

# DEATHWATCH™

## THE GAME MASTER'S KIT™



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# SHADOW OF MADNESS



ERIOCH  
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BARABAN  
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THE TOWERING  
GLADES  
•  
BEHIND ENEMY  
LINES  
•  
THE WESTERN  
CONTINENT  
•  
THE FINAL  
CONFLICT



# SHADOW OF MADNESS

*"It is merciful to let me be mad. Pity the man who can remain heartlessly sane."*

—Writings of an ancient Terran prophet

The Jericho Reach seethes with xenos secrets and mysteries from before the Age of Shadow. One enigma amongst many is Baraban, a forested planet where “ghosts” haunt Imperial Guardsmen and their Tau enemies alike. **THE SHADOW OF MADNESS** explores what unfathomed forces may have cursed the planet, and raises questions about their connection to the unknown purpose of the waiting Omega Vault.

## THE TRUTH OF BARABAN

The true nature of Baraban’s apparitions is not rooted in spirits, but in the mind. Long before its region of space was dubbed the Canis Salient, in the height of the Jericho Sector’s glory, the planet was a prosperous centre of agriculture and learning. Its fate was not dissimilar to many of the sector’s other worlds: an malevolent unknown enemy destroyed the population with dark, forbidden technology.

Perhaps intending to preserve the planet’s ecosystem for their own use, the enemy planted Delirium Trellises to infect the population with visions of death and insanity. The tormented inhabitants tore one another apart, becoming just one more casualty of the Age of Shadow. While the Trellises’ potency diminished over the millennia, they still taint Baraban with echoes of madness that manifest in the planet’s infamous visions.

## OVERVIEW

The Delirium Trellises on Baraban were concealed via a strange phasing technology that kept them from interacting with the material world until they were ready to be detonated. A few failed to activate in the assault that doomed the planet. They have lingered undetected in the corners of reality ever since. Certain wavelengths of light disrupt the arcane phasing mechanism that cloaks the devices. By chance or fate, the accidental interaction of a Tau ion cannon with a las burst changed the quantum state of the las beam to the precise wavelength necessary to affect the Trellises. The momentary revelation of one has sparked a chain of events requiring the Deathwatch’s intervention.

The Chamber of Vigilance has long suspected that the Omega Vault somehow monitors the Watch Fortress’s central data reservoir for events of significance to its mysterious purpose. (Information on the Omega Vault is available in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook on pages 332-333. Its existence is not a secret from most Battle-Brothers, and you should confirm your players know the term before launching this adventure.)



The Vault reacted to news of the Trellis on Baraban by revealing a trio of archeotech luminators. The Kill-Team deploys to the tainted planet. There, they must negotiate its aura of madness and the effect it has on the stationed Imperial Guard, as well as enemy Kroot forces and an elite Tau strike team apparently in competition for their objective. Should the Kill-Team succeed in obtaining and understanding the xenos technology, they gain insight to the mystery of Baraban's curse, but are left with far larger questions about who or what was responsible, and its greater significance.

## ERIOCH

*"The hand that built this place did so with a purpose. Let us pray that purpose is never enacted."*

—rumoured to be Epistolary Axineton's first words upon embarking Watch Fortress Erioch

The massive labyrinth of Watch Fortress Erioch can be a place of calm repose or frigid isolation, depending on the occupant's nature. The Game Master should encourage the players to detail what their characters do while waiting for their next (or first) Mission, providing the opportunity to consider dimensions of the Battle-Brother beyond his martial prowess.

The Fortress's secrets guard themselves, and little is restricted to a Battle-Brother. He has access to training grounds, chapels for prayer and meditation, libraries replete with tomes that lesser men have been put to death for opening. Should he choose to stray into the echoing, ancient expanses that delve towards the station's heart, no hand will stop him. A Battle-Brother also has frequent opportunities to interact with the other Space Marines serving on Erioch. His ascetic cell is as likely to neighbour that of a Watch Captain as one of his Kill-team fellows, and the entirety of the Fortress's Deathwatch membership assembles for meals in one corner of a cavernous hall that could hold ten times their number. For ideas on various NPC's of the Watch Fortress, see the Appendix on page 24.

## CHASING SHADOWS

Whatever a Battle-Brother's typical day on Watch Fortress Erioch may be, this Mission interrupts it with a call to duty. A serf in a hooded robe approaches each Battle-Brother, and deferentially informs him that his presence is sought in the surveillance theatre. This section assumes Inquisitor Quist of the Ordo Xenos gives the briefing, although the Kill-team's Watch

### THE DELIRIUM TRELLIS

The Ordo Xenos has unearthed a handful of madness-inducing xenotech webs in the Jericho Reach, and dubbed them Delirium Trellises for their effect on humans. The devices cause subtle distortions in the warp, which seem to cause different malignant reactions in different life forms. This variance has led to theories that the creators of the Delirium Trellis were either immune to its effects or capable of constructing protective measures.

A Trellis takes the form of a looming yet delicate array of shifting images until activated. Once this happens, it quickly rots away, leaving no physical sign of its existence, but intangibly blighting the surroundings for dozens of kilometres. The number of Trellises necessary to blanket an entire planet with dementia is easily hundreds of times the total count of devices ever discovered, nor do any known accounts exist of the phasing used to conceal the Delirium Trellises on Baraban. Perhaps this indicates that their application on Baraban is unique, for the alternative—that other legions of these weapons still lie dormant in dark corners of planets across the Reach—is terrifying indeed.

Captain is also present. The GM should feel free to substitute whatever Mission Authority is most interesting in the context of his campaign.

Erioch's cavernous surveillance theatre engulfs hundreds of serf-manned monitoring stations. The lowliest of these are pit panelled in grainy screens that rotate through still and moving pics of the Reach's many battlegrounds.

On the tiers above that rest more elaborate stations where aquila frames surround the displays, and ornate thrones seat those authorised to view the Reach's most classified footage. The room is in disarray, littered with notes, print-outs, data-slates, and other detritus, evidencing the intensive archive search that just ended. Servitors have begun the slow task of restoring order; many of the pits are empty; a few still contain the twitching forms of serfs whose brains could not handle the inundation of images they processed over the last few days. The room's largest screen contains a grid of hundreds of images, some still and some looping motion.

Inquisitor Quist (see the NPC Profiles on pages 24–28) sits at the central command dais. As the Kill-team arrives, read or paraphrase the following:



*Inquisitor Quist lifts her haggard gaze from a sprawl of hand-inked maps as you approach. Her weary posture suggests that force of will alone allows her to stand as she nods a respectful greeting to you all. "Forgive us for taking over your surveillance theatre. A few days ago we received a strange report from the Canis Salient." She pauses to survey the room's kaleidoscope of screens, which do indeed flicker through a preponderance of the Tau forces and their sympathisers which dominate the Canis Salient. "The account describes 'a hail of dark daggers' that fell in the middle of a battle. The local Imperial Guard tried to send us a sample of one, but the box arrived empty. Of even more significance, however, is that the Omega Vault revealed another sub-chamber immediately after this report was uploaded to the Fortress's central cogitator."*

Depending on your players' familiarity with the Jericho Reach, you may need to explain the Canis Salient and the Omega Vault. As the most elite heroes of the Imperium, this information is certainly entrusted to their characters. Once you are comfortable that the players understand the events transpiring around them, continue:

*"Since then, we've been trying to see what other data we can correlate with this incident. We found one pict of...interest." She turns an ornate cog on the command console, and a still pict on the central screen eclipses the others. In it, a fierce battle rages between Vespide and Imperial Guard, all darkened by a jagged, ominous shadow. She adjusts another dial, and the view of the frozen scene pans back. Despite the complete view of the landscape, no object exists that could possibly cast the large and inexplicable shadow. The Inquisitor circles the dark shape with her finger. "We believe this is the same location described by the report in question. As you can see, there is clearly something abnormal about it. I might have sent my own agents to investigate, but the Omega Vault's response interests the entire Chamber of Vigilance. We also believe that the Tau have deployed command units in response. If there is something dangerous—or connected to the Vault—we can't afford to let it fall to the enemy."*

She pauses for input from the Kill-team before continuing. If they do not inquire about what the Omega Vault revealed, she elaborates.

*"You should see precisely what the Vault revealed." The Inquisitor gestures upwards, and the observant machine spirits that control the room's command platform respond. The top slides off a nearby pedestal, and with a hiss of objection from the ancient actuators, three identical archeotech luminators rise into view from within. The engravings are of clear Imperial craftsmanship, and a soft blue light shines perpetually through the intricate stained glass chimneys. The Inquisitor turns her gaze back to you. "By the sacred agreement between my order and yours, I request your aid in bringing light to the darkness once more."*

Inquisitor Quist answers any questions the Kill-team has to the best of her ability, and conveys further points of relevance to the mission:

- The report originated from Imperial Guard Epsilon Outpost 420, under the command of Colonel Afton Hathe.
- She does not have any leads on what happened to the missing sample. (The truth is that the Trellis fragment disintegrated as it was designed to do.)
- The Hunter-class frigate *Spear of Fury* is waiting to convey the team to Epsilon Outpost 420 on Baraban, and can be contacted to extract them when ready.
- The enemy forces on the Battlefield are typically bulk troops and skirmishers, but there is no telling what strength and numbers may accompany the Tau officials spotted recently. Quist predicts the Battle-Brothers will have an easier time moving through the warzone if they don't draw attention to themselves.
- You may issue the information in the Baraban sidebar as a briefing document or simply use it as reference in this discussion.

Once the Kill-team is briefed and any questions answered with the limited information on hand, their Watch Captain sees to their arming.

## GIVER OF KNOWLEDGE

Most Kill-Teams operate under a single Watch Captain, but that does not mean he should always initiate their Mission. A briefing presents the opportunity to introduce NPC's outside the normal circles of the Deathwatch. Good information is often in short supply in the Imperium, but Battle-Brothers are among the elite few trusted with more or less full access to whatever is known. Brother Space Marines, military officers, adepts, and many other personages may come together to arm the Kill-team with the most accurate intelligence possible.

Additionally, the briefing is usually the players' first glimpse of the Mission, setting the tone of what is to come. The firsthand account of a planet's devastation from a haggard survivor sets very different expectations from a military overview of troop deployments in the same battle zone. The authority who actually requested the Mission also presents possibilities for intrigue. Does the authority seem to be holding something back? Is their Watch Captain pleased about this Mission? Why is this Mission important enough to warrant Deathwatch attention in the first place? A savvy GM can use even the traditional kick off of a Mission to convey more than just the Objectives, should he so choose.

## ARMING AND OATH-TAKING

Calculating Mission Requisition in an investigative Mission where the situation is unknown requires anticipating what Objectives the Kill-team will set, something the GM can never be sure of. Your best guess at what the players are likely to attempt translates into the Mission Authority's intuition about the difficulty of the Mission. You may not always guess correctly, but a deliberate error in judgment by this Mission Authority should be a calculated event. This Mission has a suggested Requisition rating of 50 (rounded up from 49), based on the following assumptions:

**Primary Objective:** Stop all of the Delirium Trellises from falling into enemy hands (Skilled Objective, 17 Requisition)

**Secondary Objective:** Bring back useful information on the Trellises (Novice Objective, 11 Requisition)

**Tertiary Objective:** Keep the Outpost from being overrun by Kroot (Novice Objective, 6 Requisition)

**Tertiary Objective:** Rescue the General (Veteran Objective, not included in calculation)

**Tertiary Objective:** Deal with the crazed Guardsmen without taking their lives (Veteran Objective, not included in calculation)

**Tertiary Objective:** Defeat the feral Kroot (Skilled Objective, 7 Requisition)

**Tertiary Objective:** Defeat the Tau command unit (Veteran Objective, 8 Requisition)

You should add or modify these starting Objectives, and the Requisition, based on your own evaluations of what Objectives your players may set or ignore.

In addition to Requisitioned equipment, the Battle-Brothers are issued a Deathwatch Land Speeder Storm for transport on the planet. A larger vehicle cannot manoeuvre through the planet's dense forests. Finally, they receive custody of the archeotech luminators. All that then remains is the Oath-taking, which may be done on Erioch or the *Spear of Fury* depending on the particular squad's custom.

### Departure

The Hunter-class frigate *Spear of Fury* awaits the Kill-team. The kilometre-long ship is narrow and sleek like its namesake, with a hull of dark metal streaked in the soot of war. Its Captain is a broad Battle-Brother named Jaresh, who hails from the Black Templars. He welcomes his brothers aboard, although his attitude may quickly sour if they count a Librarian amongst their ranks. The ship's crew is predominantly indentured serfs, although a handful of other Deathwatch-sworn Space Marines man the bridge. One such Battle-Brother is Dane, a fresh-faced Initiate who loyally followed Jaresh into Deathwatch duty. The Battle-Brothers repast together just as they do on Erioch, but otherwise Brother Dane is the Kill-team's primary liaison during the two week voyage.

