



# EPIC: MECHANICUS

## Contents:

- Introduction
- Story
- Miniatures Gallery
- Hobby guides
- Army Lists

## IMPERIAL

Legio Destructor—The Beasts of Steel  
Achil-Quag Skitarii Planetary Defence Force  
Knight Household Achil  
Attillan Imperial Guard Regiment  
Black Templars Space Marines  
Crimson Fists Space Marines (Fighting in the style of their primogenitor Chapter, the Imperial Fists, & also as Codex Marines)  
Imperial Guard Netean Regiment (Fighting in the style of the Imperial Guard Steel Legion)

## ORKS

Gobgutz Badfang's Stompy Onslaught  
Orkbert Orkstein's Gargant Bigmob  
Speed Freaks Warband  
Blood Axes Clan  
Sun-Tzork's Grotling Horde!

## ELDAR

Eldar Titan Clan

- Scenarios for some of the events of the story
- "A Complex Capture" (A report on the big game played to determine the storyline outcome of the battle for Complex 1)
- Campaign rules for playing the war for Achil-Quag
- Reference Sheets

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## Additional details:

EpicUK versions of duplicate lists will also be included, for use in UK tournaments (Templars, Speed Freaks, Steel Legion, etc.).

Any lists not Approved by each NetEA Champion in time for the supplement's release will have to sit it out.

Some lists, like the Steel Legion list, will be just a reference sheet & army list page, rather than having full datafax sets; they're an opportunity to get some more NetEA lists locked down but as they aren't new they don't need 10+ pages to themselves.



# Temporary Picture

## UZMAK SYSTEM - PLANETARY SURVEY

**Segmentum:** Ultima  
**Sector:** Charadon  
**Sub-sector:** Akant  
**System:** Uzmak  
**Surveyed:** 343650.M41  
**Planets:** Three

### Inner Planets:

Uzmak A Dead world, uninhabitable, irradiated  
Uzmak B Arid grass planet, Inhabited

### Outer Planet

Uzmak C Phasing Brown Dwarf / Gas Giant

### UZMAK B

**Summary:** Resource poor world; Ork infested

**Size:** Equatorial Distance - 6240 miles  
**Gravity:** 0.65 G  
**Satellites:** Five  
**Rotation Speed:** 715 mph  
**Orbit:** Insufficient data on orbital path to determine;  
Planet detected at 1.23 AU at time of survey

**Climate Classification:**  
Temperate - arid (Stable)

**Mean Surface Temperature:** 26 C

**Atmospheric Composition:**  
75% nitrogen, 22% oxygen, 1% argon, 1% carbon dioxide, trace amounts of other gasses

**Climatic Regions:** Extensive equatorial deserts

**Seas:** 24% of planetary surface

**Flora:** Some Terran-type genotypes, implying human colonisation before the Imperial Age. Ultimate stage Orkoid flora

**Fauna:** Ultimate stage Orkoid fauna

**Population:** 180 million sapients approximate

**Tithe Grade:** N/A

**Economy:** Speculated standard Orkoid barter system

**Society:** Speculated standard Orkoid tribal system

**Water Supply:** Natural precipitation

**Principle Exports:**  
Unknown; Atmospheric analysis indicates little extensive industry

**Principal Imports:**  
Unknown; Lack of extensive industry implies few / no imports

**Food Supply:** Orkoid flora and fauna

**Urbanisation:** One city of 30 million Orkoids (Estimated); Speculated limited industry

**Tectonic Activity:** Unknown

### Known History:

Likely Terran settlement, followed by Orkoid invasion, in pre-historical times  
Trace elements in atmospheric composition imply atmospheric modification / terraforming may have been enacted

### Supplemental Details:

*Long range scans of Uzmak B indicated that the Orkoid infestation was extensive, but of low technological development. The survey commander consequently authorised the survey fleet to move in for a closer scan.*

*The close-range planetary survey of Uzmak B was interrupted by an attack by multiple Ork spacecraft of the Cruiser class, which had been waiting in ambush behind the planet's fourth moon.*

*The last communications signals from the fleet were received by sector astropaths soon after the attack began, along with partial survey data; the fleet itself is presumed lost.*

## A Butterfly Flaps Its Wings

Dawn came early to the city of Big Smog, as flashes of eldritch weapons fire lit the ugly Ork city in lurid blasts of green, purple and white.

Startled from slumber by the concussive blast that signalled the explosive destruction of his chief rival's construction yard, Big Mek Albork Orkstein stumbled from his lair, hoisted his favourite kustom weapon, and scrambled hastily up into a lookout tower that was normally used to spy on neighbouring Mek foundries. From the top of the shuddering tower, the low expanse of Big Smog was lit by the pale glow of three of Uzmak's swift moons.

The city was mostly composed of simple adobe structures, with occasional metallic outcroppings that mostly denoted the location of Mek yards or the dwellings of technophile Warbosses. Never a truly peaceful city, Big Smog was now aflame with war, as at least ten great silhouettes strode majestically through the metropolis. Their forms flickered in unpredictable fractal patterns that confused the eye, making their titanic forms seem like ghostly mirages, yet for all their uncertain forms, the weapons they carried were very real. Lancing power beams tore into the disorganised Orkish inhabitants of the city, whilst thrumming sonic disruptions shattered buildings effortlessly. Occasionally the visual distortions ceased momentarily, affording a brief glimpse of titanic bipeds with smooth limbs and weapons that moved with a fluidity that belied their incredible size.

Bellowing orders to his nearby Boyz, who had also started to emerge from their own nearby lodgings, Big Mek Orkstein hastily descended from the lookout tower and ran through his construction yard, past half-built Trukks and untidy piles of Shootas, to where his Dreadnought mob waited. Nine Mega Dreadnoughts, bipedal war machines festooned with light guns, large bore cannons, and a variety of close combat weapons, shook and rattled as their crews piled aboard and began flicking switches and kicking engines, seemingly at random. Orkstein himself swerved towards a larger form that stood to one side of the Dread Mob – His personal Mekboy Stompa, *Mega Crusha*.

The size of a large house, *Mega Crusha* mounted a massive smoothbore cannon on one arm, capable of firing explosive shells larger than an Ork, and a massive chain-blade on the other arm. In addition, a shoulder-mounted razor saw as large as a battle tank was beginning to spin as the Krew activated the onboard systems. Just as Big Mek Orkstein hopped aboard, arcs of electrical sparks flashed high up on the flank of *Mega Crusha* as the last of its systems came online.

Barging past his krew of Boyz and scurrying Grots, Orkstein burst into the command cabin of his Mekboy Stompa and grabbed a hand held microphone device. When he spoke into it, his voice boomed loud across his fabrications compound, amplified a hundred times, loud enough to cut through the noise of battle and the rumble of Dreadnought engines.

*"Right Boyz! Ya see those pointy-'ead big Gargants? We's gonna crush and bash 'em 'till dey are dead!"*

With that inspiring speech (which left several unfortunate Boyz deafened for days, until their robust Orkioid regeneration ability healed them) Big Mek Albert Orkstein's mechanical creations tromped forwards to meet the attacking war engines in battle. One of the Mega Dreadnoughts promptly detonated, showering the others with flaming chunks of metal.

*"Turned it on wrong didn't 'he! Dat'll learn 'im!"* yelled Orkstein, as his krew burst into laughter at the unfortunate fate of their compatriot. The wrecked Dreadnought burned fiercely, as unfortunate bystanders ran wreathed in flames toward nearby pools of industrial fluid. For most of the Boyz this was a messy but effective method of dousing the flames, but one unfortunate Ork lept into a vat of volatiles, and triggered a small explosion that sent various body parts (including his head, with a very

surprised look on its face) arcing high into the cool morning air.

Beyond the compound walls of Orkstein's construction yard, the Eldar Titans danced over and through the city, sweeping the tiny Orkoid figures aside like a child kicking at sand on a beach. Pockets of resistance were beginning to spring up, however, as the disorganised Warbands reacted instinctively, taking up arms and charging toward the indistinct Titans. In general though, their wild gunfire was ineffective, even counter-productive, as cannon shells fired at the Eldar Titans more often than not passed through the unclear machines as if they were smoke.

Most of the larger Titans had already passed through Orkstein's district of Big Smog by the time his Dreadnought Mob began to move to pursue them, but just as the threat had apparently passed onwards, a second force of smaller Eldar Titans came skipping across the low rooftops. The first Orkstein knew of the second group of Titans was when his Mob came under attack from the flank, as a series of pulsing beams blasted in to tear one of his eight remaining Mega Dreadnoughts apart. Tracing the bright beams back to their source, Orkstein had a brief glimpse of an elegant figure, taller than his Mekboy Stompa, armed with two huge weapons attached to its "arms", before it slipped behind a building and disappeared from view.

*"Red Teef, chase 'dat git fast as you can!"*

Three Dreadnoughts, each marked with daubing of red paint across the tooth-like decorations on their control cabin heads, detached from the line of walkers and stamped in pursuit of the Eldar Titan, guns blazing wildly. Ork dwellings burned, but the Titan wasn't where the Red Teef group thought it was, and as the graceful machine came leaping out of concealment in the lee of a different building, two of the Red Teef Dreads blew apart, destroyed by the pulsing energy beams from the Titan's arm weapons. At the same moment, almost casually, the Eldar Titan fired off a small salvo of missiles towards *Mega Crusha*.

From inside of *Mega Crusha's* command cabin, Big Mek Orkstein watched as the Eldar missiles screamed across the space between the two war engines.

In a flash of blue sparks, the missiles disappeared, just metres before they would have impacted *Mega Crusha's* hull. A frown spread on Orkstein's long face. The power fields he had designed for *Mega Crusha* had worked well in destroying the missiles, but he was quickly running out of Mega Dreadnoughts in fighting this one Eldar Titan. Before there was time to lay down a decent amount of return fire, the Eldar Titan had again danced out of line of sight, to hide again between nearby buildings - though which ones, Orkstein could not be sure. Panicking, the remaining Red Toof Mega Dread could be seen running out of control in a direction that just so happened to be away from any sign of enemy activity.

*"White Teef, find 'im!"*

Two of Orkstein's four remaining Mega Dreadnoughts charged angrily forwards, firing their guns with careless abandon.

*"All da rest, WAIT!"*

One of Orkstein's senior Nobz looked around from his gunnery console in disbelief.

*"Boss, we gots ta 'elp out da White Teef boyz! We got ta charge!"*

Orkstein punched the Ork in the face so hard that he sprawled back onto the cabin floor, unconscious. Unheeding, Orkstein yelled at the prone figure.

*"If I is sayin' we WAIT, den we friggin' WAIT! You got 'dat skum? Or do ya wanna talk back some more?"*

*Didn't 'fink so"...*

Brave and reckless, the two White Teef Mega Dreadnoughts charged towards where the Eldar Titan had last been seen. Blasting away with their guns just as the Red Teef group had mere minutes before, the Mega Dreadnoughts were ambushed as the Eldar Titan leapt from an unexpected shadow, guns blazing.

The Eldar Titan pilot had underestimated the Orks' cunning, however, as with a roar of pleasure Orkstein signalled his stationary machines to open fire on the swift Titan. With a dull boom that rocked nearby buildings on their foundations, *Mega Crusha's* huge cannon fired its payload, and a massive explosion bloomed beneath the flickering image of the Eldar machine. Multiple cannons attached to Orkstein's Mega Dreadnoughts joined in with the assault, spitting fire.

With a last flicker, the visual disruption field that protected the Eldar Titan from harm collapsed, and the previously agile form of the Eldar Titan was revealed, no longer proud and untarnished but damaged and limping. Its attempted attack on the White Teef group abandoned, it began to retreat, still fast despite a dragging leg. Orkstein refused to let it get away, however, and yelled out for *Mega Crusha* to close in for the kill.

Still, it seemed for a moment as if the Eldar Titan would escape, but a lucky shot from a White Teef Mega Dreadnought hit the Titan in the shoulder, blowing off one of its arms and spinning it in a half circle. Crippled though it was, the Eldar Titan managed to drop into a crouch, keeping its balance before springing back to its full height and levelling its remaining gun arm at *Mega Crusha*. Legs damaged and hovering jets destroyed, the Eldar Titan pilot had decided to meet his fate with his face to the enemy.

For five seconds the Eldar Titan stood against the onrushing Ork machines, its remaining arm weapon blasting aside first *Mega Crusha's* remaining power fields, and then parts of its armoured shell. Missiles flew from its shoulders, wreathing the Stompa in explosions.

Proud, unyielding, arrogant, the Titan stood firm, but then *Mega Crusha* opened its eye, and the gaze of mork fell upon the Eldar war engine. Boiling, turbulent energy lanced out of the Mekboy Stompa's "eye", piercing a tank-sized hole in the chest of the Titan.

Like a child's marionette with its strings cut, the Eldar Titan collapsed lifelessly in a heap of broken limbs; Just to see the Titan blasted into smithereens, *Mega Crusha* fired its huge cannon into the downed wreck, sending pieces of the fallen Titan flying in every direction. The remaining Mega Dreadnoughts, including the now-rallied Red Toof Dread, joined in with the exultant victory celebrations, shooting the broken war engine or cutting it apart with their huge combat weapons. Within minutes, all that was left was splinters of shattered bone, with almost nothing left to identify the pile of debris as once having been a mighty Titan.

The harsh sound of Big Mek Orkstein's laughter cut through the din.

*"All right Boyz! Good bashin'! But dere's more killin' to be done! Waaargh!!"*

With that, *Mega Crusha* began to rattle off towards the dim forms of the larger Eldar Titans, which had now passed beyond Big Smog's outskirts leaving devastation in their wake, and seemed to be climbing the lower slopes of one of the several small mountains that stood at the edge of the city.

As one, the five remaining Mega Dreadnoughts turned to follow the larger Mekboy Stompa towards the enemy .

Two hours later, Big Mek Albert Orkstein stood atop the gently burning wreck of a mighty war engine, victim of the clash against the Eldar army. Unfortunately, it was not another of the elegant hostile machines, but the battered remains of *Mega Crusha*, which had been struck down almost contemptuously by the enemy force.

The earth had shaken violently at the command of the hostile Titans, cracking open and tipping *Mega Crusha* over on its back, and then, as *Mega Crusha* lay foundered, two of the largest Eldar Titans had concentrated their guns on the upturned war engine. Lances, Pulsar beams, and flashing lasers had turned the Ork machine from a weapon of war into scrap metal.

From his perch atop what was left of *Mega Crusha's* vast belly, Orkstein looked up at the summit of the mountain, to where the Eldar Titans had eventually climbed, just as true dawn had broken. In triumph, the Eldar war host had saluted the rising sun, disengaging their holo-fields to display their contempt of the Ork city that had only managed to destroy a single one of their smaller Titans. Standing tall, the dawn light illuminated their bright banners and colourful armour for a few minutes, the Titans had soon turned away from the city, their unfathomable mission apparently accomplished, and had retreated northwards and out of sight. Not long after, rumbling sounds loud enough to rattle every remaining building in Big Smog (not to mention topple a few) indicated that the Titans had likely boarded transport craft and left the planet. Communications calls to the small Ork fleet in orbit were only answered by the question "*Wot space craft?*" - clearly the Eldar had the capability to conceal and baffle sensors in space as well as on the ground, and had made good their escape.

Turning away from the summit of the mountain, the Ork mek looked down at the city of Big Smog. Once a busy metropolis, relatively peaceful (For an Orkoid society, at least) due to its uncontested domination by the ork Warlord Gobgutz Badfang, Big Smog had been demolished. At least half of the city's buildings had been destroyed, either hit by weapons fire, or simply stamped flat by the swift Titans. Fires burned citywide, though they were being systematically being tackled by teams of press-ganged grots. Soon the burning would cease, and the city would begin to rebuild.

Perhaps, thought Orkstein, the Ork Mekboy who had brought down a pointy head Gargant might be able to catch the ear of Warboss Badfang, and have a say in what the Orks should build from the ashes of their city. There was an awful lot of metal down there that could be used to make war machines, instead of new buildings...

The Ork inventor looked back up at the mountain's summit again, before speaking to the Mega Dreadnought crews bunched up nearby.

*"Boyz... We gots ta think **bigger**"*

Full Page picture:

Eldar Titans saluting the dawn atop the mountain

# Temporary Picture

## Temporary Picture

### ACHILL SYSTEM - PLANETARY SURVEY

**Segmentum:** Ultima  
**Sector:** Charadon  
**Sub-sector:** Naidar  
**System:** Achill  
**First Surveyed:** 342574.M34 (forty-two subsequent surveys)  
**Planets:** Nine

#### Inner Planets:

Achill A Dead world, uninhabitable, contaminated.  
Achill B Dead world, uninhabitable, irradiated.  
Achill-Suung Resource world, depleted, abandoned.  
Achill D Resource world, uninhabited.  
Achill-Quag Resource world, Inhabited.  
Achill E Dead world, Inhabited.

#### Outer Planets

Achill F Medium Gas Giant, Inhabited.  
Achill G Large Gas Giant

#### ACHILL-QUAG

**Summary:** Resource world; Intensive mining and agriculture.

**Size:** Equitorial Distance - 4115 miles  
**Gravity:** 1.31 G  
**Satellites:** One (Artificial)  
**Rotation Speed:** 815 mph  
**Orbit:** 1.1 years at 1.2 AU mean distance  
**Climate Classification:** Temperate Arable (Controlled)  
**Mean Surface Temperature:** 24 C  
**Atmospheric Composition:** 72% nitrogen, 25% oxygen, 1% argon, 1% carbon dioxide, trace amounts of other gasses.  
**Climatic Regions:** Large scale strip-mining regions. Areas that have been previously mined are in use as agricultural land.  
**Seas:** 80% of planetary surface.

**Flora:** Introduced Terran agricultural Flora.  
**Fauna:** Introduced Terran agriculture-assistant Fauna.  
**Population:** 12,321,451 plus 2,000,000 (Approx) Servitors and 500,205 Skitarii.  
**Tithe Grade:** Primaris IX.  
**Economy:** Adeptus Mechanicus Mars Pattern Economy Mk III  
**Society:** Adpetus Mechanicus Social Order (60%)  
Imperial serfs (40%)

**Water Supply:** Artificially supplied.

**Principle Exports:** Processed metals, processed nutrients.

**Principal Imports:** None.

**Food Supply:** Self sustaining.

**Urbanisation:** Two Stygies IV Pattern Habs, two star ports, multiple small resource collection settlements.

**Tectonic Activity:** Low Risk.

#### Known History:

Terraformed on the event of Achil-Suung's depletion in M38, with the intent of supplying Accatran Forgeworld with raw materials.

#### Supplemental Details:

Achill-Quag is expected to provide raw materials for Accatran Forgeworld until early M43. Achill D has been earmarked for Terraforming during M42 in order to take over responsibility for supplying Accatran's needs.

#### ACHILL E

**Summary:** Dead world; Accatran Pattern communications installation, Accatran Pattern Defence Web.

**Data:** Stable orbit at 2.6 AU.  
No resources, atmosphere, or tectonic activity.

#### History and Details:

Established in M35 during the initial inhabitation of the Achill system, Achill E acts as the coordination hub and staging post for the export activities of the system's active resource world. Resources are lifted to Achill E, and held until an interstellar barge arrives to transport the haul to Accatran, once every four Terran months.

## A Hurricane Makes Landfall - 3100950M41

With grace that came from their behemoth size rather than from elegant design, four starships translated out of Warpspace, leaving aetheric ripples in their wake. They had appeared in the far reaches of the Achill system, on the edge of deep space where gravitational perturbations were at a minimum. Yawing about slowly, the ships ignited their engines and set a course towards the inner system, a journey that would take two weeks.

All this was tracked and calculated dispassionately by the Adeptus Mechanicus Analytica station on Achill E. Within hours, the course of the four unidentified ships had been studied and extrapolated, their destination of Achil-Quag confirmed. Judgements were made and long range active scans were initiated. The scans would alert the intruders to the presence of the Adeptus Mechanicus base, but it was judged that ascertaining the identity of the mysterious ships was more important than maintaining any element of surprise.

The scans revealed the ships to be Ork vessels, three of Cruiser class, and one "Rok" class of weaponized astral body. Within minutes, the outpost began transmitting psychic distress calls.

Significantly outmatched, the system's defence fleet, a lance-equipped light cruiser and a small squadron of Cobra class escorts, held in low orbit above Achil E, sheltering under the outpost's defence grid; The Orks' destination planet of Achil-Quag was to be left to its fate.

The planet was not completely abandoned, however. The Achil-Quag Skitarii garrison was marshalled and put on high alert, forces divided between the two main settlements of Port Alpha and Port Omega. For two weeks, press-gang crews scoured the lower levels of the port hab towers after curfew each night, taking tardy indentured workers and unwary gang members away to join hastily raised militia companies. The strongest of the conscripts were taken into biologis factorums, where they were hastily lobotomised, fitted with grafted military accoutrements such as weapons and armour, and returned to their units to act as heavy weapons Servitors. Gathered in their hundreds of thousands thousands, the levied forces were deployed to encircle Achil-Quag's settlements in a protective ring.

Fifteen days after it entered the solar system, the small Ork fleet curved neatly around Achil-Quag's small artificial moon and settled into a stable low geostationary orbit fifty miles above Port Alpha. Within minutes of their taking up station above the port, batteries of defence weapons opened fire on the Ork ships, lance beams and the tracers of missiles streaking up to intersect the ships' protective power fields, causing little damage. In response the Ork Cruisers began to bombard the settlement with weapons battery fire. Many miles below, small pin-pricks of light flashed sporadically, each flickering light indicating where an Ork cannon shell had landed and turned a hundred square metres of terrain into a brief inferno. The bombardment was continued for an hour, without notable effect; Obviously non-combatants in the port area were dying by the thousand under the spacecrafts' guns, but the port's defence batteries were well shielded, and kept up their fire valiantly.

For a time, Mechanicus cogitators judged that it was possible that the Ork craft could be driven off, indeed after one particularly lucky defensive salvo struck home on an Ork Cruiser several of its cannons were damaged and put out of action. The small Mechanicus spacecraft force being held in reserve in orbit above Achil-E were readying themselves to intervene and hopefully drive off the hostile ships, when the true Ork plan was revealed.

The Ork Rok, which hitherto had stayed slightly out of effective range of Port Alpha's defence batteries, suddenly ignited its engines and powered downwards towards the planet; The Ork's behaviour, which had been presumed a wild and uncoordinated

*Orks engage Militia gangers in the foreground, the Ork Rok in the middle distance, and the Hab Spire in the background*

bombardment, was revealed as just a probing raid. The Orks had been testing the Mechanicus' defence guns to determine whether they had enough firepower to prevent the Ork Rok from making landfall. Clearly, they had been found wanting.

Plummeting rapidly towards the ground, the Rok began to attract all of Port Alpha's defensive fire, its massive shape taking hit after hit at the same time as its lower surface burned as the atmosphere was super-heated by its passage. Ponderously, huge chunks of the Rok, each dozens, or even hundreds of metres long, were blasted off from the main body of the weaponized asteroid. Still the Rok fell onwards through the sky, burning, shedding outer layers (Spilling thousands of unlucky Orks into the air along with them), yet for all the humans' effort still maintaining a coherent core. When just a kilometre from the ground, the Rok's massive thrust engines ignited, slowing its decent far more rapidly than seemed possible to the observers on the ground.

Preceded by the impact of dozens of massive asteroid pieces, each carrying the kinetic energy of a macro cannon shell, the Ork Rok slammed into wide, flat expanse of Port Alpha's landing plain.

