

The Storm Begins

Account of the Kerflon Campaign



Colonel Wissen left his men playing dice, stooped under the low compound doorway and out under the dark, starry sky of Tyrrell: outermost planet of the Kerflon System – and, Wissen noted as he spat into the bone dry dust – little more than an asteroid such as they had back in his home system of Crinan. He grew up on a crappy rock like this. Mined it for adamantium and relzor. That was until he had joined up of course.

Wissen's first posting had been on Ulant, in the Scarus Sector. It was there that they'd been put through the mincer. Also where he'd lost his right arm, to the undercut of a chaos cultist. The wound wouldn't have been so bad if there had been proper treatment, but the planet was in chaos. The Crinan IVth had barricaded themselves in to the governor's palace and held out for three months against cultists and greenskins. Then the greenskins started attacking the cultists. That was what had saved them. Regardless – Wissen had left his right arm behind, and most of the men he had joined up with. In the ten thousand men of the Crinan IVth had been reduced to a poultry 3567. There was no time to rest of course, just time to refill their numbers with fresh recruits from Crinan. And then they'd been posted on again. To a listening post on the dark side of this bloody rock.

Wissen checked on his sentries. He couldn't think why there needed to be such a large army presence on this place – but the cog priests were up to something. He'd seen them around with their half-human dogs. There was no love lost between the cog priests and the men of the IVth. The Crinan priests warned them against fraternising with the idolaters and Wissen was happy to pass on that order. They'd been promised a crusade next, Wissen thought as he ducked back inside. There were rumours that a crusade was being raised to drive Abbadon from Cadia. Wissen's mouth salivated at the chance to kill heretics. He prayed that he and his men would be permitted to join in that venture.

Trooper Grippen thought he saw something out there in the darkness. He shone his torch and saw something huge rear up from the perpetual gloom. He thought his eyes were fooling him for a moment – but there was barely time for him to realise his mistake – as the huge creature darted forward and impaled him on the end of a claw five feet long.

Trooper Grippen managed to shout a warning with his dying breath, then committed his soul to the Golden Throne.

Wissen had no idea what had raised the alarm, but he knew his men well enough to know that there was trouble afoot.

The dice were abandoned as the men piled out of the bunker, right behind him. Already there was the dull rattle of heavy bolters. The tracers lit the empty shadows between the asteroids and craters. He could see shapes moving – hundreds of them – faster than seemed possible. The bolters found their target and Wissen could see a



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It seemed that they were all heading for the listening outpost, rather than the hab zones. Wissen felt a prickle of fear. There was a reason that he and his men had been put here: and that was to keep the listening post open. The camp alarm began to ring out and Wissen could see the sentinels begin to move towards the listening post – but suddenly there were shouting voices and he turned and saw twenty scuttling figures rushing towards him. They were short but lightning fast. He led his men against them – but his men were cut down in an instant. Wissen was fighting alone, he lashed out to left and right – felt his power sword connect. The creatures were all over him – he lashed out right and left and felt razor claws shredding his uniform and flesh alike. Wissen stumbled and fell – but he clawed his way back up and cut another of the creatures down. As he was finally overwhelmed he could smell the unmistakable scent of burning promethium. There was the unmistakable roar of a hellhound. Wissen shut his eyes and prayed that the men from the hab zone had arrived in time.



The battle was ferocious, but the men of Crinan IVth did not stand a chance – the aliens were upon them before they had a chance to unleash their deadly volleys.



Twenty minutes later there was a strange silence over Listening Post R-23. A few pools of promethium still burnt, strange winged creatures cremated in their midst. But all around there lay the yellow and blue uniforms of the men of Colonel Wissen's command. None of them lived. Nothing moved. In the listening tower an intercom crackled.

'R-23 please answer.'

'R-23 - please answer!'

There was the crackle of static then the radio went silent.

From the gory insides of the listening station, a single creature came, carapaced and many limped like a huge walking insect. But there was a malevolent intelligence to the way the thing moved, ichor dripping from a massive gun that seemed fused to the side of the creature. It sprayed the radio one more time, dousing the thing in acidic ichor, then dropped into the dust, and turned and followed the other of its kind. A single mind driving them on.

