

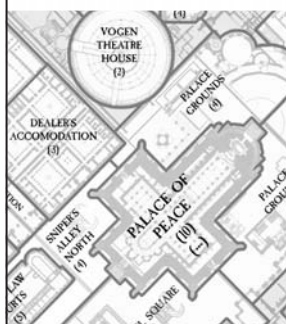
WARHAMMER  
40,000

# THE ROK OF AGES



## Tales from Vogen

Only a few years back, the Studio was embroiled in the Vogen campaign, a brutal struggle for an ancient Imperial city. So map-based 40K campaigns are nothing new. What has changed, however, is there's now a dedicated kit that allows you to make great-looking maps without a degree in cartography!



**Planetary Empires is released this month, tying all of our 40K Expansions together. So what better way to stoke the fires of war than with one of the Studio's famous super-campaigns? Phil Kelly talks us through his greatest Warhammer 40,000 adventure yet.**

**Phil:** One of the best things about Warhammer 40,000 campaigns is the narrative; the story that you enact from battle to battle. Right from the start you have an inbuilt conflict, as all of the players jostle for the upper hand. Well, I've always been into such gaming events; for me they are the pinnacle of the hobby. The narrative of a planetary invasion seemed like a perfect background for the latest Studio campaign. After all, with Planetstrike thundering onto the gaming scene and Planetary Empires hot on its heels, it would seem that the stars were aligned for a great season of hard-fought and tense battles.

So, after sequestering a bunch of Planetary Empires tiles and writing up a little backstory for the planet I intended to use as the focus of the campaign, I was pretty much ready to start. There was one aspect that nagged at me, though – I

wanted the good guys to have as much chance to strike planets as the bad guys. Sure, they could counter-attack at the positions taken by the evildoers, that would work fine... but then an idea came to me. Why not have two worlds invading each other at the same time in an interplanetary conflict that allowed every player to take either role with equal legitimacy? Even better, why not have one of the worlds actually being steered towards the other by a massive set of engines, the continent-crushing impact between the two worlds giving new meaning to the term Planetstrike? 'Surely that's impossible', said one side of my brain, but it was drowned out by the other, more fun, side that was shouting 'WAAAGH!' at the top of its metaphorical voice.

And so the Rok of Ages was born – a titanic planetoid harnessed by the Orks who had kitted it out with the salvaged

engines of captured spacecraft. With a few megatonnes of Mek-know-wots and the mineral resources of the Rok itself, the Orky engines were completed, propelling the Rok through space with slow but deadly momentum. By the time it reached its target world of Meridian, the Rok would be impossible to stop. Or so the Orks thought – arrayed against them were not only the Imperial settlers of Meridian itself, desperate to mine as much of the planet's riches as possible, but also the Eldar to whom the maiden world rightly belonged. They would fight to the last to reach the Rok of Ages and blow it to smithereens before it could scourge the life from Meridian. This premise gave us a storyline upon which to base all manner of cool games, a rich opportunity for dozens of different games of 40K, Cities of Death, Apocalypse and Planetstrike, and a suitably dramatic climax that will give us a chance to use our entire collections. I got busy putting the two campaign maps together and roped in some of the lads for an evening of beer, pizza and bastion-building. Before long we were ready for the most ambitious campaign yet.

The once-verdant meadows of the former maiden world of Meridian have been befouled by the morbid architecture of the Imperium. Its azure skies are choked by acidic smoke and its lush fields are smothered by grey urban sprawl. Meridian is rich in Helian III, an isotope that can provide near limitless energy under the right conditions. Because of its bountiful natural resources, this green paradise has been plundered by Imperial forces, settlers and explorators. Yet more converge upon it day after day. They will not leave until Meridian is mined to exhaustion, reduced to a scarred and ravaged husk where once was a jewel hanging in the firmament.

And yet that is only half of the tragic story of Meridian. Drifting through space towards the maiden world is a catastrophe waiting to happen, or rather one that is looking for a world to happen to. The Rok of Ages it is called; a titanic asteroid that has been infested with greenskins and equipped with gigantic engines that propel it through space with slow but deadly momentum. As the Rok of Ages floats through the void, the Orks aboard it make their plans of conquest. They laugh about driving their harnessed planetoid straight into an unsuspecting and populous world. They fight amongst themselves to lead the invasion as Meridian, at first a green dot in the distance, becomes a circle, then a sphere, then a world. In the dead of night, they whisper in hushed tones of things even more strange and deadly than their Chaos Space Marine allies, things that live inside the Rok itself. All hell is poised to break loose upon Meridian in a planetary invasion of epoch-shattering proportions.