Thirty square kilometres of flat ferrocrete, large enough to hold the huge bulk freight shuttles that regularly lifted supplies from the planet to great cargo haulers in orbit, the landing plain of Port Alpha was almost totally filled by the singular form of the Rok. The bombardment from the Ork ships in orbit ceased, and for several minutes there was silence, as a pall of dust thrown up by the crushing impact of the Rok added its shade to the already smoke-filled sky.

Then, with a collective savage roar that began with a single voice but soon built to a crescendo, massed hordes of Orks poured out of the crashed Rok and launched themselves at the human defenders of the Port.

With the benefit of recovered sensor data, Mechanicus analyticae were later to estimate that the initial assault wave of greenskins may have contained as many as 1.85 million Xenos life forms, almost all of which were actively and directly hostile. Sweeping across the short distance from the unclear "edge" of the Rok to the defensive lines of militia dug in around the periphery of the Port. The battles were short, savage, and very one-sided. Within an hour of the Rok making landfall, a quarter of a million militia had been killed, whilst another hundred and fifty thousand were in rout. In the nearby Hab Alpha that overlooked the Port itself, the main Adeptus Mechanicus force held all of its more capable units in reserve, knowing that despite having two hundred thousand Skitarii, as well as a full Knight Household in reserve, they could never hope to match the rampaging Orks in a direct fight.

At the Western extent of the landing plain, a few of the scratch companies, mostly formed from conscripts drawn from Hab gangs, were making a semi-organised fighting retreat, but beyond that coordinated resistance was soon at an end.

Consigning most of the working population of Hab Alpha to its fate, the master of the Port, Tech Lord Gonvitch II, ordered that the upper levels of the Hab be sealed against the invaders. Void barriers were engaged, emergency bulkheads shuttered, and backup fusion power planets activated. Before the last gunfire of the short battle on the landing plain had died away, the Tech Lord had sealed himself, as well as his two hundred thousand strong Skitarii Garrison, in the upper levels of the Hab Spire. In such a state of lockdown, the Hab Spire was designed to be able to last for up to ten years in isolation before requiring new rations. The majority of the population were not so fortunate however, as only a fraction of them had been housed in the upper levels of the Hab. Abandoned to their fate, the four million inhabitants of the Port arcology had not been informed that a Xenos attack was imminent, and nor had they been warned that the upper levels of the Hab were about to be sealed. For most of the workers, it would be days or even weeks yet before they learned of the battle outside. Some, however, had been near the edges of the vast structure, and had seen the Rok land, and through a few areas of the lower Hab the word was passed that they were under attack. As there was no means to broadcast this news to the whole settlement, there was no mass panic, no riots or stampedes. Instead there was merely a steady trickle of workers, soon numbering in the tens of thousands, exiting the Hab and fleeing East.

The Orks, for their part, had mostly finished wiping out the Hab Militia, and were turning their attention to the six defensive weapons silos scattered around the Port, which were still firing resolutely on the orbiting Ork Spacecraft far above. Within two hours of the initial landings five of the weapons facilities had been overrun, their light garrisons of Skitarii easily swept aside, whilst the sixth silo held out a little longer, before self-destructing just as the Orks penetrated the main command centre. With the skies clear of weapons fire, one of the Ork Cruisers descended into the atmosphere until it was only a dozen kilometres above the captured Port, thrusters constantly firing to keep it from crashing to the ground. Like small flocks of birds alighting from a tree, swarms of small and medium sized craft detached from the huge craft's docking bays. Soon, the air was filled with aircraft of all kinds, from squadrons of small Fighter craft, up to large bulk landers. Settling down in the few areas of the landing plain that were not occupied by the grounded Rok, the bulk landers began to disgorge thousands of armoured vehicles, as well as scores of War Engines.

Amongst the wave of landing craft was one unremarkable transport containing the mastermind behind the invasion, Big Mek Albork Orkstein. Settled on the shoulder of his newly constructed personal Gargant, *Mega Crusha II*, the Ork engineer squinted briefly at the sudden light as the transport's cargo bay doors creaked apart, then grinned in contentment as the doors swung fully open and his Gargant tramped out onto the landing plain. In every direction, fires were burning. The sky was shrouded in a vast cloud of dust and smoke, while thousands of corpses were lying rent and bleeding almost as far as the Big Mek's cyber-eye could see.

Three kilometres to the West, at the edge of the landing field, the vast structure of Hab Alpha stretched skyward. Instinctively, Mek Orkstein's affinity for technology informed him that it was a residential conurbation of some kind, and would likely house uncountable numbers of Humans, ready (If not willing) to be enslaved and put to work for their new Ork masters. He rubbed his hands together at the thought of all the machines he would force them to build. Grinning horribly, he directed his *Mega Crusha II*, as well as his personal Warbands, to move off towards the Hab.

Four kilometres tall, Hab Alpha was not large enough to be classified as a full Hive by the Imperium, but it was nonetheless an impressive structure. Ten kilometres in circumference at its base, it tapered gradually to a multi-turreted summit that was obscured from view by the shimmering glare of hundreds of protective Void Shield layers.

Beyond Big Mek Orkstein's line of sight, to the East of the vast bulk of Hab Alpha, the last battle of the day was about to occur. The flow of refugees, now grown to a crowd forty thousand strong, had been noticed by some of the Ork Warbands.

With their tempers still raised from the recent battle, the Orks were in no mood to be taking prisoners, and fell upon the fleeing civilians with feral savagery. Mostly defenceless, the human workers were like children faced with Terran lions, and could only die pitifully, shot down in the back as they ran, or struck with crude axes and swords driven with inhuman strength.

Seeing the plight of the civilians, the Knights of the Adeptus Mechanicus sallied forth.

Unable to sequester themselves in the upper reaches of the arcology with the Lords of the Port due to the same lack of forewarning that had doomed the civilian population, the Knights had held back from intervening in the battle for the Port, knowing that it would have been a futile gesture. Likewise, they had not fled to the countryside, as the supreme commander of the Knight force stationed at Port Alpha, Baron Harko, had refused to allow his forces to abandon their oaths of duty that bound them to defend the population of the Port. As soon as the refugees attempting to flee the Ork invasion came under attack, Baron Harko signalled to his force to follow him to war.

*"The time has come; We shall fulfil our oaths! We shall defend the people!"*

The rallying cry boomed from the Eastern gate of Hab Alpha as it cracked open, to reveal the Knights of Achil standing in serried ranks... and *stand* they did, as bipedal war machines five times the height of a man, humanoid in shape yet hunched forwards, with varied weapons of cannon and sword held at the ends of their arms. Brightly coloured in hues of green and yellow, the Knights, each piloted by a single highly trained operator, stood ready and waiting for the command of Baron Harko.

*"For the Emperor! For the Omnissiah! To War!"*

With a noise that started with the squeal of servos releasing that soon built to a thunderous peal of metallic clanks, mechanical hisses, and the crash of feet that weighed twenty or more tons, the Knights of Achil stormed towards the rampaging Orks.

*The Knights of Achil  
make their charge.*

The first Knights to fire their weapons were equipped with long range macro cannon and missile launchers, which detonated their payloads amongst the teeming Ork hordes with devastating effect, killing scores with each shot, with some lucky or particularly well placed shots even killing hundreds.

Unprepared for the sudden attack from their flank, the Ork warbands flinched, directionless for a crucial few moments as they attempted to ascertain what direction the enemy was shooting from. Those moments of uncertainty were exploited by the charging Knights, as they activated squealing chain swords as long as a tank, or five metre long shock lances, and carried their charge home into the heart of the greenskin mobs.

Whirling chain blades tore hundreds of Orks apart, whilst flashing arcs of lightning from shock lances struck out at the crude Ork vehicles, setting them ablaze or even igniting ammunition or fuel stores, causing them to explode. In disarray, the Ork horde acted instinctively, ceasing their attacks on the civilian refugees and turning as one to face the unexpected new enemy.

Bravely facing off against the greenskins, the Knights of Achil manoeuvred themselves so as to form a protective screen between the Orkish hordes and the fleeing civilians and, once in position, they stood firm for a full hour, providing enough time for the refugees to scatter into small bands that could strike out into the countryside without attracting too much attention.

Acting in coordinated groups, the Knights would push forwards, feint sideways, dart in for close-range attacks, or fall back to draw the incautious Orks under the heavy guns of the more formidably armed Knights. The Orks, for their part, were largely unable to come to grips with the fast moving Knights, and were forced to rely on heavy cannon fire from their vehicles and field cannons, few of which had yet reached the eastern side of Hab Alpha. Losses on the part of the Knight household were steady, but not overwhelming, whilst dozens of Orkish charges were blunted by the canny tactics of Baron Harko.

In this manner, most of the civilians were saved, and almost ten thousand would ultimately survive the trip across the fifteen hundred miles of country to reach the second major Mechanicus settlement on the planet, Port Omega.

This survival was paid for at cost however, as before they quit the field, fully half of the three hundred Knights that had sallied from Port Alpha would be destroyed, their highly skilled pilots and sacred machine spirits lost forever. Each fallen Knight had reaped a handsome tally of Orks and war machines, but it was a slim consolation to hold to for the defeated force as Baron Harko gave the signal to retreat from combat and set out toward the distant haven of Port Omega. Baron Harko knew that he had ensured the survival of a small part of the Hab's population, thus fulfilling his oaths, and if at all possible he would one day return to rescue the remaining civilians; It was to be two years before the defeated Baron would lay his eyes on Hab Alpha again, and in that time the area would be changed almost unrecognizably.

Map showing Port Alpha,  
and the various battles  
around the port.

Fallout - 3200950M41

The weeks following the Ork invasion saw the Adeptus Mechanicus work on strengthening their fortifications around their remaining facilities. Day and night, Port Omega and its attendant processing outposts rang to the metallic sounds of construction work as buttressed walls were strengthened, minefields laid, and weapons of war forged. At the same time, less conventionally audible noises were emitted from the Port, as Astropathic distress signals were broadcast unceasingly.

During this time, the tech-station situated on the outer planet Achill E provided the Mechanicus forces on Achil-Quag with surveillance data on Ork activities via the use of deep scans and long range optical analysis. Their activities thus observed, it was revealed that the Ork forces had apparently spared most of the human population from extermination, and was using them as a servile workforce. Tens of thousands of workers were seen each day moving in long lines across and around the landing field outside of Port Alpha, seemingly acting as porters, moving heavy machinery and disassembled Port vehicle component pieces under the direction of their Greenskin task masters.

Mechanicus Analyticae were given the observational data, and reported that, despite interference caused by Orkish technology, they had identified dozens of ad-hoc construction yards scattered around the captured Port. With the full information at his command, the master of Port Omega, Gonvitch I, authorised the use of heavy intercontinental missiles. It took three weeks to prepare a production line using Standard Template schematics, and at infrequent points thereafter large launching platforms of the Ordinatus Minoris class, each the size of a super-heavy tank, rolled from the manufactorum, raised their freshly constructed missiles to the ready position, and launched a volley of munitions into the sky.

An hour later, three thousand miles to the west, the lands around Port Alpha would be hit with the salvo of missiles. Mostly armed with mass barrage warheads, the missiles filled the Orkish fabrication yards with fire. Each launching inflicted damage that temporarily set back the construction works, but the Mechanicus Fabricators could not manufacture support missiles fast enough to truly stem the Orks in their creation of new war engines. To do that, reinforcements would be required.

Feedback - 3230950M41

Thirty five light years to the galactic north west, a response to the Ork invasion had been prepared.

As an Adeptus Mechanicus planet, Achill-Quag had appealed to the mother Forgeworld to which it owed allegiance for military support, and it was in the interest of the planet Accatran to respond. Without the regularly delivered agriculturally-derived nutrient gruels produced on Achill-Quag, Accatran would lose five percent of its billions of Servitors to starvation, and even ignoring the loss of Servitors, without the minerals strip-mined from Achill-Quag's mountains, Accatran would lose two percent of its munitions manufacturing. Such a dip in production volume would be unfortunate, and so a military intervention force was drawn together.

Besides the fleet flagship *Omniissiah's Rage*, an ancient Dictator Class Cruiser that had served the Adeptus Mechanicus for almost three thousand years, the relief fleet contained two capital ships, two light escort squadrons, as well as five squadrons of bulk freighters. Into their holds were packed hundreds of thousands of Mechanicus warriors, drawn from the fearsome Skitarii armies of Accatran, as well as twenty six regiments of Imperial Guard from the nearby planet Attila, sent in a show of support for the operation by the Adeptus Munitorum of the Imperium. Finally, carefully loaded into five different transports were some of Accatran's most precious implements of warfare, twenty four Titans of the Legio Destructor, known as the Beasts of Steel.

The Titans, each one an awesome construct of arcane technology that wielded weapons of terrible potency, marched proudly into the cargo barges that would take them into orbit, as liturgies were canted by thousands of thronging Tech Priests that lined the route from the Titans' cathedral-hangers to the waiting ships. Some of the Priests, driven wild by the proximity of their mechanical idols, dashed briefly from the crowds to touch the feet of the passing Titans, risking their lives for a brief moment of ecstatic communion with the avatars of their God. Incense-wrapped, war horns blaring the catechisms of their Legion, the Titans strode in to their berths, and quiescently allowed themselves to be bound by magna-clamps and containment fields, within which they would ride during the journey to Achill-Quag.

Most of the Titan crews would disembark their war engines for the transition, but some of the Titan commanders, the Princepsi, would remain inside their steeds for the duration, either through choice as they preferred the company of their cold machine to that of humans, or because their level of physical integration with their Titan precluded a simple disconnection. Known for their tendency towards extensive bodily modification so as to mesh closely with their Titans, even the least enhanced of Legio Destructor's Princepsi demonstrated many mechanical replacements, such as cyber eyes with integrated information systems, mouths and throats with attached broadcast ports, and fingers replaced with snaking data tendrils.

Once all of the weapons, vehicles, and infantry had been loaded aboard the bulk freighters hanging in orbit, the fleet broke away from the Forgeworld's gravitational influence, made for the edge of the Accatran system, and after several days' travel, disappeared in null-flashes as they silently translated into warp space.

Achill-Quag Intervention Fleet (M40.950)	
<i>Omniissiah's Rage</i> -	Dictator Class Cruiser
<i>Boundless Devotion</i> -	Gothic Class Cruiser
<i>Escort Squadron #52</i> -	Sword Class Frigates (6)
<i>Accatran's Talons</i> -	Cobra Class Destroyers (8)
<i>Bulk Freight Squadron #4</i> -	Heavy Troop Transports (4)
<i>Bulk Freight Squadron #7</i> -	Heavy Troop Transports (4)
<i>Bulk Freight Squadron #63</i> -	Troop Transports (8)
<i>Bulk Freight Squadron #92</i> -	Heavy Fuel Transport (4)
<i>Bulk Freight Squadron #98</i> -	Replenishment & Stores Barge (2)

Achill-Quag Intervention Army (M40.950)	
<i>38x Skitarii Infantry Regiments</i> -	475,000 infantry. 7,600 armoured vehicles. 200 super heavy vehicles.
<i>10x Skitarii Tank Regiments</i> -	4500 armoured vehicles. 125 super heavy vehicles.
<i>12x Skitarii Logistics Regiments</i> -	150,000 infantry. 14,400 armoured vehicles. 72 super heavy vehicles.
<i>26x Attilan Regiments</i> -	208,000 cavalry.
<i>1x Titan Quattro-Legio</i> -	1 Emperor Titan 7 Warlord Titans 6 Reaver Titans 10 Warhound Titans



# Temporary Picture

## ACCATRAN SYSTEM - PLANETARY SURVEY

**Segmentum:** Ultima  
**Sector:** Accatrania  
**Sub-sector:** Accatran  
**System:** Accatran  
**Surveyed:** 242620.M41  
**Planets:** One

**Inner Planets:**  
Accatran Dead world, inhabited, irradiated.

**Outer Planets:**  
None (Extensive debris field indicates a possible artificial destruction of up to three outer planets in pre-Imperial times)

### UZMAK B

**Summary:** Adeptus Mechanicus Major Forgeworld.

**Size:** Equitorial Distance - 4100 miles  
**Gravity:** 1.1 G  
**Satellites:** Eight (Artificial)  
**Rotation Speed:** 1024 mph  
**Orbit:** 0.4 years at 0.5 AU.

**Climate Classification:**  
Surface Uninhabitable

**Mean Surface Temperature:**  
300 C

**Atmospheric Composition:**  
50% industrial effluvial, 40% carbon dioxide, 10% oxygen.

**Climatic Regions:** Extensive uninhabitable deserts.

**Seas:** 14% of planetary surface (highly toxic).

**Flora:** None

**Fauna:** None

**Population:** 100 million , plus 60 billion servitors and 400 million Skitarii (liable to fluctuations).

**Tithe Grade:** Adeptus Non.  
**Production Grade:** IV-Secundus  
**Economy:** Adeptus Mechanicus Mars Pattern Economy Mk III  
**Society:** Adeptus Mechanicus Social Order  
**Water Supply:** Imported (93%), recycled (7%)  
**Principle Exports:** Munitions, Armoured Vehicles, Aircraft.  
**Principal Imports:** Foodstuffs, Water, Industrial Ore, Prometheum.

**Food Supply:** Imported (99%), cultivated (1%)  
**Urbanisation:** 86% of planetary surface is composed of manufactories, refineries, processing plants, and other such industrial facilities.  
**Tectonic Activity:** None (Continents artificially stabilised).

### Known History:

The establishment of Accatran dates back to pre-Imperial times, and its founding date is unknown.

Nevertheless, Imperial records of Accatran's actions are uniformly positive. The Forgeworld is prompt with deliveries, its products are of above average quality, and it has often stood ready to commit its Titan Legion (the Legio Destructor) to the support of Imperial wars.

### Supplemental Details:

The forgeworld of Accatran has a notable record of successful explorator missions, and its recovered STC patterns are of such a high eminence that they have in many cases been disseminated throughout the Imperium, to be produced by Forgeworlds and manufactory planets in all five of the Imperial Segmenta. Few Forgeworlds can boast such a contribution to the Machine God's realm.

Accatran is the homeworld of the Legio Destructor, which is, as far as Imperial records indicate, the largest known Titan Legion, with a standing strength of over one hundred Battle class Titans.

## Achill-Quag at War - 3680950M41

It took seven terran months between the Rok's landfall and the arrival of the Imperial relief fleet in the Achill system, during which time the Orks made steady gains, taking large swathes of territory from the Mechanicus whilst meeting little resistance. Rather than stir the Orks up by offering them open battles (which could only result in Orkish victories, so greatly outnumbered were the humans), the Mechanicus settled on a policy of withdrawal. Any valuable equipment small enough to be practically transported was dismantled and taken eastwards to Port Omega, whilst larger facilities were destroyed so as to prevent Orkish scavengers from recovering useful technology.

In this manner, three of the four administrative and processing complexes surrounding Port Alpha were abandoned and demolished. Only Complex D remained occupied by its workers. Protected by a garrison of ten thousand Skitarii and a detachment of the Knights of House Achil, the menials continued to till the algae fields in the eastern portion of their administrative region, and mine for the valuable ores in the Phobos mountains.

However, the strategic withdrawal was unable to greatly affect the Orks' construction efforts at Port Alpha, where dozens of large bulk cargo lighters and port haulers had been stranded, providing millions of tonnes of refined metal for the greenskins' industry. Hundreds of War Engines were built, despite the irregular missile strikes of the Imperium. After two months, the Orks were able to power up the Port's void shields, rendering the entire landing site of the Rok (Along with most of the construction yards) effectively immune from the Deathstrike bombardment.

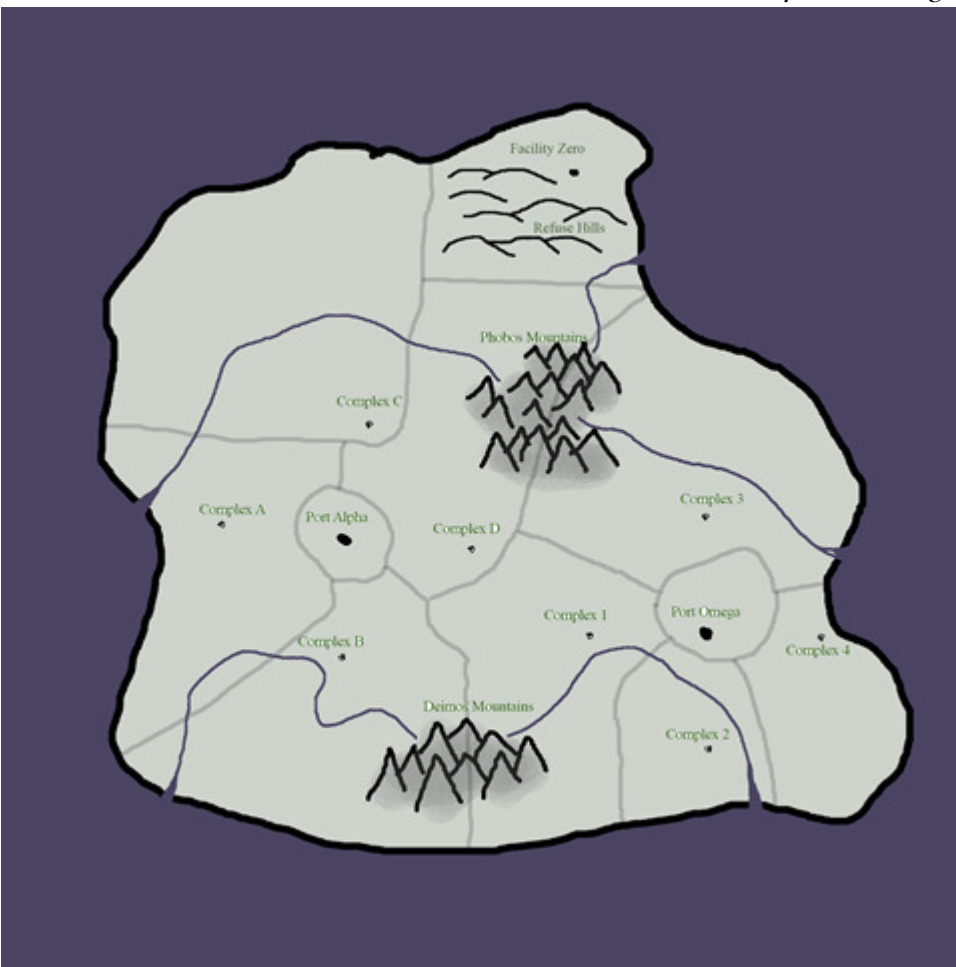
Meanwhile, those Orks not engaged in construction works (in general, Warbands of low a status, too junior to be able to claim prime salvage from the captured Port) began to spread out across the continent. First in bands numbering only a few dozen, they were easily repulsed, but the numbers of roving Orks increased with every passing day.

Two months after the initial Ork invasion, a small warband of Orks known as "Harley Orkison's Speed Freaks" destroyed the first Mechanicus Industrious to be lost in the war.

Much of the industry on Achil-Quag used large machines of various configurations, with the most common types being mobile mechanical excavators used in the mining works, and tracked agricultural tenders that worked the fungus fields and algae swamps. Other industrial engines in service included bulk transporters, mobile resource processors, and massive auto-tenders that serviced the other machines. Collectively, these large machines were known as Industrious Engines, and it was an agricultural Industrious of Complex D that found itself attacked at dawn, sixty-two days after the fall of Port Alpha.