The journey passes uneventfully, but provides the Kill-team time for any strategizing they may need to do. Should any of the Battle-Brothers engage in conversation about their Mission with Dane, he recalls an anecdote from a White Consul who once received passage on the *Spear*:

*"Brother-Sergeant Valus crossed through the Warp Gate with the first Crusade forces. He had much wisdom to share about his battles in the Reach, but above them all, the tale he told of Baraban has stayed with me. It was as blasphemous in its own way as anything festering in the Charon Stars. He said something wearing Guilliman's guise came to him one night while he stood sentry. This was before we knew the planet's treachery, and for a moment he mistook the vision for a blessing. But then the false spirit beckoned him into the forest, and he began to doubt. Why would his Primarch ever ask us to abandon our watch and our duty? He challenged the insolent mimic. That instant, it revealed itself for the distorted imposter it was. Our Brother banished it in a rain of holy bolter fire. I have often wondered: what manner of daemon would dare—could dare—to impersonate a Primarch, much less hold the reprehensible deception for even a moment?"*

The war-torn Jericho Reach needs the *Spear of Fury* far too greatly for it to idle waiting in orbit. Jaresh gives the Kill-team a vox beacon to signal when they are ready for retrieval. Brother Dane pilots the Battle-Brothers to Epsilon Outpost 420 in a Thunderhawk. He has explicit orders to drop them and return so his ship can depart. Once they are set down and any immediate trouble in their landing zone cleared, it would take extremely strong persuasion to convince him to anything except return to the *Spear*.



# BARABAN

*"They were all around me, sure as you are now. And they were angry, so angry that I'd made it through the Greybell Front and they'd all died. If I hadn't run they would have dragged me back to hell with 'em right then!"*

—Deposition of Guardsman Lars Ibsen before his execution for desertion

The thick forests of Baraban hide the war that wages beneath them, making the planet deceptively serene on approach. Read or paraphrase the following as the Kill-team descends through the atmosphere.

*It is hardly your first time inside a Thunderhawk, although the interiors of these familiar gunships always seem cavernous when holding a handful of Battle-Brothers like your Kill-team.— instead of several times this number of your Chapter Brothers. The holo-projectors at the troop transport station activate as you start to descend. Clamps affix your Land Speeder to the gunship, and one aerofoil cuts into the three dimensional projection as clouds give way to the northeast continent. In a universe of climbing hives and battle-ravaged rockscapes, Baraban appears strikingly untouched, despite the millions of soldiers you know to be warring beneath its canopy. You catch a glimpse of rippling blue ocean bordering the landmass's collage of red and gold. Then the blanket of autumn colours surrounds you as the gunship drops lower.*

*Suddenly, the serenity fractures with calamitous explosions and an abrupt halt to your descent that tests your power armour's shock absorption. Brother Dane shouts over the noise, "The Outpost is under assault!"*

Through the obscuring web of branches and dead leaves, the Battle-Brothers can glimpse a shattered bunker, and frantic Imperial Guardsmen fighting off an overwhelming number of Kroot. The pulse rounds of Kroot rifles outnumber each las shot four to one, and the growing distance between frag bursts suggests that grenades are quickly running out. The Battle-Brothers face a choice: do they intervene in the conflict and risk revealing their presence to the Tau, or do they allow the Outpost to be overrun?

Brother Dane follows their direction if they choose to participate in the battle below, but is unable to bring the Thunderhawk lower than 15 metres because of the dense forest. If they bring the gunship's weapons to bear, it provides a decisive advantage in firepower, but creates a large degree of collateral damage. The Kroot and Guardsmen ranks intertwine as the lanky aliens attack with pulse charges and the wicked blades of their rifles. The close combat and the obscuring tree canopy make firing into the melee (with the ship's guns or from its deck) Very Hard (–30). Any misses or Blast weapons are sure to catch a few Guardsmen.

Fortunately for those without jump packs, the ship's storage lockers contain a stash of single-use Astartes grav chutes that can be equipped in a Round. Alternatively, a particularly

eager or nimble Battle-Brother can attempt to jump directly onto one of the massive tree trunks with a **Challenging (+0) Agility or Acrobatics Test**. Failure by one degree or less indicates that he successfully landed on a branch, but it could not support his power-armoured bulk. Tumbling through the cracking foliage counts as a fall of only 3 metres (see page 261 in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook), while a greater failure causes Damage from the full 15 metres.

The Kroot form a Horde of Magnitude 35. (See page 359 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook) Once broken, they retreat into the forest.

## KROOT CARNIVORE HORDE

The warrior society of this xenos race was indoctrinated into the Tau's greater good long ago. Strong and limber, they are at home in the forest geography of Baraban.



### Kroot Carnivore Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
42	35	(8) 40	45	47	25	(8) 44	30	18

**Movement:** 4/8/16/32

**Magnitude:** 35

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Kroot, Tau) (Int), Tracking (Int) +10, Survival (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (SP, Primitive), Furious Assault, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Sprint, Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Natural Weapon (Beak), Size (Massive), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2).

**Armour** Hide armour (Horde 2, Primitive).

**Weapons:** Kroot rifle (110m; S/–/–; 1d10+5 E; Pen 1; Clip 6; Reload 2 Full), beak (1d5+8 R, Primitive).

**Gear:** Rifle reloads.

A Kroot's beak follows all rules for natural weapons, except it inflicts 1d5 Damage instead of 1d10.

May be used in melee (1d10+8 R; Balanced)

## THE THICK OF BATTLE

If the Battle-Brothers choose to face the Kroot Horde, they can hardly occupy the entire enemy mob. As the Kill-team endeavours to turn the battle's tide, the Guardsmen also fight for their lives. The GM should make this evident in his description of the scene Round to Round. By the time they arrive, roughly a quarter of the Outpost's 100 Guard already lie dead in the fallen leaves and rubble. To represent the rising body count if the combat drags on, assume another 1d10 Guardsmen die for every Round it takes the Battle-Brothers to break the Horde. The GM may reduce these casualties if the players take deliberate actions to protect the soldiers around them.

## BARABAN

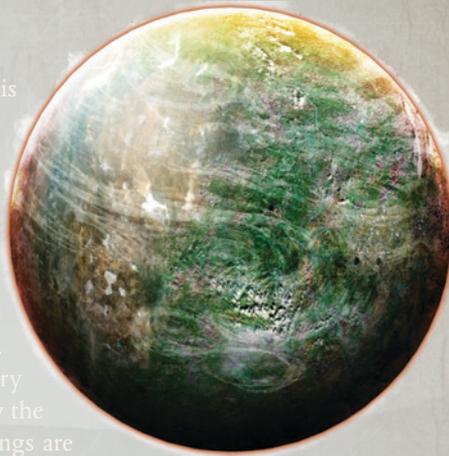
**Planetary Data:** Situated in the Canis Salient, Baraban's geography is dominated by deciduous forests. The north-eastern and south-eastern continents are typical temperate ecosystems with four distinct seasons. The smaller, western continent is distinguished by several mountain ranges and lower prevalent temperatures due to the elevation. Occasional accounts suggest the ruins of a prior civilisation may underlie the forest terrain, but no formal exploration has ever been made as the planet is an active battlefield.

**Military Disposition:** At any time several regiments are active on Baraban. Major footholds exist on each continent, although the shifting of territory lines means that many bunkers and trenches built over the war's history by the Imperium are in enemy possession. The four largest stable Imperial holdings are Fort Avernus and the Epsilon Garrison on the northeast continent, Fort Dorn on the southeast continent, and Faithspyre Station in the western mountains.

Enemy forces are primarily Kroot and Vespids employing guerrilla tactics, with little evidence of Tau leadership. Despite the apparent lack of organisation in the enemy, the Imperial Guard has been unable to maintain a stable advantage. Crusade command lays the blame largely upon the planet's unusual manifestations (See the Lorekeeper's Annotation for more detail), but this would not be the first time environmental hazards became a scapegoat for poor leadership.

**Lorekeeper's Annotation:** The so-called "Ghosts of Baraban" are an unfortunately well-documented phenomenon. The vast majority of Imperial troops stationed on the planet appear to have experienced visitations ranging from quiet voices to legions of the dead. Mortal minds are ill-suited to such experiences, and incident after incident exists of platoons deserting in fear or turning upon each other in madness.

Reports compiled from previous Deathwatch missions and Storm Warden support for the Crusade enumerate at least five instances of Adeptus Astartes noting similar experiences. Two of these instances, from the Erioch archives, predate the Achilus Crusade by decades, casting serious doubt on Imperial theories that the Tau can claim responsibility for the phenomenon.



One way or another, the Kroot assault finally ends, either with the carnivores routed, or dragging off a host of corpses for a victory feast behind their lines. Within the rubble of Epsilon Outpost 420, the Kill-team can find the young Lieutenant Lionus Drayle. (His relative physical condition and the number of other survivors should be dictated by whether the Space Marines intervened, and how decisive their victory was if they did.) Drayle is a recent officer graduate from his regiment, and—like the troops now under his command—he has no idea they are not in the Halo Stars. Intelligent and brimming with the catechisms of his Imperial upbringing, Drayle is the ranking (and only) officer left at the outpost. He has close cut blond hair and prominent sideburns. He sports many superficial wounds in various states of mending, telling the tale of recurring and bloody battles. Should Drayle's profile become relevant, use the Imperial Guard Field Officer on page 375 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook.

- General Caroses of the Epsilon Garrison recently went missing in action, and it has thrown the local Imperial forces into disarray. The Outpost's Colonel Afton returned to the Garrison and assumed command. This sudden shift left Drayle in charge no so much by design as default. He submitted the Departmento Munitorum forms to have a new leader assigned, and is trying not to be afraid the paperwork was misrouted.
- Drayle is not able to conceal his awe of the Adeptus Astartes, but his disciplined schooling does allow him to temper it enough to discourse in an almost normal fashion. However, he is convinced that he owes his life and that of the other survivors (no matter how many or few) to the Kill-team's

intervention. Even if the Battle-Brothers didn't fight the Kroot, he remains convinced that the Adeptus Astartes' sudden arrival represents the Emperor's favour upon those who remain. He repeatedly thanks them for "saving their lives and souls from the tainted xenos."

- Without even knowing their mission, he offers the Kill-team a guide, troops, supplies, or anything else they might want to aid in their duty. Of course, the Space Marines likely learned long ago that such "aid" from normal men is usually more of a hindrance.

If queried about the battle which brought the Kill-team here, the Lieutenant was present and gives his account.

*"We'd been pushing back a sky full of Stingwings all morning. We were making progress, but that doesn't count for much here. We've had more skirmishes than I can count turn on us when the ghosts come out. So I deliberately forced the line towards the glade. There's something about that place seems the ghosts don't seem to like. Keeps them away. We thought we had the enemy routed, but then this Hammerhead burst out of the trees. We were still firing up at the Stingwings and it opened up on us with an ion cannon. And then—then that's when it happened. For just a second instead of sky there was this black wall, and I could see something moving in it. All these black spikes rained down on us; just the memory of them makes my skin crawl. Then it disappeared. It must have spooked the enemy too, because I've never seen Vespids retreat so fast and so suddenly."*

He can immediately direct them to the location. The shadow stands only a few kilometres from the Outpost, and the spot is remarkable not just for the unusual terrain feature, but as a place of sanctuary—not from death, but from madness.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The Kill-team's briefing was accurate about enemy activity: a Tau force has landed on the planet to compete for the same objective as the Space Marines. The Velk'Han Sept also reviewed similar accounts of the battle that caught the Ordo Xenos's attention, and deployed their own strike team to investigate. The force's leader, Shas'El Keyl, is a Veteran of the Tyranid battles in the area Imperials call the Xenocide. Once, he believed in trying to incorporate humanity to the Tau Empire, but the horrors of Hive Fleet Dagon hardened him. Now he bitterly resents that humanity continues to war against the Greater Good. He personally has come to think of

### PERILS OF THE BATTLE FIELD

Despite its mysterious past and unending forests, Baraban is first and foremost a warzone. In addition to possible trouble from the Tau, the GM may wish to use one or more of the following encounters to emphasise the dangerous and exotic surroundings as the Kill-team travels the planet:

- **Hungry for Death:** The Kill-team encounters the aftermath of another—even more massive—battle between Kroot and Imperial Guard forces. Hundreds of corpses from both sides litter the forest floor, but the birdlike aliens appear to have won by ever so small a small margin. However, the dozen victors quickly abandon their meal of human flesh to awkwardly turn the heavy weapons of a Leman Russ or Hellhound tank against the encroachers.
- **Scorched Earth:** The Kill-team encounters an expansive radius of ash and blackened, dead trees. Bones crunch beneath their boot treads as they cross through this war scar. Unbeknownst to the Battle-Brothers, this marks an enemy-controlled zone. A mass of sentry Gun Drones (found on page 367 of the DEATHWATCH Rulebook) rise out of the ashes to defend the perimeter.
- **Legacy of Madness:** The Delirium could strike anyone, at any time. The GM should feel free to throw in additional Delirium Tests (See the Delirium sidebar) of varying Difficulties whenever he deems appropriate.
- **Fallen to Ruin:** The Battle-Brothers find a maze of rubble, and fragments of human statues tangled in the roots of giant trees. GM's who favour occasional comic relief might have a mass of small, angry rodents leap from their den in the ruins and tenaciously dog the Kill-team, scabbling at their power armour with tiny teeth and fangs.

the thoughtless, hungry biomorph tide as the greater threat. If humanity deserved indoctrination, they should embrace an ally who could unite with them against that evil. Shas'El Keyl arrived on Baraban believing that the gue'la were testing a new weapon. However, he has since come to understand that he has found a technology that may be turned against them.

A team of Fire Warriors and a few elite warriors in Stealth Suits accompany him. (Shas'El Keyl uses the Tau Commander profile from **Chapter XIV: Adversaries** in the DEATHWATCH rulebook. The profiles for his troops can also be found in that chapter.) If the Kill-team participated in the battle for Epsilon Outpost 420, the Kroot survivors quickly report the Space Marine presence to the strike force. From this point forward, a Stealth team may ambush the Battle-Brothers at any point the GM feels appropriate. The team should be roughly equal in number to that of the Kill-team.