But the Imperial forces upon Meridian are not without their defences. The capital hive of Arcadia boasts an ancient defence laser capable of destroying orbiting spacecraft. The Mechanicus launch-base of Benefact Majoris is priming Ignis Deo, a Skylord-class missile that towers above even the spires of the nearby hives. The long-range augur stations of Hive Ereone have picked up the Rok's approach. Meridian is girding itself for war. Yet even with all its defences arrayed, its bastions manned and its defence lines bristling with interceptor batteries, the combined firepower of Meridian cannot stop the planetoid's descent, for the Rok is the size of a small moon. All know in their hearts that if the Orks complete their plan and the planetoid collides with the world below then it will be the end. Destroying the Rok is the only way to save Meridian from the imminent apocalypse inexorably approaching from the depths of space.

So the stage is set. As Ork and Chaos ships blast through the stratosphere to take out Meridian's planetary defences, the spaceports of Meridian fill with strike forces intent on establishing a landing zone upon the planetoid whilst the Rok of Ages grinds ever closer with the inevitability of death. If the Imperial forces launch a successful counter-invasion and penetrate deep into the Rok, they can plant nuclear charges and blow it apart in a spectacular display of pyrotechnics that will fill the night sky of Meridian from horizon to horizon and give rise to a new era of hope and prosperity. Conversely, if the Orks and their nefarious allies make planetfall and take out Meridian's defence networks, the Rok of Ages will come crashing down with world-crushing force onto the maiden world below, altering the course of history forever.

The fate of Meridian hangs in the balance...





# CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The Rok of Ages campaign has been split into three distinct phases as the Rok plummets ever onward towards the planet. Splitting the campaign up like this gives it structure and allows for a variety of types of game.

**T**he Rok of Ages campaign is designed to celebrate all aspects of the Warhammer 40,000 game, and can be adapted for use in your own gaming group with a little effort. Though it uses the Planetary Empires rules to determine the shape of the campaign overall, the individual games will cover a lot of different variants. These are broadly categorised into three phases:

## PHASE ONE – PLANETSTRIKE!

As the gigantic planetoid of the Rok burns through the stratosphere of Meridian, both sides are attempting to make planetfall upon their foe's base and cripple their military installations so that more of their comrades can flood into the enemy warzone. For that reason the campaign starts with lots of games of Planetstrike – the good guys can invade the planetoid base, whilst the bad guys invade Meridian itself. This gives everyone a chance to try the role of attacker and defender – each has its perks and strategies for you to enjoy.

It is possible that the defender in a game of Planetstrike beats his attacker, and ends up capturing the attacker's hex as a result. This is perfectly fine – it means that the defender has capitalised on his enemy's failure, and that his counter-attack was particularly effective!

## PHASE TWO – TOTAL WAR

Once the battle is in full swing and forces are properly established on each map, you have a choice; you can either invade more territory by playing more games of Planetstrike, play games of Cities of Death to represent the terrible struggles in the urbanised areas of Meridian, or you can play normal games of Warhammer 40,000. Intrepid players will want to roll on the following chart to determine what type of game they play:

Result	Game type
1-2	Standard 40K Mission.
3-4	Cities of Death.
5	Planetstrike – 'good' defending.
6	Planetstrike – 'bad' defending.

During this phase, one player may end up with more resources than another, but the difference is never that drastic so never fear if you get off on the wrong foot. This phase makes up the main bulk of the campaign.

## PHASE THREE – APOCALYPSE

Whatever happens, the last phase of the campaign will involve some large and impressive games of Apocalypse, some of which will be hinged around the fuel refineries that process the precious Helian III so vital to the war effort. The outcome of these games will determine the fate of Meridian itself, but rest assured it'll be indescribably violent either way.

# THE RULES

The campaign uses the sample system designed by Jervis, and included in the Planetary Empires booklet. However, just as Jervis encourages, the system has been further developed and tweaked to suit the campaign background.