The machine was tending to its allotted fungus fields, collecting mature growths and extracting their nutrients into a concentrated soup, whilst scattering fertilizer and new fungus bulbs in its wake, when it found itself under attack. The Skitarii force assigned to protect the Industrious attempted to hold off the greenskin attackers, but the Orks were stronger in numbers and equipped with many fast vehicles, some carrying esoteric and powerful laser cannons; within ten minutes of first contact with the Orks, the Skitarii were overwhelmed and the Industrious was disabled. A distress message was sent out, but by the time reinforcements arrived in the form of a column of Knights, the Industrious had been stripped of its most valuable power plants, armour plates and motive engines, and all that remained were some late-comer Ork scavengers from a different warband who retreated without a fight.

Thirty miles to the west, Harley Orkison's Speed Freaks had claimed their first salvage of the war, and were busy turning their captured parts into new vehicles, impressing some of the other roving Ork groups into joining the Speed Freak warband, or into attempting to emulate their success. Within the next month, fifteen other Industrious Engines of various classes were destroyed or badly damaged by Orkison's Speed Freaks, and other Warbands inspired by his actions, forcing the Mechanicus' analyticae to change their tactics.



### Achill-Quag - Major Landmass

*The planet's single unnamed continent was terraformed by the Adeptus Mechanicus during M38 so as to be a productive resource world, and was split into nine administrative regions.*

*Facility Zero - Abandoned Terraforming plant, surrounded by trillions of tonnes of toxic industrial effluent.*

*Port Alpha - Western Port for the dispatch of supplies into orbit.*

*Complex A - Processing and refinement, algae farms.*

*Complex B - Processing and refinement, fungus farms, mining works.*

*Complex C - Processing and refinement, fungus farms, munitions works.*

*Complex D - Processing and refinement, fungus farms, mining works.*

*Port Omega - Eastern Port for the dispatch of supplies into orbit.*

*Complex 1 - Processing and refinement, fungus farms, mining works.*

*Complex 2 - Processing and refinement, fungus farms, munitions works.*

*Complex 3 - Processing and refinement, fungus farms.*

*Complex 4 - Processing and refinement, algae farms, mining works.*

# The Skitarii of Outpost D versus the Ork horde

From that time onwards, instead of using the Industrious Engines individually, wherever possible they would instead be collected into groups, which would intensively farm or mine smaller areas in sequence. This would not be as efficient as their normal method of operation, but in collecting the Industrious Engines together, their protective Skitarii and Knight guards could be combined into larger groups protecting fewer targets, more able to deflect the attentions of the xenos tribes.

Following this, the four months before the arrival of the relief fleet saw the rate of losses of Industrious Engines drop for much of this period, until the Orks began to bring some of their new War Engines to bear. Starting with Dreadmought and “Mega” Dreadnought class vehicles, escalating to “Stompa” class war engines more massive than an Imperial Baneblade, three weeks before Imperial reinforcements were due to make landfall, the first Gargants were sighted.

The Ork Warlord Gutgrub Badfang had bided his time during the six months since his forces had arrived on Achil Quag, watching with imperious contentment as his chief Mek Orkstein had orchestrated the construction of hundreds of new war engines for his army, including forty-five new Gargants to complement the two Gargants he had brought with him. With all the resources of the captured Port at his disposal it would be several years before it had been exploited to its full potential.

However, even a Warboss as cunning and patient as Badfang could not chase feral humans through the under-hive of the Port Hab forever, especially when there was word of real battles being fought just over the horizon against organised human forces. And so, eager to wage war rather than capture technology like the lesser tribes’ Bosses, overlord Badfang ordered his Gargants to fan out across the fertile lands to the east of Port Alpha.

Each Gargant was to Ork psyches a vast totemic idol, and their passage across the plains of Achil-Quag attracted many of the smaller Ork warbands into following in their ponderous wake. With such a weight in numbers behind them, the Gargants’ first contact with the forces of the Adeptus Mechanicus was almost universally devastating.

In the foothills of the Phobos mountains, a convoy of nine Industrious Engines used for mining operations was ambushed and destroyed by a Gargant attack. In the plains south of Complex D, a convoy of agricultural Industrious Engines was forced to abandon their allotted tilling grounds and flee, whilst a detachment of fifteen Knights of Achill, backed up by Mechanicus Serfs, undertook a valiant charge that temporarily immobilised a Gargant, saving the convoy for the loss of all but three of the Mechanicus walkers.

The third major Ork strike fell upon Complex D, the last remaining Mechanicus facility on the west of Achil-Quag’s main continent. One Gargant, six “Kustom Stompa” class War Engines, and a force of around two thousand Orks including many lesser vehicles and heavy weapons, attacked the Complex’s garrison.

The Orks were heavily outnumbered by the ten thousand strong Skitarii garrison, but the Mechanicus army largely lacked heavy weapons as Analyticae had judged the Complex as unworthy of protection by more valuable weaponry. No great War Engines or noble Knights of Achill stood ready to defend Complex D, even the normally ubiquitous shapes of Leman Russ tanks were absent from the Imperial lines, and the ensuing battle was a clash of Ork war machines set against wave after wave of human infantry.

The first Ork forces charged the Skitarii in their prepared defence lines, heedless of the small arms firepower that cut hundreds down as they rushed forwards. The Orks attacked directly, without waiting for the heavy guns of their Stompas and Gargant to soften up the defence lines, and consequentially the first wave of charges was stalled, the Orks having captured an outlying factorum complex but having been blunted enough that they lacked the momentum for pushing further in to the Complex.

The Orks’ heavier forces, seeing the loss of most of their infantry forces, hung back and fired their long range weaponry merely in an attempt to prevent their infantry mobs from being overrun by the thousands of counter-attacking Skitarii. However, despite killing many hundreds of humans, the remaining Ork mobs in the captured factorum were wiped out after an hour of fierce close quarters combat.

The massive Ork War Engines seemed to contemplate continuing their bombardments, but after counter attacking Skitarii forces destroyed one of the Kustom Stompas, the War Engines were forced to withdraw or face being overwhelmed. For the loss of almost half of the facility’s Skitarii garrison, Complex D had been saved, albeit temporarily.

Two days later, with the relief fleet still a week away, Complex D was attacked again, this time by a force consisting of three Gargants, dozens of Kustom Stompas, and at least thirty thousand individual Orks. They found a facility mostly abandoned, machinery destroyed and vehicles missing, staffed only by a few mindless servitors that trundled purposely between empty resource hoppers. Faced with annihilation, the Skitarii garrison had withdrawn.

Before sunset, every servitor at Complex D had been butchered.

## Escalation - 3750950M41

In all the months since the greenskin invasion, three Ork Cruisers had hung in geostationary orbit above the captured Port Alpha, but as the Imperial relief fleet entered the system they swung about as one; The Ork spacecraft over Achill-Quag ignited their main boosters and fled for the outer reaches of the Achill system, where their data signatures were quickly lost amongst the clutter of the Achill system's asteroid belt. Whether they had left the system or still lurked unseen in the system was unknown, but if they had remained they were powerless to prevent the Imperial relief fleet from reaching the warring planet.

Shrouded in steam from where their super-heated hulls met with Achill-Quag's damp atmosphere, dozens of massive landing craft began to alight their cargos at Port Omega in the two months following the retreat from Complex D. More than a million and a

quarter infantry, cavalry, vehicle crews and logisticians had to be landed, processed, billeted and fed, swelling the total human population of the planet significantly and more than tripling the peacetime Skitarii garrison.

Set aside from the rest of the Imperial forces in their own void shielded compound, the twenty five Adeptus Mechanicus Titans were sequestered. Aware that the greenskins had a variety of forces they could bring to bear, Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius made the decision to have his Titan squadrons equipped with specialised weaponry and upgrades, rather than the standard configurations that were allocated to most deployments. He split his forces into six distinct battlegroups, each with a particular battlefield tasking.

Rather than wait for the full Imperial army to be landed, the Titans began probing sorties immediately. Master Princeps Tiberius lead from the front in his own Titan, *Riddle of Steel*.

### Legio Destructor Quattro Legio Weapons Outfits - Achill-Quag Deployment

#### ***Battlegroup Riddle of Steel - Generalist Combat Squadron***

<i>Riddle of Steel -</i>	Emperor Titan Plasma Annihilator Hellstorm Cannon Quake Cannon Defence Laser
<i>Pax Imperator -</i>	Reaver Titan Apocalypse Missile Launcher Gatling Blaster Laser Blaster
<i>Accatran's Wrath -</i>	Reaver Titan Inferno Gun Melta Cannon Gatling Blaster
<i>Steel Doom -</i>	Reaver Titan Apocalypse Missile Launcher Volcano Cannon Gatling Blaster
<i>Steel Eye -</i>	Reaver Titan Inferno Gun Laser Blaster Melta Cannon

#### ***Battlegroup Lazer-Wolfe - Scout Squadron***

<i>Lazer-Wolfe -</i>	Warhound Titan Turbolaser Destructor Plasma Blastgun
<i>Plasmar-Wolfe -</i>	Warhound Titan Turbolaser Destructor Plasma Blastgun

#### ***Battlegroup Direwolf - Scout Squadron***

<i>Direwolf -</i>	Warhound Titan Plasma Blastgun Vulcan Megabolter
<i>Greatwolf -</i>	Warhound Titan Plasma Blastgun Vulcan Megabolter

#### ***Battlegroup Canid Sine - Scout Squadron***

<i>Canid Sine -</i>	Warhound Titan Inferno Gun Vulcan Megabolter
<i>Canid Dexe -</i>	Warhound Titan Inferno gun Vulcan Megabolter

#### ***Battlegroup Ferrum Incarnadine - Anti Vehicle Squadron***

<i>Ferrum Incarnadine -</i>	Warlord Titan 2× Turbolaser Destructors 2× Volcano Cannons
<i>Lupus -</i>	Warlord Titan Turbolaser Destructor Support Missile (Warp) Melta Cannon Volcano Cannon
<i>Ferrus Rex -</i>	Warlord Titan 2× Plasma Blastgun 2× Laser Blaster
<i>Lord of Light -</i>	Warlord Titan 2× Plasma Blastgun 2× Plasma Destructor

#### ***Battlegroup Deus Machination - Anti Infantry Squadron***

<i>Deus Machination -</i>	Warlord Titan Support Missile (Barrage) Inferno Gun 2× Gatling Blaster
<i>Towering Steel -</i>	Warlord Titan 2× Vulcan Megabolter 2× Quake Cannon
<i>Watchtower -</i>	Warlord Titan 4× Apocalypse Missile Launcher

<i>Custodian -</i>	Warlord Titan 2× Inferno Gun Plasma Destructor Titan Close Combat Weapon
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#### ***Battlegroup Thunder Child - Siege Squadron***

<i>Thunder Child -</i>	Reaver Titan Support Missile (Vortex) Melta Cannon Close Combat Weapon
<i>Firewolf Alpha -</i>	Warhound Titan 2× Inferno Gun
<i>Firewolf Beta -</i>	Warhound Titan 2× Inferno Gun

#### ***Battlegroup Wolf's Howl - Reserve Anti-Vehicle Squadron***

<i>Wolf's Howl -</i>	Warhound Titan 2× Turbolaser Destructor
<i>Wolf's Growl -</i>	Warhound Titan 2× Turbolaser Destructor

**Battles Across The Continent - 3800950M41**

For two months, the Gargants had been on the march. More than a million Orks had been unleashed, trailing in the wake of their gigantic war engines.

However, as the Orks advanced, the Imperial forces began to deploy against them. Whilst the half of the Mechanicus forces were deployed around Port Omega, twelve Skitarii infantry regiments, four tank regiments, and six logistics regiments were deployed to the largest remaining defensible area between Port Omega and the advancing Ork Horde: The processing factories of Complex 1.

Whilst the forces around Complex 1 began to dig in, with two exceptions the remaining Mechanicus reinforcements were dispersed in a long line each side of Complex 1, out to the Deimos mountains in the south west, and Complex 3 to the north east.

The first force allowed beyond the defensive lines were the Titans of the Legio Destructor. Cruising the areas to the north-west of Complex 1, the heavier Beasts of Steel moved in battlegroups that intercepted the first advancing Ork warbands in attempts to destroy or cripple their heavier war engines. Led in to the best targets by the lighter Warhound Titans, the heavy Titans undertook battles at extreme long ranges, destroying or delaying the heavier Ork machinery in their advance. Small waves of Ork infantry mobs were swept aside by anti-infantry configuration Titans, whilst heavier infantry waves were avoided. In this manner three Gargants and nineteen Stompa class war engines were destroyed by the Titan Legion with no significant damage being taken by the Imperial forces in return. However, as their strategy was predicated on long range engagements, the Titans were forced to continually fall back towards the Imperial entrenchments around Complex 1.

The other exceptional force permitted to attack the enemy beyond the defensive lines were the 26 Attilan Rough Rider regiments. As Achil-Quag was a fertile land with millions of square miles of grazing fields, the Attilan regiments were not constrained by a requirement to keep a large logistics train running to feed and water their horses. With merely a small and mobile logistics unit attached to each regiment, the Attilan regiments were sent out beyond the defensive cordons in two vast armies each a hundred thousand strong, one southwards, skirting the northern hills of the Deimos Mountains, whilst the other army went north-west, passing through the Phobos mountain range using boreholes left by Mechanicus Industrius mining engines. This grand manoeuvre allowed the second Attilan army to emerge unheralded behind the greater mass of the advancing Ork hordes. Both Rough Rider armies undertook to disrupt the Ork advances and logistical efforts. The first army met with difficulties as they found themselves engaged in running battles with the growing Speed Freek clans of the Warboss Harley Orkison, whilst the second army achieved considerable successes, managing to outflank and destroy dozens of large supply convoys headed for the front lines packed with Orkish reinforcements, munitions, and heavy guns.

However, even with an army loose in their rear, the Orks could not be turned aside from bearing down upon Complex 1. With the Skitarii greatly outnumbered despite their reinforcements, liable to be attacked by local concentrations of Orks on a factor of ten-to-one, the fate of Complex 1 seemed sealed; deep in the sub-levels of the threatened facility vortex self-destruction mechanisms were prepared, whilst the Titans of the Legio Destructor prepared to pull back from their defensive positions rather than be lost in the warp-fires of the facility's combustion.

**Impartial Aid, Unheralded - 3850950M41**

Unbeknownst to the Adeptus Mechanicus, other Imperial forces had been monitoring the communications between Achil-Quag, the research station on Achil E, and the mother Forgeworld of Accatran. Despite the transmissions being encrypted, Ordo Xenos Inquisitorial agents had deciphered enough of the private communications to infer that the situation was far more severe than the Adeptus Mechanicus' initial request for aid from the Rough Riders of Attila had suggested.

For the Forgeworld of Accatran, the loss of the resource planet Achil-Quag represented a moderate irritant, causing a dip in production of Imperial tithed munitions of two percent, which might cause Imperial censure and minor punitive measures. However to the wider region, a two percent loss of munitions production would be a very serious issue. Fortress worlds standing around the Ork Empire of Charadon might be strained, in the worst case even lost to Ork attacks. Trillions of Imperial citizens might die, and worlds might fall, if the Orks were allowed to conquer the Achil system.

To Ordo Xenos Lord Inquisitor Bernard Gui of the Mordant Zone, this was not an acceptable risk.

On his command, dozens of regiments of Imperial Guard bound for the Tyrannic Wars on the Eastern Fringe were re-routed as they passed through the Segmentum headquarters at Kar Duniash, enough regiments that if combined with the Imperial Guard and Mechanicus forces already in theatre to match the Orks with a reasonable chance at military success.

However it would take months for the reinforcements to arrive, and so Inquisitor Lord Gui also sent a request for assistance from two Adeptus Astartes armies known to be operating in the area; The Crimson Fists Chapter, which had its homeworld near to Achil-Quag on the southern edge of the Ork Empire of Charadon, and a small Black Templars Crusade force which had been operating in the Charadon sector for five years.

Responding with rapid decisions, both forces acceded to the Inquisitor's request and dispatched armies to Achil-Quag at the earliest available Warp tide. Coordinating together in the Warp, the Imperial Space Marines emerged directly above Achil-Quag together, just five hours before the leading edges of the Ork hordes were due to arrive at Complex 1.

<b>Crimson Fists Achil-Quag Task Force (M40.950)</b>	
<i>Strike Cruiser -</i>	Dorn's Truth
<i>Strike Cruiser -</i>	Wrath V
<i>Strike Cruiser -</i>	Conquest III
<i>Strike Cruiser -</i>	Fist of the Emperor
<i>Fleet Assets -</i>	10 Thunderhawk Transporters
<i>2nd Company Squads -</i>	6 Tactical, 2 Assault, 2 Devastator
<i>3rd Company Squads -</i>	6 Tactical, 2 Assault, 2 Devastator
<i>4th Company Squads -</i>	6 Tactical, 2 Assault, 2 Devastator
<i>8th Company Squads -</i>	6 Bike, 20 Land Speeders
<i>Armoury -</i>	12 Whilwinds
	20 Vindicators
	10 Hunters
	8 Predators
	24 Rhinos
<b>Black Templars Marshall Galfridus' Charadon Crusade (M40.950)</b>	
<i>Battlebarge -</i>	Hammer of Doom
<i>Fleet Assets -</i>	2 Thunderhawk Transporters
	2 Thunderhawk Gunships
	1 Stormhawk Landing Craft
<i>Crusade Squads -</i>	2 Terminator, 22 Initiate, 10 Neophyte
<i>Armoury -</i>	8 Land Raider Crusaders
	16 Rhinos
	8 Razorbacks
	6 Hunters

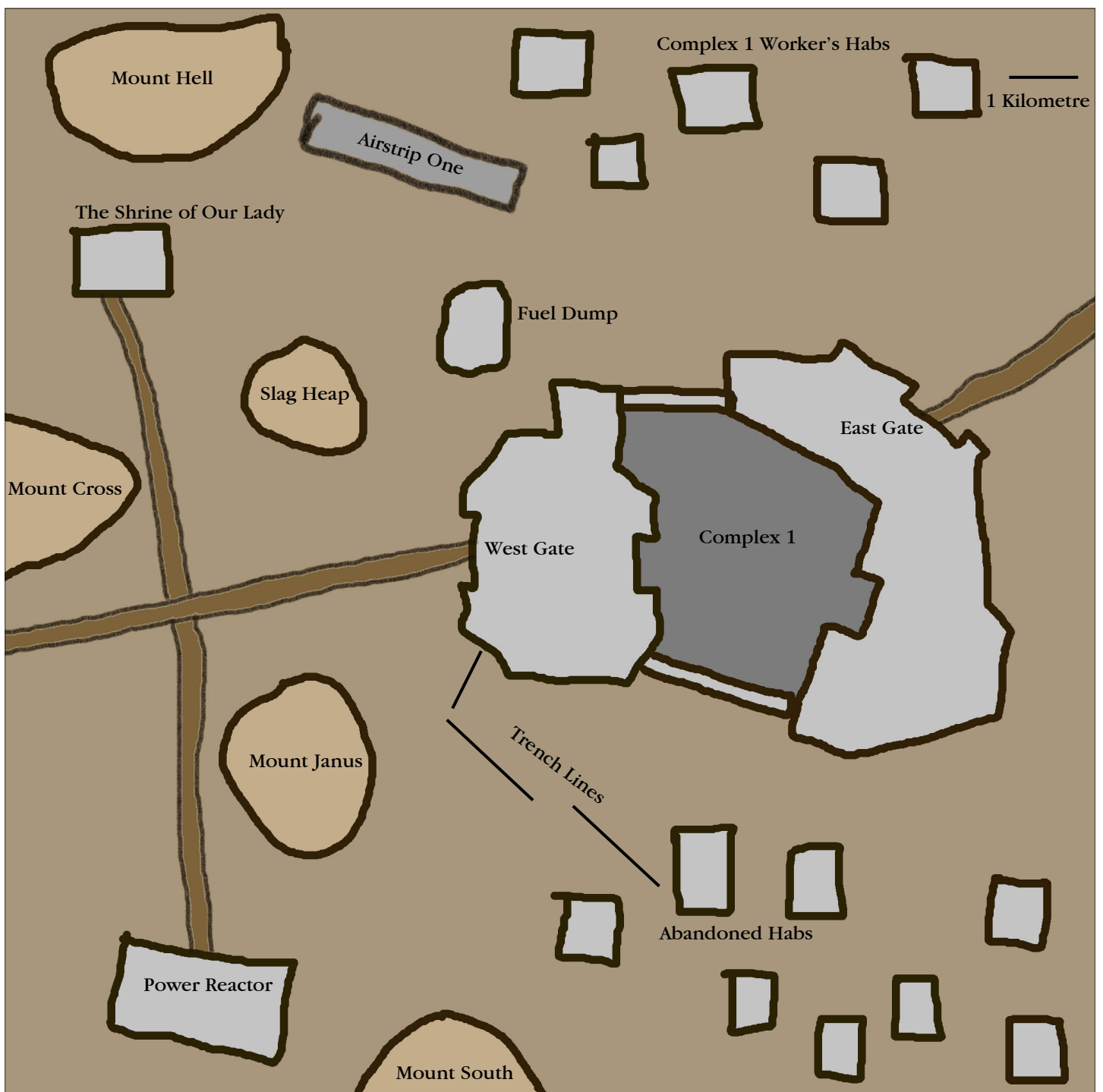
Quickly identifying themselves to the two Adeptus Mechanicus Cruisers in orbit, the Space Marines moved to assess the situation. Aboard the Black Templars Battlebarge *Hammer of Doom*, the senior commanders of the two Astartes strike forces convened in one of the great vessel's spartan war strategy rooms.

The grim Black Templar senior officers were already present as the Crimson Fists commanders entered the room. Castellan Ramos and Castellan Nathaniel sat each side of their senior commander Marshal Volkmann Galfridus, the pair deceptively dwarfed by his Terminator-Armoured presence despite their own seven foot tall Power Armoured frames. A single Templar Initiate stood silent at the rear of the strategy room, an unsheathed obsidian sword held at attention before his helmeted face. As the Crimson Fists officers entered, Marshall Thomas gestured to a row of seats across the wide digi-table.

"Please my Brothers, sit with us before battle is joined, that we may discuss how best to save this world "

Chapter Master Pedro Kantor, supreme commander of the Crimson Fists Chapter, smiled with casual ease.

*The Space Marine battlefleet  
arrives in orbit*



"Right glad am I to accept such an invitation from another son of Dorn"

Following Master Kantor, commanders Turon, Baeloran, Anoati and Caziar, the company commanders of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 8th Companies respectively, filed into the war room and selected seats on which to rest.

As the last of the armoured super-humans took his seat, the digital before them flickered into life, displaying a live pict-feed of the planet below, overlaid with tactical information and visual enhancements to sharpen the image.

Marshall Galfridus again spoke first.

"As an initial point of order, I would cede overall command of this operation to you, Master Kantor"

Chapter Master Kantor nodded, his eyes briefly leaving the digital's tactical information feed to lock with Galfridus' own eyes, "My thanks to you Marshall"

"However, I would desire to maintain operational independence for my Crusade companies. Our tactical doctrines differ from your own more... patient, methods. I fear that our combat styles might not complement well"

"Understood. I will not be looking to draft your men into trenches, and expecting Templars to hold fast to them like Crimson Fists. You may be assured of missions complementary of your combat doctrines"

"My thanks to you, Chapter Master"

Chapter Master Pedro Kantor studied the tactical displays for a few more seconds, before speaking again.

"The situation on this planet is interesting. The Mechanicus have a deal of military power, but they been forced to adopt a defensive posture. Two Rough Rider armies are achieving some successes but they are as yet only irritants to the Xenos."

