

DEATHWATCH™

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A HISTORY OF THE
JERICHO REACH

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY



A LEGACY OF WAR

'We are the Imperium; we are a slave to our past. Our future is bound to things that are lost to memory and legend. This is our strength, our curse and our destiny. Ask me not of the future; ask me instead what fate is written in the deeds of the dead.'

—Yoren Kipraus, Cardinal of Verronus, martyred 245.M36

This document is a brief timeline of selected events pertaining to the history of the Jericho Reach, the wider events that have shaped it and those of the Deathwatch, whose tireless vigils have held sway there. Amidst upheaval and invasion, the Deathwatch have remained. Amidst crumbling foundations of the Imperium's might and the return of ancient foes, the Deathwatch have remained. Amidst the conquests of the Achilus Crusade and the ravages of Hive Fleet Dagon, the Deathwatch have remained.

THE PRE-HISTORY OF THE JERICHO REACH

[The Following data is culled from limited available sources.]

Unknown Circa M30 The Great Crusade

The Volume of Space later designated as the Jericho Reach is conquered during the Emperor's Great Crusade to unify the galaxy as a realm of Mankind by fleet forces primarily under the auspices of the Ultramarines and Night Lords Space Marine Legions. The area of the reach is sparsely populated by pre-Imperial Humanity, but bears many life-sustaining and resource-rich worlds, and as such, is quickly marked as an area for Imperial colonisation and expansion. Numerous minor xenos races are exterminated in an extremely bloody campaign to bring the Reach under Imperial control, and 132 worlds are ascribed to have been brought under Compliance. Such evidence that remains indicates that the most serious opposition to the Crusade here was encountered in purging an entrenched Ork pocket-empire in the Reach's Rimward portion, and most particularly in destroying the remnants of a highly technologically advanced, likely very ancient, and clearly non-humanoid xeno-form known in several records as the 'Ghanathaar' who dominated the Reach's border with the Galactic Eastern Fringe.* This later conflict destroys the capacity of numerous worlds in this portion of the Reach to sustain life, a factor that will shape the future Jericho Sector.

*The Chapel of Ages on Macragge, Chapter World of the Ultramarines, contains among its thousand shrines a Charantracite relief panel graven with the names of two thousand and thirty-three fallen Battle-Brothers who perished in the War against the 'Ghan' at Hark' which is believed to pertain to this mighty conflict, but no known other records are extant.

These records are taken from the Meageran Data-Looms of the slumbering cloister of Watch Fortress Erioch, Clearance level Heliotrope-Sigma: Available to all Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch. Further Access and Files Granted only by writ of Watch Commander Mordigael.

These records have had a number of important entries purged under mysterious circumstances. Some of the ciphers contain codes unique to an Inquisitor (and many thought dead). Must presume it is Herod... what kind of game is he playing?

Quist



THE HORUS HERESY

Through the foul machinations of Chaos and the sorrowful treachery of the Warmaster Horus, the Imperium is brought to the brink of annihilation by a great civil war that sees the realm of Humanity shattered asunder and fully half of the Space Marine Legions turn against their Emperor. Although Horus and his traitors are defeated in the Siege of Terra, the Emperor is grievously wounded and must ascend the Golden Throne and a time of great darkness and bloodshed ensues, lasting nearly a millennium before a semblance of order is restored throughout the Imperium. As part of this, those Space Marine Legions who remained loyal are broken up into smaller Chapters so that no such great rebellion can ever again be conceived.

Circa Early M32

Foundation: After an interregnum lasting over twelve-hundred years and often riven with bloodshed, the Imperium's hold over the Jericho Reach is finally fully cemented, and it is re-designated the Jericho Sector in the great Imperium Universalis. The Sector capital is the hive world of Verronus which once served as a Crusade way-station and has maintained its links to the wider human domains in the preceding centuries, while the Shrine world of Eleusis gains prominence some centuries later for its native saint and because, legend claims, it was blessed with the tread of the Emperor's foot.

The foundation of the Sector is not without incident, however, as a suppression campaign must be fought against shadowy xenos forces who have begun to prey upon the stars of the southern zone around the star system of Oertha. The menace is driven off, and the [Restricted Access], one of the Fleet-based Space Marine Chapters who take part in the campaign claim title and right to the feral world of [Restricted Access] as one of their recruiting grounds, binding them in part to the defence of the Jericho Sector.