## VEILS OF SHADOW

The Battle-Brothers are free to proceed through the autumn forest in pursuit of the target site. On the ground, the nature of the war is much more apparent. The pervasive scent of rotting corpses troubles anyone who unseals their helmet. While the glade is easier to find with Drayle's assistance, the Kill-Team can stumble upon it after 1d10 hours of searching (less if they have a well-thought out approach) on their own. Read or paraphrase the following as they arrive:

*The dense foliage opens into a natural clearing. Brilliant scarlet leaves coat the trees and the earth, but muddy splatters of old blood dull the tableau like rust. The bodies have all been recovered—or consumed. Unmistakable, the massive shadow looms prominently—the silhouette of an absent giant.*

People and objects can pass freely through the space where the source of the shadow should be. Visual inspection reveals nothing, however Librarians may get a slight sense of unease. The source is in fact one of the monolithic webs of xenos technology called Delirium Trellises. A mysterious attacker assailed Baraban with these mind-disrupting weapons long ago. (Their linkage to Baraban's ghosts will become apparent to the PC's as the adventure unfolds.) However a few of them failed to detonate, and remain as shadows sleeping out of phase with reality.

The light of the archeotech luminators reacts with the strange nature of the devices, making them visible and tangible for short intervals where the azure light falls. Shining the lamps into the area is obviously the easiest way to find the Delirium Trellis, but the players might devise their own clever plans for locating the source of the shadow that do not involve the luminators. Such possibilities include:

- A **Hard (–20) Psyniscience Test** informs a Librarian that something sinister and vaguely warp-tainted occupies the spot, but nothing else. Several psychic powers from the Divination Discipline can provide pertinent information on the area, the hiding object, or its exact location and nature.

## VEHICLES IN DEATHWATCH

Future supplements will introduce more robust rules for using vehicles as part of your Deathwatch game. However, ships and transports are integral to a Space Marine's duties, and adventures such as this one may call for the presence of a vehicle. You can use the following simplified rules should vehicles become part of a battle:

### VEHICLE PROPERTIES

**Weapons:** The weapons available, and whether they are available to the driver or (if applicable) the gunner position. A character seated in the appropriate position fires these weapons on his Turn, following all the standard rules for the weapon. The GM must rule that the target is in the line of fire for the weapon based on his understanding of the vehicle configuration.

**Tactical Speed:** An abstraction of how fast the vehicle is during combat Rounds. This is the vehicle's maximum Move in metres.

**Cruising Speed:** How fast the vehicle moves in narrative time.

**Armour:** The Armour Points applied when attacking the vehicle. These Armour Points apply exactly like AP cover (see page 246 in the Deathwatch Rulebook) to anyone inside the vehicle. The GM has final say on what Locations the cover applies to for characters shooting out of open vehicles. Opponents may make ranged attacks on characters who have total cover inside a vehicle at a -10 penalty by stating what area of the vehicle they are targeting (driver, gunner, passenger hold, etc.). Cover still applies as normal.

**Structural Integrity:** Equivalent to the vehicle's Wounds if someone chooses to attack the vehicle directly. The vehicle is assumed destroyed (though not necessarily the characters inside; effect on them is at the GM's discretion) once these Wounds are exceeded.

- A **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** with an Auspex reveals that something is present at the base of the shadow, and suggests it may react to certain wavelengths of light. (Another **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** can modify either the Auspex or any light-producing object including las-weapons to the proper wavelength.)

- Even while phased and dormant, a Delirium Trellis can still be malignant. If anyone stands directly on the site of the Trellis for 10 minutes or more, check for The Delirium with a +10 bonus to their **Willpower Test**. Whether the test is passed or failed, the Battle-Brother is aware of some dark influence pressing upon his mind.

If the Kill-team finally gets a visual on the Trellis, read the following description:

*A flat, uneven arch towers over the glade; its silhouette aligns perfectly with the shadow upon the glade. Dark panels of shifting images stretch between splayed pinions of inactive xenos circuitry. Few of the swirling shapes are discernable: perhaps an eye? Perhaps the trail of a comet? You have the constant sense that you are seeing only part of a larger pattern.*

Delirium Trellises are obscure, but not unknown in the circle of the Deathwatch. A **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) or Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) Test** allows a Battle-Brother to recognise the device for what it is, and recall an appropriate amount of lore as detailed in the beginning of this adventure.

The Kill-team must now decide what to do with the Trellis. Destroy it? Try to salvage the whole or a portion for study? If the Kill-team opts for a plan that involves explosives and failed to bring demolition charges themselves, some are available from the guard post. The following information may help the GM in responding to their actions:

- Tinkering with the device is a risky proposition. A character with both Tech-Use and Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Skills may attempt to bring the Trellis into phase with reality by Testing on the lower of the two Skills. However, a failure activates it. A Delirium Trellis is at its most potent when first set off. Anyone within 100+5d10 kilometres must Test for the Delirium at -20.
- Small objects (like explosives) planted on the device while it is tangible are incorporated into the phasing field and fade to the same reality-insulated existence as the Trellis when the light source is removed.
- Small pieces of web can be broken off while it is revealed (or shot off if one can duplicate the ionised las beams that revealed the threat to begin with). They do not phase away, but they disintegrate in a matter of hours.

TABLE 1-1: VEHICLES IN THE SHADOW OF MADNESS

Vehicle Name	Weapons	Tactical Speed	Cruising Speed	AP	Structural Integrity
Deathwatch Land Speeder Storm	Heavy Bolter (Gunner) Assault Cannon (Driver) Two Lascannons (Pilot)	30m	275 kph	18 <sup>†</sup>	15
Thunderhawk Gunship <sup>††</sup>	Turbo-laser (Pilot) Hellstrike Missiles (Gunner) Heavy Bolters (Gunner)	30m	2000 kph	35	40

<sup>†</sup>The Land Speeder Storm is largely open. It covers the legs of the driver and gunner. Whether it affords any cover to the 4 passengers depends on their position and angle in the extended rear section.

<sup>††</sup>See page 23 for the profiles of the Thunderhawk weapons.

TABLE 1-2: DISTANCE BETWEEN IMPORTANT BARABAN LOCATIONS

	Initial Site	Towering Glades	South-eastern Forest	Western Mountains
<b>Towering Glades</b>	1233 km (4.5 hours)			
<b>South-eastern Forest</b>	2451 km (9.0 hours)	1297 km (4.5 hours)		
<b>Western Mountains</b>	5240 km (19 hours)	4018km (14.5 hours)	3487 km (12.5 hours)	
<b>Tau HQ</b>	1180 km (4.0 hours)	1354 km (5.0 hours)	120 km (0.5 hours)	3595 km (13 hours)

The Delirium Trellis's unknown makers built them for secrecy. The only way to circumvent this mechanism is by moving the entire array together, or with a stasis field.



## THE DELIRIUM

A Delirium Trellis reaches into the human mind to seek out whatever thoughts are most oppressive and terrible. Then it conjures a state of Delirium where those nightmare people and creatures walk. However, Adeptus Astartes are no longer entirely human. Just as Fear affects them differently than common Imperial citizens, the visions produced by the Delirium differ as well. Checking for Delirium begins with a **Willpower Test**. Failure yields 1d5 Insanity Points, and the appropriate effect below.

### MORTAL DELIRIUM

Most individuals who experience the Delirium as described above treat a failed Delirium Test like a failed Fear Test. Check for Shock as normal, adding an additional +20 to the result.

### VISIONS OF THE IMMEMORIAL

The mind of a Space Marine is laced with the history of his Chapter, and indeed of mankind. If he is affected by the Delirium, he may see people or memories that recall his own personal failings, or the Delirium may reach back into an ancestry equally fraught with pain. Space Marines so affected may experience horrors witnessed by dead members of their Chapter, their Primarch, or even the Emperor himself. The mental trauma of such experiences manifests in a temporary affliction of their Primarch's Curse (see pages 280-281 in the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook). If the character is already suffering from the Curse, then it increases in severity for 1d10 hours. Otherwise, he suffers a random level of the Curse for 1d10 hours.

### THE DREAM OF UNITY

While not necessarily sorcerous, the technology behind the Delirium Trellises involves at least a small amount of immaterium manipulation. Its effect on the warp-removed Tau is therefore diminished, but not absent. Tau receive +10 to resist the Delirium. Any who fail to resist do not experience fear, but rather the pleasant delusion of having achieved their driving goal: universal acceptance of the Tau'va, the Greater Good. A Tau so afflicted treats anyone he encounters as a trusted member of the Tau empire (since in his mind all races are now one with them). This is not to say that his perception of an individual cannot be altered by that person's words or deeds (particularly hostile ones), only that he assumes all people, including humans and Space Marines, follow the Greater Good until given reason to doubt.

### RETURN TO THE WILDS

The Kroot are not so far removed from the savage world and mindset in which the Tau found them. Kroot under the delirium revert to a savage and animalistic state. All other life forms become simply a source of food in their eyes. The Greater Good and the Tau Empire are no longer even a distant memory in this feral state.

## DARK IMPLICATIONS

There are in fact three other “undetoned” devices on Baraban; these too must be kept out of enemy hands. A variety of options exist for alerting the Kill-Team to the fact their mission is not over (if they do not move to this conclusion themselves), including:

- The Imperial Guard may mention that other areas of spiritual calm—similar to the red glade containing the first Trellis—are rumoured to exist on the planet.
- A bold Techmarine might attempt to interface with the device to learn more about it. This move may prove perilous for his mind depending on how his Tech-Use Test turns out, but also reveals enough about the effective range of the device to realise it alone couldn’t possibly be tainting the planet.
- Queries or investigations into recent enemy activity on the planet report a decrease in activity on nearly all fronts, as though their troops were presently being diverted to some other activity besides pressing the war. The Tau strike team may also be sighted “searching for something” on other continents.
- If the Kill-team is single-mindedly determined to end their Mission in the glade, the GM has a few choices: He can let them depart, and cut the adventure short, with subsequent events revealing that they failed in their Primary Objective; the Tau gain a new weapon that will surely come back to plague the Crusade forces. Or (a more heavy-handed but less harsh option), when the *Spear of Fury* returns for extraction, Brother-Captain Jaresh queries into the results of their Mission. Upon hearing the details, he reports that his ship’s Sensorium array suffered strange feedback when reading the planet’s surface, and suggests that more Trellises may remain. (He is less than pleased at returning only to have to wait, but the Battle-Brothers have access to the Gunship again for faster intra-planetary transport.)

Once the Battle-Brothers realise other Trellises may still lie on the planet, they need a method for pinpointing the locations. The GM should encourage their own clever ideas, but a few possibilities include:

- Scan footage of the planet for similar visual anomalies. Of course, the Battle-Brothers alone would need months to wade through all the pics stored in the main Imperial military installations, so they would need the appropriate Tests to employ or persuade cogitators, servitors, or regiments of guardsmen for the task.
- If a Techmarine does access the Delirium Trellis, he discovers each device also contains the planetary coordinate matrix used to deploy the devices to the proper locations. A **Challenging (+0) Logic Test** can decipher the information sufficiently to determine the other locations of devices that did not activate. Failure by less than one degree reveals the entire web, composed of hundreds of deployment points, but gives no insight into which ones still remain.
- If the Kill-team has realised light interferes with the phasing mechanism, planetary augurs controlled by the main military installations could be modified to search the planet for Delirium Trellis signatures.

## OPTIONAL RULE: VOLUNTARY VISIONS

Players often have the preconception that falling victim to an attack or effect is a purely negative experience (and sometimes this may be true). However, some of the most memorable roleplaying scenes often come out of rolls gone wrong. The Delirium’s effect on Space Marines is actually a fun chance for Battle-Brothers to explore the heritage and the more extreme personality facets of their character. GM’s may want to offer their players a chance to forego gaining Insanity Points from the Delirium in exchange for automatically suffering from the effect. This gives everyone a chance to participate in the roleplaying opportunity without feeling penalised.

### POSSIBLE VISIONS

The GM should feel free to create his own Chapter or character specific events for Battle-Brothers who fall prey to the Delirium. However, here are a few ideas to build upon:

A Black Templar may see a vengeful coven of witches he purged in his early days with the Chapter. Alternatively, he may suddenly feel himself persecuted by his brothers for his Chapter’s lack of adherence to the Codex Astartes.

A Storm Warden may experience a sudden distortion of time, as though locked in stasis with his First Company. Or, he may see a daemonic traitor Primarch calling the purity of his gene-seed into question.

A Blood Angel may see Horus bearing down on him for betrayal, or find himself surrounded by those of his Chapter who have succumbed to the Black Rage, beckoning him to join them in mindless violence.

A Dark Angel may suddenly find traitor Fallen Angels lurking in his environment, or be plagued with the constant sensation of the earth beneath him cracking—reliving the destruction of Caliban.

An Ultramarine may feel a keen and constant pain beneath the seal of his helmet, as though sharing in the mortal wound of his Primarch. Or, he may see the half-consumed forms of the many Battle-Brothers lost to Tyranids in the Battle of Maccrage.

A Space Wolf may hear the call of his lupine pack in the distance, or perceive his ancestors from Fenris, constantly cheering him on to challenge his Brother Space Marines in contests of skill, strength—or anything at all.

After they determine the approximate locations of the other Delirium Trellises, the Kill-team can deal with them in any order (although some paths are more efficient than others). The table below gives distances between each of the relevant locations, and travel time at the Land Speeder’s maximum cruising velocity. The GM should slightly expand the series of events at whichever location is visited last, as described in the Final Conflict section.



## THE FIST OF THE EMPEROR

The Kill-team may choose a course of action that requires translators, manpower and/or equipment from the Imperial Guard stationed on the planet. There are four large installations of the Imperial military on Baraban.

