frontier where the battle group first arrived. It was Groupmaster Marran's intention to advance methodically through the region, not committing to significant drives unless he could be sure systems and worlds to the rear were purged of the Necron presence.¹ Due to the effects of the Necrons' arcane technology, there were no calls for aid coming from elsewhere in the Nexus, save from one system – Argovon. It was this that led Marran to dispatch a task force to it. A quick assessment revealed that one of the system's worlds had a very significant Ecclesiarchal presence, meaning it could very well serve as a vital staging post or relative safe zone for refugees fleeing other systems. When Archmagos Archeogeologor Akuminor

Xor revealed that the Adeptus Mechanicus had a noctilith extraction site on the world of Foronika in the system, securing the region became a necessity to prevent the Necrons securing this vital resource.² Task Force XI was quickly formed.³ It was only later discovered, and at great cost, that not all of the calls for aid were from loyal citizens desperate for salvation. The Hive Bhorik Consumption, where a dozen Astra Militarum regiments disappeared in the city's underhives, the Collapse of the Ingaard Bridge which saw thousands of armoured vehicles of the Touzen Tank Korps plunge into a miles-deep ocean and the Night of Gnashing Teeth are but a handful of examples of terrible treachery that were suffered.

¹ Though it is certain that the Bullgrox, as he was known by many, wanted much to advance swiftly, he knew that a sure but steady approach had to be the way forwards. Reinforcements from elsewhere in the Imperium were far from likely if the bulk of his forces were surrounded by Necrons after diving too deeply into the Nexus without gaining secure footholds first.

² Why the Adeptus Mechanicus representative chose only then to reveal such vital information remains a mystery as well as a source of frustration to both the senior officers of the task force as well as those of us recording events.

³ The number of bureaucratic and administrative errors that arose because of this is impossible to ascertain. The effects of many were disastrous. At least twelve cruisers and their escorts were deployed with only ten percent of their required munitions. Scores of Astropaths and Navigators were killed through the sheer strain of demands placed upon them. Dozens of regiments of Astra Militarum troops and preceptories of Adepta Sororitas were abandoned on battlefields as ships were withdrawn from contested war zones. We can only pray to the great God-Emperor that they made the vile Necrons pay a heavy price for their lives. Contrastingly, on occasion mistakes were a boon. The defenders of the Cathedrum of St. Zoneris the Purger of Heathens Many on Argolish withstood and threw off a two-year siege thanks to being supplied with twenty times the food, ammunition and water rations they should have received.



THE ARGOVON SYSTEM

The Argovon System has been in Imperial records for approximately eight thousand years, first mentioned by name only in fragments of the *Katalogue of the Regions of the Galaxie Sowthward*. Local myth talks of a great hero called Foronika Argovon, who discovered the system determined to bring new worlds into the Emperor's domain. She is described in the *Canticles Of Our System's Discovery* as 'tallest of the tall and strongest of the strong, bravest of the brave and truest of the true'. Many other texts my researchers and I have prised from the system's ruined archives and libraries echo similar ideas. My research has concluded that is far more likely the case that she was in fact a Rogue Trader from a long disgraced, heavily indebted and impoverished family. By sheer fortune she happened to stumble across the region and the enormous mineral wealth on the world she so humbly named directly after herself. It takes little imagination to think that she might have wanted to 'correct' her story and restore some regard to her family name. Though these accounts are terribly transparent in their lies and hyperbole, I have not shared my discovery. The great unwashed always need their stories – now, I daresay, more than ever.



FORONIKA

No worlds in the system have as sparse a population as Foronika, but none are more strategically significant. The battles that raged here for the noctilith deposits are easily among the most savage and brutal in the entire Argovon conflict. Here Adeptus Mechanicus forgeshrines sat built atop or alongside ancient Necron extractio-arcana, and millions died among them and around countless other objectives. One forgeshrine sat at the base of a series of low rolling hills known locally as the Humps of Kafusa. It took eight months for Imperial forces to seize this high ground from the Necrons, and it cost some two million lives. Even this was only possible thanks to the direct involvement of the Tome Keepers 3rd Company and a decisive charge by multiple lances from House Boros. I give this as an example of the uncompromising nature of the battles here – anything offering the slimmest tactical advantage to aid in the capturing, saving or holding of the Adeptus Mechanicus noctilith extraction sites was fought for with fanatical intensity. And rightly so! It is of little doubt that if we are to save this part of the Nephilim Sector and beyond, then the secrets of blackstone must be revealed, and we must not allow the Necrons to secure any more of it.

SARRONIK

Sarronik is a strange world of contradiction. On one hand, its population is poor, nomadic and the prey of the extreme fauna that top the planet's food chain. On the other hand, it has been a favourite of the entire sub-sector's nobility to travel there to hunt and claim pelts, claws and skulls of the largest creatures for display. Thus

part of it is designed for the rich – well protected and luxurious. In other parts, day-to-day life is an almost impossible struggle for the populace, the remotest of which are developmentally still little more than flint-wielding savages. A particularly unusual geographical feature of Sarronik is its very large lakes of high-alkaline liquids. Once thought to be devoid of life, it came as a great surprise to the troops of the 19th Irikidan Hastati and 3rd Irikidan Ballistas, as well as Battle Sisters of the Order of the Ivory Blade, when Necrons appeared on the shores of Lake Chirel from a dolmen gate that must have been on the lake's bottom. The Battle of the Chirel Shore was an act of containment that went on to involve dozens of Astra Militarum regiments as well as elements of several Adepta Sororitas Orders as they attempted to stymie the never-ending flow of Necrons on the scores of miles-long shorelines.

ARGOVON

Here is where Argovon's fortune was made so many millennia ago. A temperate world ideal for Human habitation, Argovon has rare mineral wealth. While few in number, its deposits are unusually rich in materials found on barely one in a thousand systems – materials the Adeptus Mechanicus have sought avidly. That being said, extensive mining has created a man-made fault line through the middle of the planet, known as the New Argovon Fault, or Gorias's Fault.⁴ The surrounding area is beset by serious earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions on a regular basis that in the past have cost millions of lives. It was upon this world that Task Force XI encountered significant Genestealer Cult presence.⁵



ARGOLISH

Argolish is the Argovon System's Ecclesiarchal capital. Huge portions of its land are given over to colossal basilicas, cathedrums, chapels, chancels and sanctuaries. Even structures not directly dedicated to the worship of the Emperor, such as hab-blocks and administratum offices, have been designed to resemble sacred sites. The mightiest of the cathedra are city-sized and heavily fortified, great citadels raised up to honour the God-Emperor's name. It was here that the effect of the Stilling was its weakest, so it was here the Necrons' struck hardest. Colossal hosts marched from dolmen gates, and tomb fleets darkened the skies. The 811th Veolan Black Guard won renown for their one-hundred-day running battle through the Great Gardens of St. Bartholema the Pure of Heart. I write in awe recollecting the daring strike of a host of Terminator-armour-clad warriors of the Adamantine Lions, who slew a Necron lord and a number of his council. The confusion this caused undoubtedly bought the time needed for the 82nd Varkhian Jackals of the Militarum Tempestus to evacuate the priceless mosaic of The Most Glorious Emperor While He Yet Walked Among Us from the small chapel that held it.