*M32-M35**THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE JERICHO SECTOR*

With the wider Imperium swelling to a peak of power and influence, the Jericho Sector is but one of many that bloom into a renaissance of power and achievement as scores of Imperial worlds of every type are raised up from the rubble of past failures and the un-trodden soil of alien worlds in Mankind's name. The Jericho Sector becomes both a bastion and exemplar of Imperial civilisation and majesty carved from the cold wilderness of space with a burgeoning population that quickly soars into the hundred of billions. The Sector is a hub of commerce and industry with its bloody past all but forgotten, a realm of piety and devotion whose renown is such that it is spoken of on Holy Terra as a gem of Humanity's domains. Its goods are sought after as far afield as blessed Ultramar and distant Espandor.

With the passage of millennia the power and fortunes of the Imperium wax and wane, but the Jericho Sector manages to remain strong and prosperous despite the vicissitudes of war, invasion, and petty disaster. However, the dawning of M35 heralds both a darkening of the Sector's fate and the coming of the Deathwatch into the known histories of the Jericho Reach.

*401.M34-975.M35**THE NOVA TERRA INTERREGNUM*

The Imperium is dived into warring factions by civil war within the Imperial Commanders. During the centuries of battle and attrition that follow, the Jericho Sector (distant enough from the front lines to be spared direct contact with the conflict) is nevertheless a vocal and active supporter of the Terran Loyalists, channelling large volumes of manpower and resources to fuel the war. The drain of the Sector's resources becomes increasingly hard to sustain, leading to widespread shortages and unrest on many of the worlds of the Jericho Sector for the first time in living memory.



267.M35

The First Martyr: The first accessible record pertaining to Watch Fortress Erioch available to this Clearance level: Balthazar Ho'Tsun, Master of the Watch, Captain of the Imperial Fists, has died in an action in the Slinnar Drift. The enemy engaged and other forces involved are not recorded.

566.M35

The Unseen Death: The [Restricted Access] Space Marine Chapter is declared Excommunicate Traitoris for their high crimes against the Imperium. As a result, their goods and chattels are also declared forfeit by Inquisitorial order as they themselves are under sentence of death. The feral world of [Restricted Access] is therefore put under close scrutiny by the Deathwatch of Erioch according to this order, and thereafter subject to Exterminatus, its presence removed from all maps and charts of the Sector.

990.M35

The Burning of the White Palace: A series of Deathwatch Kill-teams are despatched to Vanir and perform a surgical strike against the Imperial Governor and his administration. The Kill-teams purge the Governor's palace of all life and then detonate a series of inferno devices that reduces it and the surrounding seven square kilometres of the planet's surface to cinder ash. This event leaves an indelible mark on Vanir's history, and enters the mythos of the native population of Vanir as the 'Wrath of the Black Angels.' This incident creates an enduring legend that survives even the later collapse of the planetary civilisation and unto the modern period.

M36-M37

THE FALL

The fall of the Jericho Sector from grace was swift, and much is recorded of its cause before the darkness descended and blotted out hope and reason.

Circa 100-600.M36

The Age of Apostasy: High Lord Goge Vandire tightens his stranglehold on the Imperium, beginning a monstrous tyranny that will become known as the Reign of Blood and thereby gives birth to the Age of Apostasy, the darkest period of bloodshed and strife the Imperium has known since the Great Heresy. As part of his web of power and control, Vandire ensures that numerous key Imperial Sectors singled out either by their strategic importance or wealth are firmly within his sphere of control by placing in control of them puppet-commanders whose only loyalty lies with him. The Jericho Sector is soon encompassed by this policy and at the High Lords' direct command a new ruling partnership comprising the Lady Sector Castagar Murella and Arch-Cardinal Udo Asterus are appointed as Over-Governors Temporal and Spiritual, respectively, of the Jericho Sector. All prelates and Imperial commanders must bend their knees to their new masters, whose authority is backed by squadrons of the Imperial Navy and tens of thousands of Frateris Templar shock troops. Taken by surprise by this unexpected turn of events and the legitimate authority that carries out the change, the control of Vandire's puppet rulers goes initially all but uncontested, and what little resistance that forms is quickly beaten down and a bloody period of tyranny and oppression previously unseen takes hold of the Jericho Sector. Meanwhile, the Over-Governors become infamous for the speed and callousness with which they swiftly proceed to expand their personal wealth and power.