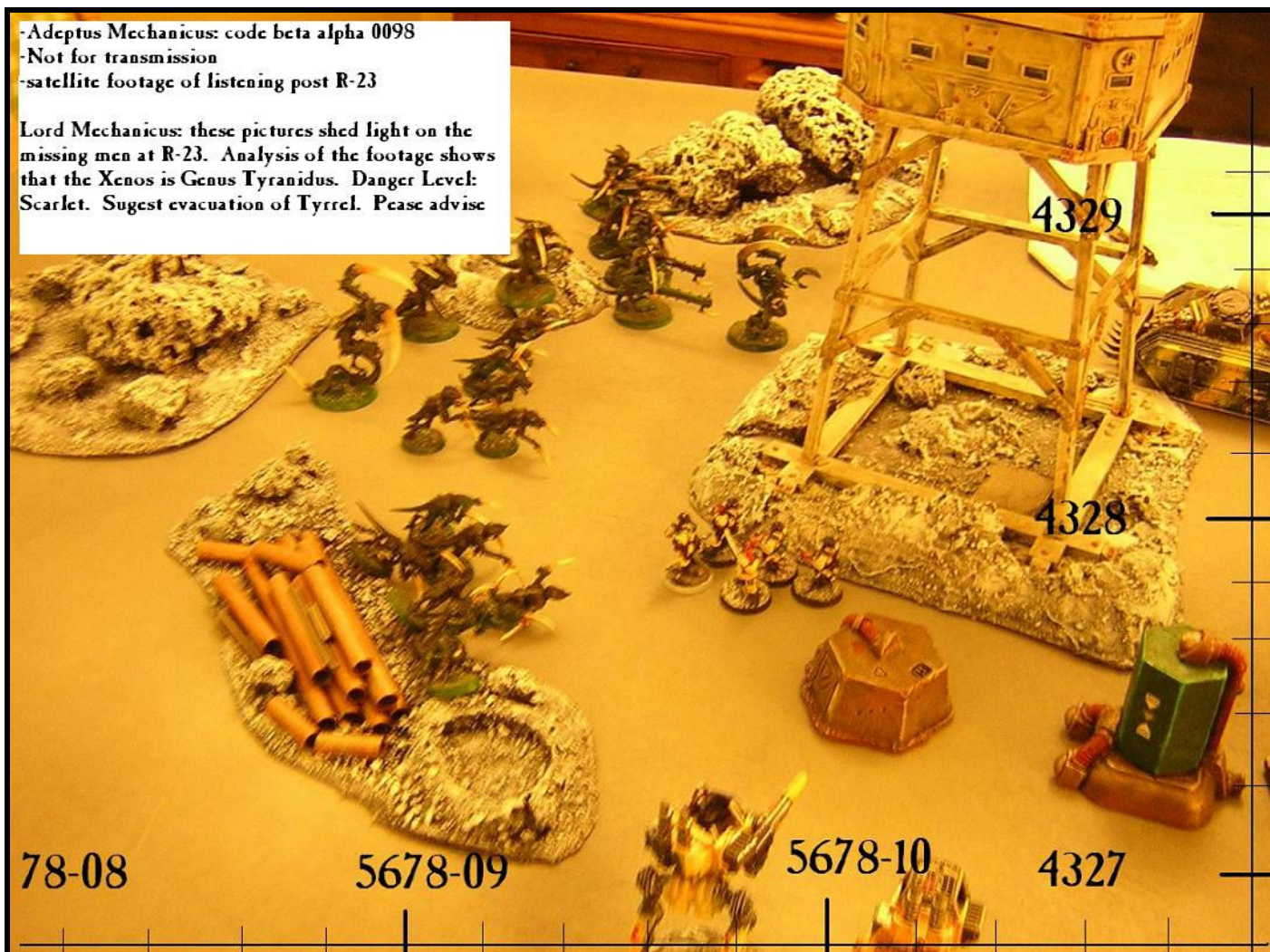
Ambush

The hand of the servitor moved without thought or understanding as it wrote onto the fine vellum. A cloaked figure stepped up behind and read the report. Still no news from R-23.

The tech priest considered for a moment, his rasping breath coming through the intricate respirator. He took the report to the arch priest. His superior's face had been almost entirely replaced by wires and metal. Only one eye still stared out, now dead and lifeless, replaced by artificial sight.

The Arch-priest took the report. He had seen the satellite pictures. The fate of R-23 could now, not be doubted.

'Inform Colonel Skull,' the mechanical voice box said. The tech priest nodded, bowed stiffly with the sound of metal plates sliding over one another.



Colonel Skull read the reports and summoned Colonel Gertes. He showed him the same piece of paper that the tech priest had given him.

Colonel Gertes read it. 'Three days?' he said.

Skall nodded.

‘Anything else?’

Skall shook his head. ‘You know what these damn cog-priests are like. Can’t answer a question straight.’

Gertes nodded. ‘I’ll kick that bastard Wissen’s butt.’

‘Make sure you do,’ Skall said, and slapped Gertes on the arm. ‘And make sure nothing kicks you!’

It was a one week drive to R-23, on the dark side of Tyrrell.

The road was dry and dusty, the fine planet ash swirling up behind the men. Colonel Gertes walked with his men, the dust from the chimera’s and the hellhound clogging their mouths and nostrils. As they walked Father Jonsel Franklin walked with them, keeping up a round of prayers to inspire the men. The prayers were the same set that the men had prayed Ulant – when they had been abandoned by the retreating forces of the Imperium. It was only those prayers that had saved them from complete annihilation. It kept the men free from contamination. The Crinan IVth had one of the fewest levels of desertion in the whole Scarus Sector. Relief had finally come from the hands of the Index Astartes, descending like gods from the sky and blasting the cursed heretic from the streets and ruins of Ulant Prime.