**Epsilon Garrison** on the northeast continent is the closest installation to where the Kill-team lands, as Outpost 420 is one of its satellites. Morale is low since the disappearance of General Caroses, and Colonel Afton has his hands full trying to restore order. He is receptive to any requests that do not overly tax his time and resources, just to get the Kill-team out of his thinning hair.

**Fort Avernus** is also on the northeast continent, albeit its most southern peninsula. Its powerful las emplacements and easily defended position make it the most secure installation. From here, Lord General Sarenus commands the overall struggle for Baraban. He is an even-tempered veteran who has worked with enough Space Marines in his long career to no longer be intimidated by them. However, he does understand the strategic value of unravelling the planet's ghosts.

**Fort Dorn** is a battered foothold on the enemy-dominated southeast continent. Waves of enemy forces almost never stop assailing the underground installation. Thousands of soldiers no longer mentally fit for the front labour in its lower levels to repel and repair constant tunnelling by the Vespids. General Kire is more than a little touched by the planet himself, and has trouble distinguishing his living troops from apparitions of the dead ones.

**Faithspyre Station** is the smallest of the four major installations. Built into the side of one of the range's tallest mountain, it overlooks hundreds of kilometres of the western continent. Much of the interior is given over to docking platforms and vehicle bays, as the majority of space traffic lands here due to the lower density of combat on this continent. Faithspyre also sees the fastest turnover in command, due in no small part to the hub's easy access to off-world channels for requesting re-assignment. Its current authority is Captain Martex of the Imperial Navy.

## THE TOWERING GLADES

The oldest and tallest trees on Baraban fill the western part of the northeast continent. The Delirium Trellis located here is in a contested piece of territory that switches hands between Imperial and Vespids forces on a daily basis. All available information indicates the Battle-Brothers should expect a fight to reach their objective. However, unbeknownst to them, this location was already investigated by the Tau strike team, who accidentally activated the device in their attempts to recover it. Although Shas'El Keyl and most of his team managed to retain their minds long enough to withdraw, the Vespids were not so fortunate. The local



population suffered a fate similar to the one that ripped the Baraban's civilisation apart thousands of years ago.

When the Kill-team arrives, all is silent.

*The Vespids have made themselves at home in their long occupation of Baraban. Tunnels burrow into the massive columns of tree trunks and wind through the knotted mounds of roots, casting the venerable forest with the tinge of an alien landscape. A few insectoid corpses lie in the undergrowth. More xenos bodies hang out of their self-made catacombs, and individual chitinous limbs and wings seed the loamy earth.*

Cursory examination of the scene reveals that the Vespids died in variety of ways, largely by the claws of their own kin, and shots from their own neutron blasters. The Trellis's wilting remains languish near a convergence of tunnel openings. The dark webs are still, drained of movement and their shadowy lustre. Already large patches of the panels are mottled, like the first blooms of rot on a corpse. However, the Battle-Brothers must first contend with something far more pressing. The Delirium effect still lies thick and potent over this area. Each Battle-Brother should test for Delirium at a -20 penalty.

The earth around the rotting Trellis is unstable from the many subterranean structures in the area. Once the Battle-Brothers locate it, any who approach within 15 metres should make a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**. Failure means he does not notice the ground's instability beneath his heavy boots. Anyone who continues 10 metres or closer to the remains must make a **Difficult (-10) Acrobatics or Agility Test** to avoid falling 8 metres through the weak earth into the dead nest below. (This Test assumes a Battle-Brother is in his heavy power armour. It is only **Challenging (+0)** without that extra weight.) If a Kill-team member does take a tumble into the tunnel network and does not have the means to jump or climb out, he can wander the dirt necropolis for 2d10 minutes (reduced by a successful Survival Test) until he finds an exit. The interior of the nest is just as littered with dead xenos as the surface, and barely wide enough for a Space Marine. However, the soft earth gives easily, leaving his armour a bit dirty, but otherwise unharmed.

The Trellis continues to slowly deteriorate before the Kill-team's eyes. Any character succeeding on a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** notes one panel is already completely gone from the Trellis. Did it rot faster than the rest, or was it removed? If the Kill-team does nothing, the Trellis is completely gone in 1d10+5 hours. Otherwise, they are free to take whatever actions they choose with the device, although they must continue to be wary of the unstable ground.

## THE HATCHERY

An uneven stone mound rises out of the ground on the western side of the scene. Holes the diameter of a Space Marine's fist riddle it. This miniature catacomb holds developing Stingwings. Even the most matured of the creatures are still small and helpless compared to the Battle-Brothers. They put up no fight if the Kill-team decides to cleanse them before

## IS XENOS WARGEAR TAINTED?

In the course of serving the Deathwatch, encounters with alien technology are inevitable. Adeptus Astartes opinions on this topic are far more diverse than in the Imperial citizenry at large. Many Space Marine Chapters are not as superstitious as the common man, but they are steadfast in faith, honour, and tradition. The uneasy relationship between the Astartes Chapters and the Ecclesiarchy is rooted in the same fundamental differences of philosophy.

Some Space Marines may view xenos technology just as the Ecclesiarchy proclaims: a product of the enemies of man, from which no good can come. However to others, just as the Emperor for all his greatness was still a man, a tool of the alien is still only a tool.

Xenotech can be a dividing line not just in the Deathwatch, but also in the Ordo Xenos whom they serve. Ultimately, a Battle-Brother's stance on it: pragmatic, zealously condemning, or simply indifferent, is something each player should contemplate.

they can grow into more enemies. However, slaughtering such defenceless opponents may put a bad taste in the mouths of more honour-bound Adeptus Astartes.

## TAU REMAINS

As the Battle-Brothers survey the area, a **Routine (+10) Awareness Test** also picks out a Fire Warrior's body amidst the wreckage. Examination of the corpse shows that he too was killed by Vespids' neutron blasters. The most interesting fact to be gleaned here is that over a dozen Vespids dot the ground nearby, punctured by pulse weapon fire. Either this Fire Warrior was a remarkable combatant to defeat so many, or he was not alone.

If any of the Kill-team decides to take a closer look at the detritus, a **Challenging (+0) Search Test** reveals a small, palm-held dome with some kind of projector array atop it. The sophisticated Tau technology is well designed, so despite its alien nature a **Routine (+10) Tech-Use Test** can activate. It produces a three dimensional display of a Delirium Trellis, with several annotations in the Tau language. This schematic is the product of Earth Caste study of the battle where the Trellis was first discovered. If a Literate character with Speak Language (Tau) deciphers the contents, they discover the diagram actually contains directions on how to use modulated light frequencies to permanently remove the Trellises from their phased existence. This is the very procedure the Tau are using to try to recover a sample of one of the devices.

## CRYSTAL VAULT

One particular patch of ground is thick with the alien exoskeletons, like the piles of dead insects that might pour from a poisoned pest hive. If the Battle-Brothers sift through this mound of rough wings and chitin, beneath it they find a sunken pit containing a heavily secured metal locker.



Opening the locker requires a **Routine (+10) Security Test**. Inside lies a stock of the crystals unique to the Vespid homeworld. These crystals power the Vespids' signature weapons, modulated to the proper energy frequencies by their wings. The Delirium creates a fatal cycle of attraction to the energised mineral in Vespid. They swarm the crystals, beating their wings at unnatural frequencies that create a low, sustained energy field. The field and its ultrasonic signature is like drug, drawing the Vespid closer while poisoning their bodies with its emissions.

## BEHIND ENEMY LINES

**T**he southeast continent is similar in ecology to the northeast, but the trees are the dark green of summer. The Tau and their allies also have the strongest hold on this landmass. The Delirium Trellis here is located towards the centre of the continent, less than two hundred kilometres from one of the planet's largest Tau installations. The Kill-team must be cautious and alert once they reach the thick, verdant woodlands. The stealthy Kroot are at home in this arboreal locale, and far more numerous than on the other continents. If the Kill-team does not lay out at least some plan for avoiding detection as they travel towards their objective, they are interrupted several times by Kroot attacks (some or all of which the GM may wish to summarise to avoid monotony). This has the additional side effect of revealing their presence to the Tau if it had not happened already.

A constant sense of being watched lingers over the journey, as movement constantly rustles through the thick tree canopy, and visibility is poor. Maintaining top speed despite the thick undergrowth and masses of vines requires a **Routine (+10) Drive (Skimmer) Test**. Failure adds additional time to the trip.

The area holding the Delirium Trellis is similar to the rest of the continent. Two trees have grown over the fan-shaped device in the millennia since its placement, and it is actually wedged tightly between them. The Battle-Brothers have more to contend with than ornery flora, however. This clutch of trees is home to a tribe of Kroot that have succumbed to Baraban's Delirium. The creatures (numbering about half again the Kill-team size) leap from the trees almost as soon as the Battle-Brothers exit the Land Speeder.

### REGRESSED KROOT

Although the Delirium Trellises do not affect alien races in the same way as humans, the unfortunate repercussions of exposure cannot be denied. Across Baraban, many Kroot have regressed to a feral mentality under the planet's malign influence. Forgetting their alliance with the Tau Empire, these victims of the Delirium live in isolated nests in the dense forests. They seem like little more than animals now, although they have evolved a deadly hunting style suited to their arboreal nature.



### Regressed Kroot Carnivore Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	25	<sup>(10)</sup> 50	45	60	15	<sup>(8)</sup> 44	30	12

**Movement:** 6/12/24/48

**Wounds:** 19

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Kroot) (Int), Tracking (Int) +10, Survival (Int) +10

**Talents:** Assassin Strike<sup>†</sup>, Death from Above<sup>††</sup>, Furious Assault, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Sprint, Swift Attack

**Traits:** Natural Weapon (Beak), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2)

**Armour:** Tattered Hide armour (Body 2, Primitive)

**Weapons:** Kroot hunting blade (1d10+10 R; Pen 4), beak (1d5+10 R)

**Gear:** None

<sup>†</sup>The half Move taken as a result of Assassin's Strike can be in any direction, including a vertical jump or Climb.

<sup>††</sup>The Kroot may Charge vertically with a successful Acrobatics check. Doing so grants them the same benefits a Deathwatch Assault Marine gets from Wrath of Angels when using a Jump Pack.

Most of the xenos still have Kroot rifles, but they have forgotten how to fire them at range. Instead they use the weapons' bladed ends for melee. While the Space Marines have the clear advantage in training and equipment, the battleground strongly favours the Kroot, and it is clear they know how to take advantage of it.

The Kroot are clever enough not to go toe to toe with the Space Marines. Instead, they take advantage of their speed and mobility to launch diving attacks from the branches and immediately swing back to a concealed position. The trees do not have the stopping power to provide any Armour Points as cover from Adeptus Astartes weapons, but they do make targeting the creatures more difficult. Ballistic Skill Tests to hit Kroot in the tree foliage are **Difficult (-10)**.

Once the Battle-Brothers take care of the animalistic Kroot, the difficulty of dealing with the Trellis depends on their plans for it. If they have set on a course of destroying the devices, then this one poses little additional challenge. However, any destructive force great enough to annihilate the Trellis is almost sure to topple the two massive trees around it. If the Kill-team seems to have forgotten that little fact while wedging their explosives into the tight space, the GM may wish to call for Intelligence Tests to realise the potential danger, or simply Dodge Tests to avoid dents and damage from the falling trees. In any event, explosives and/or the felling of the large trees echoes like thunder through the forest, raising storms of crying birds and almost certain to warrant investigation from the nearby Tau base. An enemy team of the GM's choosing arrives in 3d10 minutes, and engages the Battle-Brothers if they have not departed by that time.

Trying to extract the Trellis from its trapped position is a more challenging proposition. Possible avenues include:

- Taking a chainsword to the base of one of the trees. This is a slow but steady method, requiring no Tests, but taking 20 minutes minus the wielder's Strength Bonus in minutes.
- A **Challenging (+0) Demolitions Test** can pulverise one or both of the entwining trees without damaging the Trellis. Failure by two degrees or more indicates that the Trellis is destroyed in the blast.
- The Kill-team can carve away a portion of the trunks to expose the Trellis. This requires three successes on an **Extended Weapon Skill Test** with most melee weapons, or an **Extended Ballistic Skill Test** with a weapon that can produce a sustained blast like a melta or flame weapon.

If the Kill-team employs any method that involves felling trees, a successful use of the Evaluate Skill to determine weak points either halves the time needed or adds +10 to the chances of success.

## XENOS REMAINS

The Kroot nested in the tree branches, about fifteen metres up. If the Battle-Brothers glance upwards, they see the series of structures formed from animal hides, leaves, and a mulch of partially digested wood from the Kroot's iron stomachs. Anyone who takes an interest in investigating these dwellings must make a **Challenging (+0) Climb Test** to scale their way up to the primitive houses. Navigating them should require the occasional **Routine (+10) Awareness Test** to watch one's footing, as a Battle-Brother strains these fragile constructions considerably more than the light Kroot. (These Tests are one step easier without the complication of power armour's weight.)

It appears the entire colony joined in the fray with the Kill-team, as exploration finds no additional Kroot. It does provide concrete evidence that the creatures had strayed from their faction. Leavings from Tau, Imperial, Vespida, and even other Kroot victims litter the makeshift hut. Most of the undamaged equipment is of little use to a Space Marine, both inconveniently small and of inferior make. However, a pair of Tau EMP Grenades do roll around loosely near a gore-spattered carapace chest piece.

## WORDS OF WARNING

One other point of interest crumbles within line of sight from the Kroot den. The forest opens onto a large lake, where severed stone columns break the surface, and adamantite beams have lain long enough that even that the ultra-durable metal is slowly fading to rust. This site was once the refuge of the last inhabitants of Baraban. Here, the few people that escaped the insanity ravaging their planet fled to hide from their less fortunate neighbours.