IASO

Iaso is a failing agri-world. Production has fallen to 10% of levels from four decades ago. The cause itself is claimed to be highly mysterious. Three successive Planetary Governors have been installed and executed for incompetence. It is vital for the Imperial war effort in the region that the world's productivity is restored. When Task Force XI arrived in-system, Iaso was the planet closest to being completely stilled. Battle Sisters

of a number of Orders, including the Order of the Argent Shroud, Our Martyred Lady, the Wounded Heart and the Sublime Adoration deployed to the planet in droves alongside frateris militia brigades and regiments of Astra Militarum with thousands of attached Ministorum Priests. These forces, inflamed with righteous faith, were dropped onto a world in the grip of a Necron tomb world's awakening.

HISHREA

Farthest from the system's star, Hishrea is in a state of never-ending winter. Its surface is laced with jagged mountain chains; vast, inhospitable tundras; dark seas and hyperactive cryovolcanoes. The majority of the planet's population is nomadic, following megashoals of helikoprioids over the freezing oceans on large hunting vessels. Most of the remainder live in one of the dozens of hive cities that sit atop the world's thermal vents, suffering a life of severe harshness. Most are committed to work in extremely dangerous gas mines, or guard the tunnels from horrifying frostwurm incursions.⁶ Despite its remoteness, many Argolishian missionaries have travelled here to preach. The populace is thus hardy, strong-willed and faithful. The Planetary Governor, Oponidas Phlax, was quick to respond to the Necron incursions as well as to provide as much aid as possible to Task Force XI. In one notable engagement, the local Hishrean Mountainmen set explosives on the underside of the ice of a frozen lake. With great discipline and courage, they lured thousands of Necrons on to the surface before springing the trap, detonating the charges and sending the xenos automatons into the depths.

⁴ Named for Phrancheska Gorla, the former planetary governor who was warned of the damage being done to the world's geology. The name is a deliberate pun, invented by the world's sardonic population of prospectors. Needless to say, it was only after her death that the name became more widely used.

⁵ Symbols, slogans and markings found daubed in public areas suggest the presence of both the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor and a previously unidentified cult known as the Blessed Raised. Their numbers have been impossible to ascertain, the margins of error in their calculation so wide as to render them meaningless.

⁶ Though only four inches in length on average, frostwurms move in colonies through the ground many hundreds in number, and they can strip a person of flesh in less than a minute.



FORCES OF THE ARGOVON CAMPAIGN

STRENGTH OF TASK FORCE XI

No complete and fully accurate record was ever made of the forces that made up Task Force XI, due to the hasty nature of its formation and the disorder in the early stages of the Pariah Nexus campaign. There were also the logistical and bureaucratic challenges of the Indomitus Crusade as a whole. Elements of battle groups and task forces were lost in transit to a battle zone. Individual ships and refugees from around the galaxy found themselves within task forces having encountered them by chance and

accompanied them on their missions. Other forces were given additional missions that were never logged, whether by accident or design. Those fleets and battle groups that exist today do not closely resemble those that set out from Terra years ago, as some of their constituent elements have been destroyed and others have joined them. Forces of the Adeptus Astartes have generally come and gone as they pleased, nor is the situation dissimilar for the Adepta Sororitas, Adeptus Mechanicus and the forces of Knight worlds and Knightly households.

> The following is the estimated disposition of Task Force XI, at the outset of the Argovon Campaign, as recorded by Officio Logisticarum Metascrivener 3rd Class Thodensia Plunthar in the name of the Almighty Emperor, the Primarch Reborn, and Groupmaster Marran. Disposition collated approximately seven months into the Argovon Campaign.

+++ SENIOR TASK FORCE COMMAND STAFF +++

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASTRA MILITARUM

- High Field Marshal Janred Remko Hynflaager – in his command is the task force placed
- Major General Oyer Valdu
- Lieutenant Commander Hansk Yurne

Note: Only the most senior Astra Militarum officers were considered to be among the command staff. Those besides High Field Marshal Hynflaager were responsible for multiple army groups.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADEPTA SORORITAS

- Canoness Preceptor Gizella of the Order of the Bleeding Heart
- Canoness Preceptor Celiya of the Order of the Argent Shroud

Note: Other Canoness Preceptors were a part of the task force from several Orders. Those listed above were included in the command staff by vote of their peers to serve as representatives.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE QUESTOR IMPERIALIS HOUSEHOLDS

- Baron Polonius of House Terryon
- Lady Rozalind of House Boros
- Baroness Maryanna of House Miranor

Note: No single Baron or Baroness agreed that another could represent them at senior command briefings. The High Field Marshal allowed for this in the name of expediency and also in light of the reality that the Questor Imperialis elements of his task force did not sit under his authority.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

- Archmagos Archeogeologor Akuminor Xor of Mars, Tech-Priest Dominus
- Baron Pendrus of House Vulker

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ADEPTUS ASTARTES

- Captain Nasiem bal Tergu of the Tome Keepers
- Captain Xiopa Ahuitz of the Obsidian Jaguars
- Lieutenant Auxitius Palamas of the Atlantian Spears
- Watch Captain Argustus Kastor of Deathwatch Fort Prescience

Note: More than any element of the Imperial forces fighting throughout the Pariah Nexus, the Adeptus Astartes were most likely to move in and out of different war and battle zones at their own whim, carrying out missions before moving on.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HOLY ORDOS OF THE INQUISITION

- Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Allexei Macara
- Ordo Machinum Inquisitor Selen Thakra
- Ordo Astra Inquisitor Tholome Marcs

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NAVIS IMPERIALIS

- Admiral Ashenzar Kinra [Flagship: Oberon-class Battleship Doom of His Foes, colloquially known among task force personnel as 'the Doom'.]
- Air Commodore Lord Balak Surpara [Overall commander of Aeronautica Imperialis elements.]



+++ Thought for the Day +++
The victor lives in honour;
the vanquished dies in shame.



HIGH FIELD MARSHAL JANRED REMKO HYNFLAAGER

The fifth son of a noble family, High Field Marshal Janred Remko Hynflaager joined the 56th Ghobyan Assault Guards of the Astra Militarum during his adolescence, serving as a cadet on the staff of mid-ranking officers. Assessment reports from his seniors state that even in his youth he had a remarkable grasp of the *Tactica Imperium*, and committed swathes of it to memory. He was a member of the 56th Ghobyan for thirty-seven years, eventually rising to command the entire regiment. During this time, he was involved in numerous rebellion suppressions as well as wars against xenos forces. He earned the Imperial Medallion for commanding his company in a successful assault on a traitor headquarters which had withstood an eight-month long siege on the world of Diadok. After promotion to commander of the regiment's 17th Battalion, he orchestrated the masterful defence of Bulwark IX during the height of Waaagh! Snakrat. There he organised a perfect strategy of feinting and rapid counter-attacks whilst fighting in the front lines alongside his battered troops.