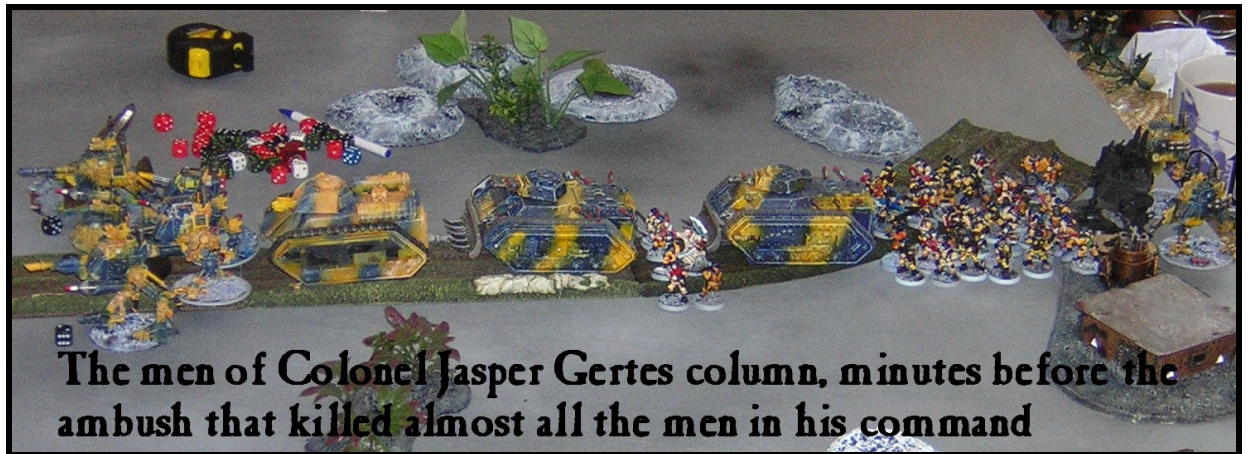
Father Jonsel had just started another round of prayers when the hellhound at the front of the column came to a halt.

Colonel Jonsel stepped forward to shout up the line when there were shouts of alarm from the sentinels at the front of the column – and they moved to either side to cover the men.

‘Ambush!’ Jonsel shouted, and his men responded immediately – fanning out to cover the backs of the other men.

Within seconds there were more thuds as gobs of ichor rained amongst them – men screaming in terror as the acid seared their flesh. A creature 18 feet high swirled in combat with two sentinels to the left, while F Squad were set upon by a terrifying whirlwind of death.

Colonel Jonsel did not look back as the sound of warfare erupted. He had a mission to perform, and while men could be replaced, these sacred machines could not. The men behind knew that they would die, and commended themselves to the Golden Throne. They would take many Xenos with them.



Captain Guntern Flex charged into combat, but the speed and size of the creature unnerved him. There was a moment of panic, that he regretted for the rest of his short life, and he turned and ran, leaving his men to avenge the shame of his cowardice.



Trooper Frener saw his captain flee the battle and swore that he would make up in bravery for his craven captain. As he marched forward another swarm of hormagaunts break from the cover and knew in that instant that his service to the emperor had come to an

end. The men of E Squad rallied close behind him as he led his men forward, firing furiously. The volley of las shots slaughtered the creatures. They took the charge of the remaining creatures and cut them down with righteous fury.



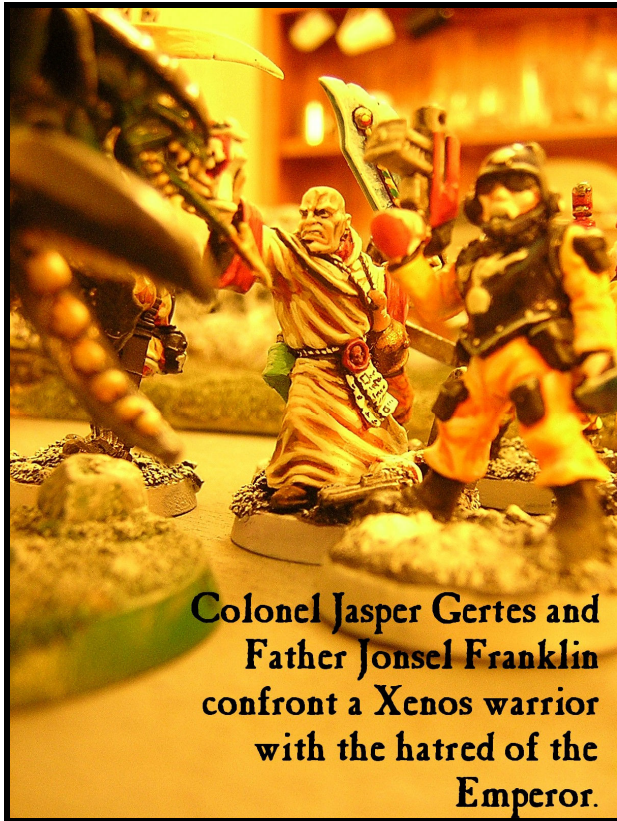
Sergeant Helm only had four men left, but he knew no better way of using their lives than in allowing the Colonel and the machines at the front of the column to escape. Although his life would end that day, there was some satisfaction that the Colonel might yet fulfil their sacred duty.