**T**he Rok of Ages campaign, as you might have already figured out, is a campaign with a difference. We've learnt from previous Studio campaigns that not everybody has the same amount of time to play, so we've devised a system that accommodates both the casual gamer and the super-keen fanatic alike. We've also kept it relatively simple, because that way you can concentrate on getting the best out of the new Planetary Empires and Planetstrike rulesets.

## TAKING SIDES

The players in the campaign are divided into two factions – 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. The good guys are based predominantly on the green Meridian map, the bad guys on the grey asteroid map. If you want to rationalise why aliens such as Tau would be attacking Meridian, you can explain it away with the presence of the precious isotope Helian III, though we suggest you don't lose too much sleep over it and just concentrate on getting some really fun games started for now. The sides are divided as follows:

### Good Guys

Space Marines (all loyalist Chapters), Imperial Guard, Witch Hunters, Daemonhunters, Eldar.

### Bad Guys

Orks, Chaos Space Marines, Necrons, Tyranids, Dark Eldar, Tau.

If the sides do not work out evenly, try swapping the Eldar or Dark Eldar players around – Eldar are notoriously fickle after all, and they are really on no one's side but their own!

## RED vs BLUE

To keep things simple, good guys have blue flags and bad guys have red flags – the campaign's progress is decided by counting up the flags at the end of each week of play. Essentially, whichever side has the most flags at the end of the campaign is the winner, so grab territory whenever you can – it is territory and not victories that determines the ultimate fate of the planet(s). The player with the most flags at the end of the campaign is the overall winner and is proclaimed Grand Overlord of Meridian.

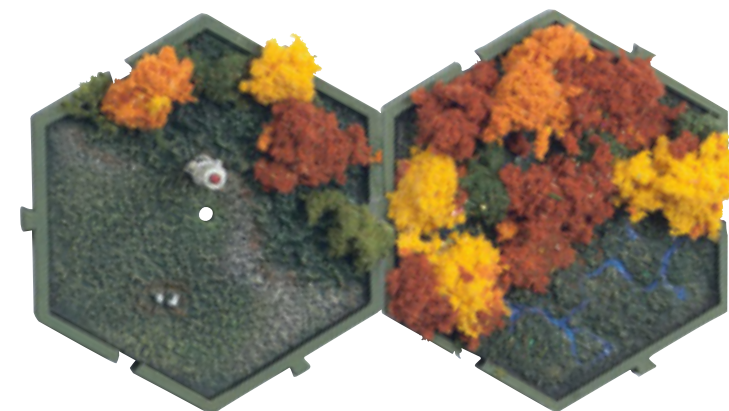
To mark out a flag as your particular territory, the little blip on the top of the flag (as well as the flagpole) can be painted in a colour or design of your choice. This will mark out your flag from the rest of those on your side – add your initials in black pen to your flag as well if you can write that small! The only stipulation is that your flag must remain predominantly red or blue so that players can see which side is winning at a glance.

*Designer's note: In our campaign there are more hexes on the good guys' map, and more good guy players, so they start with more flags. To balance this out, the bad guys have two special areas that confer campaign-wide advantages. You might want to tinker with the rules to ensure your own campaign is 'fair', but we've found that it is more important to have fun and vibrant games than to ensure that everything is completely fair. The good guys, for instance, also have hive cities, which are fantastic advantages as they combine the benefits of a spaceport, a command bastion, a shield generator and a manufactory (upgrades detailed in the Planetary Empires rules).*



## SEASONS OF WAR

Phil wanted a visual way to track the different phases over the course of the campaign. Because he wanted something a bit more imaginative than a sign that said 'PHASE ONE' (and also because he's a bit peculiar), Phil decided to do this by changing the 'seasons' of the board so that the campaign began in the height of summer, then progressed through to autumn and finally winter. In this way the players got the feeling of the landscape changing as the campaign went on, and there was a nice visual way of representing the time passing as Meridian drew ever closer to the winter of its discontent.