The Deathwatch of the Sector, operating in secrecy, and with their extent and holdings unknown to Vandire's lackeys, follow their usual millennia-old pattern of non-interference in the Imperium's worsening domestic affairs unless they impinge on their remit. However, the Master of the Watch orders all under his command to studiously protect their inviolate nature and secrecy of the Watch. Any Frateris Templar vessel or force that strays too close or interferes with the Deathwatch's activities is quietly and efficiently diverted or destroyed as a matter of policy, and the secrecy of the Deathwatch is maintained.

245.M36

The Voice of Truth: Yoren Kipraus, Cardinal of Verronus, speaks out publicly against the 'worldly sin and excess' of Arch-Cardinal Asterus and is soon taken in the night by Frateris Templar forces. His basilica is stripped and laid waste and his clergy slain or enslaved. Kipraus himself, after months of torture, is declared a heretic and is torn apart by marrow-jackals as entertainment at a great feast in the honour of the anniversary of the Over-Governors' appointment. For his martyrdom, Kipraus will later be beatified by order of Sebastian Thor.

257-262.M36

The Poison Hatches Out: Revolts and armed resistance movements flare up across the Jericho Sector, as quota-tallies demanded by the Over-Governors increase exponentially. While most of these insurrections are quickly and brutally crushed, the resulting collateral damage is extensive, marring the Sector's production capacity further, which in turn means ever increasing demands to make up a shortfall that cannot be fulfilled, creating an ever-worsening cycle of repression and revolt.

The Over-Governors begin a paranoiac series of purges to remove anyone that they perceive as a potential threat and increase their revenue by plundering the coffers of the Sector's magnates and nobility. Among these, the estates and vessels of the then absent Free Captain Mordecai Haarlock, whose holdings span the Jericho Sector and several others beyond its borders, are seized by order of Over-Governor Murella Mordercai on his return. In protest, Haarlock resists arrest, slaying those who would hold him. He flees with a single vessel, the *Spear of Destiny*, into the Slinnar Drift, swearing bloody vengeance.



263.M36

The Lord of Lightning: In response to the opening of a cell in the Omega Vault and the revealing of a broken spear of archaic design and unknown material, a Deathwatch Kill-team undertakes a quest to the Feudal world of Sovereign, which they discover suffers under the grip of a murderous xenos energy-entity which has offered itself as a false messiah to the natives. The spectral creature has grown strong on the life-forces of thousands sacrificed in its name and is worshiped by an army of savage warriors. A single Deathwatch Battle-Brother returns to Erioch with the Thunder Lord's shattered crystal heart.

263-270. M36

Haarlock's War: Through force of personality and fear, Mordecai Haarlock convinces a vagabond fleet of privateers, refugee merchants and disgruntled captains to join him in a war of resistance against the Over-Governors and those that stood with them. They begin a guerrilla war of ambush and lightning attacks against tithe-shipping, lone Frateris Templar vessels and outposts, as well as smuggling weapons and priests who have turned against Vandire's mastery of the Ministorum to resistance movements against Vandire's rule across the Jericho Reach and in neighbouring regions.

Mordecai Haarlock displays an uncanny genius for this kind of shadowed warfare, both as a corsair captain and spymaster. As his infamy spreads, he becomes known as the Spider Lord. A single man at the centre of a web comprising countless strands of terrorist cells, spies, agents, and corsair ships. His emblem of the golden spider clutching an Imperial Eagle becomes a symbol of hope for those crushed under the Over-Governors' rule, and a mark of fear for their vassals.

266.M36

Haarlock and Erioch: The annals of Watch Fortress Erioch record the arrival of *The Spear of Destiny* on the edge of the Erioch system. Not knowing where he is becalmed, Mordecai Haarlock moves in-system, and he is swiftly surrounded and brought under the guns of the Deathwatch. Forced to power down, Mordecai and his close associates are taken on board the Watch Fortress under guard by Kill-teams.

Three days later, Haarlock and his ship are permitted to leave. He never speaks of what occurred within those three days, nor does he ever return to the Erioch system.