Though by the time of the Argovon campaign he had long since been promoted above the rank of a regimental commander, the 56th always served alongside him, unofficially calling themselves 'Janred's Own'. It is a sign of the extraordinary bond between the High Field Marshal and his old regiment that he permitted the insubordination in the use of his first name. It is certain that other senior officers looked down upon such a practice as improper, but Hynflaager's combat record speaks for itself. The campaign was a further forty years after he last directly commanded his old regiment, yet so very rarely was he found remotely wanting. His tally of victories was enormous. He was responsible for the Salvation of Langarus and the Third Purge of Areetes – wars taught in Imperial academies throughout the Imperium that I have known since I was young. I take no shame in stating that I shed many a tear upon hearing of his death, when it came. Not a day goes by that I do not beseech the Emperor to grant us vengeance. The Lord of Steel and Night will pay.

> The following is an extract from the estimated disposition of the Astra Militarum of Task Force XI, as recorded by Officio Logisticarum Metascrivener 3rd Class Thodensia Plunthar in the name of the Almighty Emperor, the Primarch Reborn, and Groupmaster Marran. Disposition collated approximately fourteen months into the Argovon Campaign. Note that the task force officially inducted much of the local forces soon after arrival in the system.¹ Additionally, some elements were lost or destroyed early in the fighting, and due to the hurried nature of Task Force XI's assembly, no complete list of the entirety of its strength exists or can be compiled. The intention of the inclusion of this information is to indicate to the honoured reader the breadth of Astra Militarum forces engaged.

INFANTRY ELEMENTS

- 27 regiments of Vuxorian Venators
- 3 regiments of Cadian Shock Troopers
- 15 regiments of Valhallan Ice Warriors
- 23 companies of Haephosian Tritons
- 41 regiments of Miasman Redcows
- 19 companies of Sashani Patrollers
- 4 rangings of Anvarsian Ice Rangers
- 32 regiments of Nunciar Chevlariks
- 26 sabot groups of Vastadt III Expedrines

ARTILLERY ELEMENTS

- 6 regiments of Chancyllian Cannoneers
- 11 regiments of Dremian Carronademen
- 14 regiments of Formund Scorpions
- 37 batteries of Xomoni Blasthounds
- 22 regiments of Klighayan Mangonels
- 19 gunhosts of Sarronikan Trebuchets

ARMOURED ELEMENTS

- 32 regiments of Touzen Tank Korps
- 4 regiments of Praetorian Hussars
- 9 regiments of Sondoran Gearheads
- 12 echelons of Dragoons Exemplar
- 27 spearheads of Lascareen Thunderers
- 15 regiments of Nunciar Chevlariks

OTHER

- 213 formations of Censerhosts
- Unknown numbers of Pilgrims of Foronika the Brave
- ~~Bhorik Underhivers~~ PURGATOS
- c. 2,000 faith battalions of Argolishian Creedsmen
- 47 squadrons of Iasoni Outriders
- 389 brigades of Argovonian Militia
- 14 brute regiments of Tagax XIII Ogryn Auxilia
- 219 scratch battalions of Hishrean Mountainmen



+++ Thought for the Day +++
The only necessary reaction to treachery
is vengeance.

¹ Though in practise it would take some time for any of these forces to make contact or be unified in any way.





XENOS FORCES OF THE ARGOVON CAMPAIGN

What I could learn of our enemies' strength in the Argovon System has been pieced together from after-action reports, servo-skull pict recordings and other fractured information sources. It is not impossible that the presence of certain Necron dynasties has never been noted, or that those Imperial forces to encounter them were destroyed entirely before they could fully log the identity of their enemies in a given zone of battle. The Necron order of battle – if such a thing is even used by the Necrons – is virtually impenetrable, in terms of one's ability to understand how it functions. It has only been possible to formulate some idea of the strength of some Necron dynasties through the careful analysis of ritualistic boasting some appear to indulge in at the outset of particularly large engagements⁷ (cf. the Megalith Ice Ravine Massacre – see the full account of the fighting for Hishrea for the complete telling of this abysmal disaster). It is clear without any doubt that the Szarekhan Dynasty and Oruskh Dynasties are present in force, with the Szarekhan by far the most

widespread and dominant. There is some confusion around the presence of others due to the extreme reverence in which they hold lords of the Szarekhan Dynasty. Some are so intertwined with this dominant force it is nigh impossible to distinguish them.

Scattered reports also told of the presence of the Aeldari. Records suggest between four and five thousand officers and troops of the Astra Militarum were executed for 'spreading malicious rumours', 'lying to a superior', 'wasting a superior's time' and 'gross negligence' for reporting the sighting of these enigmatic creatures.⁸ Through painstaking research, with much gratitude due to my colleagues and no doubt the intervention of the Emperor himself, I was able to ascertain that the sightings of the Aeldari were of troops from Alaitoc Craftworld and a Masque of Harlequins known as The Dreaming Shadow. What their agenda(s) were – or indeed, are – in the Argovon System have yet to be revealed. I doubt little that whatever goals they seek to achieve are little in line with our own, and are to our detriment.

⁷ Of course, such sources are by definition unreliable in extremis, and should only be listened under supervision of the Ecclesiarchy. I conducted nine hours of continuous prayer after listening to but one such speech. Only the strongest of faith should consider sourcing these recordings.

⁸ Though it is easy, with the benefit of hindsight – and especially after the total annihilation of the 3rd and 12th Vuxorian Venators at the Cirque of Ullavian on Hishrea – to criticise those who ordered these executions, after examining the events I am quite convinced they were right to do so. Battles can be lost by but a clause of information, or by hesitation caused by uncertainty. The vague and unhelpful testimony of the executed cannot lead to sound conclusions, and I am sure that a great many of the accounts some have linked to Aeldari sightings are in fact the phantoms of the imaginations of exhausted troops who should have known better.

ARGOVON CAMPAIGN

As the Necrons awaken from their hibernation, the Argovon System is plunged into all-out war. But the Necrons are not the only alien race making a bid to claim this valuable system. Read on to find out how you can fight this epic campaign set in the Pariah Nexus.



Over the following pages, you will find an in-depth campaign system that allows you to fight the conflict embroiling the Argovon System in this period of strife. Players will form alliances and then play a number of games, split across several phases, as the armed struggle wears on. Each phase is scored separately, meaning that everything is to play for, right up to the very last game of the campaign. This is the first of three parts.

FLASHPOINTS

Flashpoints represent specific areas of conflict at particular moments in time. Some of the rules content found within the following pages is tagged with the Flashpoint that it belongs to. Rules that are labelled as belonging to one or more Flashpoints, in this case the Argovon conflict and that of the wider Pariah Nexus, are thematically linked to them and are not intended to be combined with rules from different locales.