## UPGRADES APLENTY

In the basic Planetary Empires rules, a player can place an upgrade (command bastion, manufactory, shield generator, or power station) whenever he wins a game. In this campaign we used a slightly different system, because many of the upgrades were already built into the maps Phil had put together. Essentially Phil placed a great many upgrades on the boards and let the players fight over who controlled them during the course of the campaign. Then, at the beginning of every phase, Phil made like Santa Claus and gave each player another upgrade that they could place whenever they wanted – provided they painted it up first! Don't be mean with upgrades – their actual effect on individual battles is slight, but it all adds up.

## THE GRAND MUSTER

Once your flags are painted, you're ready to begin. There should always be a grand muster to kick the campaign off – details are included below. If you cannot make it to this grand muster, send someone in your place, otherwise you will end up with rubbish territories!

## HOW TO PLACE FLAGS

Each player has a number of flags to begin with, depending on the size of the maps used – simply count the number of hexes and divide it by the number of players you have signed up for the campaign. That's how many flags each player has to begin with. For instance, in the Rok of Ages campaign we have 25 players and a total of 90 tiles, so each player has 3 flags (though more have been supplied in case they do well) and there will be 15 unclaimed tiles left over. That's actually a good thing – it means that new players can join in at a later date.

To determine in which order our players placed their flags, each player rolled a D100 (the first D10 rolled for the tens, second D10 rolled for the units – but you can just as well use D6 for this to give a result between 11 and 66 instead). We then listed the players on a flip chart in order from 1 to 100. Having established a 'priority' order we let the players take turns to place their flags in any tile they wished. Naturally the hive tiles and hexes with cool-looking features were the first to go! Once every player had placed his flag we went round again until every player had placed three flags.

**NB:** If you want to be extra gracious and 'fair' to the players, you can go in reverse order for the placement of the second set of flags and then back to the normal order for the last flag.

The last flag that each player has in his collection may be planted upon the enemy's map if you wish – this represents your forces making planetfall upon an empty drop zone.

## TERRITORIES

Each player starts with the same number of hexes or 'territories' under his control. This number will ebb and flow as the campaign progresses, but what we're really interested in is the number of territories belonging to each side, not each person. In this way a player with hardly any spare time can play a single game and still contribute to the war effort, whilst keen players can mastermind an entire campaign by leading from the front.

It's important to conquer territory. Some territories (those furthest away from your own) will be difficult to conquer even if you win your game – a special dice roll is needed, and you have to beat a certain score depending on how distant or well-protected that square is. An unprotected square (most of them) adjacent to your own territory can be conquered on the roll of a 3+ on 2D6, so you'll probably succeed if you pick your fights well. Territory that's not adjacent is conquered on a 7+. That said, some well-protected hexes give you massive advantages, so you might want to gamble and go for the jackpot – fortune favours the bold.



## SPECIAL TERRITORIES

Certain territories have special rules that go alongside them. If you are in possession of a special tile (showcased later in this article), you get to apply the bonus rules that go alongside that tile. Assume that the larger and more impressive the terrain upon a named territory, the more powerful it is, and you won't go far wrong.

## UNCLAIMED TERRITORIES

Occasionally you will find that there are unclaimed territories on the map. Any player who scores a win in any game may place a flag in an unclaimed territory without having to roll to see if he conquers that territory.

You can also use these unclaimed territories to include new players who have decided they want to get in on the action – simply give them D3 flags and let them place their new empire anywhere on the board. Hopefully, they can carve out a powerbase before being descended on!

## PLAYING CAMPAIGN GAMES

By now you'll be wanting to get stuck in. Luckily, in the Rok of Ages campaign, this couldn't be simpler. All you need to do is to challenge a member of the opposing team to a game, agree on a points value, agree on what type of game you'll be playing, and go for it. Simple as that. Each phase of the game recommends a certain type of game, but as long as you're playing Warhammer 40,000 it doesn't really matter; just play whatever you feel like.

## CLAIMING TILES

Once you have played a game, you and your opponent will need to head over to the campaign map(s) and see whether any territory changes hands. The victor chooses one of his opponent's territories and rolls to see if he can conquer it as per the Planetary Empires rules. If the victor captures it, then he replaces his opponent's flag with one of his own, claiming any of

*In the aftermath of the game, Fil makes his conquest roll against Andrew, but doesn't score enough to take a territory.*



the upgrades there for himself. It's good practice to let the games master and the other players know every time this happens, if only for the bragging rights – we got into the habit of sending an in-character email to the other players, glorifying our victories or making excuses for our defeats (see below right).