He paused for two seconds, before continuing, gesturing to the icon indicating Complex 1 as he spoke;

"My tech-marines tell me that a Xenos attack is likely to shortly overrun this Mechanicus facility without much difficulty. Even with our assistance, turning back the Ork advance is unlikely"

Galfridus nodded, then pointed at the captured facility of Port Alpha,

"My own adepts agree. I would propose that we ignore the attack on the processing Complex. Instead, using Drop Pod insertions to pass through the power fields, we should make a combined landing here, at the heart of the Greenskin territory. The Complex will fall with or without our assistance, but if we use Vortex weapons at certain structural weak points on the lower levels of the captured Port's habitation arcology, we might bring it down, toppling it on the main Ork facilities. We estimate around three hundred thousand Ork casualties, as well as the destruction of most of their production yards."

Chapter Master Kantor studied the tactical icon representing the four kilometre high Hab that stood above Port Alpha,

"There are three hundred thousand Imperial souls still alive, besieged within that arcology. Two thirds of them trained soldiers."

Galfridus nodded solemnly,

"The Emperor shall welcome them all to the hereafter, informing each one that he died to save this world."

"Equal numbers also stand to lose their lives at the processing Complex, if they are left unaided."

Galfridus nodded again,

"They are already lost, our intervention cannot save them."

Master Kantor sat in silence for a few moments more, before speaking again.

"My analysts have indicated that it should be possible to hold off the first wave of the Ork attack long enough to make a fighting retreat possible"

Galfridus stilled, and seemed not to breathe as he replied, "My adepts do not concur"

Kantor responded in measured tones,

"With respect, Marshall Galfridus, my tech marines are more associated with defensive siege warfare than are your own adepts"

Galfridus hesitated, then spoke slowly,

"This is undoubtedly true; What would you propose we do?"

Kantor swept his hands over the continental map of Achil-Quag,

"This planet is precious to the sector. Without it, and as many of its facilities as possible, more important planets will become vulnerable. We must retain as much infrastructural integrity as is possible in saving this place. Your plan might work, in that the Orks might be defeated after a shorter time, but at the cost of the captured Hab, and Port. It would take two decades to rebuild those facilities, during which time production would be restricted, bottlenecked by the single remaining Port in the east"

Kantor pointed at Complex 1,

"I believe the Codex dictates that we must defeat the Greenskins conventionally, rather than asymmetrically. If we can trust the word of Inquisitor Gui, he has directed many regiments of Imperial Guard to assist this planet. With reinforcements inbound, we can make time our ally. Let us make the Orks fight for every metre of ground between the processing Complex and Port Omega, let us make of this war such a fighting retreat that the Xenos are delayed not days, or weeks, but months. Let us hold the line long enough for the Guard to relieve us, at which point they can defeat the foul Orks in open attritional warfare."

Galfridus remained impassive,

"You would indeed use my Templars to hold mud trenches, to keep the enemy at arms' length, then."

Kantor shook his head,

"Nae, I know which way the skills of your Initiates lie. Your force would be deployed as a tactical strike force, you shall be tasked with taking down the most threatening enemy formations in close engagements using aircraft deployments. The Fists will do the dour work and hold the line on the ground, whilst the Templars shall take glory in slaying the greatest metal beasts our tech marines can find in strikes from the skies; Is this plan acceptable to you, Marshall Galfridus?"

Galfridus declined his head slightly,

"Yes, Chapter Master, this plan finds favour with me."

Kantor smiled again. Not once in the debate had he lost his casual composure, despite Galfridus' icy manner.

"Then let us plan in more detail, Brother. We have just four hours remaining to determine the specifics of how we can turn certain defeat into merely a rout."

The Battle For Complex 1, Preparation - 3850950M41

Informed that they would be receiving assistance, the Adeptus Mechanicus ceased in their preparations to make a retreat from Complex 1 and reoccupied their defensive positions around the facility.

The heavy Titan Battlegroups *Riddle of Steel*, *Ferrum Incarnadine*, and *Deus Machination* were re-deployed to the west of the facility, whilst the light Titan Battlegroups *Lazer-Wolfe*, *Direwolf*, and *Wolf's Howl*, were sent to the flanks of the anticipated battle zone, with the mixed Battlegroup *Thunder Child* held in reserve behind the east gate of Complex 1. Only one Titan Battlegroup was not recalled to the area, the light Titan group *Canid Sine*, as the Warhound Titan pair had been dispatched to support the Atillan 2nd army beyond the Phobos mountains and could not return in time.

In addition to the Titan battlegroups, hundreds of converted Ordinatus Engines, including six of the larger and more capable Ordinatus Majoris Class Engines, were positioned to defend the area.

To the south west of the Complex, the Crimson Fists deployed in support of the Skitarii, covering an area of land with 400 Space Marines that would have comfortably held fifty thousand Skitarii. Both Black Templars Crusade Companies were held in reserve, one Company under Castellan Ramos and Marshall Galfridus waiting in transport aircraft to the east of Complex 1, with a second Company under Castellan Nathaniel in an armoured attack formation held within the Complex walls.

KEY			
SK	Skitarii Regiment	INF	Ork Infantry Horde
SK (A)	Skitarii Tank Regiment	STOMP	Ork Stompa Mob
DL	Skitarii Defence Laser	GARG	Ork Gargant Mob
Ferrum	Titan Battlegroup	MEGA	Ork Mega Gargant
CF <sup>2nd</sup>	Crimson Fists Company		
BT <sup>2nd</sup>	Black Templars Company		



#### Ork Horde Composition - Complex 1 Attack (M40.950)

Infantry -	~500,000
Vehicles -	~20,000
Wheeled/Tracked War Engines -	~300
Stompa Class War Engines -	~120
Gargant Class War Engines -	33
Great Gargant Class War Engines -	8
Mega Gargant Class War Engines -	1
Aircraft (Fighters) -	~400
Aircraft (Bombers) -	~80
Aircraft (Transport) -	~60

#### The Battle For Complex 1, Hour 1 - 3850950M41

Although Imperial artillery had been firing steadily at the advancing Orks for hours, the first real contact with the Xenos hordes came behind the front lines, as a flight of Ork Fighta Bombers fell through the overcast sky to strafe the anti-aircraft guns stationed around Airstrip One.

With many anti-aircraft guns put out of action by the attack, a second wave of Ork aircraft flew in from the north, nine bulbous transport craft that landed in an ungainly fashion, each disgorging scores of Orks. Within minutes, half a thousand Greenskins had overrun the central areas of the airstrip. The Mechanicus had deployed a Skitarii Armoured Regiment to protect the airstrip however, and the appearance of the Orks stirred up a reaction, as ten Armoured Companies roared towards the Orkish landing site, blasting apart the Landers and soon scattering the Xenos, the routed mob breaking northwards in retreat.

After a rapid withdrawal, the approximately three hundred remaining fleeing Orks began to rally around one kilometre north of the airstrip, whilst scanners in orbit indicated to the Chapter Master Kantor that more Transport aircraft were inbound to the same area. Rather than move his own Marines out of their defensive positions, Kantor sent a request to Marshall Galfridus to deal with the incursion, lest the Orks reinforce and threaten towards the largely undefended Defence Laser installation to the east.

With a clipped series of commands, Galfridus indicated that Castellan Ramos should strike at the Orks, using some of his lighter forces. Obliging, the skilled Castellan selected his two Thunderhawk Transporters and launched off, thirty Initiates, ten Neophytes and four Rhinos held aboard. Alongside Castellan Ramos in the Transporters was the Initiate who had stood silent and brooding at the rear of the conference in the war room of the *Hammer of Doom*, sword still unsheathed. The other Black Templars stood apart from the quiet Marine for the duration of the short flight to the landing zone, and as they landed he was the first Astartes to dismount from his Rhino transport and charge directly into the fray. What followed was not battle, but butchery. The shocked Orks were cut down in their scores almost without resistance by the guns of the Black Templars, backed up by fire support from the Thunderhawk Transporters. Through it all, the silent Initiate swept unscathed, his black sword slick with scarlet Orkish blood. Within minutes the two score Marines had killed three hundred Orks, having taken few woundings and no casualties.

Soon, they would accomplish the same task again, as nine more fully loaded Ork Landers swept in to touch down on terrain they believed to be empty of human resistance. Blasted by Skitarii defence lasers and met by Templars, Imperial victory was swift.

Elsewhere the first of the ground based Ork infantry mobs began to reach the Imperial front lines. The first areas to come under direct attack were the southern power reactor, and the Skitarii garrisons strung between Mount Hell and the Shrine of Our Lady

in the north west. Disorganised and sporadic at first, fighting soon increased as tens of thousands of Orks charged the lines of Skitarii. Without apparent emotion, the Mechanicus troops met their onrushing wild attackers with calm skill, shooting down hundreds of green-skinned Xenos from their prepared defence lines before falling back. Efficiently calculated algorithms selected particular squads to act as sacrificial rear guards, covering the retreat of the main body of each formation at the cost of their own lives.

However, even the Mechanicus' meticulous plans could not compete with the overwhelming force the Orks brought to bear. Not just greater numbers, but more powerful War Engines were used by the Xenos. Faced with scores of Ordinatus Engines defending the flanks of Mount Hell, each armed with Titan grade weaponry, the Orks brought almost a hundred War Engines to smash directly into the Skitarii positions.

At the Shrine of Our Lady, a three hundred metre tall statue of a long forgotten Adeptus Sororitas hero erected in the unremembered past, the greatest concentration of Ork attacks fell. A mob of Gargants including one Great Gargant, around forty Stompas, and a vast infantry mob tens of thousands strong, fell in one crushing attack against the Skitarii garrison. Neat ranks collapsed in disorder, as dozens of Ordinatus including one Ordinatus Majoris equipped with flashing close engagement arc lances, exploded as they were overrun.

Aware that opening a gap in the centre of the Imperial defence line might divide the defenders into two isolated forces, Marshall Galfridus requested permission to intervene and fill the widening gap. Chapter Master Kantor acceded to the plea, and Marshall Galfridus launched skyward with the remainder of his reserve force. Two Thunderhawk Gunships and a massive Stormhawk Landing Craft rocketed towards the danger zone, carrying between them four Land Raider Crusaders, and a hundred and twenty Space Marines, a score of whom were equipped with suits of Terminator Armour. Ancient artefacts from the dawn of the Imperium, the Terminator Armoured Black Templars stood ready to tear into the rampaging Ork War Engines. Confident that they could destroy or disable the Great Gargant that was leading the Ork charge, demoralising the Ork attackers enough to allow the Skitarii to reform the battle lines, the three transport aircraft thundered directly at the heart of the Ork army. The air itself trembled, as they flew low to the ground towards their target.

One kilometre from their destination, travelling at a velocity of almost five times the speed of sound in Achil-Quag's sluggish atmosphere, the three transport aircraft came under light anti-aircraft fire. Under normal circumstances the aircraft would have flown safely through the gunfire; The anti-aircraft guns in the area were weak, inaccurate, and according to the precepts of the Codex Astartes, offered almost no threat. Marshall Galfridus did everything absolutely correctly, right up to the moment all three aircraft were hit in vital locations, and crashed.

The leading Thunderhawk was struck first, veering off northwards in a fireball that slammed into the southern flanks of Mount Hell. Perhaps by intent, the stricken aircraft crashed directly into the centre of a Stompa mob, destroying four of the large War Engines.

Next, the second Thunderhawk took a hit directly to the front cabin, killing the pilots and destroying the auto-guidance systems; Without active control, the unguided aircraft flew at maximum acceleration directly into the Shrine of Our Lady, exploding on impact, leaving a small crater in the ancient statue's right thigh.

Last of all, the Stormhawk Landing Craft took hits to both main engines. Without power, the large transporter attempted an emergency landing, hitting the ground at a sharp angle that rent the tough Stormhawk almost in two. Wrecked, it came to rest in a smoking heap, half a kilometre east of the Shrine.

At the same time in the south west of the battlefield, the Imperial power reactor was quickly overrun by almost a hundred thousand Orks, outnumbering the Skitarii defenders five to one. The battle for the power reactor was over so quickly, that within the hour a nearby Gargant Mob had already arrived to re-charge their depleted Power Fields from the newly-captured facility.

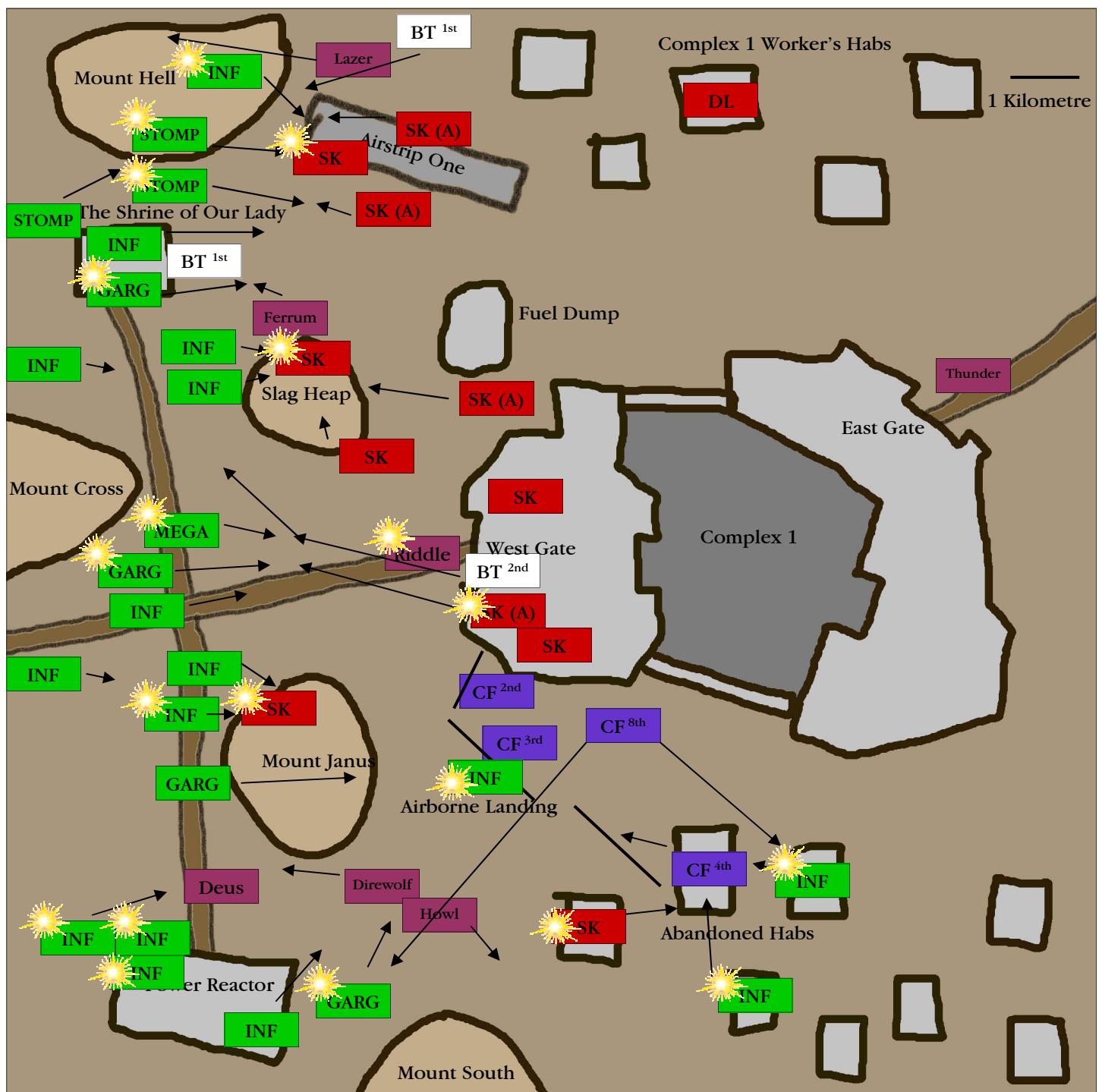
Other clashes during the first hour were relatively minor, including repeated airstrikes against the Titan Battlegroup *Riddle of Steel* by Ork Fighta Bombers in attempts to bring down the shields of the great machines, some jockeying for position amongst the abandoned Habs to the south of Complex 1 between the Crimson Fists and encroaching Blood Axe warbands.

All the while the Imperial artillery in the form of Titans with barrage weaponry, Skitarii Basilisks and barrage Ordinatii kept up a constant bombardment of the advancing Orks, whilst Crimson Fists Whirlwinds added their firepower to the defensive fire. Analyticae were later to estimate that the combined Imperial artillery killed approximately seven hundred Orkoids a minute during the first hour of the battle.

## The Battle For Complex 1, Hour 2 - 3850950M41

As the battle progressed, the Imperial Titans began to engage the largest Ork War Engines in battles. To the north, Battlegroup *Ferrum Incarnadine* fell upon an Ork Gargant mob. For no losses, the anti-vehicle configuration Titans destroyed four Gargants and drove back the remainder, including a Great Gargant. The Warlord Titan *Lupus* achieved considerably success here, damaging and destroying multiple smaller War Engines.

Before the West Gate, Battlegroup *Riddle of Steel* began trading blows with a Gargant mob and a massive Mega Gargant. The “Mega” class Gargant was the largest Ork War Engine seen during the battle for Complex 1, and its power fielded bulk shrugged off many hits whilst the Emperor Titan *Riddle of Steel* sent repeated salvos of ordinance and plasma in its direction. Alongside the towering Emperor Titan, the Reaver *Pax Imperator* also scored notable success, destroying two Gargants in quick succession. However, the *Riddle of Steel's* void shields, already weak from repeated air strikes, began to fail under the concentrated gunfire of multiple Ork Gargants. After several crippling hits, the largest Imperial Titan was forced to withdraw



from combat. With plasma dripping freely from its damaged weaponry, it limped through the West Gate and disappeared from the battlefield.

In the south west, Battlegroup *Deus Machination* had positioned itself in the path of the Ork infantry that had overwhelmed the southern power reactor during the previous hour. As the mobs of Xenos began to break cover and continue their advance, the anti-infantry biased Titans engaged their vox units, and accompanied by their war chant of "Big Death! Big Death!", unleashed their maximum firepower; Thousands of Orks were slain in minutes by the overwhelming concentration of weaponry. Despite the carnage, the Orks continued in their charge until the lead Titan of the group, *Deus Machination* itself, unleashed its Barrage missile, covering a three square kilometre area of the battlefield in explosive flachettes that killed around five thousand Orks in a single combined detonation. The area around the power reactor fell silent as the remaining Orks cowered, broken and confused. Victorious, Battlegroup *Deus Machination* again sounded their war horns, before moving off eastwards in search of new targets, chanting their war cries of "Big Death!" as they went.

Two kilometres to the east, Titan Battlegroups *Wolf's Howl* and *Direwolf* conducted a combined operation, moving to the flanks of a Gargant mob that had recently moved through the power reactor district. In coordinated hit-and-run operations they repeatedly dodged in and out of range of the ponderous Ork Gargants, firing their weapons to good effect before retreating out of range of the Ork guns. Seeing the harassment intent of the Warhound Titans, Chapter Master Pedro Kantor dispatched his twenty 8<sup>th</sup> Company Land Speeder formations to assist in the surgical strikes. Between them, the Land Speeders and Warhound Titans badly damaged multiple Gargants, and destroyed a dozen Stompa class War Engines.

The remainder of the Crimson Fists 8<sup>th</sup> Company, equipped with Bikes and Attack Bikes, were sent to assist the 4<sup>th</sup> Company alongside the Skitarii regiment stationed in the abandoned hab district. Though the garrisoned Skitarii regiment was largely destroyed in the fighting, the Orks were stymied in their attacks in the south by the Crimson Fists' counter-attacks despite outnumbering the Imperials three-to-one. Even an attempted airborne landing against the Crimson Fists' artillery park by Ork Landers ended in failure, as the Greenskins fell victim to pre-prepared minefields and Devastator Squads in overwatch positions, not to mention Hunter Anti-Aircraft vehicles which brought down at least four Landing Craft and ten Fighta Bombers on their approach run, before they even fired a shot at the Imperial lines.

Around ten minutes into the second hour of combat operations, the crashed Black Templars Stormhawk Landing Craft began transmitting an emergency beacon. Suddenly, the possibility of recovering Marshall Galfridus, as well as twenty almost irreplaceable suits of Terminator Armour, seemed achievable, if only a rescue mission could be mounted.

Using more aircraft to mount a rescue mission seemed unsuitable considering the failure of the first airborne raid, whilst Castellán Ramos was too busy assisting the Skitarii regiments defending Airstrip One to be able to offer his assistance to the stricken aircraft. Nearby Skitarii Regiments and a Titan Battlegroup were too closely engaged with the attacking Ork forces to be able to spare forces to answer the distress call. This left just Castellán Nathaniel of the Black Templars to petition Chapter Master Kantor for permission to investigate the crash site. Kantor wryly gave his permission for the mission to take place; sixty thousand Orks, two Gargant mobs, and a Mega Gargant lay between Nathaniel and the crash site. If Nathaniel's Crusade Company could make it that far, they would disrupt the entire centre of the Ork attack, and if not, Kantor assumed that Castellán Nathaniel would have the common sense to fall back rather than be overwhelmed.

Sallying from the West Gate, with a full Skitarii Armoured Regiment alongside, Castellán Nathaniel's relief column headed directly for the largest target that stood between the Black Templar Space Marines and their objective: The Ork Mega Gargant. If the massive War Engine could be destroyed, a hole would open up in the Ork lines, through which the Marines could pass. Behind the main front line, the Marines could use their fast Rhino vehicles to move at great speed, cutting across the rear of the hostile army to reach their imperilled battle brothers. First, however, the Mega Gargant needed to be destroyed.

In a message to the Mechanicus high commander Tech Lord Gonvitch I, Castellán Nathaniel requested special assistance from the Titans of the Legio Destructor in destroying the Mega Gargant, and his reply came in the form of a Warp Missile launched from the Warlord Titan *Lupus* four kilometres to the north. Flying at super-sonic speed, the missile powered through the air in a horizontal line heading directly for the vast war machine. Three hundred metres from the war engine, just before striking the Mega Gargant's protective power field layers, the missile flashed and disappeared as it ripped a hole in the fabric of reality and slipped from view.

A second later, the missile reappeared, within the power field layers, still travelling at hypersonic velocity, and struck the Gargant with a huge concussion. Stunned, the vast machine stopped in its advance, as fires began to burn across the left flanks of its broad gun decks. Perhaps due to the damage inflicted by the missile, the remaining protective power fields around the Gargant flickered and faded away.

Suddenly, the gunfire from Skitarii tanks and super-heavy vehicles that had been splashing harmlessly on the seemingly-endless layers of power fields protecting the Mega Gargant began instead to puncture the great war engine's armoured frame. Skitarii Super-Heavy vehicles and tanks unleashed salvos of destructive weaponry at the Gargant, whilst an Ordinatus Majoris equipped with two great Plasma Destructors fired every chamber of its weaponry directly at the Mega Gargant's control head, melting through layers of armour to kill most of the command crew instantly. The Mega Gargant did not entirely cease to fire its weaponry for a further fifteen minutes, as fires gradually crept through its internal spaces, detonating ammunition stores and forcing progressive evacuations by the Ork and Gretchin crew until the massive vehicle was nothing more than a burning wreck.

As the Mega Gargant's potency faded, the Skitarii Armoured Regiment spread out to hold the line as best they could against the encroaching Gargant and Infantry mobs, whilst the Black Templars relief column slipped through the Ork lines at high speed, heading north west, past the destroyed Mega Gargant.