268.M36

The Darkfall: A vast city-sized vessel of unknown origin appears hurtling out of the Warp at great speed in the Andronicus system, and crashes into Andronicus Prime's second moon, shattering it. Debris rains down on the planet, blotting out the sun and laying its verdant forests waste. All life on Andronicus Prime is exterminated in a matter of days.

273. M36

The Defector: Revolt against the Reign of Blood has sparked across the Imperium like wildfire, and elsewhere, the holy Sebastian Thor's Confederation of Light is steadily destroying the strength of Vandire's rule. Fleeing the assassin's blade for his Thorian sympathies, Flag Captain Durek of the Imperial Navy battlecruiser *Power of Terra* encounters Haarlock and agrees to join his cause. With him he brings a network of contacts within Battlefleet Jericho and alliance with the Confederation of Light.

273.M36

The Darkling Stirs: Something alien stirs amid the frozen, night-shrouded surface of Andronicus Prime, and the Deathwatch respond. Kill-teams sweep the shattered ground and targeted bombardments take place from orbit. In the aftermath, a Watch Station is established in the turbulent asteroid fields that now strangle the near-orbital approaches to the planet.

275.M36

The Wrath of the Deathwatch: Lady Sector Murella learns of the existence of fortified Watch Stations scattered across the Sector from contacts within the Navis Nobilite. Unable to establish who controls them, but fearing that they pose a threat to her rule, she orders the Watch Stations seized. None of the forces sent to capture them ever return. Ever larger forces are sent to the fray, forcing the Deathwatch to unleash its own power in defence of its watch and sacred duty, which is not for such a petty tyrant to dispute. Realising the folly of making war on the Adeptus Astartes far too late, the Over-Governor's power is critically weakened, and the best of her warriors and warships squandered in battle.

277.M36

The Downfall of the Over-Governors: Free Captain Mordecai Haarlock leads a fleet of insurgent vessels in a surprise attack on Verronus, having drawn the forces of the remaining Frateris Templar warships in the Sector away through a diversionary attack on Eleusis. His strike fleet succeeded in breaking through the system's defences. Accompanied by an elite force of unrecorded nature, Mordecai Haarlock executes Murella for 'betrayal of the ideals and soul of the Imperium of Mankind.' Meanwhile, the Arch-Cardinal is torn apart by a lynch mob while trying to flee.

395.M36

Aftermath: After the death of Vandire and the end of the Reign of Blood, Free Captain Mordecai Haarlock is granted a Warrant of Trade by Sebastian Thor. The warrant is a greater charter of writ to him and the heirs and successors of his blood unto the end of all things, and conditional first upon the restoration of order to an Imperium still plagued by heresy, war, and division. This honour is supposedly in recognition of Haarlock's actions against Gorge Vandire's forces, but some sources note that Mordecai had been expected to ascend to rule the Jericho Sector himself, and that the granting of the Warrant of Trade effectively banished Haarlock (who was perhaps, at best, too dangerous and resourceful a man to entrust with such a task) beyond the bounds of the Imperium once the wars of the Apostasy were over and his usefulness was at an end.

Almost exactly a century later (in 395.M36), Mordecai Haarlock, taking up the mantle of Rogue Trader, vanishes from the Imperium, taking his fleet with him. What ties, if any, he kept with the Jericho Sector remain unknown. However, the dark coincidence of his deep connection to the later founding of the far distant Calixis Sector, a region that would prove inextricably linked to the Jericho Reach's future, is a matter of shrouding mystery that has troubled many within the Inquisition.

416.M36

The Storm: The ship carrying Masimat Helicos, Lord Sector Designate of the Jericho Sector, disappears during the onset of a violent storm during warp transit, marking the beginning of the darkest days of the Jericho Sector. Astropathic messages become so unreliable that a message telling that the official ruler of the Sector never arrived takes five years to be received.

From this point, warp storms on the edge of the region become more violent and more frequent, all but cutting it off from any swift access to the wider Imperium, critically stymieing any efforts to rebuild or consolidate following the end of the Reign of Blood. Even the Deathwatch within the Sector is forced to retrench, as it too is largely cut off from ready access to reinforcement or re-supply, although its own resources and vessels prevent this interference from completely isolating them.