When playing a game, if both players wish to use any Flashpoint rules, they should agree ahead of time which Flashpoint their battle is set in. After this choice has been made, the only Flashpoint rules that can be used in that game are ones labelled with that Flashpoint.





CAMPAIGN RULES

CAMPAIGN MASTER

This campaign is best run with a Campaign Master. The Campaign Master can take part in the campaign just like any of the other players, but also bears the responsibility of organising the campaign, keeping track of ongoing progress and acting as a point of contact for any questions the players may have as the various alliances struggle for dominance. The role of Campaign Master can be passed from one player to another as peoples' available free time changes across the course of the campaign, but we recommend that this be done at the end of a phase, rather than in the middle of one, in order to ensure an easy handover of responsibilities.

FORMING ALLIANCES

After a Campaign Master has been chosen, it is time to split the players into the alliances that they will play in over the course of the campaign. The number of alliances to use in the campaign is down to the Campaign Master to decide, but a good starting point can be found in the table below:

NUMBER OF PLAYERS	NUMBER OF ALLIANCES
2-10	2
11-15	3
16+	4

Where possible, it is best to balance the number of players in each alliance as equally as can be achieved, taking into account how often each person is able to play. For example, it might be inadvisable to place all of your group's most active players in the same alliance.

We recommend players come up with their own narrative hooks and motivations behind their alliances. In the direst of circumstances, even the most hated of foes can become allies ... for a time.

WAYS TO PLAY

Once players have been organised into alliances, the Campaign Master should determine the type of play for the campaign – open, matched or narrative. It is important for the Campaign Master to specify the type of play from the outset, so that each player's army can be organised accordingly. Whether the players are looking for a deep narrative experience using Crusade forces, or a test of minds in the crucible of battle that is matched play, this campaign will support them and will work with any of the available mission packs.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

This campaign is split into three phases, each corresponding to a one-month period, and which will be supported with new content found in that month's issue of *White Dwarf*. At the end of each phase, the alliance that was victorious is determined based on the battles that were fought during that month. And then, at the end of the campaign, the alliance that has performed the best across all three phases is crowned victorious.

Within each issue of *White Dwarf*, there will be new campaign rules, such as Theatres of War, exploring more of the varied locales found within the Argovon System, alongside new Crusade content that will further expand upon the trials and tribulations of the forces fighting in this war zone.





CAMPAIGN PHASES

During each campaign phase, players are free to arrange games with one another just as they normally would, using any mission pack they choose. Only games fought between players from rival alliances will factor into the campaign results, however, with both players earning war zone points that will determine the victorious alliance for that phase.

WAR ZONE POINTS

Each time you play a game against a player from a rival alliance, it is about more than just personal glory. Based on the outcome of the battle, your alliance will earn a number of war zone points, as shown in the table below:

GAME RESULT	WAR ZONE POINTS EARNED			
	COMBAT PATROL	INCURSION	STRIKE FORCE	ONSLAUGHT
Lose	1	1	1	1
Draw	1	2	3	4
Win	2	3	4	5

After the game, players report their results to the Campaign Master, who will keep a record of each alliance's war zone point total. At the end of each phase, the victor of that phase is the alliance with the most war zone points. In the event of two or more alliances tying for top place, all of those alliances count as the victor. The victor of a phase will earn a number of strategic points that will count towards the overall campaign winner.

At the beginning of each campaign phase, the war zone point totals for all of the alliances are reset to zero, putting everyone on an equal footing for the next phase of the campaign.

WINNING THE CAMPAIGN

Each alliance starts the campaign with 0 strategic points. The number of strategic points an alliance earns for being victorious during a campaign phase is shown in the table below:

CAMPAIGN PHASE	STRATEGIC POINTS EARNED
1-2	1
3	2

At the end of the third campaign phase, the winner of the campaign is the alliance that has the most strategic points.





ARGOVON THEATRES OF WAR

If you are playing a Flashpoint, you can, when selecting your missions, choose to set that mission in a Theatre of War that is found within that Flashpoint; these are themed locations that will provide you with new rules to represent the battlefield conditions within that locale. Theatres of War are a fantastic way to add an extra level of narrative to your games as well as add new and exciting challenges to your battle. You and your opponent can either select an Argovon Theatre of War to use for the battle, or you can randomly select one from those available.

ARGOVON FAULT ZONE

It is a desperate commander indeed who seeks to pass the Argovon Fault Zone, for it is a place in constant turmoil, rife with tectonic activity that has wracked its battlefields for millennia. The rumbling ground can crack and split without warning, rending great chasms that can swallow battle formations whole.

Flashpoints: Argovon System, Pariah Nexus

When fighting a battle in the Argovon Fault Zone, the following rules apply:

Fracture Tokens

This Theatre of War uses fracture tokens to represent weak points in the earth caused by the local populace's mining activities. Over the course of the game, fault lines will open between these fracture tokens, endangering those lying along their path.

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, the players roll off. Starting with the winner, players alternate placing fracture tokens on the battlefield until each has placed three tokens. Each fracture token must be placed more than 9" away from any other fracture token. Each player assigns the numbers 1-3 to the fracture tokens that they placed.

Fault Lines

At the start of each battle round, the players must determine which, if any, fault lines have opened up on the Argovon surface. The number of fault lines that open at the start of that battle round is based on the battle round number, as shown in the table below:

BATTLE ROUND	NUMBER OF FAULT LINES THAT OPEN THIS BATTLE ROUND
1	0
2-3	1
4+	2

When a fault line opens, each player rolls one D3 to determine one of the fracture tokens that they placed at the start of the battle. The fault line that opens up then runs between these two points.

Draw a straight line from the centre of one of these fracture tokens to the centre of the other. Each unit (excluding **TITANIC** units or units that can **FLY**) that lies beneath this line falls foul of the fault line and becomes affected by it. If a **TITANIC** unit lies beneath this





line, roll one D6: on a 4+, that unit also falls foul of the fault line and becomes affected by it. Each unit can only fall foul of one fault line per battle round. Each time a unit becomes affected by a fault line, roll on the Tectonic Effect table to see what happens to it.

Open fault lines then remain open for the remainder of the battle (if, when rolling to see if a new fault line opens, an open fault line already runs between the two fracture tokens rolled, then roll again to see if the units on the line fall foul of the fault line, as described above).

Each time a model in a unit (excluding **TITANIC** units or units that can **FLY**) makes an Advance move or charge move across any open fault lines, roll one D6: on a 1 that model's unit suffers 1 mortal wound.