Behind the strange Tyrrel shrubs, Sergeant Helm saw a sickening gathering of many limbed creatures. He had heard rumours of such monstrosities, and when they came into view – sickly green with many claws – they rivalled even the most terrible of mutants he had seen on Ulant.

Sergeant Helm screamed hatred at the Xenos; he did not need to look back to know that his men were following. The creatures seemed startled to be charged – but it was long enough to let the Colonel escape.

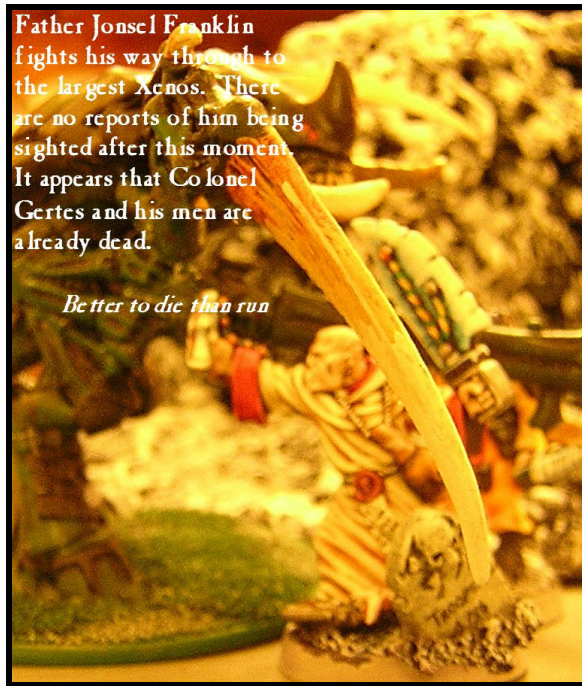
Colonel Gertes hurried forward, as hellhound and chimeras moved forward looking for an escape route. But as they left the screams of his men behind he saw a number of huge monstrosities move in to close the trap. There would be no escape.

Screaming fury he led his men in a charge against the first of these beasts. Father Jonsel cut it down as he recited the Litany of Hate. The Helios Brigade chimera exploded to the right and only two men staggered from the dripping wreck as acid ate away at the ceramic armour. A net of razor vines fell on his men, cutting three to shreds. There were five sentinels in front of him, but they exploded as huge maggots of stinking acid splattered over them: a hellhound and



**Colonel Jasper Gertes and
Father Jonsel Franklin
confront a Xenos warrior
with the hatred of the
Emperor.**

Colonel Gertes prayed that they would get through, led his men in a desperate charge against a creature that was four times taller than him. He never saw the blast of shredding vines that shredded him into chunks of quivering flesh. Only Father Jonsel survived, his robe tattered and bloody. He clutched his rosarius, still chanting the Litany of Hate, and charged the Xenos abomination.



The Battle of Frinol Pass

Colonel Skall came into his room, swearing. No news from Wissen or from Gertes. He cursed. Something was wrong, of that he was sure, and as a precaution he had summoned his men back from the more isolated posts. Worryingly many of them had not responded.

He walked to his desk in the rough camp on the outskirts of the Tyrrel Space port. There was a dull roar as another Adeptus Mechanicus craft took off. He did not trust these cog-priests. He began to suspect that the sudden activity had something to do with the disappearance of his men.

He was about to summon his aide when he noticed a sealed envelope on his desk. He picked it up and tore it open. Inside there was a pictslate. He pressed the button and a picture flickered to life. It was fuzzy and rambling – like a satellite pict – focussing in on a point on the planet. There were flashes, and Colonel Skall realised that the flashes were flashes of guns. A volley showed up as a bright sparkle of flashes. The screen went fuzzy again, and then the picture changed – and was a nightvision shot of something large and inhuman.

Fear prickled Colonel Skall's skin. Tyranids. On Tyrrel.

'I am taking control of this planet,' Colonel Skall informed the Arch Priest.

The hood remained still, the eyes shadowed. Colonel Skall could feel the Skitari tense around him. He had no doubts in the justice of his decision, however it may offend the Adeptus Mechanicus.

One of the Skitari took a step forward, but Colonel Skall drew a pistol from under his white coat and pointed it at the Arch Priest. The wires that kept the cyborg alive twitched threateningly and there was a hiss of hydraulics, or was it a breath?

‘In the name of the Emperor I take command of this planet,’ Skall said, his voice rising in intensity and conviction. ‘And I shall kill every man that stands in my way.’

There was a moment of silence. The Skitari did not return to their positions. Skall put his finger on the trigger and squeezed. There was a hum as the plasma gun began to heat its terrifying ammunition.

At last the Arch Priest made a movement and the Skitari returned to their positions.

‘So be it Colonel,’ the Arch priest’s voice came through a mechanical voice-box. It betrayed no emotion.

Colonel Skall chanted the Litany of Righteous Purity at the abomination in front of him before slipping the gun back into its holster. He marched back outside, where his men waited, their helmet’s scrawled with religious texts.

‘Bring the commanders to me,’ Colonel Skall ordered. ‘We have work to do.’