M37-M41

THE AGE OF SHADOWS

Darkness and dissolution descend upon the Jericho Sector. From this point onwards, the records of its history are no more than a few fragments of an unknown whole, with only the Deathwatch's tireless vigil maintaining any semblance of Imperial involvement in the region.

889.M36

The End: The endless wars and calamities of the Imperium grind on. Still cut off, the Jericho Sector is left to fend for itself, all but entirely bereft from contact from the outside—save from occasional deep range patrols from the Battlefleet Ultima and far-ranging trade and exploration vessels. Cut off and isolated, world after world is subsumed to horror, civil decay, or warfare, until finally in 889.M36, the Imperial authorities declare with the stroke of an auto quill that the Jericho Sector as an entity to be no more. The region of space it once occupied is returned to being designated the Jericho Reach.

380-405.M37

The Star-Killa Krew: An Ork freeboota fleet of over one hundred ships ravages the northern region of the Jericho Reach, attacking and devastating Castobel, Aurum, and Alphos. Codicier Kiataino masterminds a plan to destabilise the Ork forces before they can become entrenched, and succeeds in killing their warboss and his immediate possible successors, forcing the Orks to turn on each other in a savage fight to establish dominance, neutralising the Ork threat.

651.M37

The Black Shield: A brother of the Deathwatch bearing no Chapter device arrives at Watch Fortress Erioch. This brother 'Black Shield' calls himself Hail, and is the lone Space Marine occupant of the rapid strike vessel *Unquiet Angel*. Hail claims that he has learned the location of the remains of the vanished 4th Company of the Black Consuls chapter, a force lost in its entirety a millennia before, and seeks the aid of Watch Fortress Erioch in seeking them out. Following the convening of the Chamber of Vigilance, a Kill-team joins Hail aboard the *Unquiet Angel*. Hail leads the Kill-team to a massive space hulk drifting in the dead space on the edge of the Phaegis system. The Kill-team board the vessel and succeed in recovering the banner of the Black Consuls 4th Company and a number of other relics, despite being assaulted by scores of warp ghouls and other foul creatures. In gratitude for the eventual return of their remains some decades later when the conveyor ship despatched from Erioch reaches them, the Black Consuls renew their oaths to the Deathwatch with a pledge of Battle-Brothers three times what it was previously.

920.M37

The Spiders of Mataras: Mataras IV is subject to the final sanction of Exterminatus carried out by the Deathwatch to prevent further contamination by a parasite-colony of the horrific Hadrus Skin-Weaver xenoform from spreading to neighbouring worlds. The Hadrus is a species only previously encountered in the southwestern extremes of the Segmentum Tempestus, and its presence on Mataras IV is a mystery of dire import that remains unsolved.

111.M38

The Nightmare Lords: The Feudal World Ynnen falls to the tyranny of an Enslaver outbreak. A full eighty Deathwatch brothers and two Dreadnoughts have to undertake the elimination of the Enslavers. Only eleven Battle-Brothers return alive and both occupants of the Dreadnought sarcophagi are slain, but successfully returned to await new interments.

249.M40

The Long Night of Verronus: The hive world of Verronus, once a bright star of Imperial majesty and the seat of the Jericho Sector's power, finally succumbs to centuries of slow collapse, its last threads of civilisation collapsing as the ill-tended power-stems that maintain its spires flicker and finally die. Foul cults, witches and abominations that have thus far been kept in check only by the direst sacrifices of Verronus's last defenders rise up, their hour come around at last. With the failing of the light, all that remains is a final long night of anarchy, famine, and living nightmare.

325.M40

The Hereteks of Samech: A Mechanicus Explorator Fleet battles its way through the Warp Storms shrouding the Jericho Reach to re-contact the Forge World of Samech. The ships are lured into close orbit and fired on by the defence systems that ring the world. The Cult Mechanicus declare the Forge World Apostate under a penalty of death, an order that has yet to be carried out.

360.M40

The Coming of the Carnivores: A modified, marauding 'war sphere' vessel belonging to the mercenary (and highly carnivorous) xenos species known as the Kroot appears in the Jericho reach and attacks outlying worlds in the Black Reef region. Hunted and stalked by Deathwatch vessels and repeatedly raided by Kill-teams, the massive Kroot ship is badly damaged but manages to flee, driven away from the region.