## LOSING ALL YOUR FLAGS

The good news is that even if you lose all your flags you can still play with just as much verve as anyone else – you'll just find it more difficult to claim territory. After all, it's hard to have hexes adjacent to any others if you have no territory at all. Still, never fear; if there are unclaimed territories on the campaign maps you can automatically claim them with even the most tenuous win.

OK, that's it for now – the Planetary Empires rules explain the rest. Ignore the Ending the Campaign section though – your games master will no doubt have a far more special finale in mind!

Paint up your flags, pull your collection together and get ready to wage war!

**++** Inquisitor Caspiel Rex: This is the Inquisitor, we will repel these... Oh, Imperator, no... [fragment lost. Data retrieval suggests the revving of multiple chain-weapons] **++**

Datascript Ends - 130hrs





# MERIDIAN

Meridian was once an Eldar maiden world, though its natural splendours have long since been replaced by the gothic stonework of Imperial architecture as human settlers seek to harvest the priceless Helian III that enriches the planet's crust.

## MIGHTY MERIDIAN

Phil put together the Meridian board out of not only Planetary Empires tiles but also some spare Mighty Empires tiles that he had left over from an earlier Warhammer campaign. You might recognise the forests, rivers and mountains from Mighty Empires, though Phil made sure that any field tiles were face down; Meridian isn't an agri-world after all. The great thing about these campaign tiles is that they clip together and do not need glue – once the Rok of Ages campaign is over the guys can just break the maps down into individual hexes and restore their Warhammer campaign board to its former glory.



## THE RIVER LETHID



The River Lethid was once a crystal-clear stream of freshwater that flowed through the verdant meadows of Meridian. Since the Imperial settlers twisted the lands to their own ends, it has burned with toxic chemicals that make it ice-cold and poisonous to all forms of life.

**Defensible:** Any tile that has a river upon it is easier to defend – even in the 41st Millennium it is an advantage to know that an army's flanks are guarded by an impassable terrain feature. All attempts made to claim river tiles deduct one from their dice roll. This is cumulative with bonuses from shield generators and the like.

**Terrain Advantage:** Any general with a river tile knows the value of defensible terrain locations. A player may roll a dice at the beginning of each Planetstrike game in which he is the defender – on the roll of a 6+ the player has a free Drop Zone Denial stratagem.

## THE CLAWED SWAMPS



The wetlands of Meridian are home to all sorts of unusual species, from megaraptors to self-detonating toads.

**Here be dragons:** At the end of the Spring phase of the campaign, players must roll a D6 for each of their flags that occupies a swamp tile. On the roll of a 1 the flag is removed to represent the forces there getting gobbled up (or worse) by the alien beasts that dwell in the region.

5



The defence laser was made from part of an Imperial cruiser from Battlefleet Gothic, and a plastic bead.

## THE DEFENCE LASER OF HIVE ARCADIA



Hive Arcadia was once a prosperous node of industry and culture, host to many aristocratic and political figures who oversaw the mining of Helian III from a safe distance. It has suffered terribly under the bombardments of the Rok of Ages, though its pride and joy is still intact – a Cronos-pattern defence laser with enough power to scar a moon.

After every game that he plays, a player that controls Hive Arcadia can open fire with Old Cronos, the defence laser of Hive Arcadia. Place a marker on any tile on the Rok of Ages and roll a scatter dice as near to it as possible. If a hit is rolled, the tile with the marker is obliterated. If an arrow is rolled, an adjacent tile to the tile with the marker is targeted – pick the one that best corresponds to the direction on the arrow. Replace the targeted tile with a crater tile and remove any upgrade or flag that was on that tile.

4



Battlefleet Gothic bitz and a rocket from the Whirlwind frame have been used to create the Benefact Majoris Spaceport tile.

## THE BENEFACT MAJORIS SPACEPORT



The Adeptus Mechanicus launch base is dwarfed by its most ambitious creation yet, the Skylord-class missile Ignis Deo. If the warriors defending it can buy the Servitors enough time to finish the priming rituals then it can be launched at the Rok before it enters orbit...