Although the second hour of the battle had seen some notable Imperial successes, it had also seen reversals. The most powerful Titan, *Riddle of Steel*, had been driven into retreat two hours earlier than expected, whilst tens of thousands of Skitarii lay dead on the battlefield. Almost all of the Imperial reserve forces had now been committed to the battle, whilst the Orks had yet to even make contact with a sizable portion of their infantry mobs.

The Ork Mega Gargant burns  
as other gargants pass it,  
guns blazing

### The Battle For Complex 1, Hour 3 - 3850950M41

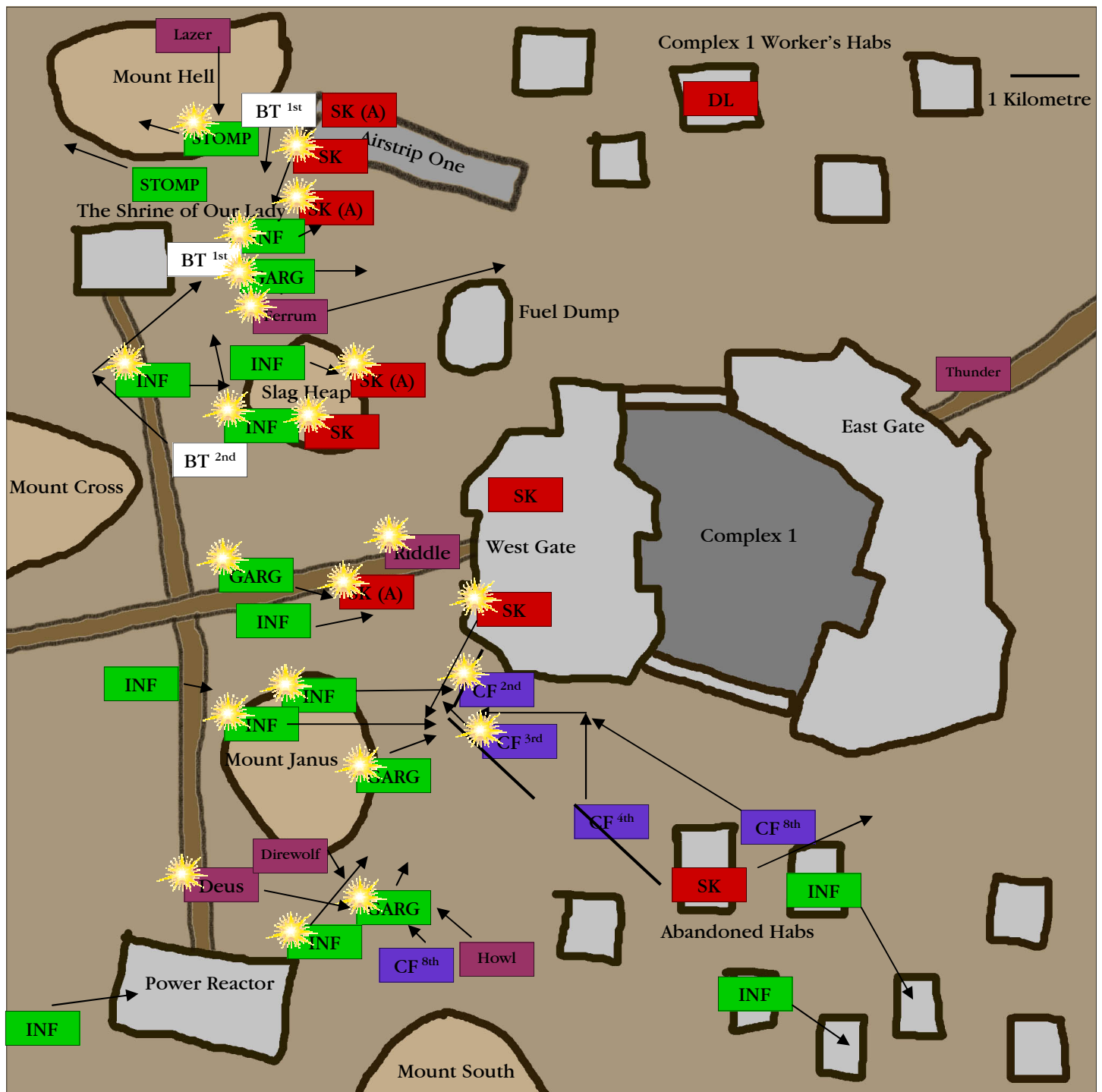
In the north of the battle zone, the tide of war began to shift in favour of the Imperials. Despite repeated attempts to take Airstrip One with Infantry, Stompa, and even Gargant mobs, the implacable Skitarii had weathered the storm, and with the assistance of Castellan Ramos' Black Templars and the Warhound Titan Battlegroup *Lazer-Wolfe*, began a sustained counter attack.

First breaking and then sweeping aside the remaining Stompa mobs between Mount Hell and the Shrine of Our Lady, the Skitarii regiments threw themselves at the Ork mobs which were engaged in battle with the Titan Battlegroup *Ferrum Incarnadine*.

Caught in a crossfire between the Skitarii Armoured Regiments and the Titan battlegroup, the Gargant mob found itself held in a closing trap, and lost most of its remaining Gargants over the course of the third hour of the battle. The cost to the Imperium was steep however, as three of the Warlord class Titans in the Battlegroup received serious damage, whilst Titan

*Lupus* was destroyed outright after a shot from a Gargant's laser weapon punctured the containment fields around its reactor core. Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius, still in strategic command of the Titan Battlegroups despite his own Titan *Riddle of Steel* having withdrawn from the fighting, ordered Battlegroup *Ferrum Incarnadine* to retreat eastwards.

In the centre of the battlefield, before the West Gate, the most pressing moment of battle arrived. With the Skitarii picket regiments on Mount Janus destroyed, fifty thousand Orks, plus the remainders of two Gargant mobs, spilled out onto the plain and charged at the western extents of Complex 1. Holding the line was a Skitarii Armoured Regiment, the remaining four Reaver Titans of Battlegroup *Riddle of Steel*, three hundred and sixty Space Marines of the Crimson Fists, plus assorted Astartes armoured vehicles. In desperation, Mechanicus Tech Lord Gonvitch I committed his final ace cards; A Skitarii regiment held in reserve within Complex 1, accompanied by two Ordinatus Majoris class platforms, the first armed with Titan-slaying Volcano Cannons, the second with a pair of Quake Cannons. Accompanied by the sound of the Legio Destructor Reaver Titans chanting their war cry of "Big Death!", the armies clashed.



The ensuing battle for the West Gate is written into the Crimson Fists' annals as one of the grimmest fighting engagements they have conducted in their ten thousand year history. Cannon fire blasted apart Men, Ork and Marine indiscriminately. Thousands of green skinned Xenos died under the guns of the twin Ordinatus Engines before they were silenced, one by heavy ordinance fire from the Gargant mob, the other by a single Ork Fighta Bomber pilot who managed to avoid the anti-aircraft gunfire of an entire regiment of Skitarii through a show of skill or luck unmatched in the experience of every warrior present. Twisting through the sky with astonishing turns and spins, the Ork aircraft loosed a barrage of rocket fire that ripped into the ancient Ordinatus, detonating its reactors, before spiralling back into the sky unscathed.

Nor were the twin Ordinatus the only Mechanicus Engines to be destroyed. The Reaver Titans *Pax Imperator* and *Steel Eye* of Battlegroup *Riddle of Steel* both fell before the West Gate, cut down by Ork gunfire even as their war horns screamed defiance. Dozens of smaller Ordinatus Minoris War Engines, and conventional Super-Heavy Tanks, fought and were lost in the shadow of the great bronze gates. Sixteen thousand of the twenty thousand Skitarii committed to hold the line lost their lives, and one third of the Space Marines who made their stand against the Ork onrush breathed their last before the hour was out, each Marine a more painful loss to the Imperium than a thousand Skitarii. In addition to their losses, around a hundred Astartes took serious wounds which would require weeks of recuperation before they were fit to participate in combat operations again.

In return, the Ork attack stalled. Barely. The two Gargant mobs suffered heavy losses and were forced to withdraw. The fifty thousand charging Orks were hammered mercilessly by Ordinatus, Siege Tanks and Space Marine Whirlwinds, losing two thirds of their number before the remainder hunkered down to wait for reinforcements, rather than continuing their attacks. Across a battlefield littered with burning war machines and tens of thousands of dead bodies, the two sides disentangled to steady themselves.

The battle for the West Gate would have gone much worse for the Imperium, possibly resulting in the total annihilation of the defending forces, if Titan Battlegroup *Deus Machination*, assisted by the Scout Titan Battlegroups *Wolf's Howl* and *Direwolf*, had not conducted an almost perfect engagement against a third Gargant mob inbound from the south, escorted by approximately twenty thousand Ork infantry. Using the Warhound Titans to pull the Gargant mob out of a cohesive formation, Battlegroup *Deus Machination* exploited the Orks' lack of cohesion by undertaking a close range attack on the exposed flank of the Gargant mob.

With assistance from Astartes Land Speeders, the four ostensibly anti-infantry configuration Warlord Titans achieved considerable success against the Ork Gargant mob. Acting as ranged fire support platforms, *Deus Machination* and *Towering Steel* attacked the Gargants with Gattling Blasters and Quake Cannons, whilst *Custodian* strode directly into the fray, unleashing its Plasma Destructor at close range into unshielded targets and smashing apart mighty Gargants with its wrecking ball. In order to keep the nearby Ork Infantry mob from becoming a threat, *Watchtower* released wave after wave of rocket salvos, keeping several square kilometres to the north east of the power reactor constantly alight with concussive detonations that meant death to any Ork infantry foolhardy enough to attempt an advance. Battlegroup *Wolf's Howl* also achieved several Engine kills in the engagement with their turbolasers, whilst Battlegroup *Direwolf* moved to assist *Watchtower* in the anti-infantry role once it became clear that the Gargant mob was unlikely to regain cohesion.

Although *Towering Steel* took enough damage to put one of its Quake Cannons out of action, and fires were burning all along *Watchtower's* carapace after it was hit by a plunging rocket

*Titan Watchtower fires its barrages.*

barrage fired by a hostile War Engine, the Gargant mob was devastated in return. A few of the Gargants managed to begin a retreat, but even then, many of the fleeing Engines found themselves immobilised by surgical strikes from the Crimson Fists Land Speeders. Fused walking gears and destroyed motive limbs left the stranded Gargants and Stompas easy prey for *Custodian's* wrecking ball or *Towering Steel's* one remaining active Quake Cannon.

Hour three of the battle was reasonably quiet in the south east sector, as the Blood Axe warbands in the area withdrew several kilometres to regroup, giving the hard pressed Skitarii regiment enough respite to begin an organised withdrawal eastwards.

Under the cover of the general clash of arms, Castellan Nathaniel's relief column finally managed to reach their crash site objective, having punched through the rear of an Ork infantry mob, causing around three hundred casualties amongst the Orks for few losses in return as they did so. With the disrupted Xenos infantry formation in hot pursuit, the Templars did not have much time to investigate the crash site., but they did find a few living Battle Brothers from the ill-fated airborne strike. Sixteen of the Terminator-Armoured Black Templars, as well as four of the Power Armoured Initiates, were still alive in the wreckage of the Stormhawk Landing Craft, though all but two were very seriously injured. Marshall Galfridus himself was found still living, despite much of his lower body having been torn away from his torso in the crash, his Terminator Armour had automatically put him in a palliative medical coma to assist in keeping his body alive.

With well-practiced speed, the Templar relief column loaded all of their wounded, as well as the majority of their dead, onto waiting transport Rhinos, before setting out north-eastwards with the intent of linking up with Castellan Ramos' 1<sup>st</sup> Company battleforce. In all, nineteen of the precious Terminator Armour suits were recovered by the rescue task force from the wreckage, an invaluable haul that would have taken at least eighty years to replace if manufactured by the Black Templars' Crusade artificers.

In general, despite some great losses, the third hour of the battle had gone well for the Imperials. Airstrip One was still in Skitarii hands despite another set of air raids, whilst many of the Ork threats in the north had been at least temporarily sent into retreat. In the centre of the battlefield the Orks and Imperial forces had fought to a standstill, and though the Imperial forces were seriously denuded they were still in effective fighting order. In the south, the Titan Battlegroups had achieved almost unmitigated success.

Chapter Master Pedro Kantor now judged that the Imperial forces had inflicted enough damage on the attacking Ork hordes that if the Imperial forces were to affect a general withdrawal eastwards, the Orks would lack sufficient inertial momentum to pursue the retreating Human forces. Instead, it seemed likely that the survivors would begin to fight amongst themselves in order to claim the best salvage from the Complex and the surrounding battlefield wreckage fields. Thus, in concert with Mechanicus Tech Lord Gonvitch I, and Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius, Chapter Master Kantor issued a wide-spectrum order to begin a general, ordered retreat.

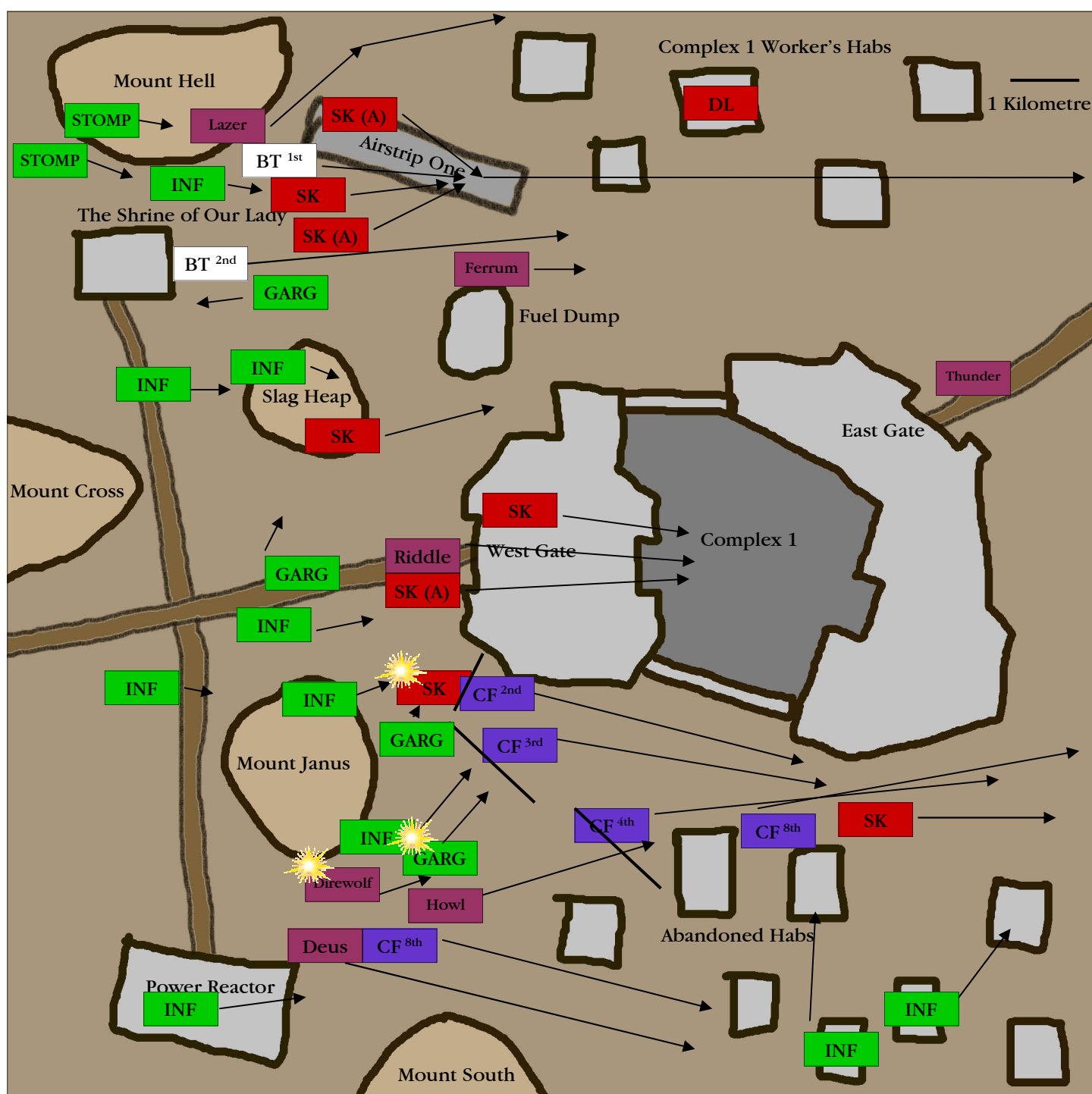
Hour four of the battle was relatively casualty-free compared to the devastating engagements of hour three. In the north, with the Gargant mob broken, and the infantry and Stompa mobs only recently rallied, the Imperial forces (including Castellan Nathaniel's relief column), made their withdrawals from combat. Ork pursuit was scattered and uncoordinated, allowing the various Imperial battle formations to retreat largely without incident.

Transporters fell into a circular holding pattern, notifying Chapter Master Pedro Kantor that they were again available for a combat drop, should they be required.

Before the West Gate of Complex 1, the remaining two battered Reaver Titans of Battlegroup *Riddle of Steel* strode behind the bronze door of the central Complex, to rejoin their Emperor Titan commander, before setting off eastwards towards the East Gate. Trailing in their wake was the Skitarii Armoured Regiment that had first sallied forth from the Complex gates in support of Castellan Nathaniel's relief column two hours previously.

South of the West Gate, the Imperium suffered minor casualties, as the last four thousand members of a Skitarii infantry regiment lost their lives in a holding action intended to grant the rest of the army time to withdraw in safety. In addition, Titan Battlegroup *Direwolf* fell under the guns of a Gargant mob and was destroyed as they impetuously attempted to prosecute one last attack run on a Gargant mob before moving to retreat.

All other Imperial forces in the south managed their retreat well, without encountering significant Xenos attacks.



**The Battle For Complex 1, Hour 5 - 3850950M41**

By hour five, the Imperial disengagement was almost complete. Only around a quarter of the remaining Ork forces were still in active pursuit of the Emperor's forces, as the rest of the warbands began squabbling amongst themselves in claiming the best salvage rights over the captured ground.

In the north, the Imperial Defence Laser installation, which had claimed almost forty bomber and lander kills during the most intensive parts of the battle, was destroyed by its own crews before they evacuated eastwards in transport Ordinatii.

South of Airstrip One, the Complex 1 fuel dump was likewise destroyed by a retreating Skitarii regiment. With the Ork logistics train being disrupted by the activities of the Atilan 2<sup>nd</sup> army, and no fuel dump to resupply from at Complex 1, it was predicted that the Ork forces would find it hard to maintain their general advance at such a rapid pace in the days to come.

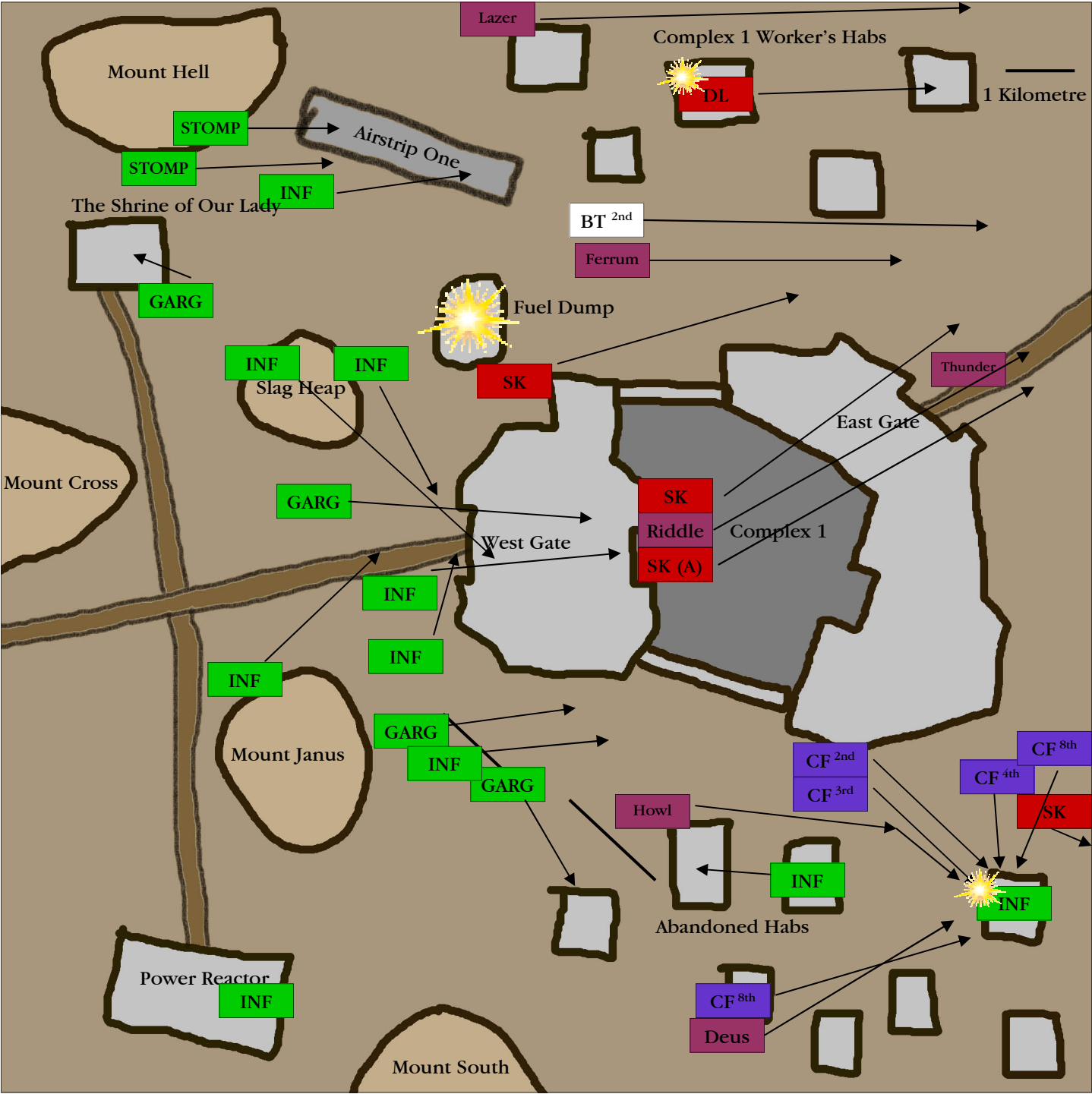
The only major engagement of the fifth hour of the battle occurred in the abandoned Hab district to the south east of Complex 1. With the mobile Titan and Space Marine forces clear

of their pursuers, Chapter Master Pedro Kantor judged that one last strike operation against the Orks would be of benefit to the Imperial cause. Thus, all remaining active elements of the Crimson Fists battleforce, in combination with Titan Battlegroups *Deus Machination* and *Wolf's Howl*, attacked a Blood Axe Ork warband of around six thousand individuals.

The Orks, most of whom were using captured Imperial vehicles or equipment including some super-heavy tanks, were overwhelmed by the concentration of Imperial forces. A second nearby Blood Axe warband went into retreat rather than attempt to assist their doomed compatriots.

By the close of hour five, it seemed as if Chapter Master Kantor's plan had succeeded. The leading edge of the Ork army had been seriously denuded, enough that they would require several months of recuperation and vehicle repair work before being able to undertake new offensive operations, by which time new reinforcements should have begun to arrive.