656.M40

The Fury of Hell: The Hadex Anomaly comes into being, swallowing the hive world of Verronus. It is believed that the Anomaly emerged due to the bloody rites performed by those dark souls that abided there. Across the Jericho Reach, nascent psykers burn and daemons stalk the land as a sudden wave of unholy power ripples through the localised area of Warpspace. Those afflicted psykers are either sent irrevocably mad or transfigured into short-lived and murderous demi-gods who kill thousands and further push those few worlds that remain under civilised control over the brink. On Watch Fortress Erioch, a full third of the Astropathic choir dies, weeping blood. The Omega Vault opens, yielding up a holo-projector that shows only the image of a face mask in the shape of a golden human skull.



175.M41

The Fifteen of Midael: The Deathwatch rapid strike vessel *Instance of Fire* is attacked by an unknown warship of an archaic design, and forced to flee before the vastly overmatching vessel. Guided by infernal power, the warship pursues the Deathwatch vessel to Midael and catches the *Instance of Fire* and disables it in a brief exchange of fire. Escaping to the Watch Station on Midael's surface, the fifteen surviving Battle-Brothers make death oaths and prepare their last defence in the armoured tower of the Watch Station. They hold out for seventeen days against a company-strength force of Chaos Space Marines clad in red armour emblazoned with the marks of the Dark Gods. When a relief force reaches Midael, it is too late; they find the Watch Station despoiled but repairable. The bodies and armour of the fifteen defenders are never found.

397.M41

The Year of Dreaming Depths: A period of sustained and often deadly warp disturbance affecting the Koronus Expanse in the Segmentum Obscurus is observed. Concurrently, the warp storms in the Jericho Reach lessen, but do not give way. Wreckage of the *Iron Promise*, a Rogue Trader vessel belonging to the minor bloodline of Unnurdel lost within the Koronus Expanse in this year, is later discovered on the dead world of Belissar by the Deathwatch in the Jericho Reach.

Circa 400.M41

The Invasion of Black Reef: At an unknown date during this period, the aggressive, expansionist xenos race known as the Tau begin wide-scale colonisation and invasion operations in the Black Reef region of the Coreward portion of the Jericho Reach. Shielded from immediate detection by the warp storms and stellar phenomenon of the region, the Tau fleets quickly gain an entrenched foothold on several worlds, and enslave many human populated worlds.

715.M41

The Visitation: Two Inquisitors arrive at Watch Fortress Erioch unannounced, their credentials and ciphers for access all in order. One calls herself Camilla Noesis, and the other claims the name Kaleb, but hides his face behind a featureless mask of tarnished silver. They give no explanation of how they learned of the Watch Fortress's location; they simply say that the time was as it should be. Their arrival coincides with an opening of a chamber within the Omega Vault. Within is found a chronograph dating from the Dark Age of Technology which appears to be meticulously marking a countdown of time, measuring the hours and their divisions with total precision. The Chamber of Vigilance stands in discussion for thirteen days and nights. The two Inquisitors take all records of their discussions as they leave.

755.M41

The Warp Gate Opens: The gate in the great warp storms on the periphery of the Calixis Sector is discovered by the Imperial Navy Frigate *Spear of Tarsus*. Sensing something causing a localised area of calm in the great warp storm, the ship's navigator drops the *Spear of Tarsus* out of the Warp. At the centre of this sea of ethereal calm is a vast Warp Gate of xenos design. The gate is found to be active and becomes the immediate focus of the attentions of the Ordo Xenos, Deathwatch, and savants of the Adeptus Mechanicus devoted to the rare study of such arcane machinery. Preliminary investigations reveal (to not inconsiderable surprise) a static warp conduit leading to the deadspace region bordering the Jericho Reach on the other side of the Imperium.

756.M41

The Gathering of the Ascension: On the eve of the Feast of the Emperor's Ascension, four Inquisitors and two hundred brothers of the Deathwatch arrive to the fortress at the same time. All claim to have received a coded message that called them to attend at the Watch Fortress. The source of the message is unknown.