**Spaceport:** A player that controls the Benefact Majoris Spaceport gains all the benefits of a spaceport tile.

**3...2...1... Ignition!** At the beginning of each new season after the first, a player that owns the Ignis Deo may attempt to fire it at the Rok of Ages. Roll a dice and add one to the result. If the dice roll is equal to or less than the number of games the owning player has played over the course of the campaign, the Ignis Deo is launched.

Should the Ignis Deo be launched, its detonation is all but assured. The GM of the campaign should organise one last mega-game to represent the defenders of the Rok of Ages scrambling to stop the Deo from launching/detonating and blowing them all to smithereens. This game can take any format provided that it's ambitious and looks great.

If the bad guys lose this mega-game, then they lose the entire campaign as the Rok is blown apart! However, if they win the game, they automatically claim Benefact Majoris Spaceport.

## URBAN SPRAWL



The Meridian urban sprawl is surrounded with countless hab-blocks that have been bombed flat in the war.

A player with an urban sprawl tile may choose to convert any game he is challenged to play into a Cities of Death game. In this game the player with the urban sprawl gains an extra stratagem to represent his home territory advantage.

MORE LOCATIONS OVER THE PAGE ►



## THE WARP GATE



Beyond the haunted depths of the Vidian Forest lies an arcane structure of alien origin, a towering edifice that hums with barely contained power. Not only does it shield the environs from harm, but if correctly activated, it can open a portal from this reality into the next.

**Terrain Advantage:** The Warp Gate tile automatically has the 'force field' upgrade. This cannot be negated or destroyed.

**Webway Assault:** An Eldar or Dark Eldar player that occupies the Warp Gate tile is able to pass his troops through the webway. The owning player may opt to roll a dice before each game; on the roll of a 2+ he gains a free Webway Assault stratagem. On the roll of a 1, his forces get lost in the labyrinthine tunnels of the webway and he must subtract 1 from all Reserve rolls he makes for the duration of that game.

6



*Phil made the Warp Gate tile simply by raiding his bitz box and sticking the end of a plastic Eldar gun upright onto a normal tile.*

++ The Battle-barge *Hammer of Nocturne* has taken up position above the Rok and commenced preliminary bombardment operations. ++  
Captain Dac'tyr, Salamanders 4th Company

## THE HIVE EREONE OBSERVATORY



A radar dish so titanic that it has its own city of Technomagi at its base, forms the early warning system for the Meridian mining operation. The observatory lies at the heart of the Imperial Cognitas Network and monitors every fluctuation and troop redistribution of the battle upon the Rok.

The player that controls the Hive Ereone Observatory may choose what type of game he plays and whether he takes the role of attacker and defender. Furthermore such is the scope and quality of his intel that his opponent must show him his army list in advance, allowing the Ereone player to tailor a force best suited to its destruction.

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*The observatory was made from a standard Hive City tile with the addition of a couple of odd-shaped bitz found in Phil's bitz box to make the radar dish. Plastic strips were then stuck onto the dish.*

## GLADIUS MOUNTAINS



The Gladius Mountains are rich with an unlimited supply of Helian III, an isotope that can be used to create vast amounts of energy. The mining operations are of such importance that the mountain passes are dotted with bastions and defences bristling with interceptor cannons.

**Defensible:** Any mountain tile is easier to defend than a normal tile. All attempts made to claim mountains tiles deduct two from their dice roll. This is cumulative with bonuses from shield generators and the like.

**Interceptor Gun Network:** Any defender with a mountain tile not only knows the value of an interceptor cannon in a tight spot, but also has more than enough wealth to afford them. In games of Planetstrike he may use twice as many interceptor cannons as he has bastions, instead of one interceptor cannon per bastion as is normally the case.

## DEFENCE NETWORKS



Heavy-duty defence networks zigzag for hundreds of miles across Meridian. Even the most inexperienced general can hold out against the odds with the firepower of the bastion networks behind him.

**Defensible:** Any defence networks tile is easier to defend than a normal tile. All attempts made to claim these tiles deduct one from their dice roll. This is cumulative with bonuses from shield generators and the like.

**Aegis Network:** A player who controls a defence network tile gains a bonus Interlocking Defences stratagem (detailed below) in any game of Planetstrike in which he takes the role of defender.