D6

TECTONIC EFFECT

1	<p>Catastrophic Collapse: <i>The ground cracks and a chasm yawns wide. Warriors who do not plummet to their doom must clamber back to relative safety.</i></p> <p>This unit suffers 2D3 mortal wounds. Until the end of the battle round, halve the result of any Advance or charge rolls made for this unit.</p>
2	<p>Deadly Fall: <i>A fissure splits the ground. While many warriors jump out of harm's way, not all are so lucky.</i></p> <p>This unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. Until the end of the battle round, halve the result of any Advance or charge rolls made for this unit.</p>
3-4	<p>Unsteady Footing: <i>The ground trembles with pent-up fury, knocking warriors from their feet and rattling crews within vehicles.</i></p> <p>Until the end of the battle round, halve the Move characteristic of models in this unit.</p>
5-6	<p>Shaken: <i>The battlefield shakes with rage, and whilst some can keep their footing, their aim is thrown off by the tectonic upheaval.</i></p> <p>Until the end of the battle round, each time a model in this unit makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.</p>



SARRONIK LAKES

The battlefields known as the Sarronik Lakes are marshy and water-logged, the skies above wracked by dark storms and forever lashed by torrential rain. Rumoured to be resting within the half-submerged ruins are lost archeotech, but many treasure seekers have been lost to the murky depths of hidden water-sinks and fast flowing rivers, never to be heard from again.

Flashpoints: Argovon System, Pariah Nexus

Designer's Note: If playing using this Theatre of War, we recommend that the battlefield features plenty of pieces of water-based Area Terrain, such as rivers, water-logged woodlands, flooded ruins, etc. to represent the battlefields surrounding the lakes of Sarronik.

When fighting a battle around the Sarronik Lakes, the following rules apply:

Treacherous Waters

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, the players must agree what pieces of Area Terrain are water-based. Then, the Attacker must roll one D3 and consult the Treacherous Trait table that follows. The result is an additional rule applied



to all water-based Area Terrain features on the battlefield. Alternatively, the players can choose to roll for each water-based Area Terrain feature individually, or they can simply agree to ascribe one of the following traits to apply to each water-based Area Terrain feature based on what they feel is most narratively suitable.

D3	TREACHEROUS TRAIT
1	<p>Alkaline Waters: <i>The waters here bubble with strong alkaline chemicals that weaken the strongest armour.</i></p> <p>Each time an attack is made against a model that is receiving the benefits of cover from this terrain feature, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.</p>
2	<p>Deep Water: <i>The waters here are unusually deep, and not traversable by regular troops.</i></p> <p>Unless they can FLY, models cannot be set up within or move over any part of this terrain feature.</p>
3	<p>Sinking Sands: <i>This area is a boggy quagmire of quicksand that will suck armoured vehicles down to their doom.</i></p> <p>Unless they can FLY, VEHICLE models cannot be set up within or move over any part of this terrain feature.</p>

Miserable Weather

At the start of each battle round, the player with the first turn rolls one D3 and consults the table below to determine the current weather effect. That weather effect lasts until the end of the battle round.

D3	WEATHER EFFECT
1	<p>Eye of the Storm: <i>Dark clouds gather ahead, but they do not yet release their fury.</i></p> <p>No effect.</p>
2	<p>Sheeting Rain: <i>Torrential rain lashes the battlefield, reducing visibility and soaking the already sodden and grumbling warriors below.</i></p> <p>Subtract 6" from the Range characteristic of all ranged weapons of all models on the battlefield, to a minimum of 6".</p>
3	<p>Strong Gales: <i>Howling winds buffet every warrior, gales of such strength they cause them to stumble and falter in their stride.</i></p> <p>Each time an Advance roll is made for a unit on the battlefield, subtract 1 from that roll. Each time a charge roll is made for a unit on the battlefield, subtract 2 from that roll.</p>

Mysterious Objectives

If you are using any objective markers, before determining deployment zones, the Attacker must roll one D3 and consult the Mysterious Objective Effect table over the page, or agree on the most suitable option. The result is an additional rule applied to all objective markers for the battle. Alternatively, the players can choose to roll for each objective marker individually, or they can simply agree to ascribe one of the following effects to each objective marker on the battlefield based on what they feel is most narratively suitable.

D3

MYSTERIOUS OBJECTIVE EFFECT

1	<p>Ancient Archeotech: <i>Fragments of water-logged archeotech remain on this site. Such treasures are valuable beyond comprehension, and will not lightly be abandoned.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While a unit is within 3" of this objective marker, add 1 to Combat Attrition tests taken for that unit. • If your WARLORD is within range of this objective marker at the start of your Command phase, you receive 1 Command point.
2	<p>Submerged Statuary: <i>The marshy ground around this objective actually hides ancient fallen statuary. Warriors can take cover behind these submerged slabs of masonry in order to prepare an ambush.</i></p> <p>While a unit is within 3" of this objective marker, each time a charge is declared against that unit, if it is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can either Hold Steady or Set to Defend.</p> <p>If a unit Holds Steady, any Overwatch attacks made by that unit this phase will score hits on rolls of 5+. If a unit Sets to Defend, it cannot fire Overwatch this phase, but you add 1 to hit rolls when resolving attacks made with melee weapons by models in that unit until the end of the next Fight phase.</p>
3	<p>Unnerving Sigils: <i>Strange lights and symbols radiate from the murky waters surrounding this objective, unnerving even the most stalwart soul.</i></p> <p>While a unit is within 3" of this objective marker, subtract 2 from that unit's Leadership characteristic.</p>

HISHREA MOUNTAIN VALLEY



The Hishrea Mountain Valley is an inhospitable place, wreathed in blood-freezing fogs and assaulted by blizzards that can strip flesh from bone. Waging war in this locale is particularly dangerous, especially when a single grenade can trigger an avalanche and bury the battlefield in tonnes of snow, ice and rock.

Flashpoints: Argovon System, Pariah Nexus

When fighting a battle in the Hishrea Mountain Valley, the following rules apply:

Frozen Blizzards

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, the Attacker must roll one D3 and consult the table below to determine the current weather effect. That weather effect lasts until the end of the battle.

D3

WEATHER EFFECT

1	<p>Deep Powder: <i>The snow continues to pile high, hampering warriors' efforts to advance quickly into position.</i></p> <p>Each time a unit that cannot FLY Advances, no more than 3" can be added to the Move characteristic of models in that unit.</p>
2	<p>Frozen Fog: <i>A bone-chilling fog descends on the battlefield, closing around the warriors and dropping visibility to a mere fraction of what it was.</i></p> <p>Units that are more than 24" away cannot be seen and cannot be targeted by any attacks.</p>
3	<p>Ice-shard Blizzard: <i>Razor-edged hail pelts the battlefield, slicing open flesh and even punching through light armour. Such a blizzard is particularly dangerous for aerial units, the shards damaging engines and turbines with ease.</i></p> <p>Each time a VEHICLE model starts or ends a move within 6" of a terrain feature, roll one D6, adding 1 to the roll if that model can FLY: on a 5-6, that model's unit suffers 1 mortal wound; on a 7+, that model's unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.</p>





Avalanche Risk

With frequent heavy snowfall, this Theatre of War is at constant risk of avalanches. Over the course of the game, each time any models fire particularly devastating (and loud) ranged weapons, there is a chance that they will cause an avalanche.