There was a day of frenetic activity as men were marshalled and all the routes to the spaceport were blocked. On the wall of Skall’s command post red markers showed all the posts with which contact had been lost. It was a frightening sight, and the spread was terrifying. Whatever was out there was moving faster than even the Imperium’s armoured columns could manage.

Across each route to the starport yellow flags had been posted, showing where men of the Crinan IVth had drawn a line in the sand. *They shall advance no further*, was the day’s motto. Each man chanted it under his breath as they worked – digging trenches in the dust, and unravelling coils of razorwire, checking their weapons.

Skall was handed a piece of paper. He had twelve thunderbolts. There were five more but they were not suitable for flight.

‘Tell those cursed Navy boys that they’ll be genetic soup if they don’t get those thunderbolts flying!’

His aide nodded. 'Faith is my Shield!' he shouted.

The radio crackled as his commanders reported in. Colonel Skall listened as he stared at the map, at a cluster of blue flags. The Helios Brigade. Five hundred crack troops. Colonel Skall's best men. All veterans of the Thirteenth Black Crusade. They had been through hell and back: they would sell their lives against any enemy of humanity – but Skall needed to hold them back. Just in case the Tyranids should break through. He needed days to evacuate the planet. He only prayed that he had that time.

All of a sudden the radio crackled again. 'Sightings!' the man's voice shouted. 'Sightings!'

Colonel Skall grabbed the handset from the operator.

'Identify!'

But before the man had a chance to answer, all the men started reporting in.

'Xenos sightings!'

'Enemy located!'

'Faith in the Emperor!'

Colonel Skall shook his head in horror. A whole army, controlled by a single mind. The thought of such a heretical abomination made him curl his lip in hatred. He took the handset and flicked the switch into broadcast mode.

'All channels hear me!' he shouted, drawing his plasma pistol and brandishing it as he spoke. 'Motto for today: They shall advance no further!'



A Hive Tyrant is spotted for the first time. These monstrous warriors are the spearhead of determined Tyranid Attacks

The men of Dranan Platoon leapt up to the barricades. Over them stood a wall of steel, sentinels with holy scriptures riveted onto their armour casing. They towered over the men: awesome and majestic, gave them faith and confidence.

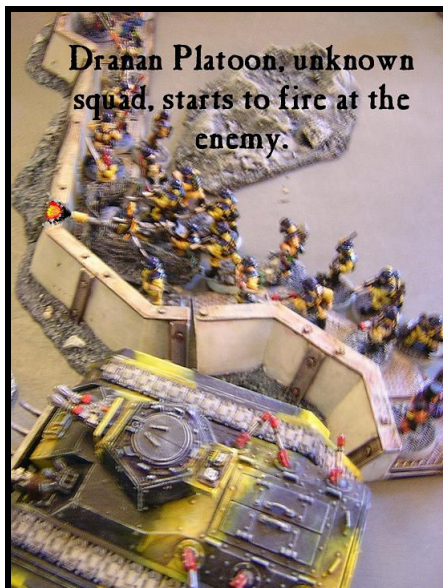
'They shall advance no further!' Colonel Fraltor shouted and his men chanted back in unison.

The air fizzed with ozone as the sentinels got the range and began to fire.

They shall advance no futher.

The line had been drawn and try as they might the tyrannids could not break the thin blue line. A few hormaguants managed to dodge through the fire, their swarms falling around them till the dead lay in piles – and they threw themselves with terrible ferocity at the men behind the barricades – but a wall of bayonets and rifle butts met them – staved in Xenos-skulls and shattered alien limbs. There were heaps of spent lasrifle cartridges around the men's feet. When one man fell another took his place until there were no more men to step forward and gaps began to appear. But always the men aimed and shot and killed.

They shall advance no futher.

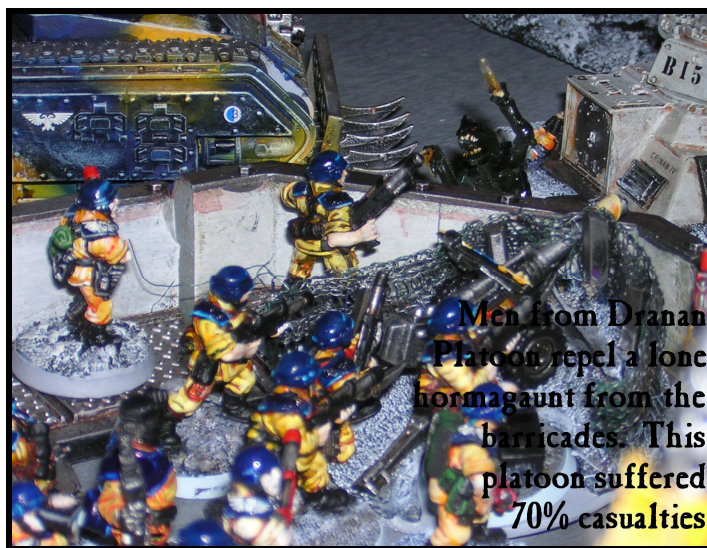


There was a scream of fury as flying beasts swept down from the sky. There was a volley of fire, and two of the sentinels turned and blasted away: shredding the bat-like monsters – leaving them crashing them to the ground. But at the same time Colonel Fraltor saw a huge beast tearing at one of the sacred sentinels. He led his men in a ferocious charge, Father Alman Kurt chanting besides him.