### Interlocking Defences

Stratagem Points: 2

**When declared:** Pre-game

*The fortified zones that criss-cross the lands are so heavily reinforced that they can be seen from space, an endless collection of Anvil and Gauntlet-pattern defence centres with which to smash potential invaders.*

- Provided the defender places at least four objectives across the table and links all of them with defence lines of some sort from table edge to table edge, he may re-roll any reserve rolls. He may also re-roll his rolls to determine from which table edge his reserves enter play.

## CRATER PIT



The surface of Meridian and the lunar blastscape of the Rok of Ages have one thing in common – they are both pitted with massive craters left by megatonnes of detonating ordnance. These mile-wide eyesores scar the planet's surface like a violent skin disease, and all too many of them lead into the subterranean colonies of the vile alien species that have made their nests in the devastation.

Provided they control at least one crater pit, a Tyranid player may treat any hex that is adjacent to a crater pit as adjacent to one of his own territories.



## MERIDIAN STRIKES BACK

In phase two of the campaign, all defender armies have access to the following stratagem:

### Defence Stratagem: The Maiden Stirs

Stratagem Points: 1

**When declared:** Defender's Shooting phase

*The world the Eldar are defending is in fact a dormant maiden world. Sensing the turmoil of the defenders' emotions, the world begins to awaken and is soon joining the fight to repel the attackers.*

- Enemy units that move within a wood-based terrain feature are treated as moving through dangerous terrain. This affects entire units whether they are wholly or partially in a wood.

## THE HAUNTED FORESTS



The towering forests of Meridian once covered the lands as far as the eye can see with gigantic thallorn trees. Much of the land has since been deforested for lumber and fuel so that the humans might build their urban sprawl ever higher. Those forests that remain are said to be haunted by unquiet spirits that can drain a man's life force with a touch.

**Terrain Advantage:** A general with a forest tile has a free Hypertrophic Flora stratagem, regardless of what race and game type he is playing. This essentially allows him to place free woods and foliage before the game starts, representing his ability to use the native terrain to his advantage. This bonus terrain is always treated as dangerous as well as difficult terrain.





# THE ROK OF AGES

Primarily Ork-held, the Rok has drifted from one side of the sector to another. Only now have the Orks installed enough stolen and salvaged engines onto the Rok that they are able to steer its course, sending it hurtling toward Meridian.

## THE MAKING OF THE ROK

Phil made the Rok of Ages board with a simple but cunning technique. Grabbing a big pair of sharp scissors and a couple of spare moonscape craters, Phil cut the craters into rough halves so they would fit around the map he had put together. He then slotted each piece roughly up and under the map tiles so that the crater's base was as far underneath the hexes as it would go, with the slopes of the craters touching as they surrounded the edge of the hex map. He then traced around the map's edge with a marker onto the crater pieces and cut off the corresponding areas so that each crater piece fit back in snugly. A little bit of modelling putty to cover the joins, a few bits of pipe and spare tank barrels for the engines, and the board was ready to Rok (*Oh dear – Ed*).

## AZURITE CRYSTALS

**12** Azurite crystals are miraculous and rare, magnifying the energies of the stars and chiming softly with the scintillating music of the spheres. Even a single Azurite Crystal is an artefact of wonder and awe to the Eldar race. Sadly the Orks smash them up and bung them in the furnaces instead.

Any player with an azurite crystals tile may harness the energies of the Crystal Forests whenever he is playing as the defender in a game of Planetstrike. Everything on the board has a 5+ cover save from the effects of the firestorm and the Meteor Strike, Crash and Burn, and Laserburn stratagems.

## ENGINES

**13** The vast, lumpen refineries and industrial complexes that cling to the rear end of the Rok have grown up around engines of a titanic scale captured and retrofitted from victim spacecraft. Ork Meks have an uncanny way of making such salvaged technologies work, and the so-called 'Enginetowns' are no exception.

A player with control of an engine hex may roll a dice at the end of each game he has played and add one to the result. If the result is less than the number of games he has played in this campaign, he has refined enough azurite for a last burst of speed – he can have the Rok blast into the stratosphere of Meridian and come crashing down onto the planet.

The GM of the campaign should organise one last mega-game to represent the defenders of Meridian scrambling to evacuate in the last few days that are left before the cataclysmic end. All games from this point on are played with the Planetquake rules (see page 51 of Planetstrike) to represent the terrible forces pulling the worlds apart.