In the Shooting phase, each time a model makes an attack with either a blast weapon (e.g. a weapon with the blast ability) or makes an attack that inflicts 4 or more damage to its target, make a note of the table quarter the attacking model is within (we recommend you keep a tally). If the attacking model is within more than one table quarter, both player's roll off: the winner selects one of those table quarters.

At the end of each battle round, roll one D6 for the table quarter that has the biggest tally (if there is a tie, then roll for each of the tied table quarters). Add the current battle round number to the roll: on a 6+, each unit in that table quarter suffers D3 mortal wounds. Note that the same table quarter can be hit by multiple avalanches over the course of the battle.



ARGOVON CAMPAIGN AGENDAS

If you are playing a Crusade battle as part of an Argovon Campaign, you can, when selecting Agendas, use one of the Agendas from the Argovon Campaign Agendas category shown here to represent the unique motivations and goals of your faction in the Argovon System. This is a new category of Agendas, and it follows all the normal rules for Agendas (for example, when you select Agendas, you cannot choose more than one from each category).

Scavengers

Even amidst the carnage and chaos of battle, you must take every opportunity to salvage the secrets left behind on the war-scarred surfaces of Argovon's battlefields.

At the end of the battle:

- For each objective marker you control: select one unit from your army within range of that objective marker. That unit gains 1 experience point.
- If you control more objective markers than your opponent does, and your **WARLORD** is within range of an objective marker that is wholly within your opponent's deployment zone, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Defensive Bulwark

The Astra Militarum have established several vital installations throughout Argovon and have sworn to defend them from all aggressors.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **ASTRA MILITARUM** keyword. Before the battle, identify the objective marker that is closest to your battlefield edge (if there is more than one such objective marker, select one of them).

At the end of the battle:

- If that objective marker is controlled by **ASTRA MILITARUM** units from your army, each **ASTRA MILITARUM** unit from your army within range of that objective marker gains 1 experience point.



- If your **WARLORD** is in range of that objective marker, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Sacred Realm

The Sisters of Battle will defend the Emperor's holy realm of Argovon from all trespassers with lethal force.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **ADEPTA SORORITAS** keyword. At the end of the battle:

- If there are no enemy units (excluding **AIRCRAFT** units) wholly within your deployment zone, select up to three **ADEPTA SORORITAS** units from your army that are wholly within your deployment zone. Each of the selected units earns 2 experience points.
- If there are no enemy units remaining on the battlefield, or the only enemy units remaining on the battlefield are wholly within the enemy's own deployment zone, and your **WARLORD** is wholly within your own deployment zone, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Knightly Rivalry

The worthiness of an Imperial Knight during the Argovon Campaign is measured only by their epic deeds on the battlefield.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **IMPERIAL KNIGHTS** keyword. Before the battle, select one enemy unit. At the end of the battle:

- If that unit was destroyed by an **IMPERIAL KNIGHT** unit from your army, that **IMPERIAL KNIGHT** unit gains the number of experience points shown in the table below:

ENEMY UNIT POWER RATING	EXPERIENCE POINTS GAINED
1-10	1
11-16	3
17+	4

- If that unit was destroyed by a melee attack made by your **WARLORD**, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Forbidden Xenotech

The Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus will fight with zealous ferocity to recover xenos technology left on the battlefields of Argovon – but whether they seek to destroy or study it is not known to outsiders.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** keyword. If you selected this Agenda, then after both sides have finished deploying, your opponent must set up one objective marker anywhere on the battlefield that is not within their own deployment zone. This objective marker represents the forbidden xenotech, but does not count as an objective marker for any rules purposes other than for this Agenda. At the end of the battle:

- If that objective marker is controlled by **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** units from your army, each **ADEPTUS MECHANICUS** unit from your army within range of that objective marker gains 2 experience points.





- If your **WARLORD** is in range of that objective marker, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Flee the Sinking Ship

Even in the midst of destruction and disaster, the Argovon Genestealer Cults sense an opportunity to stow away aboard fleeing transports and spread the word of the Four-armed Emperor to the wider galaxy.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **GENESTEALER CULTS** keyword. At the end of the battle:

- Each **GENESTEALER CULTS** unit from your army that is wholly within 6" of your opponent's battlefield edge gains 1 experience point.
- If your **WARLORD** is wholly within 6" of your opponent's battlefield edge, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

Activate Dolmen Gate

A handful of solitary dolmen gates reside on the planets of the Argovon System, and only when all the required power nodes are realigned will they activate.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **NECRONS** keyword. **NECRONS CHARACTER** units (excluding **C'TAN SHARDS**) from your army can attempt the following action, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*:

Activate Power Net (Action): At the end of your Movement phase, one unit from your army that is within 3" of the centre of the battlefield can start to perform this action. This action is completed at the start of your next Command phase. This action cannot be completed more than once.

A unit gains 3 experience points if it completed this action. If your **WARLORD** completed this action, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

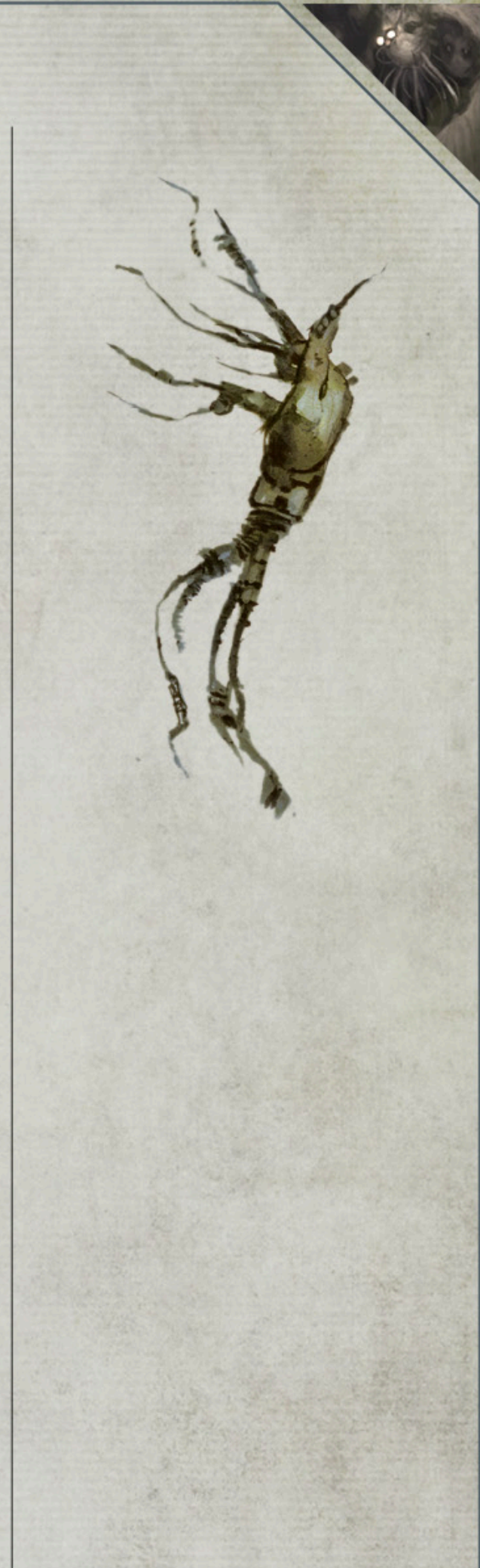
Loose Ends

An enemy agent has a stolen Necron artefacts from an Argovon tomb complex. Elimination of this individual as soon as possible will prevent that tech, and any information they have gleaned from it, from spreading.