A huge creature managed to fight through the ferocious fusillade. Trooper Gaunt could feel its fetid breath as it reared over the barricade. He flicked the switch on his metlagun, rammed the butt into his shoulder and fired. The blast of molten fuel singed his eyebrows, and he blinked the flash away

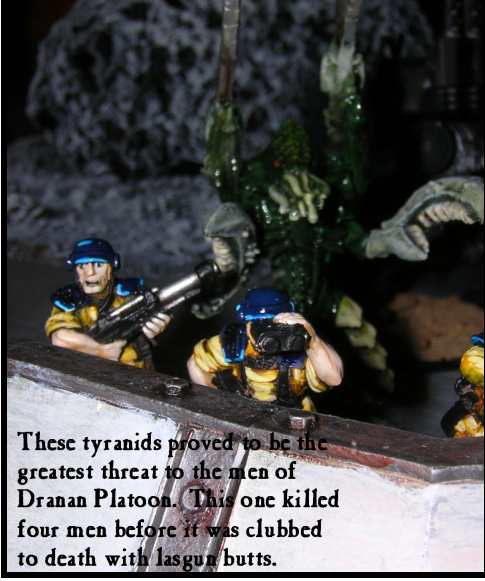
from his vision. Thank the emperor! The creature was little more than a steaming pile of flesh.



All along the line, the men of Dranan platoon kept up a ferocious rate of fire. From either flank gun emplacements turned back and forth, the twin-linked heavy bolters shredding Xenos with their heavy metal rounds. The first and second wave had been cut down, but there were more

and more – and behind them there were huge lumbering creatures, with weapons longer than the barrel of a tank.

A SHELL EXPLODES AS AN UNIDENTIFIED TYRANID LEAPS UP IN THE REAR.



These tyranids proved to be the greatest threat to the men of Dranan Platoon. This one killed four men before it was clubbed to death with lasgun butts.

Trooper Veen knew that if those beasts should come within range then their line could never hold. He looked to the sky, but there was no sign of the air support they had been promised. Faith, he told himself, faith.

All around him men were screaming as bio-bombs rained down – exploding in a shower of deadly fragments or in clouds of poisonous gas. Trooper Veen aimed again – but the retort of his shot triggered another bio-mine to explode. There was a shower of acid and five men fell – their eyes staring at the sky – as if



Tyranid Lictor springs up behind Crinan lines

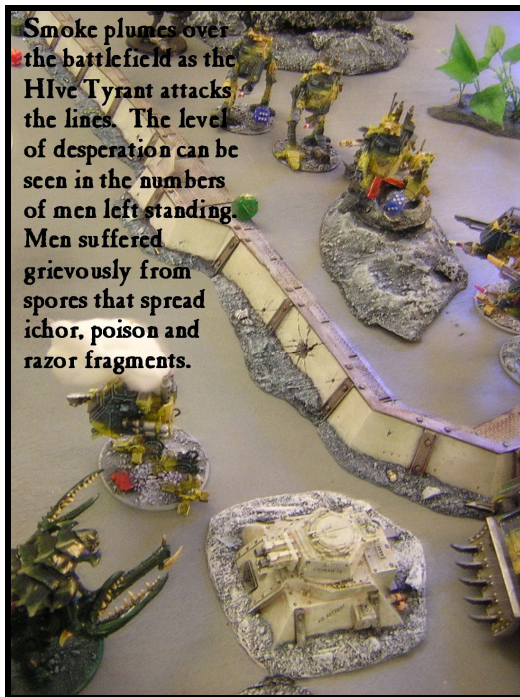
‘Air support!’ the operator screamed. ‘Where the feck are you!?’

Trooper Sincer bit his lip and slammed another cartridge into rifle, aimed and fired. The operator was still shouting, but he kept firing without regard for his survival. He only existed to kill.

Thrones! He had never seen such a fusillade – the guns of the sentinels blasting continuously away, rockets whizzing overhead, and the constant rattle of heavy bolters.

He had no idea what hit him, until he vomited blood and saw a huge claw stick a foot from his chest.

‘Air support!’ the intercom operator shouted, but still nothing came.



Smoke plumes over the battlefield as the Hive Tyrant attacks the lines. The level of desperation can be seen in the numbers of men left standing. Men suffered grievously from spores that spread ichor, poison and razor fragments.

Trooper Wreter dropped the mortar round and there was a whoop! as it fired across the mouth of the valley. Two more *whoops!* followed, and there was a few more seconds before the barrage fell – then earth and Xenos sprang upwards and he knew that the salvo had hit.

‘Again!’ he shouted and Trooper Pren handed him another mortar shell. Wreter adjusted the trajectory of the mortar, then dropped the shell in. There was a moment’s pause before the charge fired – *whoop!* – and he peered to see if it hit

home.