Complex 1 itself had been mostly left intact, and if it could be recaptured at a future date, its machinery could once again be used to serve the needs of the Imperium.



The Battle For Complex 1, Hour 6 - 3850950M41

Six hours since the start of the battle for Complex 1, and there was only one major engagement left to fight. With all elements of the Imperial army in retreat, only one group of forces still found themselves in close proximity to the enemy.

Within the bowels of the massive processing and refinement works of Complex 1, a Gargant mob plus around eighty thousand Ork infantry were moving easterly. Close in beyond the East Gate, three Skitarii regiments and two Titan Battlegroups were in retreat, all of which combined could not hope to halt a renewed Ork offensive.

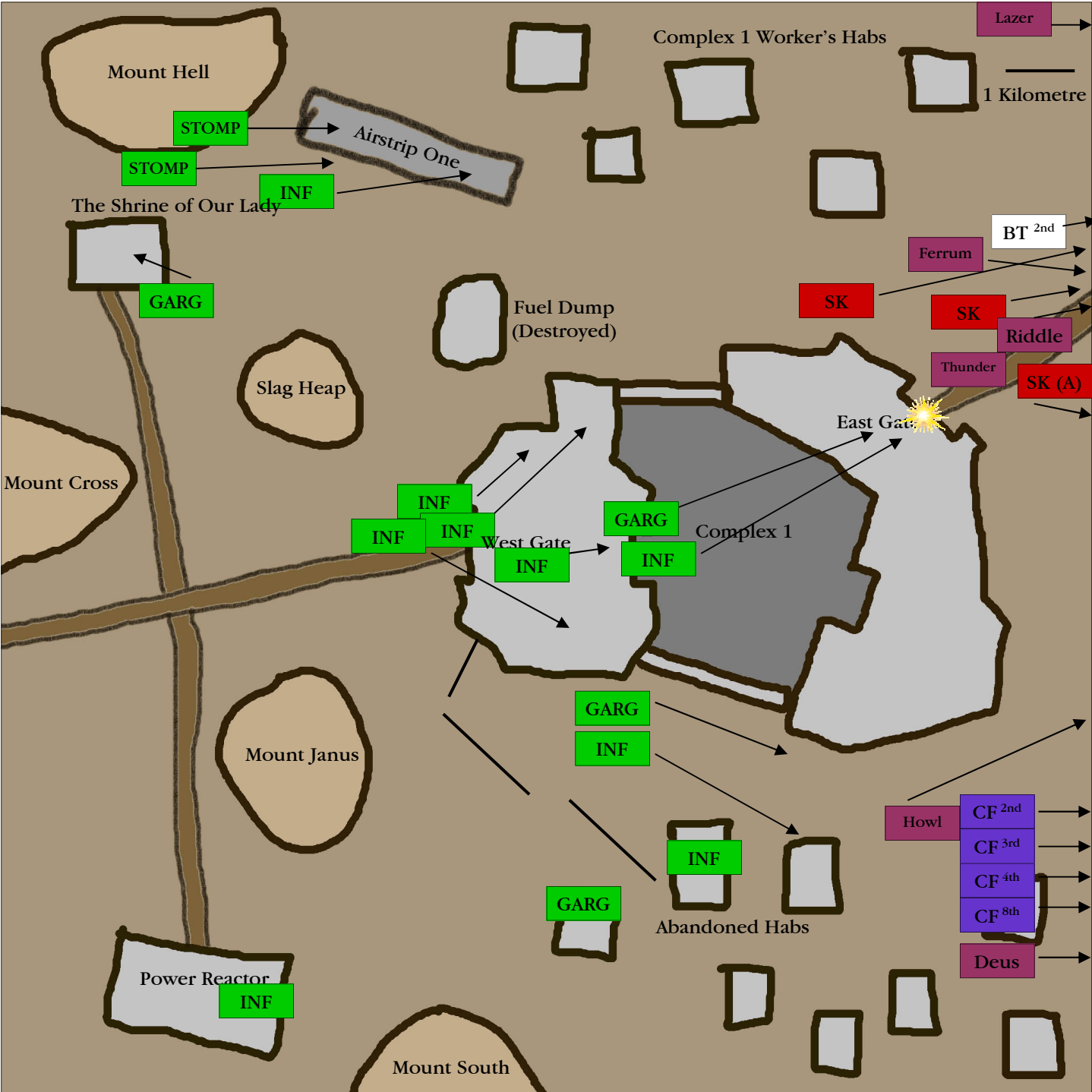
Standing firm between them was Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius' last reserve force, Titan Battlegroup *Thunder Child*. One Reaver Titan and two Warhound Titans could not normally hope to stymie such a massive coalescence of Ork forces, but they did not intend to fight the Xenos directly.

Igniting their Inferno Guns, the pair of Warhound Titans began to systematically attack the walls that held up the massive bronze -coloured East Gate of Complex 1. Golden stanchions and iron

buttresses melted under the immense heat generated by the promethium-spewing weapons, whilst *Thunder Child* used its close combat power fist to rip out supporting cross beams by their foundations.

After twenty minutes of demolitions work, with the ground shaking to the tread of the approaching Gargants, the Titans backed away half a kilometre from the walls of Complex 1, and steadied themselves as *Thunder Child* unleashed its most fearsome weapon; the mighty Titan readied and fired its Vortex support missile.

Ice crystals coalesced and fell from the clear air as sharp hail shards as the flaming missile flew straight and true towards the great bronze door. Detonating just before reaching the doorway, there was no explosive force, but instead a compressive implosion. Lightning flashed from the edges of a swirling void of darkness that ripped a hole through reality into the void behind. Cackling, mad things could be glimpsed there, as they gleefully devoured anything that was sucked into the hole in the world. With little sound, Gargants, Orks, the East Gate, and large chunks of the armoured wall of Complex 1, were sucked into darkness beyond, and were seen no more.



The Imperial retreat from Complex 1.

Full Page picture:

**Things in the picture:**

Riddle of Steel—Damaged Emperor Titan  
Accatran's Wrath—Damaged Reaver Titan  
Steel Doom—Damaged Reaver Titan

Ferrum Incarnadine—Damaged Warlord Titan  
Ferrus Rex—Damaged Warlord Titan  
Lord of Light—Damaged Warlord Titan

Thunder Child—Reaver Titan (Empty Carapace as it's fired its Vortex missile)  
Firewolf Alpha—Warhound Titan  
Firewolf Alpha—Warhound Titan

Black Templars 2nd Company (4x Land Raider Crusaders, 8x Rhinos)

Around fifteen thousand Skitarii infantry & some twenty Ordinatus Minoris War Engines (Of various types and weapons fits) and one Ordinatus Majoris.

Around seventy Skitarii Leman Russ tanks & around a dozen SHT's

Behind them all, the two hundred metre high, seven kilometres wide installation of Complex 1 is in flames, its East Gate still enveloped in a swirling Vortex storm.

High above, Imperial and Ork aircraft still duel.

**The Immediate Aftermath - 3100951M41**

It took a full month for the Imperial forces to reorganise themselves after the fall of Outpost 1, so devastating had the battle been.

Of the twenty-three Imperial Titans committed to the battle, five had been lost outright, whilst fifteen of the remainder had suffered damage that ranged from minor to severe. With most of the Quattro-Legio requiring extensive refits, the *Beasts of Steel* were mostly withdrawn for servicing. Only Battlegroups *Thunder Child* and *Canid Sine* were permitted to remain on the front lines, the former assisting in the ordered retreat from Outpost 1, whilst the latter continued to work in tandem with the Attilan 2<sup>nd</sup> army to the west of the Phobos Mountains.

In addition to the lost Titans, the Adeptus Mechanicus lost seven of the twelve Skitarii Infantry Regiments involved in the battle, and one of its four Armoured Regiments. Those statistics belied the true facts of the case however, as most of those forces had been hit hard during the battle and all were left under-strength. After consolidation, the surviving forces were combined to form just three infantry regiments and one slightly over-strength armoured regiment. Four of the six massive Ordinatus Majoris Engines deployed to Outpost 1 were lost in the battle.

For the Adeptus Astartes, the Black Templars had lost forty two battle brothers out of their three hundred and forty Marines, with around fifty more Astartes taking serious injuries. Marshall Galfridus, torn almost in two during the crash of his Stormhawk transport, survived long enough to be implanted within the sarcophagus of a Dreadnought; after two months' of acclimatisation to his new body he was again able to take up the reigns of command for his Crusade.

The Crimson Fists had been hit harder, losing one hundred and twenty Space Marines out of their four hundred strong infantry force, with a similar number taking serious wounds that would require weeks of healing, often augmented with cybernetic replacement limbs and organs.

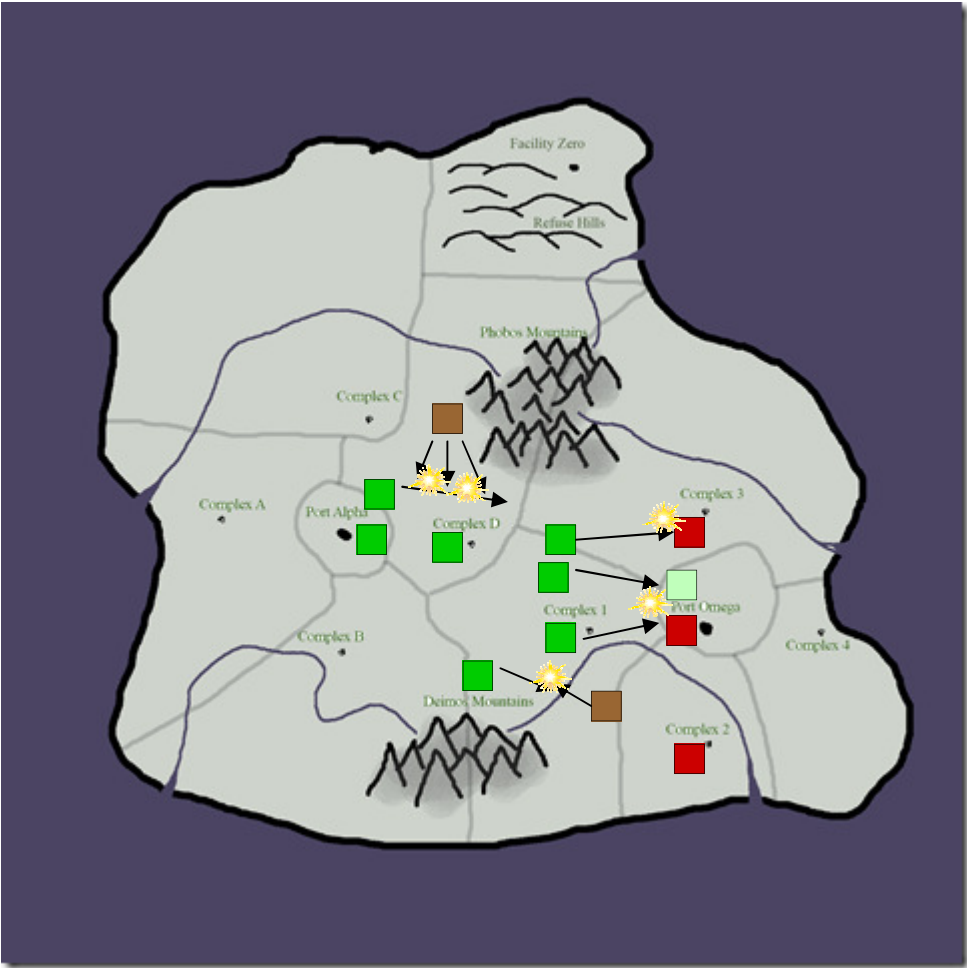
Both Imperial Marine Chapters returned to their orbiting Spacecraft, holding their remaining infantry strength in reserve for the battles ahead, whilst the vast strike cruisers and battlebarge joined the Mechanicus Cruisers *Omnisiah's Rage* and *Boundless Devotion* in low orbits that regularly passed over the Ork front lines.

Having won a painful victory at Outpost 1, and presented with regular bombardments from space, the remainder of the victorious Ork horde did not immediately continue their advance towards Port Omega and instead paused, during which time they were able to affect repairs on some of their dozens of Gargants and Stompas that had been damaged in the battle. Although hampered by bombardments from Spacecraft and the Support Missile Ordinatii of Port Omega, Ork Meks soon set up power field generators around Outpost 1's captured power reactor, which allowed the Greenskins' logistical warbands to work in relative peace on bringing their weapons of war back to a fighting condition.

Ork Warlord Gobgutz Badfang himself had been present at the battle for Complex 1, orchestrating the clash from the Mega Gargant *Bish-Bash*, switching over to the Great Gargant *'Umie Killa* after his first mount had been destroyed. Annoyed that he had been slightly wounded in the battle, he demanded that his Chief Mek Orkstein build him a more impervious suit of armour.

Using recovered Ceramite armour from dead Space Marines, parts of destroyed armoured vehicles, and some components from a single recovered suit of Space Marine Terminator Armour sold to Orkstein by an enterprising Deathskull warband, the ingenious Ork mechanic constructed dozens of unparalleled suits of "Mega Armour" for Gobgutz Badfang and his bands of Nobz.

With repaired Gargants behind them, and better armour to protect their leaders, after three months the Orks were ready to resume their advance towards their final target: Port Omega.



**Achill-Quag - Spring, Year 2**

As the second year of the planetary conflict began, the Imperial forces were put on the defensive. Despite the Orks' pyrrhic victory at Outpost 1, some Ork warbands continued to press on towards their ultimate goal of Port Omega.

- Major Ork Warbands.
- Major Adeptus Mechanicus Deployments
- Attilan Imperial Guard Armies
- Kar Duniash Imperial Guard Reinforcements
- Major Battles

**The Imperial Recovery - 3200951M41**

Ninety days had given the Imperials some space to prepare for the next wave of Ork attacks, and they had not wasted that time.

Industrius Engines continued in their construction works to the west of Port Omega, as they had done for almost a year without respite, building fortifications and raising great armoured curtain walls to protect the threatened installation.

Within the rings of trenchworks and protective walls, bulk landers had begun to arrive with the first of Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui's promised reinforcements; Ten regiments of Imperial infantry from the planet Netea, with more to follow.

The Space Marines of the Crimson Fists Chapter also received reinforcements, as Marines from the reserve companies were sent from Rynn's World to fill in the ranks of the depleted battle companies, until such time as new recruits could be raised from the scout squads and re-form the Companies on a more permanent basis.

The Black Templars Crusade force did not have a comparable large reserve to draw upon, and so they were unable to replenish more than a handful of their losses before the next battles began. However they did hold trials within the worker's habitation arcology at Port Omega, selecting around eighty young recruits to be taken up to their Battlebarge *Hammer of Doom*. Within its vast form, the recruits began their training, in the expectation that around half of them would survive the multi-year processes by which a human child is re-moulded into one of the Adeptus Astartes.

Five days before the Orks renewed their offensive, Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui arrived on Achill-Quag, and requested a council of war meeting. Although his message was not worded as a direct summons order, each Imperial commander knew that to not attend would be to risk Inquisitorial censure.

**The Omega Council - 3200951M41**

The leaders of the Imperial war effort convened in a well equipped convocation blister on the side of Port Omega's great habitation tower. The afternoon sun lit the landing plain brightly, as thousands of Imperial Guard soldiers marched from a large bulk transporter towards their intended camp site, three kilometres north west of the Port. Near to the bulk transporter, the newly repaired Emperor Titan *Riddle of Steel* stood as a great sentinel above the landing plain. The pilot of the *Riddle of Steel*, Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius, placed himself next to the observation window when he arrived for the meeting, so that he could keep his great steed within easy eyesight.

A mutilated man, Marcus Tiberius was little more than a torso and a head, suspended within a fluid gel tank, supported by metal caterpillar tracks. His arms had been severed at the wrists, and his legs cut off above the knees. From each cauterised stump, hundreds of tiny wires protruded, each wrapped into four cable bundles that joined together at the top of his gel tank, where data connection ports were attached. Much of the Princeps' cranial space had been replaced with bionic enhancements that augmented his memory and optical capacities that enabled him to wield his Titan in battle as if it were his own erstwhile hale body.

Near to him stood the bulky form of Marshal Galfridus' new Dreadnought body. A conference room with a particularly high ceiling had been chosen in order to accommodate his towering five metre tall conveyance. When he spoke, his voice sounded strong, but unseen within the Dreadnought's sarcophagus, there was less of his body left intact than there was of Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius.

Chapter Master Pedro Kantor of the Crimson Fists stood beside a hexagonal digi-table, his armoured form dwarfing the two other men standing around the tactical display table; Imperial Guard General Jackson, and the physical representation of Tech Lord Gonvitch I.

Both people seemed relatively normal in comparison to the other occupants of the chamber; General Arnold, Supreme Commander of the Imperial Guard relief forces, was of average height with short cropped hair, wearing a formal dress coat and smoking a cigar. The nameless representation of Tech Lord Gonvitch I appeared to be a thin woman in a robe, with only a lumpy mechanical protrusion at the side of her head to reveal that she was a mind-scrubbed radio-slave, acting as the remote eyes and ears of the Tech Lord, who had not descended in person from the high peak of the Port Hab.

Last to enter the council chamber was Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui himself. Eschewing armour, Inquisitor Gui wore a light brown tunic and dark brown robes. The temperature in the room dropped ten degrees as he arrived, accompanied by a slight metallic taste in the air. Frowning in irritation, Gonvitch I's radio-slave snapped his head sideways twice, as heating vents opened beneath the floor gratings, returning the room to a more comfortable temperature for the occupants.

With a sweep around the room undertaken by more than mere eyes, the Inquisitor acknowledged each of the leaders in the room.

"Imperial Commanders. I apologise for my tardiness."

The Omega Council

Chapter Master Pedro Kantor spoke in reply,

"Your delay is understandable, as you must have travelled many light years to arrange the reinforcements alighting even now" - he indicated the bulk transporter outside - "As to your apology, of course none is required, you have likely saved this planet"

The radio-slave twitched, as Marshall Galfridus spoke,

"It is not saved yet. Astartes intervention has stalled the Ork advance, but it seems likely to resume soon."

General Arnold spoke next,

"As I am sure you are aware, relief forces are now arriving steadily, but it will be some months yet, perhaps six, before we have the numerical advantage against the greenskins. The next few months are crucial."

"The Emperor Protects", intoned Marshall Galfridus.

"Just so" continued Inquisitor Gui, "However I am confident in your abilities General Arnold, enough that I think this war zone would not require my personal attendance, if it were not for one unusual factor that has piqued my interest."

A synthetic, toneless voice spoke from a vox unit attached to the side of Princeps Tiberius' gel tank.

"The Gargants"

The Inquisitor nodded.

"Yes indeed, the Gargants. This planet has seen an invasion of several million greenskins, and that in itself is not unusual in this sub sector. Ordinarily, I am sure that the forces of Accatran Forgeworld could easily have seen off an invasion of this scale, given time."

The radio-slave woman twitched again,

"However, it seems as if we are dealing with a particularly unfortuitous combination of a strategically capable Ork Warlord, backed by an unusually competent mechanical fabrication division. They have constructed perhaps ten times the number of large War Engines we would normally expect in a horde of this size, and that has given them an extra degree of power."

Marshall Galfridus spoke,

"Inquisitor Gui, are you aware of my plan to destroy the Ork construction yards, via the toppling of the Port Arcology?"

The thin radio-slave tapped the fingers of her left hand forcefully on the digi-table in regular rythm as she spoke for the first time,

"That is unacceptable. My sibling Gonvitch II still holds the high tower, and anticipates that in five more years they ca-"

Inquisitor Gui cut her off,

"Yes, I am aware of your plan. It would likely succeed, but at a cost to great to bear. I believe Master Kantor is correct, the Arcology would take decades to rebuild, and the regiments of Skitarii entrenched within could be of use to the Emperor if rescued."

"Very well"

The radio-slave adopted an impassive face, clearly annoyed at being ignored but remaining silent as Inquisitor Gui continued.

"Should we win this war, it is still possible that the Xenos commanders behind this invasion might escape, and rebuild

their armies elsewhere. More invasions of this particular kind cannot be allowed"

Chapter Master Kantor, General Jackson, and Princeps Tiberius all nodded,

"It is my intention that, whilst the armies of the Mechanicus and the Imperial Guard hold back the Ork horde, I shall lead a strike force to hunt down and kill the Warlord and his command cadre, most especially the leading engineering caste; I would be honoured if the Black Templars would assist me in this endeavour"

Marshall Galfridus affirmed that he would.

"Master Kantor, I would ask you to remain as a shock reserve force in protection of Port Omega, if that fits with your own requirements"

Chapter Master Kantor nodded to indicate that he had no objection.

"General Arnold, your Rough Rider armies are already achieving success in the north west, and I am confident your Guard reinforcements around the Port should be able to succeed in their taskings."

"Princeps Tiberius, your remaining Titans are at full strength?"

"Near enough"

"I expect you will be at the walls when the Orks come?"

"Yes"

"May the Emperor protect you, then"

Having addressed all others present, the Inquisitor Lord turned to face the radio-slave of Gonvitch I.

"Tech-Lord. You did not come to this convocation in person"

The thin female form tapped the fingers of its left hand on the digi-table as it responded,

"I am occupied with the control of the Skitarii armies and processing operations. I cannot leave a proxy in command of these operations. This proxy should have been sufficient"

"You are a good liar "

The Inquisitor studied the shocked radio-slave.

"I know it was not duty that kept you from this room. I can sense your metal emanations; Emotions, concerns, even some of your more concrete thoughts. "

The temperature began to drop again, despite the straining of the heating systems.

"I tasted your fear from my first moments on this world, and I know your sins. Go to the Emperor with shame in your heart."

The radio-slave dropped to the floor, a mannequin with its strings cut.

"Tech-Lord Gonvitch I has been hoarding vast resources for his own purposes, to the great detriment of the war effort. He has been replaced; Tech-Lord Gonvitch III is the new master of Port Omega. Praise the Emperor"

All present echoed him, their eyes on the radio-slave as it rose from the floor, under the command of a new master.

"Praise the Emperor"

## Sun Tzork - 3250951M41

As the Attilan armies clashed with the peripheral Ork forces, and the main Imperial armies awaited the final push towards Port Omega, the fungus processing facilities at Complex 3 came under a sudden and vicious attack.

As the Complex was considerably further from the Ork front lines than the main installation of Port Omega, the Mechanicus garrison was light. How the Orks came to realise that the facility was vulnerable was unknown. All that was ever confirmed by the Imperium was that the processing facility was attacked without warning by a Xenos army that consisting mostly of the lesser species of greenskin, the Grot.

It was later estimated that around forty thousand Grots, led by a few guiding Orks, had made the trek undetected through the thousand kilometres of farmlands between the Ork front lines and Complex 3. Presumably by travelling only at night, and avoiding engaging any agricultural Industrious convoys they sighted (a behaviour typically anathema to the Orkoid species), the Xenos attack force took the defenders of Complex 3 completely by surprise.

With radio transmissions for assistance blocked by unknown means, the Complex's garrison of Skitarii were rapidly overwhelmed. A contingent of the Knight of Achill also stationed at the Complex managed a fighting retreat southwards to Port Omega to carry word of the attack, and returned a week later at the head of a counter-attack force to find the facility deserted.

Organised mobs of Grots had apparently worked carefully and with purpose to strip the Complex of much of its useful machinery, leaving anything that could not be re-purposed rapidly for warmaking. A dozen Industrious Engines were found to be missing too, used as cargo haulers to drag the scavenged material off back to the Ork lines where it could be used to construct new war machines.