You can only select this Agenda if your **WARLORD** has the **DEATHWATCH** keyword. Before the battle, select one enemy **CHARACTER** unit. At the end of the battle:

- If that unit has been destroyed by a **DEATHWATCH** unit from your army, that **DEATHWATCH** unit gains the number of experience points shown in the table below.
- If that unit was destroyed by your **WARLORD**, you gain 1 additional war zone point.

BATTLE ROUND ENEMY UNIT WAS DESTROYED	EXPERIENCE POINTS GAINED
1-2	4
3	3
4+	1



CRESCENT RISE

With their armoured support in tatters, a squad of Tempestus Scions is tasked with the destruction of a seemingly unprotected Necron gun emplacement. But not is all as it seems in this short story by Callum Davis.



Squadrons of Leman Russ battle tanks vanished with a bang of displaced air and a flash that left afterimages across Emmerik's retinas and oculabes. There was no colossal eruption of raging fireballs. No teeth-jarring squeal of rent and torn metal. Their destruction was so complete that no trace of them remained besides stains of blackened ash on the frozen ground.

Throne, thought Emmerik. He watched as the other tanks of the Bergundian 63rd broke formation and spread out in an attempt to reduce the impact of further attacks.

Emmerik and the rest of his squad of Tempestus Scions were running to stop the column's attackers, their boots

crunching on the permafrost that covered this region of Hishrea. A number of crescent-shaped artillery pieces lined the rise a few hundred metres away. Giant crystals throbbed with bright green light at their centres. Lightning crackled and rippled over their surfaces.

'They're getting ready to fire again,' said Tempestor Kaithus over the squad-wide vox. 'Faster!'

These Necron constructs had come out of nowhere. Emmerik's squad had been flying on patrol over the armoured regiment with the rest of their company when the devastating cannons appeared. The battery Emmerik's squad was attacking wasn't the only one that had attacked. Several more had appeared, the rest of the company



rushing to take them down. Other squads were making for the same battery as Emmerik's squad. The Bergundians, though spread out and making what evasive measures they could, were still in the valley and therefore vulnerable. Some of the Scions' squads claimed they had seen the cannons materialise out of thin air. Others said they saw them rise up from beneath the ground. Emmerik hadn't seen either way.

It matters not. We will destroy them regardless, Emmerik thought.

'Be advised,' said Kaithus. 'Contact lost with Squad Rhyvan. Once we've finished here, we may be assigned to destroy their target battery.'

Another, thought Emmerik. He gripped his hellgun more tightly, clenching his teeth. 'More lost to those abominations,' he muttered to himself. 'God-Emperor, grant me the strength to purge them.'

He felt strengthened by the prayer. Ever since they had arrived in the sector, he had felt a malaise and paranoia at the back of his mind. Remembering the Emperor and praying to him helped. Emmerik's weapons and armour felt lighter whenever he offered praise or gave thanks to Mankind's saviour and protector. The prayers reminded him of his righteousness in doing the Emperor's work and the strength of the power he fought for.

The squad approached a series of boulders and crags.

'Watch for ambush,' ordered Kaithus. The squad slowed to a stride, weapons raised. Each of their number covered a sector of the squad's perimeter. Those at the rear strode backwards, pointing their weapons to the squad's rear. No matter which direction an enemy attacked from – if the enemy attacked – one of the Scions would be in a position to cut them down.

No one was ready for a foe who could materialise amongst them. Yet that is exactly what happened. The creatures emitted a keening of shrill madness as they hacked and slashed immediately after appearing.

Nythar was the first to die. The Necron who killed him strode out of thin air and drove the talons of one of its hands through his back, and another through the base of his skull. Where his visored face had been there was now a wicked blade, dripping in blood and brain matter sprinkled with shards of shattered faceplate.

Nythar had made it through Schola Progenium training and had fought and won against traitors, Orks and T'au in over a hundred missions. In a heartbeat he was gone, having never even seen the foe who cut him down.

Falyl was next. It was too dangerous for him to fire his meltagun at such close quarters with his comrades all around. By the time he drew his hellpistol to open fire, the Necron he was going to aim at removed his head with a single blow. Still in its helm, his head bounced on the hard earth and landed with a wet thud.



Emmerik raised his hellgun and poured fire into the metallic beast. Blood dripped down the Necron's armoured exoskeleton, and it was wearing a cloak of what looked like decaying flesh and skin. It made for Emmerik, but the storm trooper kept firing, sheer weight of hot-shot las bringing it down.

The air was full of the stench of hot-shot las discharge, and all Emmerik could hear were the shouts and screams of men and the Necrons' piercing shrieks.

Within less than a second, Emmerik identified his next target. *Emperor guide my aim and calm my soul,* he thought as he levelled his weapon at another of the hideous creatures, which was stuffing the meat of what was once Falyl into its metallic jaws. Blood and hastily chewed fleshed dripped and flopped through the Necron's body. Emmerik curled his lip in disgust. He kept firing until he brought the creature down. Its cloak of flesh was scorched and burned before the monster faded away completely. 'Back into the hell whence you came,' Emmerik spat.

Sergeant Kaithus hacked down the last of the Necrons with a ferocious blow of his power sword, cleaving the insane creature in half, shoulder to waist.

Five of the squad were dead. Their lopped off body parts were scattered everywhere. Sprays of red blood stained the rocks, which before had been white with frost.

'Take what you need,' said Kaithus to his squad. 'Take all the melta bombs.'

Emmerik went over to a torso. It had no head and had three vicious wounds where the Necrons had driven their blades right through it. He took the Scion's grenades and melta bomb. Lenith hefted Falyl's meltagun in addition to his hellgun. Ruutger replaced his hellgun for Pinther's volley gun. All the remaining Scions were loaded down with spare grenades and weapons.



The top of the rise was bathed in the eerie green glow from the Necron cannons. As Emmerik drew close, he could see the light ooze faintly from grooves all over the metal of the cannons' framework. Though the amount of energy pulsing through the weapons must have been enormous, which instinct told him should be warm, he felt even colder, exposed as he was to Hishrea's biting winds on this high ground.

He and the rest of the squad advanced more cautiously, expecting to find defenders. There was no sign of any amongst the rubble, boulders and crags. There was no sign that these artillery pieces were built here or dragged into position. It was if they had materialised out of nowhere, or had somehow been there all the time. He had no idea. Tactical readouts on his in-helm display showed

no signs of any enemy presence at all, save the cannons themselves.

Maybe they were right, Emmerik thought as he was reminded of the claims made by some of the other Scions.