Rare shot of unidentified lascanon sentinel squad as they draw sights on the Hive Tyrant

Commander Brane Deelton, pilot of Death Angel, cursed the maps he had been given as he circled one more time. This time he spotted the place and brought his craft in low. He expected the position to be overrun by now, but instead he saw a heap of tyranid

dead heaped in front of the imperial position – but even so, the barricade was almost deserted as guardsmen fought off infiltrators, and only the sentinels still stood, defiant and furious: shredding all the Xenos who attacked. But through this hail of death two lumbering creatures moved, huge and terrifying. Shot after shot bounced off their tough carapaces. Without help the lines would be over run.



Xenos make a dash across the final stretch of no mans land as gun emplacement and soldiers take fire. Note the squad are also being attacked from behind.

Commander Brane dipped the nose of his thunderbolt and accelerated. The creatures turned with fury, and he the air was suddenly thick with missiles of ichor and acid. His plane shuddered but there was no serious harm –and he aimed at the lead

creature and then pulled the trigger, let both bombs go.

The lead creature screamed in pain as a round hit home.

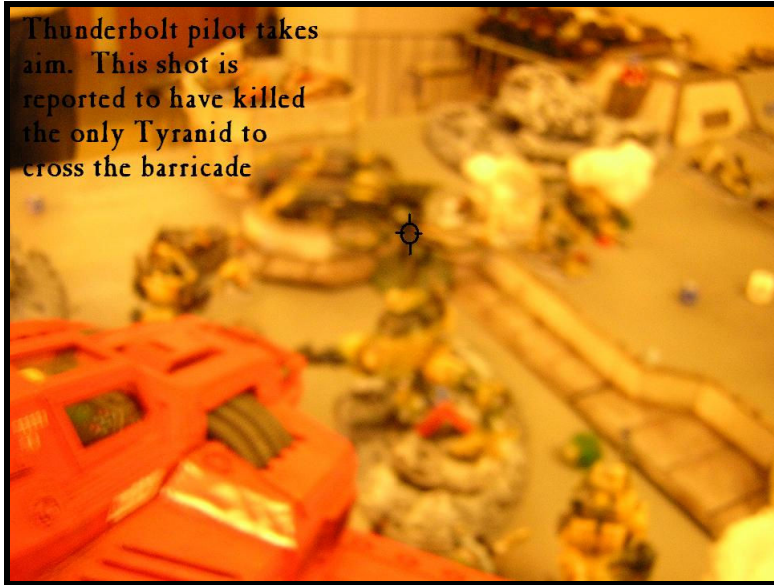
Commander Brane pulled up sharply to avoid the walls of a massive crater. It took him almost a minute to bring the craft back round to the battlefield, and he swept in from where he had left before. In the time he had been away the lead Xenos had crossed the barricade, and the brave men of the Crinan IVth were falling back – unable to fight this monster.



Thunderbolt pilot locks onto Hive Tyrant. Due to innacurate maps supplied by the Adeptus Mechanicus, this was only of only two attack runs made.

The second attack fatally wounded the Tyranid leader.

He could only see two figures below him as he came in again, guns blazing.



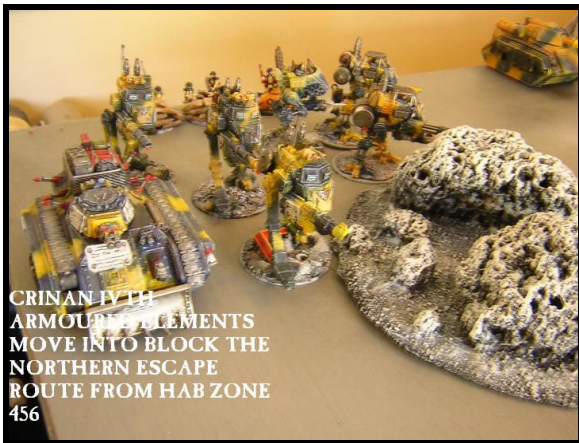
Commander Brane flicked open the trigger latch and aimed carefully. This time there was no shots to disrupt his attack run, it seemed the tyranid attack was almost exhausted. He swept over the battlefield, a sonic blast deafening the men – but in his wake the lead creature

staggered and then fell, roaring hatred and hurt. The creature roared again – plaintive and sad, but the presence that had guided its life from hatching to now had gone. It had failed. The Hive Mind had abandoned it.

The Trap Closes

Colonel Reden checked his watch, and peered into the periscope. There was a ruined hab zone with a few patches of vegetation. The enemy was down there somewhere. They had been cut off and surrounded. And none of them would leave. That was essential. This band had penetrated deep into the defences and they might be able to threaten the evacuation columns already hurrying to the space port.

Colonel Reden felt the weight of his power sword on his back and checked the maps that he had been given. It was rough ground, a number of large meteors scattering the barren landscape. He tapped his finger on the route that he suspected the enemy would take. He had positioned himself right in the path he thought the enemy would take. It would be an honour to die in the service of the Emperor, and no Xenos would pass him until he was dead.



Mortar shells begin to rain down on the ruins of Hab Zone 456. Laser beams began to rip into the bushes and rock fields.

The battle had begun. Ferocious shooting began as the Xenos sprinted for the enemy lines – seeking to break through their lines. The air was sizzling with ozone.