In the days after the Feast of Ascension, the Watch Fortress becomes a battleground of mistrust and murder, as a shape-shifting assassin of unknown origin stalks the corridors and vaults of the Watch Fortress. The assassin is caught and slain after a seventeen-hour manhunt, but only after the death of two of the four Inquisitors, nine acolytes, and twenty-three Space Marines. [Other Details Classified]

M41 to the Present

THE AGE OF WAR

777-Present.M41

The Achilus Crusade: With the discovery of the stable Warp Gate, the possibility of using it to launch a crusade into the Jericho Reach and reclaim this formerly great realm for the Imperium quickly finds favour with the High Lords of Terra. A plan hatched under the command of Lord Militant Achilus to undertake this singular military campaign, and under his command were mustered forces ranging from the Imperial Guard, the Adeptus Astartes and Adepta Sororitas, and scores of Imperial Navy warships to enact the Imperium's will. The High Lords were mindful, however, that the existence of the gate and what it portended offered dire peril as well as possibility, and decreed that the crusade was to be launched from a staging point far from the territory it intended to conquer, and under a shroud of the deepest secrecy, with the complicity of the masters of both the Calixis Sector and the Departamento Munitorium.

The Crusade would prove to be a bloody, grinding conflict fraught with reversals of fortune and beset by enemies both unexpected and nightmarish.

As for the Lord Militant, he would not live to see out its first decade.

786.M41

The Banner Has Fallen: The death of Lord Militant Achilus occurs when the *Proclamation of Wrath* suffers a catastrophic Geller Field failure. Afterwards, Solomon Tetrarchus ascends to the position of Lord Militant commanding the crusade into the Jericho Reach.

786.M41

The Council of Ashes: Lord Militant Tetrarchus summons all senior command staff to the fortress world of Alphos. Also present are senior members of many of the Chapters of Adeptus Astartes present in the crusade at that time, as well as members of the Ecclesiarchy, Mechanicus, and Inquisition. The gathering is a grand war council at the commencement of which fifty senior officers formerly favoured by the late Lord Militant are withdrawn from command or shifted into more junior roles. A council of new advisors and officer elite is formed and begins a dramatic reorganization of crusade forces and strategy.

785.M41

The Greyhell Front: The Canis Salient is launched against the Tau controlled domains of the Velk'han Sept in the Black Reef area of the Jericho Reach, reinforcing armies already fighting against the highly organised and sophisticated alien forces across the so-called Greyhell Front previously dispatched by Lord Militant Achilus. The fighting is particularly bitter. Lord Commander Ebongrave, the Imperial Salient Commander, gains a swift reputation for barbarous and unorthodox tactics.

786.M41

Against The Tides of Hell: The Acheros Salient is launched towards the centre of the Jericho Reach, there to give battle to the degenerate worshippers of Chaos and their foul allies, and retake the core worlds of what was once the Jericho Sector. The resistance they meet is unexpectedly high, particularly in the daemon-haunted Cellebos Warzone and casualties incurred by the Imperial forces are massive, blocking the salient's progress into a bloody war of attrition.

787.M41

The Crusade Conquers: The Orpheus Salient is launched to reclaim worlds lying along the rimward portion of the Reach. Here, progress is relatively rapid and successful, with scores of worlds returned to Imperial control.

788.M41

The Loss of the Margin Crusade: Elsewhere in the Imperium, contact is finally lost with forces of the troubled Margin Crusade. From this point on, the Margin Crusade exists as a lie, and is used to garner greater tithes and musters of troops and materiel for the Achilus Crusade from the distant Scarus, Ixaniad, and Calixis Sectors via the Warp Gate to replace heavy and ongoing losses.

789.M41

The Return of Castobel to the Imperial Fold: Battlegroup Santos reaches the Castobel system and finds that it has stayed loyal to the Imperium through four Millennia of shadow and isolation. A hundred-day festival of celebration is declared. At its end, the first regiment of tithed Imperial Guard (the 1st Castobel Reborn) are lifted off the planet. The 1st Reborn will be the first in a series of regiments tithed from the planet.

789.M41

The Seriphos Sanction: Covert operations by the Deathwatch disrupt diplomatic talks between the technologically advanced but renegade human world of Seriphos Secundus and the emissaries of the Tau. Deathwatch Kill-teams assassinate both Tau Ethereal Caste dignitaries and representatives of the Seriphon Unity, plunging the two factions—renegade human and xenos—into open warfare.