None of the Imperial Analyticae had predicted an Ork attack at Complex 3, or that attacks anywhere would result in scavenging behaviour of such speed and purpose. Or indeed that the Xenos would retreat as rapidly as they had advanced, prizes in hand.

The Ork commander in charge of the surprise attack was not shy about displaying pride in his actions, either, as almost every flat surface in the Complex bore graffiti that announced to the Imperials the name of their vanquisher;

*"Sun Tzork is 'da smartest!"*

Thinking that they had found the name of the Xeno Commander in charge of the entire planetary invasion, Inquisitor Lord Gui's Black Templars strike force placed the elimination of the Ork Warboss known as "Sun Tzork" as their highest priority, with any and all reports of his possible location to be transmitted to the Imperial high command.

## Renewed Threat From Space - 3300951M41

The Mechanicus forces had endeavoured to build a fortress wall between the Ork armies and Port Omega, covering the western approaches to Port Omega with two curved defence lines, each almost five hundred kilometres long, anchored by areas of low-land swamps that had been enhanced as the Industrious Engines had emptied billions of tonnes of Industrial effluvial into the marshes. Poisonous and acidic, the anchor swamps could be bypassed, but it would take weeks to swing large armies around them, harassed at every step. Instead, Ork Warlord Gutgrub Badfang chose the direct approach.

Launching out of the fallen Complex 1 in a vast onrush, the Xenos reached the first wall ten days into their advance. In the first hours of the battle, just before the main Ork and Imperial

heavy guns were coming into range, the Orks revealed yet more clever subterfuge which once again caught the forces of the Emperor unprepared.

In the outer reaches of the the Achill planetary system, three Ork Cruisers had been hiding amongst the system's asteroid belt. The The Ork spacecraft had seemed to flee in fear when the Imperial relief forces had first arrived, but it had instead been a clever feint. Running with their engines dampened, the Ork Cruisers had instead spent six months carrying out their orders. Acting as construction motherships, the Cruisers had selected from amongst the densest asteroids they could find, and modified them by fitting weapons and engines.

Each of the asteroids was relatively small, around the size of an escort frigate. They were sent on an inwards spiral one by one towards the inner system. Drifting in towards the local sun undetected, it was only as they ignited their engines in unison and powered towards Achill-Quag that the Imperials became aware of the threat. Their plan revealed, the three Ork Cruisers also engaged their engines and headed at full speed into battle.

The Imperial ships above Achill-Quag engaged in the bombardment of Ork armies, the Black Templars Battlebarge *Hammer of Doom*, the four Crimson Fists Strike Cruisers, and the two Adeptus Mechanicus Cruisers, all were drawn away as they turned to face the incoming enemy.

The space battle was short; The Ork "Rok" class asteroid craft had just one objective; to reach the planet Achill-Quag and make landfall. Under the guns of the Imperial ships, the mobile asteroids were disabled or destroyed in their scores. Still, six of the small craft made it past the blockade and planetary defence laser fire to enter the atmosphere.

In the mean time, the three Ork Cruisers swung wide around the main battle, turning in the gravity well of the outer gas giant planet Achill F to emerge back onto Imperial scanners moving at a moderate relativistic speed towards Achill-Quag.

Occupied in hunting the dozens of small Rok craft, the Imperial fleet could not break off in time to intercept the Ork Spacecraft, travelling as they were at a significant proportion of the speed of light. In twenty minutes, the three Cruisers covered the distance between the gas giant and their target. Hulls glowing white from the speed of their passage, the Ork spacecraft dipped into the upper reaches of Achill-Quag's thick atmosphere as they made their pass above the planet, each Cruiser releasing scores of small metallic pods alongside their expected bombardment, before continuing on in their rapid flight in towards the system's bright yellow sun. Soon passing once again out of scanner range, the Ork spacecraft were lost in the stellar interference, even as their deadly cargoes began to land on Achill-Quag.

The Imperial fleet had prevented most of the Rok spacecraft from making landfall, but they had failed to stop the Ork cruisers from carrying out their own mission. Above the Imperial defence lines, the skies were suddenly full of crude Drop Pods, each one carrying mobs of ferocious Orks directly into battle.

*The Ork Cruisers  
unleash their bombardments  
and Drop Kans*

Ork Horde Composition - First Wall Attack (M40.951)	
Infantry -	~600,000
Vehicles -	~22,000
Wheeled/Tracked War Engines -	~320
Stompa Class War Engines -	~140
Gargant Class War Engines -	28
Great Gargant Class War Engines -	5
Mega Gargant Class War Engines -	2
Aircraft (Fighters) -	~200
Drop Roks -	6

Ork Horde Composition - Second Wall Attack (M40.951)	
Infantry -	~450,000
Vehicles -	~17,000
Wheeled/Tracked War Engines -	~280
Stompa Class War Engines -	~100
Gargant Class War Engines -	15
Great Gargant Class War Engines -	3
Mega Gargant Class War Engines -	2
Aircraft (Fighters) -	~140

### The Battle for the Walls, Hour 1 - 3300951M41

Even as the battle in space was coming to a close, the war for Achill-Quag was reaching new heights of violence. Gargants and Imperial Titans were trading blows across and above the great First Wall, whilst around them hundreds of thousands of infantry were engaged in a vast engagement with a main battlefield almost twenty five miles wide. Some of the Gargants that the Imperial forces had believed destroyed at the battle for Complex 1 had appeared; With some of their weapons systems still not repaired from the previous battle, the vast war engines were employed as gargantuan battering rams, ambling directly up to the curtain wall itself to unload hundreds of Orks directly onto the battlements.

Despite the heavy attacks, the Imperials were holding the line. Reinforcements rushed to fill gaps opened by Ork attacks, as many Gargants fell back damaged or destroyed whilst the Titans of the Legio Destructor stood firm behind the defence wall, firing out at the attacking armies. In an instant, it all changed.

A hundred kilometres above, three Ork Cruisers flashed over the contested battlefield, and they brought death with them. Bombardments rained down upon the three Imperial defence walls in hundreds of detonations, each releasing energy equivalent to a small atomic device. Following close behind the bombardment, six Ork Drop Roks and hundreds of small metal "Drop Kans" fell through the sky.

Two Drop Roks were shot down by a Defence Laser mounted atop Imperator Titan *Riddle of Steel*, but four passed through the defence fire relatively unscathed, igniting retro-rockets to slow their descent. Three of the Roks succeeded, making hard landings behind the first wall that cracked open their outer shells on impact. Each Drop Rok was a fraction of the size of the massive Rok that had landed at Port Alpha at the beginning of the war for Achill-Quag, but even so each Rok contained thousands of Orks that spilled out in a rush, charging any Imperials within sight. Simultaneously, the hundreds of Drop Kans also disgorged scores of Ork Blood Axe warbands, which set about attacking targets behind the main defensive wall.

The fourth Rok, upon firing its retro-rockets, halted its descent whilst still a hundred metres from the ground, and then blasted back ten kilometres into the air as the Orks onboard found themselves unable to de-activate the rockets. Hit by shots from an Imperial spacecraft in high orbit, the Drop Rok disintegrated, spilling hundreds of chunks of asteroid, as well as thousands of screaming Orks, to fall mostly harmlessly to the planet's surface.

Imperial resistance was shattered, and those forces that were able were ordered to make an immediate retreat back to reinforce the Imperial forces waiting at the second wall.

Tasked with covering the retreat, Warlord Titan *Watchtower* stood before the second wall's main gate and sustained fire for a full hour at the onrushing hordes until it finally fell, killing tens of thousands of Orks in its final barrage, booming out the Legio Destructor war cry of "Big Death!" until the very last.

### The Battle for the Walls, Hour 2 - 3310951M41

Losing the first wall so suddenly had surprised the Imperial forces. Tactical Analyticae had not factored in the chances of a renewed assault from space and had assumed that the first wall would hold for four hours, instead of one.

The sacrifice of Warlord Titan *Watchtower* had delayed the Ork attack from pressing home against the second wall, but as it fell, cut down under the massive laser cannons of four Gargants, the pent-up onrush of greenskins was released. As one, half a million Orks roared in exultation as they charged the two hundred thousand defenders atop the central region of the second wall.

Two kilometres of featureless landscape stood between the first and second walls, where the Ork infantry were at first cut down in their thousands. Within half an hour, Gargants and Stompas had begun to shoulder their way through gaps in the first wall, and despite cannon fire from Ordinatus Engines and Titans, they were breaking through faster than they could be destroyed.

Still, the largest Ork war engines, two "Mega" class Gargants that had been briefly seen during the assault on the first wall, had not found a way through, and orbital scans indicated that the pair of massive machines were heading southwards towards a larger gap in the first wall, created during the Orkish orbital bombardment. Aware that they could not be allowed to attack the second wall unopposed, Imperator Titan *Riddle of Steel* left its accompanying Reaver Titans behind and began to move southwards to meet the expected attack.

### The Battle for the Walls, Hour 3 - 3310951M41

As ever greater numbers of Ork Gargants and vehicles pressed through the gaps in the first wall to attack the area around the central region of the second wall, the Titans and Ordinatii of the Adeptus Mechanicus began to fall.

Ordinatus Majoris *Cadia*, a legendary machine supposedly constructed on the famous planet Cadia six millennia previously, was destroyed by a Great Gargant armed with multiple heavy laser cannons. Ordinatus Minoris Battery *Vaash* was wrecked under the guns of a group of three "Supa" Stompas. Ordinatus Minoris Battery *SpeakerToMachines II* was destroyed by two Gargants that concentrated their firepower on the venerable Engines. Warlord Titan *Ferrus Rex* and Reaver Titan *Accatran's Wrath* both fell, hit by a thousand impacts that left them lifeless.

Around eighty thousand Skitarii died.

In the skies above, hundreds of Imperial and Ork fighter aircraft duelled, each force attempting to gain supremacy so that they could bring in their heavy bombers to assist with the battle on the ground, neither side gaining a firm upper hand.

## The Battle for the Walls, Hour 4- 3310951M41

As the third hour of the battle began, the Imperial forces were still heavily engaged on the central area of the second wall. Thousands of Skitarii and Orks were dying every minute, and the Imperial positions were beginning to be outflanked, as the Orks scaled the wall faster than reinforcements could fill the gaps the Orks were creating.

For the second time, the call to retreat was broadcast.

This time, it was the Titans of Battlegroup *Thunder Child* that were chosen to form the rear guard and delay the Orks whilst the Skitarii and other Titan Battlegroups made their retreat.

The Three Titans in the group, Reaver Titan *Thunder Child*, and Warhound Titans *Firewolf Alpha* and *Firewolf Beta*, were the only Titans present that had not taken damage during the battle for Complex 1. *Thunder Child's* Vortex Missile had been replaced with a spare missile from the Mechanicus stores, and all three war engines were operating at maximum efficiency.

As the Skitarii made their retreat, *Firewolf Alpha* and *Beta* doused the battlements with their promethium flame weapons, roasting hundreds of Orks alive with each blast. As the second wall did not have many of the large breaches and gaps in it that had been cut into the first wall, the Orks were unable to bring heavier weapons to bear to tackle the Scout Titans, and so they were unable to press their advantage and cut down the fleeing Skitarii. In the mean time, the crew of *Thunder Child* offered a prayer to the machine God, as the main gate in the second wall began to tremble and splinter. Their prayer over, they began to chant, their combined voices amplified by the hailer systems mounted to its carapace, audible above the sound of the gate being cut apart.

"Big death, big death, big death..."

The main gate shattered, and a "Mekboy" class Stompa stood revealed as having cut down the mighty gate with a combat blade and an arm mounted rotary saw.

"Big Death, Big Death, Big Death..."

*Thunder Child* charged, and blasted the machine at close range with its Melta Cannon. In an instant, the Mekboy Stompa's Power Fields failed, and it began to burn as the heat ray cut to the heart of the machine and incinerated its crew.

"Big Death! Big Death! Big Death!..."

Stepping through the gate, towards the onrushing horde, *Thunder Child* passed the wreck of the Warlord Titan *Watchtower*, and targeted a closing Gargant, two hundred metres away. With an unnatural screech that was heard for kilometres around, *Thunder Child* unleashed its Vortex Missile directly towards the Ork war machine, and exulted as it was ripped out of reality into the void of Chaos that lurks beyond. Hundreds of Orks and dozens of Ork vehicles were caught up in the Vortex and also fell into the realm of oblivion that devours.

"BIG DEATH! BIG DEATH! BIG DEATH!..."

Two Supa Stompas approached, heavy calibre guns blazing, they overloaded *Thunder Child's* Void Shields, but too late, they discovered that their firepower was not enough. Striding forwards, *Thunder Child* ripped the command head off of one Stompa with its Power Fist, and fired a second blast from its Melta Cannon to annihilate the second machine.

"BIG DEATH!!! BIG DEATH!!!!..."

Two more Gargants came next, one equipped with heavy cannons, the other with flashing lasers. Agilely crouching down behind the burning wrecks of the two Supa Stompas, *Thunder*

*Child* recharged its Void Shields, and then broke cover, heading directly towards the two Gargants. Transmitted permissions from Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius to withdraw were ignored, *Thunder Child* smelled carnage, and it would not retreat.

"BIG DEATH!!!"

The mighty Reaver Titan was battered by the firepower unleashed by the two Gargants. For a second time its Void Shields flashed and faded, unable to hold back the attack. Armour plates buckled and split, lightning flashed from local power overloads, and fires burned that wreathed the onrushing Titan in a cloak of flame and smoke.

"BIG DEATH!!!"

*Thunder Child* struck the nearest Gargant with its great Power Fist, ripping a massive hole in its side, before pivoting with unexpected strength and speed to plunge its entire Melta Cannon arm deep inside the Gargant's core, simultaneously triggering both barrels of the massive weapon.

"BIG DEATH!!!"

The Gargant exploded, sending *Thunder Child* staggering back, its Melta Cannon arm ripped off at the shoulder by the force of the explosion. With its carapace missile already used, and its gun arm destroyed, *Thunder Child* only had its Power Fist remaining with which to fight its enemies. Sounding its war horn one last time, *Thunder Child* charged the alien invaders, and met its end.

Ten kilometres to the south, Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius solemnly noted the passing of the Reaver Titan. Despite giving his permission for the Titan to retreat, he had not issued an order, knowing that the Titan's Princeps would only sell his life in battle if the result would bring benefit to the Imperial cause; multiple Ork war engines had been recorded as destroyed in *Thunder Child's* last charge, before the Titan's plasma-atomic detonation had obscured all sensor readings of the combat zone.

*Firewolf Alpha* and *Firewolf Beta* reported a clean withdrawal from the fight, as they sprinted the two kilometres from the second wall to the nearest gate in the third and final wall, behind which they took up new defensive positions.

Eleven Battle Class Titans had begun the battle for the walls, and just seven were still standing by hour four. Most of the Titans were damaged, whilst the two Mega class Gargants had not yet brought their firepower to bear.

That was about to change however, as the pair of vast machines had finally reached their destination gate in the abandoned first wall, and with booming gunfire they had begun to open fire on the structure. Stepping through nearby gate in the second wall, *Riddle of Steel* stood prepared to meet a fate which seemed unlikely to be any different to that found by *Thunder Child*.

Around *Riddle of Steel's* ankles, ten smaller war engines clustered; Acting as escort and honour guard to the Emperor Titan were ten of the Knights of Achill, each a Paladin class war machine. On a tight beam transmission, Master Princeps Marcus Tiberius briefly communicated with his Knight escorts.

"Household, do you believe that you can best serve the Imperium somewhere other than in meeting the menace beyond yonder gate?"

One of the Paladins replied.

"Nae, Master Princeps, I think this is our moment. We are honoured if we meet our doom here"

The silence of the other Knights indicated their unity of opinion as with a crash that reverberated for kilometres in every direction, the massive gate fell, and the greatest war machines in the conflict for Achill-Quag faced each other at last.

### The Clash of Titans (M40.951)

#### Ork Force -

Mega Gargant - "Gork"

Mega Gargant - "Mork" - Personal Gargant of Warlord Badfang

Gunwagon Mob - "Da Shadowz"

#### Imperial Force -

Imperator class Emperor Titan - "Riddle of Steel"

Paladin Knight Squadron - "Alpha Squadron"

Paladin Knight Squadron - "Beta Squadron"

### The Battle for the Walls, Hour 5 - 3300951M41

Hour five of the conflict saw the main Ork horde make new assaults against the third and final wall, the last defence line standing between the invading army and Port Omega. Tens of thousands died on both sides. Multiple Gargants and Kustom Stompas were lost by the Xenos, whilst the Warlord Titan *Custodian* and the Warhound battlegroup *Lazer Wolfe* fell in battle.

The Ork attack was running out of strength at last, as the Imperials, now bolstered by the presence of Crimson Fists Space Marines, held firm atop the third wall. Only one tool could now allow the greenskins to break the Imperial defenders; the twin "Mega" Gargants *Gork* and *Mork*. If allowed to reach the main battlezone, the two machines' vast gun decks would inevitably kill thousands, and send the Imperials fleeing. The retreat would leave the airspace above Port Omega compromised by Orkish anti-aircraft fire, cutting off the defenders from direct resupply from orbit and essentially guaranteeing the loss of the entire planet to the invading horde.

As the last line of defence between the Orks and total disaster, the ancient Emperor Class Emperor Titan *Riddle of Steel* and its ten Paladin Knight escorts stood firm against the two Mega Gargants, each one capable of bringing down the Imperial Titan under the right conditions.

Aboard *Riddle of Steel*, Master Princeps' Marcus Tiberius Moderati crew were electronically scanning the Ork forces that were advancing through the shattered gate.

"First Mega Gargant, 8 power field layers, identified as *Gork* by glyph markings. Threat extremis. Escort: Twelve armoured vehicles"

Princeps Tiberius grunted,  
"Knights *Alpha*, vehicles"

Five of the Knights moved off at a rapid pace to intercept the twelve Ork Gunwagons, which had poured through the shattered main gate in advance of the first Mega Gargant. Both groups angled slightly north, taking cover each side of an abandoned construction site.

"Gargant *Gork* is advancing at 30kp, Princeps"

Master Princeps replied simply,

"Wait"

Barging through the wall's gate, *Gork* came on at flank speed, bringing some of its longer ranged weapons into range, which opened fire. A heavy cannon shell from one of its gun arms fired but missed, impacting on the abandoned second wall.

"Gargant *Gork* firing two missiles, scans indicate living pilots"

Master Princeps Tiberius responded by using his mind link with *Riddle of Steel* to take up a new pose. Whilst his flesh body was crippled and mutilated, his augmentations allowed him to wield *Riddle of Steel's* vast frame as if it were his own body, indeed Princeps Tiberius had come to regard it as the body the Machine God had truly intended him to have, over the fifty years that he had been its commanding officer. With one foot braced behind the other, *Riddle of Steel* only rocked slightly as the two guided missiles slammed into the void shield layers that protected the Titan from harm.

A voice crackled in Princeps Tiberius' ear as Tech Priest Isambard reported on *Riddle of Steel's* status.

"Five Void layers lost. Three remaining. No damage."

Princeps Tiberius did not reply. He trusted the Tech Priest, and knew that he would not re-direct energy from the Titan's Plasma reactors or power capacitors to recharge the void shield layers without a direct command, as the power planet's energy might be required for another system's use at any moment.

"Princeps, Gargant *Gork* will have a firing solution on us with main armaments in nine seconds"

"Wait"

Four seconds passed slowly, as the Mega Gargant continued to rumble forwards, its main gun decks swivelling to aim at the Emperor Titan.

"Advance and Fire, Sequence W2!"

Stepping forwards from its stable defensive position, *Riddle of Steel* moved according to Master Princeps' mental commands, taking four great strides towards *Gork* before again planting its feet in a stable position. Caught by surprise as the Imperial Titan advanced towards it, *Gork* was not able to react quickly enough to fire its main guns before *Riddle of Steel* unleashed its own strike. The Emperor Titan's moderati listed off scan reports as the ancient machine's weaponry fired in a tightly coordinated sequence, starting with the solid shell weapons of the Hellstorm Cannon on the Titan's left arm, light Battlecannons fitted to *Riddle of Steel* ornamental carapace, a shell from the Titan's carapace-mounted Quake Cannon, an attack from the carapace's Defence Laser, and finishing with the great Plasma Annihilator weapon carried on the Emperor Titan's right arm.

The sequence of gunfire was designed to make maximum use of the Titan's limited supply of plasma energy, to strip away the Gargant's protective power field layers with light guns and then follow up with heavier armour penetrating weaponry as the Gargant's hull became vulnerable.

"Hellstorm, 3 fields stripped"

"Quake, 1 field stripped"

"Battlecannons, 4 fields stripped"

Princeps Tiberius grinned savagely, his limbless torso thrashing in its capsule. The light guns had performed above his expectations, and his gnarled face was lit green as the massive Plasma Annihilator discharged its full power.

"Defence Laser, armour hit, moderate damage"

"Plasma Arm, armour hit, major damage"

The entire salvo had taken less than ten seconds, and it turned the great Ork machine from a charging behemoth into a half-crippled wreck. Abruptly, *Gork* went into reverse, retreating easterly. Screaming as loud as his artificial voice could manage, the characteristically taciturn Master Princeps' amplified paen boomed across the battlefield.

"BIG DEATH!!!"

"Knights Beta, persue!"

Moving at a fast double pace, the second group of five Paladin Knights bounded after the retreating form of *Gork*, firing light cannons that inflicted some more minor damage. As they did so, the second Ork Mega Gargant, *Mork*, rumbled through the nearby wall gate, appearing on the small battlefield directly behind *Gork*.

Either through bravery or intimidation from its companion, *Gork* ceased in its retreat, automatic systems dousing its most serious fires and bringing the Mega Gargant back to fighting order in a surprisingly short period of time. As *Gork* was rallying, *Riddle of Steel* was recovering back to normal operational power levels, its Plasma Reactor having been largely drained of power in its first salvo, the Titan lacked the energy to fire any of its guns above battle cannon in size, or even take a single step, as its engine strained to dump power into its reserve capacitors.

Taking advantage of the brief cessation in gunfire, the twelve Ork armoured gun wagons broke from cover, sweeping around the abandoned construction site to level their guns against Knight Squadron Alpha. One of the small war engines was instantly destroyed, whilst the others rocked back under the unexpectedly potent attack.

Unable to offer assistance, *Riddle of Steel* had not yet brought its power reserves back to operational levels when the Mega Gargant *Gork* opened fire for the second time. Remaining stationary and firing all of its remaining operational guns and cannons with careful aim, most of the strikes hit home on the Imperial Titan.

Macro cannon fire impacted on *Riddle of Steel's* void shield layers, prompting Tech Priest Isambard to relay damage reports as indicated to him by the servitors meshed with the Titan's systems throughout its body.

"Two Void layers lost. One remaining. No damage"

*Gork* attempted to fire its two heavy laser cannons at the Imperial Titan, one of which exploded. However the second struck true on the weakly shielded Titan.

"All Void layers lost. Minor hull damage"

*Riddle of Steel's* carapace been damaged by the hit, gouging away large chunks of armour plating, letting loose super-heated steam that killed a dozen of the carapace's Skitarii who had survived the initial hit. Checking the Reactor readings, Princeps Tiberius selected a battle operation that was just within safe power limits.

"Marshall and Fire, sequence W5!"

Most of the Titan's capacitor energy was immediately dumped into the void shield generators, whilst some was diverted to powering just the Titan's carapace weaponry, as its arms held rigid and lifeless.