A **Routine (+10) Scrutiny Test** suggests that the wreckage once formed a fortified bunker supplied with water from the lake. Little more evidence remains of this bastion's lonely occupants than does of the planet's condemned civilisation. Bone fragments amidst the shards of metal and stone suggest that whoever hid here probably did so until

## BYPASSING THE ENVOY

If the flow of the story or the nature of a GM's players doesn't lend itself to the appearance of Kor'Ui Arsheth, he'll want to find some other mechanism for alerting the Kill-team to the events transpiring at the Tau base. Possible avenues include:

- A communication from the Imperial Guard telling them they have discovered the General's location
- Arriving too late at one of the locations and finding the Trellis already gone. The size of ship necessary to transport the Trellis off planet means it is almost certainly being taken to their main base.
- After a clash with the Tau strike team (or from the bodies in the towering glade), the Battle-Brothers might recover intelligence documents. Interpreting it would require help from someone with Speak Language (Tau) or an Elucidator.
- Move the base's location on the planet to somewhere that the Kill-team sees one of the orbital shuttles descend through the atmosphere.

they died. A few crumpled pages of a manuscript in high gothic flutter between two flat chunks of rubble. They appear to be the account of a survivor of original settlement, but only the first, smeared page is legible. Time has otherwise finished the work the Trellises did not.

*We may be the last survivors of this planet. Others live, but they are naught more than empty man-shaped husks filled with madness. Only a few days ago I walked in the singing gardens of the capitol with my wife and son. How distant that seems when compared to the memory of finding them lifeless in a great pool of their mingled blood. The knife was still in her hand.*

*Even though I doubt these words will ever be found, I feel compelled to lay down some memory of the home that was. Perhaps it is my own need to occupy my mind, lest loneliness and loss do to it what the enemy's horrible weapon could not. I should also leave warning about these cursed fiends, for their darkness will surely return to*

# THE WESTERN CONTINENT

**T**he Delirium Trellis on the mountainous western continent resides on the Imperial side of the battle lines. Unfortunately, the local Imperial Guard Company has completely lost their sanity to the ghosts of Baraban, and they have possession of the device. This unit of the Iocanthan 39<sup>th</sup> deserted several months ago, killing their Captain and Commissar in a terror-induced frenzy. Some of the men's minds remain irreparably shattered from the experience, while those that partially recovered are no more inclined to return. Insanity would be scarcely more of an excuse than cowardice for their treasonous actions, and they know themselves marked with a death sentence. The Company shelters in Old Hollow, a mountain full of caverns and tunnels bored decades ago by Vespids before Imperial forces claimed the surrounding territory. The Delirium Trellis slept atop the mountain before even the Vespids set up residence. The guardsmen would never have known it was there, had the Tau not recently located and come to recover it. The Tau were woefully unprepared for the crazed, armed men living inside the mountain. Before they perished, they did manage to un-phase the Trellis, revealing it to the deserter company.

The Kill-team's Land Speeder can negotiate the steep mountains to reach Old Hollow, although at times the vehicle goes nearly vertical to do so. The native life—large felines and shaggy rams—shows little fear of the Space Marines or their vehicle as they pass through the snow-laden conifers. Whatever means the Kill-team used to locate the Trellis here, the closest they can get to its suspected location is a cliff approximately one third of the way up Mount Hollow. Several circular tunnels in the stone empty out to the rock shelf, where a large circle of cleared earth stands.

## THE FIRE PIT

The deserter company spends most of their time inside the mountain, but cooking, recharging las power packs, heating stones for warmth, and other tasks requiring fire must all be performed outside to avoid flooding the tunnels with smoke. Fires of various sizes burn in the cleared circle. Smaller blazes flicker in upturned helmets and small troughs dug in the frozen ground, while the largest fire—used to roast animal carcasses—roars in the remains of an Imperial Sentinel cockpit. A dozen men mill in this area. Their military flak is still visible beneath a patchwork of animal skins and furs.

The saner members of the company are easy to spot as they are the ones who quickly retreat into the cave network at the sight of the Kill-team. Two of the men simply stay where they are, gutting the las-riddled corpses of mountain rams. A trio of the most far-gone guards, however, leap up and launched a crazed (and almost certainly suicidal) assault on the Battle-Brothers. The profile for Imperial Guardsmen can be found on page 376 of the **DEATHWATCH** rulebook.



The two remaining men react little to whatever transpires with their fellows and the Kill-team. Their own minds have conjured far stranger visions since they came to Baraban. In fact, if the Battle-Brothers attempt to speak with the men, it requires deft persuasion to convince them that they are not just more of the planet's ghosts. Either through roleplaying or Interaction Tests, the Kill-team may convince the remaining soldiers to answer questions about who they are or what lies in the caves beyond. The men raise no objection if the Angels of Death go past them into the mountain.

## A TIGHT SCRAPE

Vespids are larger than Tau, but not so large as an armoured Space Marine—particularly when the xenos have their wings tucked against their bodies to burrow. The stone tunnels do not yield like the earthen passages on the northeast continent. The Battle-Brothers fit into Mount Hollow, but barely. Unless they are willing to forsake their holy power armour, the trek towards the Trellis is full of scraping and sparks. Their power armour suffers no real damage, but the Deathwatch colours will need to be repainted.

The passage snakes through the mountain, occasionally opening into empty caves or splitting into small side alcoves, but the trail up towards the Trellis is relatively un-branching. From time to time they hear footsteps echoing nearby, but unless they have found a way to move through the restricted passageways quietly, all of the deserters clear out in the wake of the Kill-team's approach.

## THE HARVEST

Iocanthos is a harsh planet where warlords battle constantly over the rare and valuable Ghostfire flower. Most of the planet's troop tithes come from these nomadic armies. Bereft of an immediate foe and plunged into mental instability, many of the soldiers went back to a proxy of their ingrained habits of harvesting. The largest node the Kill-team encounters on their climb through the sloping tunnels is the resting place of all these futile endeavours.

The deserters have hewn rough ledges all around the oval cavern's walls with knives and axes. The bizarre array of would-be tithes collected on these shelves provides glimpses into the various insanities crawling Mount Hollow. Many piles bear an obvious similarity to the chief crop of Iocanthos: hardy purple mountain thistle and red seed pods from local trees. However some of the other crops are the products of dreams best left unknown. The makeshift shelves also hold bags of empty bolt shells and hand-carved wooden idols and faceted Stingwing eyes—dried and strung together in long cords.

## HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

A charismatic conscript named Samsael Orlos is the de facto leader of the former soldiers now. Samsael's brown hair has grown out of its military crop unevenly, and he wears the bloody and tattered coat from the slain Commissar. The dead man's bolt pistol likewise hangs on Orlos's hip, although he spent its precious ammunition some time ago on hallucinatory foes. He fancies himself the Vai (or "prince") of a rising warband. Enough men were willing to accept this familiar structure that the few who opposed him did not last long. When his men wrested the Delirium Trellis from the Tau, he became convinced that its shifting images reflect a world on the other side, and the Trellis is a gate they just need to unlock. For days he has rallied the deserters around the Trellis, preaching to them of the relief from the war and freezing climate that awaits them on the other side of this gate.

Orlos and his men dragged the device as far inside the mountain as the hive's construction allowed. The visible and slightly damaged device lolls in the centre of a massive chamber, spectral images still dancing through its dark panels. The bulk of the deserters and the results of their effort to open their gate off of Baraban crowd the room. With no tech-priests to commune with the device, Orlos and his men resorted to experimentation and the best approximation of tech-lore they knew how to mimic. Wires and hoses link slipshod to the Trellis, feeding into a limping and weaponless servitor. A scorched ring of stone and several blackened corpses suggests a rite with promethium gone awry, and an effigy of the Trellis, constructed from lasguns and vehicle panels, lies as the broken remains of failed supplication.

When the Space Marines enter the ignominious ceremony hall, Orlos is shaking the servitor by its thick shoulders, demanding it translate the mystery of the device. While he is consumed with his task, several of his men heard the Kill-team coming, and have their lasguns cautiously trained at the

entrance. When Orlos finally turns his attention to the Space Marines, he faces them with indignation. His first thought at seeing the Emperor's Angels is that they must have come to reclaim the "gate," a gift he has proved unworthy of. He also believes this judgement unfair. If a Techmarine is present, he assumes they must represent the group and addresses his rebuke to them, otherwise he rails at them all:

*"No, wait! I just need more time!" He strides towards you, expression slightly fearful yet not surprised that the Adeptus Astartes have come. "I'm close to opening it, I can feel it. This, all this..." he gestures about the room breathlessly, "I have done for His task. I will complete it!"*

Modify the Guardsman profile as follows for Samsael Orlos: add an empty bolt pistol (counts as an Improvised Weapon) to his Weapons, add +10 to his Fellowship, and give him the Fearless Talent. Orlos is obviously unstable, but it is equally obvious a great many Imperial Guards are willing to follow his commands. The Battle-Brothers have several options, ranging from diplomacy to violence. The following information may be useful in resolving the outcome:

- Orlos is a strong believer in the divinity of the Emperor's Chosen. As long as their message supports his delusion that he is meant to lead the deserters to a better place, he is receptive to what they have to say.
- If hostilities erupt, the Guardsmen form one or more Hordes totalling a Magnitude of 40.
- Intimidation is less effective with the deserters than other forms of persuasion due to their volatile psyches. If a Battle-Brother makes a successful **Intimidation Test** against the deserters, half of them back down. However, the other half immediately attack (with a total Magnitude of 20 instead of 40).



# THE FINAL CONFLICT

*"He who believes force of arms does not contribute to victory is a fool, but he who believes in force over cunning hands his victory to fools."*

—From the Battle Doctrines of the Dark Angels Chapter

**K**or'Ui Arsheth is a Water caste envoy who came to Baraban as part of a larger contingent to persuade General Caroses to the Tau point of view. However, he suffered his own misfortunes on Baraban, the greatest of them being that he is now under the effects of the Delirium. The GM is free to place him in whatever situation and location he pleases, but encountering him is likely to trigger the most climactic events of the Mission. Those who favour a flexible approach to story may therefore want to have him appear in the last location investigated. Possible options include:

**Towering Glades:** Kor'Ui Arsheth had accompanied the Fire Warriors to see the object of interest, and was injured in the chaos when the Trellis activated. He is unconscious near the other Tau corpses.

**Behind Enemy Lines:** Kor'Ui Arsheth did not realise how far the Kroot had regressed from the Greater Good. He came to persuade them to return to a peaceful alliance. The timely interruption of the Kill-team is actually the only thing that saved him from being devoured, and he rushes out from his hiding spot to thank them once the battle is done.

**The Western Continent:** Kor'Ui Arsheth accompanied the Fire Warriors in their failed attempt to retrieve the Trellis. The Kill-team finds him being held prisoner by Samsael Orlos.

Regardless of his location, the Tau is affected by the Delirium and regards the Battle-Brothers as allies. After thanking them for "rescuing" him, he segues into a request:

*"Thank you Kai'El. I am most fortunate that you found me. However, I must ask for your aid again. I had not intended to be gone this long. An important gue'la General waits there for us to show him the wisdom of the Greater Good. It won't be long before the others of my caste assume me lost to this strange backwater of strife and depart with him. I believe I will make a much faster and safer return in your company. Will you escort me back?"*

The Tau base sits in a lowland basin, its circular structure panelled in smooth, white shielding. The tree line has been cleared for 100 metres in all directions, making anyone who approaches visible and an easy target. Eight recessed oblongs ring the building at even intervals, evidencing retractable support weapons. Two railguns cover each of the four entrances. A squad of Fire Warriors (see page 368 of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook) also patrols the circumference of the base.

As Kor'Ui Arsheth (assuming he is with them) leads the Battle-Brothers down the gently sloping valley walls, they have a clear view of the activity below. The base is 40 metres high and topped with a flat landing pad for spacecraft. As the Battle-Brothers approach, an Orca dropship sits atop the structure, and two Fire Warriors escort a man in Imperial military dress towards it. Anyone who uses vision magnification to get a better look at the exchange sees that the General's expression is stubborn, but fearful.

At the edge of deforested zone another, wider, landing circle does not quite break the tree line. This dedicated platform was built to support the Tau's massive Manta spacecraft. One such super-heavy dropship waits there now. Even powered down the craft's firepower is menacing: rows of missile launchers, twin-linked heavy railguns, and turret after turret of burst cannons. The air caste crew is currently outside performing maintenance and preparing the ship for launch.

This Manta brought Shas'El Keyl and his team to Baraban, and his force has not been idle while the Battle-Brothers worked. The Tau Commander suffered several frustrating moments of finding a surviving Trellis's location, only to reach it and discover the Kill-team got there first. At a minimum he recovered a panel from the Towering Glade, and has it secured in a stasis field. If the Kill-team missed one of the Trellis locations, then the Tau may have a more substantial prize to actually fill the empty hold of the huge dropship they so optimistically brought.