Bodies were ripped apart by bolts of multilaser, and Colonel Reden waved his power sword as he fired his bolt pistol at the sprinting lines. The Xenos returned fire, goutts of venom and nets of barbs shredding steel and flesh together.

Overhead there was a low roar as a thunderbolt screamed overhead, spreading carnage across the Xenos lines. Within minutes the Xenos lines had been cleared of smaller Xenos and only the largest creatures still came on – seemingly impervious to the torrent of missiles fired at it. The minutes ticked by and the enemy came on – shrugging off the hail of lead and laser bolts.



Captain Treed Brand circled his thunderbolt, Death's Angel, back over the battlefield.

Already the battlefield has been cleared of smaller Xenos.

The larger Xenos draw ever closer to the imperial lines.

Surprisingly they chose the northern escape route. Thanks to the Golden Throne, they were almost entirely extermination.

Men of the Brendston Armoured Fist Brigade disembark to engage the enemy Xenos.



Ferocious fighting breaks out as men of the XVIIth Company are slaughtered. Eye witness reports testify that none of the men ran and that a number of dead Xenos were found afterwards with their bodies.

A few Xenos break cover, and meet the justice of death.



A final Xenos makes a dash for safety,
Ignorant to the fact that it has been targeted
By an unknown squad. Seconds later the
Xenos combusted in a melta blast.

The Evacuation Begins

Lieutenant Greuter was kept waiting for more than an hour. The delay made him restless. There was something secret being planned and he didn't like it. He didn't like the delay. He wanted to take fire and death to the Xenos, and all this sitting at base was not to his liking.

At last the door opened and he was shown in. As he marched into the room, his usual confidence was thrown as he saw a figure standing a foot over his commander. It was dressed in all white armour, and when it turned, that he realised who and what he was looking at: and it was as close to how he imagined the Emperor in his youth, in the time of the Heresy.

It was a Sergeant from the Adeptes Astartes. Lieutenant Greuter dropped to his knee and chanted the litany of repentance of the unholy.

'I have a mission for you,' Colonel Skull said.

The Lieutenant didn't dare raise his eyes.

'Stand man!'

Lieutenant Greuter stood. The Space Marine gave him a cursory look, noticed the mark of the Helios Brigade on his armour.

'You fought against the Arch Heretic?'

The marine's voice was deep and fierce.

Lieutenant Greuter nodded, but found himself short of words.

'I did, sir,' he said at last.

The marine nodded.

'Your commander has recommended you. I need men for a special mission. There is little chance of success, or even survival. We shall go into the heart of the enemy and bring fire and justice to the Xenos. Do you think your men would follow you?'

‘To the very pits of hell,’ Lieutenant Greuter said, with conviction.

‘Good. Because that might be exactly where we are going.’

Sergeant Wendel Drine of the Custodians Chapter led his men in prayer that night. They had happened to be in Hydaton on a special mission for their chapter, expunging the light of the heretic, when news came of possible Xenos infestation on Tyrrel. Their thunderbolt had landed that morning, and in order to assess the threat to the system it was necessary to get genetic material from the spawning zones of the Tyrnaids. From that it would be possible to discover if this was part of the scattered Hive Fleet Behemoth, or a new and sinister threat to the Imperium.

His seventeen Space Marines had been given assistance by men of a local Imperial Guard regiment, the Crinan IVth. They seemed reliable. A light infantry unit – almost no tanks – but who seemed to specialise in aggressive attacks. There were units he would have preferred, such as drop troops, but he had to do the best with what he had.

It seemed the Xenos had cleared all the planet except the space port area, and they did not seem to be expecting any attacks.

The plan was for the thunderbolt to ferry an attack force to within miles of the Tyranid spawning zone, then make a desperate dash – slaughter the small Tyranids protecting the spawning zone and then grab genetic material.

The Thunderbolt would rendezvous in five hours and lift them to safety. Unfortunately the fuel supplies would not allow them to airlift the IG units out. There were always sacrifices to be made.



Imperial Guard units hurry from the drop one to maintain the surprise element of the attack.

Sergeant Wendel Drine and his men wait for an opening to attack.

The Hive Mind senses intruders and hurries large bugs to the area.

It seems that a desperate fight is about to ensue.



Ferocious fighting breaks out. Resistance is stronger than anticipated.



The last reported sighting of Lieutenant Greuter as he assaults a large Xenos.

A number of his command squad can be seen attacking with him.

No survivors from this mission were ever heard from again and all their names have been added to the Roll of Honour on Crinan Prime.



A spy ship takes the last pictures of Lieutenant Greuter and his men, and the white flare of space marines of the Custodians Chapter can be seen streaking into the attack.

Unfortunately, no word was heard from Lieutenant Greuter, and no news has been heard from the Custodians' Chapter, despite a number of requests for information.

As no information has reach Imperial Command then it is assumed that the mission was a failure, and that if any genetic information was taken then it was either of no use, or of such terrifying import that the information has been suppressed.

Reports have come in that an Index Astartes Battle Barge has been seen entering the Kerflon System, although these rumours are