They were barely fifty metres from the first of the crescent cannons, and Emmerik could get an idea of their sheer size for the first time. He wasn't even as tall as the multi-legged platform on which the cannon's crescent was mounted. The concave frame was clamped firmly in place to a part of the platform that looked capable of turning around in a full circle.

No matter what the Bergundians do, they won't be able to fight again unless we destroy all of these, Emmerik thought. The reach of these constructs was immense.

'We'll need to plant the bombs strategically. It won't come down otherwise. The clamps look too strong,' said Kaithus. 'Emmerik, set the charges. The rest of you, give him your melta bombs and stand guard. We've seen what the xenos can do. They can come out of anywhere at any moment. Full alert at all times. Maintain spacing, don't make it easy for them to get more than one of us at once. For the Emperor.'

'For the Emperor,' Emmerik echoed, along with the rest of his squadmates.





He took the melta bombs from the rest of the squad. Just one was an unwieldy device, but he now had many. He hobbled awkwardly to the first cannon and heaved himself onto the platform. Making contact with xenos technology like this sickened him to the core, but he continued.

Nothing matters besides carrying out His work, he thought.

The cannon's crescent was held in place by four clamps, two on each side of it. He had a dozen melta bombs. There were three more artillery pieces on this rise, and he had no idea if the other squads survived to destroy their assigned cannons. And there might be others elsewhere they'd have to destroy. He would have to be sparing. He decided to plant a melta bomb on two of the clamps, both on the same side of the crescent.

Emperor, let that be enough to bring it down, he prayed. He had no idea if it would work. He knew nothing about Necron metallurgy. Nor did he want to know anything about it. Its evil was self-evident.

He primed the devices.

'With these devices I bring Your wrath to our foe, God-Emperor,' he intoned.

He adhered the first bomb to its clamp. 'May their fire be Your divine fury.'

He heard a noise. A kind of quiet chittering.

He attached the second. 'May the destruction of this monstrosity serve as symbol of Your righteous hatred.'

'Bombs planted,' he voxed to the rest of his squad.

He stood and ran to the next gun, detonating the bombs behind him and reducing the cannon to twisted metal and rubble. He heard weapons fire. When he started fixing bombs to the second cannon, he looked up. There was no sign of his squad. Only a thousand small green lights racing towards him on skittering insect-like things.

Scarabs; drillers; blood-whisks; buzz-bombs.

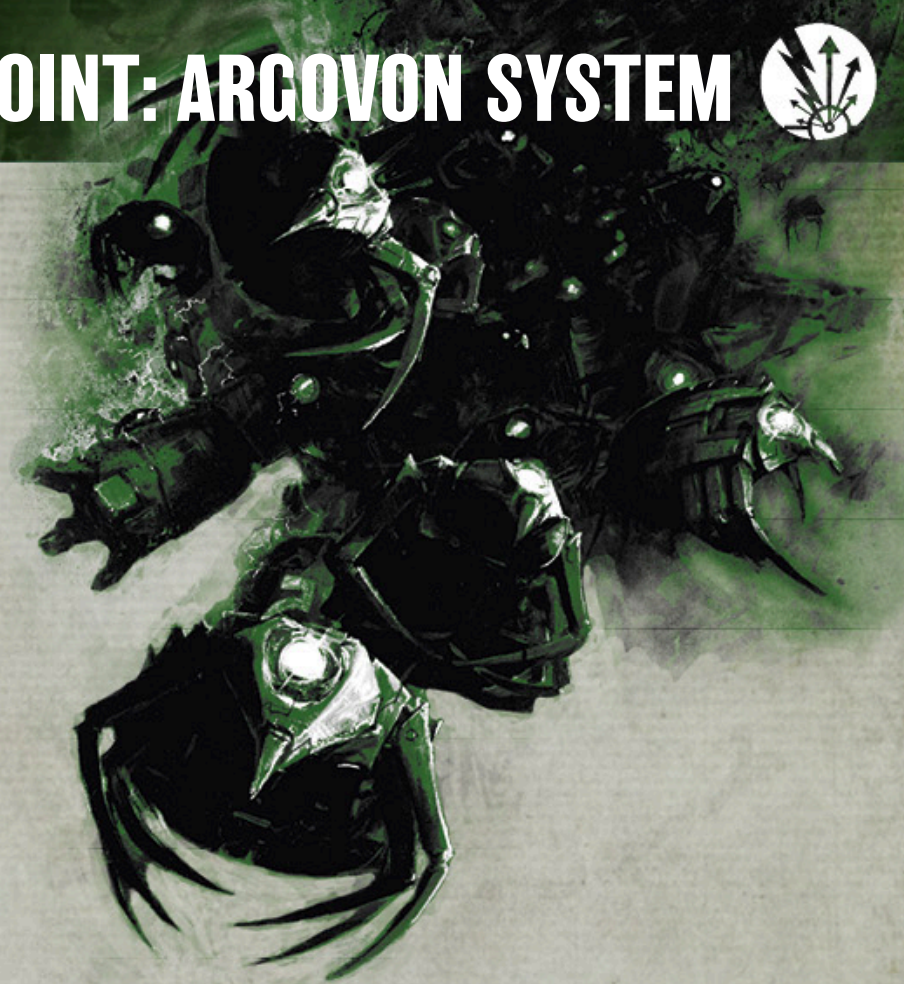
He had heard enough horror stories to know what they could do. He planted the next bombs hurriedly – knowing he had little time – and ran. As he took off, he rushed through cants of detonation, hoping the destruction of the guns would hold off the Scarabs. He dared not look back to see if his plan worked.

The roar of multiple explosions filled his ears, and fierce heat washed over him after the bombs nearest to him detonated.

Please Emperor make them fall.

He ran.

Still he heard nothing.



Still he could not look back.

Then he heard it. The screech of tortured metal; the groan of the second cannon slowly falling to the frozen ground; the thunderous crash of its impact. The earth shook, almost throwing him off his feet.

'Praise!'

He reached the third cannon. He planted two more bombs in such a way he hoped would make the crescent come crashing down on to the onrushing Scarabs. He hurriedly got to work, racing through the correct intonations and cants, far faster than he should have done.

Emperor, forgive my laxity.

Bombs planted, he looked up. The high-pitched chittering was even louder.

It was too late. The Scarabs were flitting and darting ever closer. He could not reach the next xenos cannon before they were on him. All that was left was to sell his life dearly and honour the Emperor in the best way he could. He rose to his feet.

He raised his hellgun and fired at the skittering creatures, holding the melta bombs' detonator in his hand. He saw a few stopped by the weapon, but only token numbers.

The Scarabs were twenty metres away.

'To you my Emperor, I pledge my soul. To you I pledge my life.'

The Scarabs were ten metres away. He could make out their multi-jointed legs and sheened carapaces.

'To you I give everything, and to you I owe everything. With my final words, I offer gratitude – for Your sacrifice, Your might and Your power.'

He pushed the detonation button, and everything went white.