The Battle-Brothers have a clear line of sight on both ships, and some important choices to make. While the GM should not dictate what his players can and can't attempt, he should make sure they understand the numbers and strength of weapons facing them; Space Marines only sell their lives dearly. Charging across the open ground towards the base is such small numbers highly risky, while a fight anywhere that the Manta can get a clear shot with its main armaments is tantamount to suicide. A **Tactics Test** is appropriate as the Kill-team assesses their options. Depending on how well the Battle-Brothers succeed, the GM can offer them information or advice based on the following facts:

- The General is in Long Range of a Godwyn-pattern bolter. An easy solution exists to curb the risk that the Tau might persuade him to share Imperial secrets. The Battle-Brothers only need to sacrifice a single life.
- The Kill-team can count nine unarmoured Tau Air Caste on the docking circle. This is the usual complement of a Manta's crew. If the Battle-Brothers can eliminate the pilots before they can re-enter the Manta, it is doubtful anyone else in the immediate vicinity is trained to man the sophisticated craft. Furthermore, the loading is taking place at the rear ramp, opposite the ship's main armaments. In the unfortunate event that the Manta's armament becomes relevant, see Table 1–3 for its weapons compliment.
- There is no obvious sign of exactly what disposition of forces may be inside the base right now. However, the truth is that only a few teams of Fire Warriors currently occupy it; the Tau do not maintain a large presence on Baraban, leaving it to the Kroot and Vespids. The warriors inside can form a Horde with a maximum Magnitude of 30.

## OFF-SCREEN OPERATIONS

In the darkness of the 41st millennium there is only war—but not all wars are created equal. Particularly for powerful characters like the Adeptus Astartes, sometimes an event does not hold enough challenge or narrative interest to spend extensive time roleplaying through it. In these instances, you may find it useful to simply summarise the attempt and its outcome so that the main story can continue. Once the GM and the players agree on the players' intended outcome and course of action to achieve it, the GM designates one Skill or Characteristic Test for each character involved. This Test should represent the best abstraction of the abilities the character is utilizing in the Operation. Each character involved Tests on the designated Skill or Characteristic and reports their degrees of success or failure. The GM then totals degrees of success, and consults Table 1–4 on page 22 to determine the outcome. As a general rule, you should not award XP (or Kill Markers) for Off-Screen Operations.

### EXAMPLE

The Kill-team has accomplished all their Objectives on Vanir and are returning to their Teleport Homer for extraction. Earlier in the Mission, they were harried by forces of a rebellious Monarch, but had no time to deal with matters as simple as civil war. However, they must pass through the territory again on the way back, and the entire Kill-team decides to aid the Imperial cause by putting down as many of those particular rebels as they see. The Kill-team comprises 5 Battle-Brothers. The GM allows each character to roll on their preferred combat Characteristic (WS or BS). The results across the group are: 4 DoS, 2 DoF, 1 DoS, 3 DoS, 0 DoF. This sums to 6 Degrees of Success, a Moderate Victory. They efficiently purged every rebel who crossed their path, but it was still a footnote compared the real Mission.

- The nearby mountains offer ample cover and narrow passes that vehicles cannot enter and that negate the advantage of large numbers. However, this is more viable as a withdrawal strategy than as lure, since there is no guarantee one or both of their targets wouldn't simply take off instead of pursue.
- Two burst cannons cover each facing of the base, but the approach is open and there is still the Fire Warrior patrol to contend with. However, the patrol might be lured into an ambush. If a Battle-Brother reaches the structure intact, he must still pass a **Challenging (+0) Security Test** to gain entrance. The interior of the base is built for the diminutive Tau. A Battle-Brother in power armour would be at –10 to Weapon Skill Tests inside due to the cramped environment.
- If the Kill-team devises a use for Kor'Ui Arsheth as a distraction or decoy, a **Deceive Test** or a well-conceived story convinces him to help.
- If the Battle-Brothers kept the EMP Grenades from the feral Kroot nests, Tau are highly dependent upon their technology.

Now is the moment of truth. Does the Kill-Team risk letting vital information about the Baraban war front fall into enemy hands? Do they gamble that the Tau have not

salvaged anything of relevance from the Trellises, or dare to hope their foes will not profit by escaping with one of the strange alien devices? Either storming the landing pad to rescue the general or battling the strike team will challenge a full Kill-team. Force of arms alone will not serve the Battle-Brothers if they try to split their team to deal with both issues at once. The stage of the battle is set, victory or defeat depend upon the Battle-Brothers' choices—and the Game Master's.

## MANTA ARMAMENTS

**Ion Cannon:** (300m; S/2/–; 3d10+5; Pen 7; Twin-Linked)<sup>†</sup>

**Burst Cannon:** (60m; –/–/10; 2d10 X; Pen 3)<sup>†</sup>

**Seeker Missiles:** (2000m; S/–/–; 3d10+6 X; Pen 10; Clip 5)<sup>†</sup>

**Missile Pod:** (120m; S/2/–; 2d10+6; Pen 5; Twin-Linked)<sup>††</sup>

**Heavy Railgun:** (400m; S/–/–; 6d10+12 I; Pen 12; Devastating (1), Felling, Twin-Linked)

<sup>†</sup> *The Manta has sufficient ammo hoppers for this weapon that clip size is irrelevant.*

<sup>††</sup> *The tracking warheads grant a +20 to all Ballistic Skill Tests made to fire this weapon. Each missile can only be fired once.*

TABLE 1-3: MANTA ARMAMENTS

	Burst Cannons	Missiles Pod	Seeker Missiles	Ion Cannons	Heavy Railguns
Count	16	1	2	6	1
BS fired by Drone	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BS fired by Air Caste	N/A	35	35	35	35
Covered Facings	Front: 8 Left: 6 Right: 6 Rear: 10	Front: 1	Front: 2	Front: 6	Front: 1

TABLE 1-4: OFF-SCREEN OPERATIONS

1 PC Participating	2-3 PC's Participating	4+ PC's Participating	Outcome
4+ Degrees of Failure	5+ Degrees of Failure	7+ Degrees of Failure	<b>Catastrophic:</b> The involved characters nearly die, jeopardise the Mission, or otherwise make a complete mockery of themselves. Subtract 1 Renown from the overall Mission Rewards.
1-3 Degrees of Failure	1-4 Degrees of Failure	2-6 Degrees of Failure	<b>Failure:</b> The operation is a failure. Whatever result the characters were attempting, they affect the opposite. If combat was involved, each character carries 1d5 points of Damage back from the battle.
0 Degrees of Success/ Failure	0 Degrees of Success/ Failure	0 -1 Degrees of Success/ Failure	<b>Stalemate:</b> There is no meaningful outcome to the operation. The characters made a respectable effort; the GM can further shade whether they accomplished even something trivial by whether the attempt was a net fail or success.
1 Degree of Success	1-3 Degrees of Success	1-5 Degrees of Success	<b>Minor Victory:</b> The operation will be quickly forgotten, but the characters accomplished what they set out to do. The effects may be temporary.
2-3 Degrees of Success	4-6 Degrees of Success	6-9 Degrees of Success	<b>Moderate Victory:</b> The characters performed admirably, accomplishing most of their goal, but without particular flair.
4-8 Degrees of Success	7-10 Degrees of Success	10-13 Degrees of Success	<b>Decisive Victory:</b> The Operation was a tale worth re-telling. The characters affected a lasting achievement that was everything they could have hoped to accomplish.
9+ Degrees of Success	11+ Degrees of Success	14+ Degrees of Success	<b>Heroic Feat:</b> The involved characters achieved even more than they set out to do. What began as a side errand may very well end up being the most memorable part of the Mission. Add 1 Renown to the overall Mission Rewards.

## RETURN TO ERIOCH

Once their long-range vox beacon is activated, The *Spear of Fury* takes a day or two to return from its own battles to retrieve the Kill-team. Space Marines are not known for sitting idle, and the Battle-Brothers are likely to want to use this time to further the war effort. The GM should give them an opportunity to outline the particular battles or activities the team intends to participate in, provided they stay as a unit so that whenever the *Spear* does arrive they can be speedily extracted. Use the provided rules for Off-Screen Operations to summarise these events.

Inquisitor Quist meets with the Battle-Brothers upon their return. She listens to their debrief and identifies the devices as Delirium Trellises if they have not already done so. She also fills them in with what she knows of the Trellises (as detailed in the beginning of the adventure). She is exceptionally pleased if they have managed to bring back a sample for study, but issues general commendations as long as the technology did not fall into the Tau's hands. Quist exhibits mild interest in the feral Kroot and the Tau, but little concern for the fate of the Imperial Guard regiments on the planet no matter the choices the Kill-team made.

## REWARDS

Each Trellis kept from the Tau nets 200 XP. If the Kill-team rescued or killed the General, this is worth 100 XP, as is defeating the Tau command unit. Dealing with the crazed Guardsmen at Mount Hollow without killing them, and keeping Epsilon 420 from being overrun are also worth 100 XP each. Award an additional 200 bonus XP if the team managed to both rescue (not kill) the General and stop Shas'El Keyl from getting away. The following are worth 1 Renown each:

- Stopping the Tau from getting any Trellises
- Stopping the Tau from taking the General
- Defeating Shas'El Keyl and his command unit
- Successfully dealing with two of more of the following: the Kroot attacking the Outpost, the regressed Kroot, the deserters at Mount Hollow

As always, the GM should feel free to further reward clever plans and good roleplaying.

## MUSINGS FOR THE ORDO XENOS

The Battle-Brothers now have some insight into the cause of the "ghosts" of Baraban, but many new questions. What threat could create such weapons of madness? And why was Baraban singled out—or do more Delirium Trellises lie undiscovered on populous planets even now? Was it just coincidence that the Omega Vault's luminators revealed the devices, or are they linked to its inscrutable purpose?

# NPC'S AND ANTAGONISTS

## INITIATE DANE OF THE BLACK TEMPLARS

Dane is young for a member of the Deathwatch, as his membership is adjunct to Captain Jaresh. He is aware of his unusual position in their ranks, and is eager to prove himself to senior Battle-Brothers, and particularly to his Captain. He has an inquisitive mind that retains and analyses whatever information others impart to him.

### Initiate Dane Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	40	45 <sup>(10)</sup>	41 <sup>(8)</sup>	47	48	38	48	43

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 20

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Deathwatch) (Int), Common Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Deathwatch, Imperium) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicles), Forbidden Lore (Xenos), Literacy (Int), Navigation (Surface), Pilot (Spacecraft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Codex Astartes), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int), Tactics (Int).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bulging Biceps, Deathwatch Training, Heightened Senses (Sight), Hatred (Heretics), Nerves of Steel, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Two-weapon Wielder (Melee), Unarmed Master.

**Traits:** Size (Hulking), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** Astartes Power Armour (Head 8, Arms 8, Body 10, Legs 8; History: A Fury Like Lightning).

**Weapons:** Astartes Bolt Pistol (30m; S/3/—; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Clip 12; Rld Full, Tearing), Astartes Combat Knife (1d10+10 R; Pen 2), Astartes Chainsword (1d10+11 R; Pen 4; Balanced, Tearing).

**Gear:** Astartes jump pack, 3 bolt pistol reloads, devotion chain.

**Demeanours:** Accept Any Challenge, Studious.

## THUNDERHAWK ARMAMENT

**Lascannons (2):** (300m, S/—/—, 6d10+10 E, Pen 10, Clip 40, Reload 2Full)

**Turbo-laser:** (750m, S/—/—, 4d10+30 E, Pen 20, Clip 5, cannot be reloaded in flight, Blast (6))

**6 Hellstrike Missiles:** (1000m, S/—/—, 4d10+6 X, Pen 10, each missile can only be fired once, Blast (1))

**Twin-linked heavy bolters (4):** (150m, —/—/10, 3d10+1 X, Pen 6, Clip 200, Reload 2Full, Twin-linked, Tearing)<sup>††</sup>

<sup>†</sup>These weapons can either be operated by the pilot, or the gunship's machine spirit, who has a BS of 40.

<sup>††</sup>The gunner selects targets for these weapons, and should roll for them, using the machine spirit's Ballistic Skill.

## VESPID STINGWING

The Vespids are a flying alien race covered in a tough exoskeleton of chitin, which armours even their wings. They are universally loyal to the Tau, and completely integrated to their Empire. Although no direct encounters with Vespids are written into this scenario, they are very prevalent on Baraban. A variety of actions (or additions by the GM) could bring the Kill-team into conflict with these xenos agents of the Tau, and their profiles are provided here for convenience.

### Vespid Stingwing Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	45	30	45 <sup>(8)</sup>	60	25	30	30	15

**Movement:** 4/8/16/32 **Wounds:** 15

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) +10, Speak Language (Tau, Vespids) (Int), Survival (Int)

**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (SP, Primitive), Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

**Traits:** Flyer (10), Improved Natural Weapon (Claws), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** Natural Chitin Armour (3 AP in all Locations)

**Weapons:** Neutron Blaster<sup>†</sup> (45m; S/2/—; 2d10+3 E; Pen 6; Clip 24; Reload Full), claws (1d10+3 R)

**Gear:** Communion helm (includes vox)

<sup>†</sup>A neutron blaster only functions when used by a Vespids



# APPENDIX

The Non-Player Characters (NPCs) presented in this section represent a selection of prominent individuals who frequent Watch Fortress Erioch. They provide a starting suite of characters who may serve as leaders, allies, or rivals for a Kill-team. Each NPC description also contains ideas for how they may initiate Missions or otherwise play a role in your campaign.

## WATCH CAPTAIN TARRAN CEARR

*"The Tyranids aren't going to be impressed by how many notches you've carved in your sword hilt. Show me how you use it!"*

—Watch Captain Tarran Cearr

Like many Storm Wardens, Tarran is regarded equally as exceptionally brave or dangerously reckless depending on who gives the opinion. His shaved head is a canvas of tattoos in the patterns common on Sacris. Each intricate knotwork tells the story of a great battle—to anyone who can interpret the symbols of his native tribe. Cearr is an outgoing man whose brand of camaraderie involves scathing wit that spares no one, and he has challenged nearly every Battle-Brother

on Erioch to a friendly duel at least once. The exception to his good nature is Watch Captain Servais. The two have conflicted time and again on matters of strategy, philosophy, and personality. The diametric opposition of their approaches to combat has been a wedge between the two ever since the Raven Guard warrior arrived.