789.M41

The Liberation of Colhep: Battlegroup Venicus, together with a company of Storm Wardens Space Marines, breaks the alien enslavement of the Colhep systems. A daring in-system translation from the warp and surgical strikes against key enemy holdings in overwhelming force return the human population to Imperial rule in a single week of fighting.

805.M41

The Conquest of Eleusis: Warp storms abate around the Eleusis system. Crusade forces find the once sacred world has fallen the worship of false gods under the tyranny of a priest caste called the Charnel Oracles. It is cleansed of their dark taint by the forces of Battlegroup Argo under the personal command of General Curas in a brutal extermination campaign against the blood-glutted abominations that much of the planet's population have devolved into. After their priests are isolated and slain, the mutants, despite their monstrous distortions of body and inhuman savagery, lack the intelligence or cohesion to mount an organised defence, thus freeing the scattered few who have remained fully human from their torment. Following the swift and merciless victory, a thousand-day re-hallowing and sanctification of the world begins by the faithful servants of the Ecclesiarchy.

805.M41

The Destruction of the Crimson Harvest: A vast space hulk designated the *Crimson Harvest* and forged from the fused and twisted remains of xenos star vessels and artefacts of unknown origin appears on the edge of the Hadex Anomaly. Ships bearing the blasphemous sigils of Chaos take flight from the dark forge of Samech and make their way to rendezvous with the craft,

sparkling a deadly series of running battles between the servants of the Ruinous Powers and attack ships from the Crusade forces operating in the Acheros Salient and the Deathwatch. The Deathwatch Kill-team under Brother Sergeant Hurak of the Iron Hands sacrifices itself in order to plunge the *Crimson Harvest* into the heart of a dying star, thus denying the pawns of Chaos their prize.

807.M41

The Conquest of Vanir: The war against the secessionist systems of the self-proclaimed Kingdom of Vanir is broken by a daring strike at the hive world of Vanir by Orpheus Salient Crusade forces.

810.M41

The Lament of Goln: Six Deathwatch Kill-teams under Lexicanum Raphael break the attack by the forces of Chaos on the recently conquered world of Goln. The Deathwatch attack crippled the Chaos Leadership in the progress of recovering a psy-active xenos artefact from the host's commanding cabal. Fearing that they will be overwhelmed by a second counterattack, General Saiden, the commander of Crusade forces in Goln, orders the Kill-teams to redeploy against the remaining Chaos forces. The Deathwatch forces withdraw without acknowledging the General's 'order.' Goln falls three days later to a second Chaos assault.

812.M41

The Shadow in the Warp: Communication between parts of the Crusade and re-conquered Reach is lost without warning. Particularly affected is the Orpheus Salient which disappears behind a crawling shadow of Warp interference.

814.M41

The Great Devourer: The Deathwatch warship *Thunder's Word* enters the Freya system to investigate the silence of an Astropathic relay. It finds no trace of the relay and indeed no trace of any life in the Freya system. Preparing to leave the system, the *Thunder's Word* encounters two Tyranid drone ships. Its hull scored and pitted with acid and its magazines nearly exhausted, the *Thunder's Word* arrives at Watch Fortress Erioch bringing news that the Great Devourer has come to Jericho Reach.

814.M41

Death in the Void: The Deep Range Cruiser *Admiral Ishmael* goes missing after attempting to make contact with the lead elements of the Orpheus Salient. All across the northern (Rimward) portion of the Jericho Reach worlds are swallowed by darkness and horror, and the vaunted Battlegroup Argo is lost, presenting a severe blow to the crusade forces.

814.M41

Dagon: The name of the Tyranid attack into the Jericho Reach is officially designated as Hive Fleet Dagon, and identified as the greatest single extant threat to the crusade, and indeed the lives of every living being in the Jericho Reach. The Deathwatch remains fully engaged in facing this threat.

817.M41

Current Date: The Omega Vault is becoming increasingly active, and threats of a scale unprecedented in their scope, diversity and sheer portent stalk the stars and shadowed worlds of the Jericho Reach, leading many within the Inquisition to draw the conclusion that a great turning point in the fate of the region, perhaps the Imperium itself, is coming to pass here in the Jericho Reach for good or ill. The Watch continues, and the watchers stand ready.



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