"Five Void layers raised"

Tech Priest Isambard's report was almost lost to Princeps Tiberius' enhanced hearing as the carapace weaponry fired out at the damaged Gargant. His Moderati reported the salvo's effect with practiced efficiency.

"Quake Cannon, armour hit, moderate damage"

"Defence Laser, insufficient focus, no damage"

"Battle Cannons, armour hit, minor damage"

"Gargant *Gork* estimated at ten percent operational capacity"

Briefly given respite again, Princeps Tiberius checked his scanner reports. Nearby to the north-east, Knight Group Alpha was still pinned down by the Ork Gunwagons.

To the south, Knight Squadron Beta came under fire from the second Mega Gargant *Mork*. Three of the Knights were destroyed by macro cannon fire, and the remaining two also would have fallen if their energy shields had not somehow absorbed the impact of the Gargant's heavy laser cannons. The two remaining Paladin Knights in Beta squadron prudently fell back rather than continue their harassment attack against *Gork*.

"Knights Alpha, status?"

One of the Knight pilots replied,

"We cannot break cover without being exposed to gunfire, request a distraction"

With one eye on his power levels, Princeps Tiberius replied,

"Granted"

Two minutes had elapsed since *Riddle of Steel* had fired its strenuous opening salvo, and its power levels were beginning to return to normal levels.

"Double, Fire and Support, Sequence S19!"

Striding north-east towards the Ork vehicles, keeping the damaged Gargant *Gork* between itself and the fully operational *Mork*, *Riddle of Steel* took eight ground-shaking steps that left it within fifty metres of the nearest Gunwagon. Faced with a new threat, several of the Ork vehicles swung their cannons around to aim at the massive Imperial Titan. Before they could open fire the Princeps issued a charge order to the Knight squadron.

"Now Knights Alpha! For the Big Death!"

"Omniassiah and Honour!" chorused the four Knights Paladin as they charged from their cover behind the construction site. One fell as they charged, caught but a Gunwagon's cannon shell, but the remaining three crashed home, shock lances flashing, chain blades whirring as they cut Ork vehicles in two. *Riddle of Steel's* tertiary weapons systems, short range side-arms fired by Skitarii infantry stationed in the Titan's leg bastions and carapace blisters, added a layer of supporting fire. Crushed by the sudden assault, just one of the Ork vehicles managed to escape, heading south-east back towards the main gate.

Whilst supporting the engagement beneath its feet with its tertiary guns, *Riddle of Steel* continued to fire some of its other gun systems at the stricken *Gork*.

"Plasma Annihilator is recharged"

Princeps Tiberius nodded,

"Stick to S19"

Again firing just its Quake Cannon, Defence Laser and Battlecannons, *Riddle of Steel* held back from using its full firepower.

"Quake Cannon, Armour hit, moderate damage"

"Defence Laser, insufficient focus, no damage"

"Battle Cannons, armour hit, minor damage"

"Six Void layers raised"

Abruptly, the Mega Gargant *Gork* exploded. A final battlecannon shell had struck at a critical power ammunition hopper deep in the bowels of the massive vehicle, and set off a cascading detonation that ripped *Gork* in half vertically. Split down the middle, the two separate halves of the destroyed Mega Gargant toppled over and crashed to the ground.

Standing revealed by the destruction of *Gork*, the second Mega Gargant *Mork*, its line of fire blocked until the destruction of its companion, aimed every gun, macro cannon, and laser projector directly at *Riddle of Steel*, and opened fire.

Mega Gargant *Mork* opened fire with a concussive salvo that echoed repeatedly between the abandoned first and second walls. Macro cannon shells fell on *Riddle of Steel* like sudden explosive hail from the brooding sky.

“Four Void layers lost. Two remaining. No damage”

A pair of flashing heavy lasers struck the remaining void shields, and just as the second laser strike was fading it pierced the last void shield layer, leaving scorch marks on the Titan’s hull.

“All Void layers lost. Minor hull damage”  
“Gargant *Mork* firing two missiles, scans indicate living pilots”

Princeps Tiberius checked his Titan’s power readings, noting that there was no spare power ready to dump into the void shield generators, and no time to generate more.

“Omnissiah preserve us, brace!”

At Princeps Tiberius’ command, the Emperor Titan took up a stable pose, leaning in to the expected impact with its weight over its right leg. With his enhanced senses, Princeps Tiberius could see the two incoming missiles in exquisite detail, their Grot pilots howling in exultation as they flew towards their vast target. Seconds before impact, the pilot of one of the missiles fell lifeless, hit by a lasgun blast; his missile plowed into the ground and exploded, half a second before the second rocket slammed into *Riddle of Steel*’s hip.

“Critical hit, major hull damage.”

Princeps Tiberius felt a shock in his own mutilated hip, as the impact struck home on the Titan’s surface. Using his neural interfaces, he could feel that the right hip joint had been heavily damaged, most of its thick supporting bracers had been severed, and the few remaining struts were quickly losing structural integrity, bending as the huge weight of the Titan began to bear down on the damaged hip section. In moments, the Titan’s hip would snap, and *Riddle of Steel* would fall.

“Emergency welds!”

Deep within the damaged hip, emergency melta systems engaged, fusing damaged and cracked metal into a new solid form. Skitarii crew and servitors caught in the area were instantly killed in the sudden inferno. To douse the fires started by the welding systems, as well as from the rocket impact, foam fire suppressant followed close on the heels of the welding meltas, flash cooling the super-heated metal with a speed that lent it new strength.

The Mega Gargant *Mork* had briefly ceased firing, as its deck guns were reloaded and its laser cannons recharged. For a moment, relative silence came to the battlefield as the two huge war engines faced each other.

“One Void raised”  
“The welds are holding, Princeps. Manoeuvrability inhibited, I recommend not exceeding Advancing speed”

“We’re not going anywhere; Sustain Fire, Sequence W1!”

Joined by the guns of Knight Squadron Alpha, the Emperor Titan stood still as a monolith, and unleashed every weapon at its disposal towards the Mega Gargant.

Ripple firing its guns from the lightest first, up to the super-heavy cannons, *Riddle of Steel* was given the perfect opportunity to demonstrate its capability to the Orks. Its Plasma Annihilator was fully charged, and was triggered last of all, after the Gargant’s Power Field layers had been stripped away. Molten Plasma poured over the surface of the Gargant, twisting and cracking armour, killing the Ork crew in their hundreds.

“Knight Cannons, 2 fields stripped”  
“Hellstorm,, 3 fields stripped”  
“Quake, 1 field stripped”  
“Battle Cannons, 4 fields stripped”  
“No fields remaining”  
“Defence Laser, armour hit, moderate damage”  
“Plasma Annihilator, armour hit, major damage”  
“Target *Mork* is retreating”

With a fire burning fiercely where one of its deck guns had been, the Gargant *Mork* had spun with surprising speed, putting its unscathed back to the Emperor Titan, and bolted for the gate in the first wall, through which it had entered the battle zone.

Perhaps driven insane by the sight of their burning Mega Gargants, the crew of the last surviving Gunwagon made a futile charge at the remaining Knights of Beta Squadron. Although one cannon shot did hit, damaging a Knight, the Gunwagon was soon shot down and its crew killed by the Knights.

Aboard *Riddle of Steel*, Princeps Marcus Tiberius activated his vocal communicator.

“Isembard, power for main guns?”

“Negative Master Princeps, I calculate that the Gargant will be out of line of sight before we have raised enough plasmic energy for a salvo”

“Very well, go to Marshalling mode, give us our Void layers back”

With a deep sub-vocal noise, the layers of Void Shields began to reform around the battered *Riddle of Steel*. Badly damaged, it was still combat effective, and under the command of its Princeps it turned and began to stride back towards the Imperial lines at low speed, a slight limp evident in its step.

As the Emperor Titan withdrew from the battlefield, its remaining Knight escort in tow, Princeps Tiberius broadcast a status update across the Imperial communications web.

“Imperial Command, Inquisitor Gui, be advised. Mega Gargants engaged. One destroyed, one in retreat heavily damaged...”

“I believe the retreating Gargant is the personal transport of the Ork Overlord. Repeat, glyph analysis suggests the retreating Mega Gargant is the personal transport of Ork Warlord Sun-Tzork...”

“Good hunting Lord Inquisitor, and may the Omnissiah protect you.”

The entire engagement had taken less than five minutes, and in the cataclysmic test of arms, one Mega Gargant had been destroyed, whilst the other had been driven from the field badly damaged. *Riddle of Steel* stood victorious, badly damaged but still capable of engaging the enemy if it could return to the main battle zone in time to bolster the hard pressed third wall defence forces.

Three minutes after his broadcast, a strike force of Black Templars aircraft swept over the Emperor Titan, heading for the retreating Mega Gargant *Mork*.

Black Templars Sun-Tzork Xenocide Task Force (M40.951)	
Fleet Assets -	4 Thunderhawk Transporters 4 Thunderhawk Gunships
Crusade Squads -	10 Initiate, 5 Neophyte.
Armoury -	8 Predator Annihilators, 4 Hunters
Other Assets -	1 Dreadnought - Marshal Galfridus 1 Inquisitor Lord - Bernard Gui

# Black Templars Xenocide strike force overflies the damaged Riddle of Steel

Within the command head of the Mega Gargant *Mork*, Warboss Gobgut Badfang was not in a pleasant mood. His favourite war engine was still burning fiercely after its combat with the Imperial Titan, and although it had caused some damage, it had been driven into retreat; Retreat did not please Warboss Badfang.

A shivering Grot ran up to Badfang to grovel before him,

“Warboss! Warbo—”

With a savage kick, Warboss Badfang kicked the small creature out of a gaping hole in the side of the Gargant’s head. Screaming, the little greenskin struck the shimmering power fields that protected the Gargant from harm, turned black and crispy, and had died before he hit the ground.

Slightly mollified by the senseless killing, Warboss Badfang scowled as a second trembling Grot ran up to him.

“Warboss! Warboss!”  
“Wot is it? Better make me ‘appy!”

The grovelling creature nodded obsequiously,

“Yes Warboss! Pilot says more enemies comin’! Supa’ armour boys! Mareenz!”

A savage grin appeared on Warboss Badfang’s face; he knew that fights against Space Marines were always good scraps.

“Allright, you live ‘dis time!”  
“Hooray!”

The little Grot scampered off with its prize, whilst Warboss Badfang began bellowing.

“Boyz! Mareenz is coming!”

Most armies would run in terror at that news, but Warboss Badfang’s personal retinue of Nobz quickly gathered around him. Each one big and nasty enough to lead his own Warband if he wanted to, Badfang’s retinue had chosen to stay close to their leader instead, where they were guaranteed the best armour, weapons, and post-battle loot. Clanking and hissing, thirty of his Nobz were kitted out with the best Mega Armour that teeth could buy.

“Right Boyz! Let’s go gettem! Waaaaaaagh!”

Charging down through the guts of his Mega Gargant, Warboss Badfang didn’t notice as his transport’s freshly raised Power Fields were blasted away, its engines stilled and guns silenced as it came under a new attack.

With a huge war cry, Badfang’s Mega Armoured Warband poured out of the rear of the burning, wrecked Mega Gargant, to find a Space Marine battleforce deployed for battle before them. Several transport aircraft and laser tanks lay half a kilometre away, firing their cannons towards the shattered Gargant. Closer, lots and lots of Space Marines were closing in, guns blazing.

“Waaaaaaaagh!”

Warboss Badfang’s Boyz charged the Space Marines. Scores of Boyz and Grotz were shot down during the charge, but most of the Marines’ gunfire bounced off of the Mega Armoured Nobz. Slamming into the Space Marine infantry, the Power Claws and sheer bulk of the Mega Nobz tore into the Astartes squads, chopping apart dozens of Marines.

Warboss Badfang laughed as he killed, enhanced blood flying in all directions. He was shot a few times, but the bullets exploded relatively harmlessly in his muscles and organs; as an Ork, pain was almost unnoticeable, and he knew that he’d heal soon enough if he won the fight.

To his right, three of his Nobz unaccountably shrivelled up and turned to dust, but he ignored the strange occurrence and continued to have fun, cutting apart enemies with his pair of power claws; The Mega Gargants might not have won their fight, but Orkstein’s Mega Armour was working very well indeed!

Warboss Badfang picked up a nearby Space Marine and used his body (soon enough, corpse) to beat five more Marines to death. Most of the Marines were dead now, but so were most of his Boyz; The battle was still evenly balanced!

Through the smoke and chaos of the battlefield, Badfang glimpsed a large mechanical figure moving and slaying, a human Dreadnought!

Bursting through a squad of Marines in a spray of gore, Warboss Badfang roared a challenge to the Dreadnought, and charged headlong towards it. However, he was stopped in his charge as his strength failed him, his skin seeming too tight. He glimpsed a human Wyrdborg beside the Dreadnought, eyes glowing as he used his abilities to steal Badfang’s strength. The Dreadnought spoke in a dead, toneless fashion.

“Die now overlord Sun-Tzork, in the name of the Emperor.”  
“Waaaaaaa— wot?”

Weakened by psychic attacks from Inquisitor Gui, Warlord Gobgut Badfang did not last long in single combat with the Dreadnought containing Marshall Galfridus. The leader of the Ork invasion died a bit confused as to why the Dreadnought seemed to think he was the minor Warboss Sun-Tzork, but happy to have had a really fun scrap all the same.

#### Ork Horde Composition - Third Wall Attack (M40.951)

Infantry -	~300,000
Vehicles -	~9,000
Wheeled/Tracked War Engines -	~130
Stompa Class War Engines -	62
Gargant Class War Engines -	8
Great Gargant Class War Engines -	2
Mega Gargant Class War Engines -	0
Aircraft (Fighters) -	~80

#### Imperial Forces - Third Wall Defence (M40.951)

Infantry -	~500,000
Vehicles -	~2,000
Wheeled/Tracked War Engines -	~320
Ordinatus Majoris class War Engines -	21
Warhound Class Titans -	6
Reaver Class Titans -	1
Warlord Class Titans -	5
Emperor Class Titans -	1
Aircraft (Fighters) -	~80

### The Battle for the Walls, Hour 6 - 3300951M41

The battle for the Third Wall took another hour before it was finally decided. Having lost their supreme commander, the Orks began to fragment, fighting along tribal lines rather than according to an overall battle plan. Observing these trends, Chapter Master Pedro Kantor of the Crimson Fists used Land Speeders and Assault Marines to strike at areas of the Ork battle lines where warbands displayed banners pledging allegiance to different Warbosses or ideological clans.

Pulled up against each other by the Astartes' cunning attacks, the rival Warbosses, knowing that their overall commander had been slain, began to lose focus on the main battle and in some cases even started fights amongst themselves. The confusion spread by the Space Marines, backed by the return of the Emperor Titan *Riddle of Steel* to the main battle zone, proved decisive. Gradually over the course of the sixth hour, the Xenos' attempts to scale the Third Wall lessened until finally the surviving green skinned aliens, along with their remaining serviceable war engines and Gargants, pulled back behind the Second Wall.

The rebuff was not achieved without loss to the Imperials, however, as the Reaver Titan *Steel Doom* and the Warlord Titans *Deus Machination* and *Towering Steel* were knocked out, in the case of *Deus Machination* with a devastating critical hit to its plasma reactor that killed hundreds of Skitarii infantry caught up in the blast wave.

### The Days After - 3400951M41—3100953M41

For several days after the initial battle, it seemed as if the Orks would re-group under a new leader and renew their assault. However, following a flank attack by recalled elements of the southern Attilan Rough Riders army, as well as a sustained bombardment from Skitarii and Imperial Navy aircraft formations, the Ork army quit the field and began to withdraw, taking as many of their damaged war engines as they could with them. Whichever Warboss had come to supremacy, it was clear that he regarded a period of recuperation and repairs for his forces as more important than continued attacks against the Third Wall.

The respite was welcome for the Imperial forces. The Crimson Fists had lost almost a hundred Marines killed during the battle, whilst the Black Templars had lost a comparable number of battle brothers. The Skitarii garrison had lost over a quarter of a million infantry.

Still, the relentless Xenos attacks had been finally blunted, just thirty kilometres from Port Omega, and from that moment on, the ultimate fate of the war for Achill-Quag was never in doubt. Within a month, continued reinforcements meant that the Imperial military forces came to outnumber the Orks for the first time, and over the months that followed their new logistical advantage allowed General Arnold of the Imperial Guard to begin new attacks with his forces, slowly pushing back the Orks.

In the years that followed, first Complex 1 was recaptured by the Imperial Guard forces and put back into service processing algae for the good of the Imperium. West of the Phobos Mountains, Complex C was recaptured by the northern Rough Rider army of Attila, followed in the spring of the following year by Complex D.

The xenos fabrication yards around Port Alpha, previously engaged in constructing machines of war, began to turn out spacecraft instead, as hundreds of thousands of Orks sought to leave the planet and find a war that was winnable. Others, the majority, chose to stay, fight, and die on Achill-Quag.

Finally, in a massive engagement involving millions of infantry, Port Alpha was retaken, four years after it had first fallen to the surprise Ork attack. The Skitarii forces of Port Alpha, holed up under siege for the entire war in Port Alpha's Habitation arcology, sallied forth to join the combined Imperial army in a last great attack that crushed the last major Ork forces.

Whilst Achill-Quag would be riven with moderate warfare for generations to come, and could never again be free of the spores that birthed new Orks each year in the wild places beyond Imperial control, the Xenos menace was brought down to a manageable level that the permanent Skitarii garrison on Achill-Quag was capable of dealing with.

Gradually, Imperial armies began to leave the resource world, destined for other wars. The Crimson Fists intervention force and the Black Templars Crusade were first to withdraw, leaving soon after the battle for the walls, once eventual Imperial victory was secure. Both forces would be instrumental in winning several more wars for the Imperium before the dust had settled on Achill-Quag's last major clash of arms.

The Rough Riders of Attila, both of their armies denuded by years of constant warfare, were disbanded as active military formations and their twenty thousand survivors allowed to settle on Achill-Quag. Attempted Adeptus Mechanicus objections were overridden by a stern command from Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui, who had regularly visited the war-torn planet during the years following the battle for the Walls. The Attilan colonists maintained the traditions of their homeworld, their horses running free over the meadows of Achill-Quag, and in the fullness of time new Rough Rider regiments would be raised by the colonists to fight off-world for the Imperium.

Most of the remaining Imperial Guard infantry regiments, originally intended for the Eastern Tyrannic Wars, were re-formed and distributed to fortress worlds around the Ork Empire of Charadon.

The Legio Destructor Titan detachment repaired as many fallen Titans as they could, and interred the rest in deep graves, erecting monuments to their glory over each grave.

At the last, Achill-Quag was handed back to the Adeptus Mechanicus, for the Skitarii and the proud Knights of Achill to stand watch over the lonely resource planet forever more.

### Timeline - The War for Achill-Quag

- 950.1—Ork Invasion. Port Alpha falls
- 950.2—Titan Quattro Legio *Riddle of Steel*, Skitarii & Attilan armies, sent as reinforcements from Accatran.
- 950.6—Convoy harvesting methods adopted to minimise losses of Industrious Engines to Ork attacks.
- 950.7—Complex D falls to Ork attacks.
- 950.75—Reinforcement fleet from Accatran arrives at Achill-Quag Rough Rider armies and Titan Legion forces go on the offensive.
- 950.8—Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui hears of Achill-Quag's plight, begins sending Imperial Guard reinforcements, requests support from the Crimson Fists & Marshall Galfridus' Crusade Fleet.
- 950.85—Titan forces are pushed back to Complex 1. Complex 1 falls to Ork attacks, followed by general Imperial retreat.
- 951.2—The Omega Council. Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui arrives on Achill-Quag, Tech Lord Gonvitch I executed for fraudulently re-directing war resources.
- 951.25—Complex 3 is captured and then immediately abandoned by the Ork Warboss Sun-Tzork
- 951.3—The Battle for the Walls. Death of Ork Warlord Gobgutz Badfang.
- 951.4—General Ork retreat to Complex 1.
- 951.8—Ork Warboss Stabber Krewlnob pronounces himself Warlord of Achill-Quag.
- 952.3—Complex 1 is recaptured by Imperial forces. Death of Ork Warlord Stabber Krewlnob.
- 952.5—Ork Warboss Harley Orkison pronounces himself Warlord of Achill-Quag.
- 952.9—Complex C is recaptured by Attilan Rough Riders.
- 953.0—Convoy harvesting methods abandoned in the east of Achill-Quag as the threat level falls.
- 953.3—Complex D is recaptured by Imperial forces.
- 953.5—Ork transport Spacecraft begin leaving Port Alpha at a rate of one per week. Some are intercepted by Imperial blockade, but most escape.
- 953.9—Large portions of the Ork Rok that landed at Port Alpha in 950.1 take off and head for deep space. Space battle involving the Rok and the Adeptus Mechanicus Cruiser *Boundless Devotion* proves inconclusive, and the Rok escapes.
- 954.1—Last Ork Transport Spacecraft leaves Achill-Quag.
- 954.4—Port Alpha is recaptured by Imperial Forces. Presumed death of Ork Warlord Harley Orkison.
- 954.5—Attilan Rough Riders granted right of settlement on the north-west shores of Achill-Quag.

### Timeline— Selected Events, 950 M41 to 000 M42

#### M41

- 955—Imperial forces complete their withdrawal from Achill-Quag.
- 956—Blood Axe Kommando forces, in hiding since the end of the war for Achill-Quag, raid Port Alpha, steal a bulk transporter and escape the system.
- 962—Achill-Quag Port Alpha reaches pre-war export levels.
- 965—Heavy Feral Ork attacks on Achill-Quag in the spring and autumn seasons.
- 968—Ork Warboss Sun-Tzork surfaces in an attack on another Adeptus Mechanicus resource planet, Agrii II, 50 light years to the galactic south west.
- 969—Fall of Agrii II to Ork forces.
- 972—Adeptus Mechanicus relief forces sent from Accatran Forgeworld to Agrii II find the planet under the sway of Feral Orks, its technology stripped. Sun-Tzork and his army are nowhere to be found.
- 976—Ork Kroozer *Badfang* arrives in the Achill System, delayed 26 years by strong Warp tides. Its Ork crew are found to be mostly dead of starvation years before its arrival. *Badfang* slips back into the Warp before a full destruction of the ship can be achieved.
- 981—Ork Big Mek Albork Orkstein rumoured to be involved in the destruction of the Ramiles Class Starfort *Tantalus*, 20 light years from Achill-Quag.
- 988—Big Mek Orkstein involved in technology sale to Snagrod, arch-arsonist of the Charadon Empire.
- 989—The War for Rynn's World. The Crimson Fists Chapter is almost annihilated by Orks from the Charadon Empire during the war.
- 992—Ork Warboss Sun-Tzork involved in a major raid on the fortress world Chun IX.
- 995—Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui faces his nemesis, Ork Warboss Sun-Tzork, in single combat on the ninth moon of Andathus. Tricked, he falls captive to the Orks and is placed in a stasis field atop Sun-Tzork's favourite Gargant, from where he is forced to watch helplessly the deaths of tens of thousands of Imperial citizens in battles against the Gargant.
- 998—Warboss Sun-Tzork and Ork Big Mek Albork Orkstein meet for the first time during the war for second moon of Andathus.
- 999—Warboss Sun-Tzork and Bik Mek Orkstein set out together to participate in the great war for the planet Armageddon.

#### M42

- 000—Inquisitor Lord Bernard Gui escapes his captors, and makes his way to Imperial forces, vowing revenge upon his nemesis. Marshall Galfridus' Crusade arrives to assist in the defence of planet Armageddon.