While Tarran takes the mission of the Deathwatch with utmost gravity, he sees no reason not to use the assignment to further the interests of the Storm Wardens during his term of service. Despite the Inquisitorial sanction, he possesses a burning drive to discover the truth behind the Nemesis Incident. He believes that it holds the key to the return of the Storm Wardens' original First Company. No one has read the *Liber Tempest* more than Tarran; he is always keen to volunteer himself and those under his command for any Mission where the Enslaver plague might be involved, and frequently probes the Ordo Xenos representatives for any information they might have on the topic.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

- Over his term of service, Tarran has faced the marauding Ork warboss Zrikgutta on battlefield after battlefield across the Reach. Tarran has finally located the purported base of his foe on Shedu, and is eager to resolve a duel long unfinished. However, the Deathwatch are anything but well-received at this hub for criminal trade. The Kill-

## THE POLITICS OF WAR

On the surface the Deathwatch may seem like a Brotherhood united in cause and duty. However, in reality friction occurs whenever so many strong individuals of ardent and differing ideologies are suddenly thrust together, no matter how much else they may have in common. In addition to private agendas of Deathwatch warriors, Chapters, and Inquisitors, the organisation's role in the Jericho Reach can put them at odds with the Achilus Crusade. The GM may or may not want to make this a primary theme in his campaign, but opportunities exist for groups who prefer a heavy dose of such interpersonal roleplaying.

The NPC's presented in this section expose just a few the varied clashing personalities and agendas that might cross the threshold of Erioch. It is important to understand that tensions between Battle-Brothers almost never reach lethal violence. While Servais and Tarran Cearr might jibe and seek to outdo one another, they would never endanger each other or the other's Missions. However, personal slights, favours for other rivals, and influence over the decisions of the Council are all fair game.

Friends inside and outside the Deathwatch can also reap concrete benefits. A well-disposed Inquisitor might access their archives to provide additional information for a mission, and it is never detrimental for the authority assessing your Mission's difficulty for Requisition to stack the odds in your favour.



team must negotiate violent mistrust wherever they go as they track their quarry into a wasteland filled with Orks.

- A transmission comes from the far-flung Watch Station Grace of the beginnings of an Enslaver plague on a remote world. Ever eager to learn more about this encroaching species and its linkage to his Chapter, Tarran joins the Battle-Brothers in answering the call. When the Kill-team reaches the planet, they find it already under sanction from the Ordo Xenos. Will the Battle-Brothers eliminate the Enslavers as quickly as possible, or indulge Tarran's desire to learn more about their foe before destroying it?

## INQUISITOR ADRIELLE QUIST

*"We all want the same thing, Brother-Sergeant: to see humanity reclaim not just the Jericho Reach, but our galaxy from our foes."*

—Adrielle Quist

Adrielle Quist was first noted by Inquisitor Carmillus for her prodigious telepathic abilities. Her sharp, investigative mind distinguished her from her fellow acolytes, and during her stature as Interrogator she was one of a select few brought to the Tower of Brass when her mistress became Inquisitor of the Chamber at Erioch. Five short years ago, Quist earned her rosette, and remains Carmillus's primary hand in the field.

Quist has a deep fascination with alien technology that she keeps tightly concealed. She is all too aware that many around her would brand her radical or traitor for her desire to see them match the technological advancement of races like the Tau. She is secretly one of the Crucible Resolviate's principal sources of xenos artefacts.



The fresh Inquisitor would like greatly to find Deathwatch warriors who share her open mind about the path to humanity's advancement, as it would make procuring items from their Missions far less laborious.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

- The Crucible Resolviate has recently acquired an almost intact Crisis Battle Suit. Unfortunately, its vital central cogitator core is severely damaged. Quist requests the Battle-Brothers' aid in an assassination Mission that is really little more than an excuse to acquire the missing component for her allies. If she has reason to trust the Battle-Brothers, she may enlighten some or all of them as to her real objective. If she does not, then they may find some of the Inquisitor's orders very questionable indeed.
- The Black Reef has long been a source of dark legends and malefic alien artefacts in the Jericho Reach. A new abomination has surfaced in the region's budding cold trade: parasites that rob men of their will and turn them into biddable puppets—for a time. The conspiracy was uncovered because the infected eventually enter a berserker rage, relentlessly hunting the one who infected them and gibbering in an unknown alien tongue. The Inquisition has traced these parasites to planet on the edge of the Black Reef, and Quist tasks the Battle-Brothers with helping her put an end to their source. To do this, they must cross through space held by the Velk'Han Sept and then enter the perilous worlds of the reef itself.

## HARL GREYWEAVER

*"That press is an affront to the machine spirits! Honour them the old fashioned way, with a hammer and the sweat of your brow."*

—Forge Master Greyweaver

This Iron Priest has been the Forge Master of Erioch since his predecessor answered a summons to serve the Achilles Crusade a decade ago. While the influence of Greyweaver's time in the unorthodox halls of the Deathwatch shows in his servo-harness and other small deviations from the traditions of the Isles of Iron, he is not nearly close enough to the teaching of Mars as many of the Techmarines who serve under him wish. The Iron Priest has adorned most of the Fortress's major workshops with icons of the Iron Wolf, and rivers of molten metal flow through his domain deep in the heart of Erioch. He is notoriously intolerant of other Chapter's brands of tech-craft, but his efficacy in conjuring the tools of war is so great that no one has yet been able to oust him. His fervent hatred of alien technology puts him at frequent odds with the Crucible Resolviate and Inquisitor Quist. Every piece of xenotech adopted into the Deathwatch arsenal since his arrival has been so grudgingly.



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

- It is a bitter moment of loss on Erioch. A Kill-team of five Battle-Brothers equipped in terminator armour recently died terrible deaths on Castobel. Their failure to halt the latest assault on one of the planet's standing hives and the loss of an entire team is a grave blow. Its magnitude is heightened by an accusation that the machine spirits of their armour betrayed them. The Battle-Brothers must both complete their fallen brethren's Mission, and recover evidence from the wreckage of whether the Forge Master failed in his calling. Greyweaver is not a popular man; he has many enemies who may have conspired against him.
- The apostate tech-magi of Samech have unleashed a new weapon in their corrupt arsenal: a warship that requires no crew. It is controlled by intricate cogitators and the sacrifice of thousands of souls to its hunger. The *Thunder's Word* managed to down this blasphemous creation above the planet Ries. However, the ship's engine core survived its crash through the atmosphere and festers on the frontier world. The Forge Master himself accompanies the Kill-team to see this sacrilegious tech-daemon put to rest. Unfortunately, the natives found it first, and many take to worshipping the newly fallen god.

## WATCH CAPTAIN SERVAIS

*"You may find that to bluster is not nearly so important as to listen."*

—Watch Captain Servais to Watch Captain Cearr

Servais of the Raven Guard has been a part of the Deathwatch less than a year. A master sniper and infiltrator, he and the Kill-teams under his auspices are frequently called on to perform or consult in targeted assassinations. His quiet, calculating mannerisms have isolated him from some of his Battle-Brothers, although he has never refused training to anyone who sought it from him. Servais speaks quietly, and prefers to analyze and evaluate before striking. Tarran Cearr's dislike of his tactics is entirely reciprocated, and the sniper constantly seeks to prove that forethought triumphs over frenzy.

Servais can be difficult to get to know, but is intensely loyal to Watch Commander Mordigael, and indeed anyone—Space Marine or not—that makes the effort to pierce his withdrawn exterior.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

- When Chaos Space Marines plunder the corpses of Deathwatch operatives for their gene-seed in the Orpheus Salient, it is an affront that cannot go unanswered. The stolen cargo has been taken to a Chaos stronghold on Khazant. A great many members of the Deathwatch volunteer to recover it; Servais and Tarran Cearr are both among them. The former's plan involves stealthy infiltration while the latter proposes a bold frontal assault. The Kill-team can choose to go with one of these Captains and their approach, or form their own.
- Servais's kill record is almost flawless. Almost. His one failed Mission returns to plague the Canis Salient. Human converts to the Tau's infectious Greater Good are far too common in the Canis Salient. One such traitor is a former Ordo Xenos Acolyte, Serena Erizon. Too much exposure to alien philosophies finally caused them to lodge in the young scholar's brain. When Servais went to prevent her knowledge from falling to the enemy, she escaped in a surprising manifestation of her hereunto latent psychic potential. She has used the Tau's poor understanding of her abilities to rise through the convert ranks at an alarming speed, and now holds sway on one of the Velk'hán Sept's outlying worlds.



## ARIUS HYZERON

*"The darkness bides its time. We must match its patience while we wait, and entrust our souls to the Emperor's light."*

—Arius Hyzeron

The Ultramarine Arius Hyzeron has been on Watch Station Erioch longer than any other Battle-Brother. He has served as one of the ten Guardians of the Chamber of Vigilance for over two centuries. Although no one is left who can confirm or deny, it is said that Seargent Varthion himself recommended Arius to his current post for his role in the famous defence of the warp gate. This places Arius in the Jericho Reach over four hundred years ago. He has seen the arrival of many new alien threats since that time.

Arius is gifted with his Chapter's brilliant charisma, and has forged bonds with many people on Erioch over his years there—even the stubborn Forge Master Greyweaver. He has an easy smile, although his face is marred by a triumvirate of parallel scars that cross over his augmetic left eye. He is also a repository of speculation and past tales of the Omega Vault. This makes him of great interest to Epistolary Axineton.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

- Arius's post keeps him from the field except when accompanying a member of the Chamber of Vigilance. When the Deathwatch sees an alarming pattern of reports describing Imperial troop transports that arrive at their destinations painted in blood yet empty of corpses, Arius seems to recognize a grave threat from the past. He personally requests that the Kill-team look into the matter.
- The Omega Vault unseals a preserved manuscript detailing the location of a planet in the Outer Reaches. Arius recognizes the planet, and tells a story of a Kill-team that once chased an unknown xenos enemy back to those same coordinates. They sent a few long-range communications, and then contact was lost. The Kill-team's last message was "Emperor forgive us for opening their dread eyes. We will spend the last drop of our blood to close them."

## ROGUE TRADER DIAZ LAN

*"I assure you this is a strike of great strategic importance. The Deathwatch should be there when the Crusade forces land. Will there be Xenos? Why shouldn't there be? Doesn't the Reach crawl with them?"*

—Rogue Trader Diaz Lan

The Lan Rogue Trader Dynasty comes from military stock, and sent many vessels through with the Achilus Crusade. Diaz is the much younger brother of the Dynasty's current Scion, Kazandus. A far better diplomat than the Crusade's busy Lord Militant, Diaz Lan was nominated by the Dynasty to take a hiatus from exploration and serve as Crusade liaison. He is often the voice of requests from the Crusade, and Lord Militant Tetrarchus himself.

In truth, Lan is quite tired of his position, though he masks it well. He had command of his ship, the Horizon's Pride, for only a few short years before his brother assigned him to the war contingent. He longs for more freedom over his endeavours and better chances for profit than what the three bloody Salients leave him. Congenial and an able warrior, he is on excellent terms with many Crusade military men and commands great swathes of resources. Ships from the Lan forces also have a habit of "straying" from the main Crusade fleet into less explored parts of the reach. The reports they send back to Lan make him a vast repository of knowledge on xenos races and worlds.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

- One of Lan's explorer teams that ranged far from the war lines recently returned to him with news from the Orpheus Salient: the Hive Fleet bears down on a new planetary target. The small colony could be easily evacuated and perhaps a trap laid for the oncoming horde. Lan cannot report this to the Crusade as it would raise too many questions, so he informs the Deathwatch. Furthermore, he insists on accompanying the Kill-team as one of his own is still on the planet.
- After a series of devastating losses in the Canis Salient, morale is perilously low. The stagnant war aboard the Execution Eternal has become symbolic of the entire Salient's struggle. The Crusade sends Lan to request the Deathwatch's aide in bringing that struggle to a decisive conclusion. However, unknown to them, the Tau have just deployed the famed Commander Scornfoe to settle matters in the Tau Empire's favour.
- Lan arrives with a small group of Crusade officers. Almost immediately after, a failed assassination attempt on Watch Commander Mordigael puts all of Erioch on edge. The Watch Fortress is a carefully guarded location. The possibility of a traitor and the certainty of an enemy in the walls are both intolerable notions. The Battle-Brothers must determine if Lan or one of his passengers brought the assassin, as well as locate the would-be killer before he does real damage to the Deathwatch fortress.

# MISSION BUILDING

*"No one man, however exalted or base, is more important than the mission."*

—Commissar Holt

The **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook lists several Mission Archetypes for Kill-teams. This section expands on a framework for building missions that resonate with your players and allow them to experience a compelling variety of roleplaying and combat opportunities. Most Game Masters eventually establish a framework for creating adventures, and a single "correct" interpretation does not exist. However, if you are new to the role of GM or to the Deathwatch game, you may find this starter's guide useful. This model breaks a Mission down into the following:

- **Locations:** The physical environment or environments in which the Mission takes place
- **Objectives:** The tasks the Kill-team must complete to call the Mission a success
- **Enemies:** Foes who directly oppose the Kill-team, usually with the threat of violence
- **Assets:** Conditions that help the Kill-team achieve their objectives
- **Obstacles:** Hindrances to the Kill-team's success that are less overt than enemy forces
- **Choices:** Decisions the Kill-team must make in the course of the Mission

Each of these components serves as a tool in constructing Missions, and each has a distinct effect on the feel of the story you create with your players. The text below discusses effective use of these components, and presents a menu of starter options to fill your toolbox. When you go to build your own Missions, you can reach into that box and select from these tools, combining them with elements of your own devising into Missions that fit your players and campaign.

## LOCATION

The backdrop for a Mission can drastically change its feel. Even the simplest seek and destroy mission plays out quite differently in a towering Hive city than it does in an arctic wasteland. Location includes the terrain, as well as the inhabitants and political climate of the setting. Because of the Adeptus Astartes' relative isolation from humanity, they are unlikely to be drawn into local politics and conflicts, making events of great significance to the common citizenry just one more element of the background for a Mission. A civil revolt or even an outright war can be extraneous to a Kill-team's Mission, but it is important colour to the Location where the Mission takes place. Chapter XIII of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook details many locations with interesting geography, cultures, and background events. The Location suggestions presented here are general enough to place on established Jericho Reach locations or your own.

## USING LOCATION

Location can be used sparingly or heavily, depending on your needs. When the location is important, remind the players of their environment frequently while describing the area and events around them. Location can have an effect on combat, creating a battleground as simple or complex as a particular encounter calls for; use the rules in **Chapter VIII: Playing the Game** of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook for situational modifiers or devise some of your own. Location also shades the people the Kill-team encounters during their Mission, and the way those people are inclined to react to the players.

## LOCATION BUILDING BLOCKS

- The environment is wet and swampy. While their sealed power armour protects the Battle-Brothers, the Techmarine is constantly performing trivial maintenance on all but the most robust weapons, wargear, and vehicles. The risk of guns jamming may increase.
- The environment is a teeming ecosystem. Small lizards and mammals are so abundant that the Battle-Brothers crush some underfoot if they don't tread carefully.
- The Mission takes place in a desert. The inhabitants are tough and tanned from life in the harsh environment and value water above any other currency. Foot and ground vehicle travel is slow in the shifting sands, and frequent sandstorms impede visibility.
- The local populace has never heard of the Adeptus Astartes. They treat the Battle-Brothers like Ogryns or some other sub-species of human. The civilisation may be particularly intolerant and object to these "mutants" having powerful arms and armour.
- The Kill-team's Objectives lie on a war-torn planet. Senseless death and carnage surrounds them; mothers plead for the Emperor's Angels to protect their children, but the Kill-team must ignore a thousand small miseries to combat a larger threat.

The local environment is extremely toxic; even Space Marines would not last long if exposed to the choking atmosphere and acidic earth. Every puncture of a Battle-Brother's power armour must be sealed immediately or the poisonous environment takes its toll.

## OBJECTIVES

Chapter VIII and Chapter X of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook cover the definition of Mission Objective and lay out several different types. Objectives are often the backbone of a Mission, as they define the reason for the Kill-team's deployment. However, the very nature of the Deathwatch implies that Objectives can be fluid, and the GM should have an idea both of what the Kill-team expects the Objectives to be, and what they may ultimately become. Below are some detailed examples ready for Mission construction.

## USING OBJECTIVES

Objectives can be as concrete or as abstract as the GM desires. He should not feel obligated to reveal to the players up front, or ever, what he considers the Mission Objectives to be. Sometimes, the entire situation and everything to be accomplished may be laid out in the Briefing. Other times the actions actually needed to achieve heroic success may be nothing like the Kill-team went in expecting. If your players are prone to marching only down the road in front of them, they may finish a Mission without uncovering a large set of possible Objectives. You can help by throwing players another “hook” if they miss the first one. Less forgiving GM’s may be tempted to let the players reap the fruits of their obliviousness, but do you really want your creative labour go to waste because someone didn’t ask the right question or failed an Awareness Test?

## OBJECTIVE BUILDING BLOCKS

- An enemy invasion force is descending upon a strategically critical planet. A military fleet is en route, but the Kill-team is closer and must help the locals survive until help arrives.
- A transmission has just been received from a Kill-team thought lost in the Acheros Salient a decade ago. The PC’s must risk the possibility of a trap and walk in the domains of the Traitor Legions to retrieve their Brothers, or at least recover their gene-seed.
- The Achilles Crusade has arranged to exchange prisoners of war with the enemy. The military petitions the Deathwatch to ensure the trade goes smoothly.
- The Kill-team is sent as re-enforcements for an active assault Mission by another Kill-team or a deployment of a traditional Chapter Company.
- Alien technology has been discovered on a populated planet. The Kill-team must retrieve it not just from where it lies, but also from the hands of any Imperial citizens who wittingly or unwittingly possess it.
- The Battle-Brothers answer a call for help from an Imperial held world. When they arrive, the entire population is dead or missing. The Battle-Brothers must find the menace that destroyed this world before it claims another.

## ENEMIES

Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay offers no end of options for foes to directly oppose a Kill-team. Chapter XIV of the **DEATHWATCH** Rulebook is an obvious starting point for ideas, but other **WARHAMMER 40,000** sources, both from the roleplaying game and the tabletop game can provide inspiration. Once you have settled on a species and technology base for the enemy (or enemies) in your Mission, you have several other decisions to make. How skilled or powerful are the particular forces featuring in this Mission? What do they want, and what risks will they take to get it? Is there a point at which the enemy will retreat rather than continue to fight? Will they deliberately avoid combat with the Battle-Brothers in the first place?

## USING ENEMIES

If players remember little else about a Mission, they usually remember who they fought. Even if your group has a favourite foe, fighting the same thing over and over can become repetitious. If using the same enemy force in an extended story arc, decide whether it is only the general threat that you want to recur, or specific individuals (who probably then need a level or two of Touched by The Fates). Amongst the nameless throngs, you can vary the troop composition, armament, numbers, and challenge level.

## ENEMY BUILDING BLOCKS

- A member of the enemy faction has a grudge against a particular Battle-Brother or the entire Kill-team. This individual will stop at nothing to see them eliminated in the most painful way possible.
- The enemy is cowardly. Their forces can obliterate unarmed human citizens, but hide at the first whisper of an Adeptus Astartes presence. The Battle-Brothers have to actively root this threat out and force it into a confrontation.
- The enemy relies on mercenary forces. The Battle-Brothers cannot get face to face with the real threat because of the waves of intermediaries. Perhaps the real enemy is not even present at the site of the Mission.
- The Battle-Brothers are not allowed to attack the enemy. The enemy has political immunity, or it possesses some crucial information that the Deathwatch must acquire at all costs.
- The Kill-team has a grudge against the enemy. This is the reverse of the first scenario. The enemy grievously wronged the Kill-team’s honour, one of their Chapters, or performed some other act to earn animosity. The Battle-Brothers may not always act rationally in their pursuit of this hated foe.

## OBSTACLES

Enemies are not the only factor that a Kill-team might have to overcome. Less direct and usually less violent circumstances can also put the Kill-team at a disadvantage, or provide an advantage to the enemy. Several of the Complications in the Deathwatch fall into this category. Obstacles and Complications are essentially the same thing; their discussion here focuses on their role in Mission building.

## USING OBSTACLES

Obstacles are a key ingredient of memorable stories. Without them, the story can quickly become a parade of fights with a few sentences of exposition to link them. Obstacles present a chance to control pacing, to allow players to flex their problem-solving abilities, and to vary the challenge level of a Mission without necessarily adjusting the enemy profiles. Obstacles often yield some of the more interesting roleplaying scenarios. Choose obstacles that showcase the interests of your players, the abilities of their characters, and the themes of your story.

## OBSTACLE BUILDING BLOCKS

- The Kill-team's Objective is a simple seek and destroy. However, a nominally friendly force like the Inquisition or the Achilus Crusade is after the same thing, and their plans definitely do not involve destroying the Objective.
- An individual or race that one (or more) of the characters personally despises is present during the Mission, but as an ally, advisor, contact or some other role where the Battle-Brother(s) must put personal hatred aside.
- A vital friendly NPC in the mission is actually a traitor. They spend the Mission reporting the Kill-team's movements to the enemy and secretly opposing their success.
- The Adeptus Astartes are tasked with protecting the local populace from some threat, but the natives are obviously hiding something. They are not openly hostile or heretical, but neither are they welcoming or cooperative. The Battle-Brothers may be left wondering if the greater threat is without or within.
- The Kill-Team finds themselves in a situation that requires both military might and political manoeuvrings. Even the most charismatic Watch Captains are rusty in their interactions with normal society. The Kill-team must partner with a member of the military or Inquisition who is a liability outside political arenas.
- The Kill-team were provided extensive intelligence on their Mission and given excellent opportunities to prepare. Unfortunately, the enemy they came to fight is gone, and the Kill-team faces something completely different instead.

## ASSETS

Circumstance does not always have to favour the enemy. Consider whether chance, planning, or choices made in the past might provide the Kill-team some sort of advantage. (You can always throw in more obstacles to keep things from getting too easy.) This doubles as an excellent way to make players feel like their decisions matter (see below).

### USING ASSETS

Assets are another tool for differentiating one Mission from another. Assets that provide information can be used to exposition relevant facts or gently nudge players towards the next segment of the story. They also provide the opportunity to pit the Kill-team against enemies and obstacles they might otherwise never be able to overcome.

### ASSET BUILDING BLOCKS

- The Kill-team is fortunate enough to be accompanied by allies who are not a liability such as Ordo Xenos agents or veteran soldiers.
- The Astartes-worship on this Mission is present but subdued. The local populace is polite and helpful, running errands, performing research, and offering information that may aid the Kill-team.

- The enemy or location has been dealt with before. The Kill-team has extensive and accurate information on the Mission to properly plan and equip.
- The Mission Authority opts to provide the Kill-team additional Requisition, or specialised equipment beyond the threat rating.
- Not one, but two threats or enemies plague the Mission. However, they are as opposed to one another as to the Space Marines. The enemy spends valuable time and resources in a war that has nothing to do with the Space Marines, but leaves them ample opportunities to take advantage of the situation.
- The terrain does not favour the enemy—perhaps the foe is a flying strain but the planet is full of blustery winds, or a cold-blooded race on a freezing planet.
- The Kill-team encounters an unexpected ally on the Mission: units of guardsmen willing to follow their commands, fellow Battle-Brothers on their own Mission, or a Rogue Trader's crew whose profits the xenos threat is eating into.

## CHOICES

Choice is the secret ingredient that transforms a fun adventure into a story that your players remember. Forcing characters to make difficult (or even not so difficult) choices gives the Battle-Brothers an opportunity to affect the story while highlighting their personality at the same time. Space Marines are action-oriented individuals, prone to express their core beliefs not through diatribe or heart to heart talks, but through their deeds. Placing choices of morality, philosophy, or simple personal preference serves the dual purpose of getting the characters more deeply involved in the story, and allowing (or forcing) them to prove what is most important to them.

### USING CHOICES

Choices are not just a means for characters to interact with the story, but also with one another. With the many grey moral quandaries to be found in the Imperium, the Battle-Brothers may often disagree on the "right" course of action. Most groups enjoy some amount of interpersonal conflict, and that is particularly true for Space Marines whose bonds with one another are usually close. However, as the GM, you need to have a good grasp of where your players' particular threshold for such debates lies. Some groups feel they had a worthwhile evening if they spent half the night arguing about the approach to a single Objective, while others feel like they are "wasting time" with long discussions. Know when to let your players enjoy the debate, and when to prompt the Leader to make a call.

As the GM you have your own choices about how heavy the consequences of each of the Battle-Brother's decisions are. Sometimes they may echo throughout the Reach, and others times they cause a moment's pang of regret before being forgotten.

## CHOICE BUILDING BLOCKS

- Space Marines are the defenders of humanity, but they cannot save everyone. They encounter a sympathetic group of people who will be slaughtered if the Battle-Brothers do not intervene, but time is ticking to pursue their Deathwatch Objective.
- The Kill-team will frequently encounter xenos technology in their Missions. Do they destroy it, or are some artefacts worth bringing back for study. If they do retrieve such devices, who do they entrust them to?
- Part way through a Mission, the Kill-team receives a follow up order from the Mission Authority that seems dishonourable or counter-productive. Do they trust the wisdom of their absent leaders, or follow their own evaluation of what is right?
- The Kill-team encounters a colony walking a fine line between ignorance and heresy. The entire planet lost their way during the Age of Shadow without truly falling to evil. Do the Battle-Brothers purge the seed of temptation before it blooms, or attempt to bring these lost souls back to the Emperor's light?
- The Battle-Brothers have fought and bled in the hunt for a despicable agent of the enemy. But when they finally reach him, it turns out he has vital intelligence about something of even greater significance. Do they negotiate to try and gain this information, or refuse to capitulate with the enemies of man?

## COMPONENT SYNERGY

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Many of the building blocks above blur the lines between component categories, and there is no need to try to shoehorn them into one type anyway. The interaction of components in the story is just as important as the individual pieces that form it. Often assets and obstacles spring directly from the location. Perhaps just the choice of enemy naturally links to certain choices or obstacles. The Warhammer 40,000 universe is so expansive that sometimes encapsulating it into the scope of an adventure is daunting. The following advice may be useful.

Start small. Choose one or two building blocks that interest you to start with, and see if they lead to the choices for any other components. If you have trouble filling in the framework, use this toolkit (or any of your other favourite sources of inspiration) to fill in the blanks.

Be conscious of themes. Pick a particular mood or message for your adventure and select components that emphasise that theme.

Balance your components. Too many enemies leads to a bloodfest. Too many choices and obstacles in a row can cause the pace to drag. Vary the degree and order in which your components come up to suit your group's play style and your desired pace for the Mission.

*Where there is no type or place.*



# DEATHWATCH™

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