The engine tile was created using spare bitz from a Shadowsword super-heavy kit.

## ROKKER CANNON

**14** Most Ork Meks just don't feel right about a new project unless it involves a big gun, and those responsible for the Rok of Ages were no exception. In fact, they went for the biggest gun any of them had ever seen...

The rokker cannon tile is treated exactly as an azurite crystals tile with the following exception.

The player who controls the rokker cannon can fire it at the end of every game he plays.

Place a marker on any tile on Meridian and roll a scatter dice as near to it as possible. If a hit is rolled, the tile with the marker is obliterated. If an arrow is rolled, an adjacent tile to the tile with the marker is targeted – pick the one that best corresponds to the direction on the arrow. Replace the targeted tile with a crater tile and remove any upgrade or flag that was on that tile.

## INDUSTRIAL REFINERY

**15** The industrial refinery is a miracle of technology. Not only does it refine the crude oil drained from the crust of the Rok but it also allows the energy-rich azurite crystals to be converted into incredible amounts of thrust by the expedient of hitting them with really, really large hammers.

**We do prometheum, too:** The industrial refinery also produces prometheum (or 'burny juice' as the Orks call it) in great quantities. Any player who has control of the industrial refinery may re-roll any to wound rolls made by his flame weaponry. However, if the final result includes two or more rolls of a 1 and the firer is an infantry model, the operative has overloaded his prometheum tanks and goes up in flames himself – remove the model from play.

## THE REALM OF FIRE

**16** The Realm of Fire is the base of operations for the worshippers of Chaos upon the Rok of Ages. Originally an active volcano, a shot from the defence laser of Hive Arcadia utterly destroyed the volcano itself in a single blast, leaving nothing but an inland sea of magma covered by shifting islands of shattered rock. This hostile, vile-smelling environment is much to the liking of the Chaos Space Marines and their daemonic allies.

**Defensible:** Any magma-covered or volcanic tile is easier to defend than a normal tile. All attempts made to claim such tiles deduct two from their dice roll. This is cumulative with bonuses from shield generators and the like.

**Hellrealm:** A player who controls the Realm of Fire may inflict the effects of the Hellish Cacophany stratagem in any game in which he is the defender. This free stratagem affects both armies equally as Daemons scream and shriek in the skies above. Furthermore that player may always opt to play a Planetquake mission.



# THE END GAME

After weeks or even months of endless destruction, you'll need to think about concluding the campaign. There are three ways the campaign can end. The first is the usual Planetary Empires way, the others are a bit more special...

## TEN-TILE TACTICS

Once a player has amassed ten tiles the campaign is essentially over and that player is declared the winner. We suggest this fiendishly cunning general plays one last mega-game against several opponents to end the campaign in a particularly spectacular fashion. This is the usual way for a Planetary Empires campaign to end – you might want to suspend this rule if you want a Rok-based finale.



## DESTROYING THE ROK OF AGES

The second way to end the campaign is if the vast missile known as the Ignis Deo, a weapon that makes a Deathstrike missile look like a pea shooter, is successfully launched (see the Benefact Spaceport tile's rules for details). If the bad guys win, the missile launch is delayed – ignition may be attempted again if the good guys manage to claim the spaceport. If, after playing a climactic end game to ensure the missile reaches its target intact, the bad guys lose, then that means the Ignis Deo has made it to the Rok and detonated its insanely destructive payload. The super-missile will detonate inside the Rok of Ages, blowing it to tiny pieces, killing the incoming bad guys and causing a magnificent orbital firework display to erupt across the night sky of Meridian. Well done good guys, you've saved a precious world from oblivion!

## A ROK AND A HARD PLACE

The third way for the campaign to end is if the bad guys succeed in firing the engines of the Rok to their full potential, driving the planetoid down onto the strongholds of the good guys and obliterating them in a devastating cataclysm. See the engine tile's rules for details of how this can happen. If the engines reach their full potential in this manner, play one last mega-game to see if the good guys can stop the cataclysm. If the good guys win, they have bought themselves some more time – the campaign progresses normally until the bad guys can fire the engines up once more. If the bad guys win, however, the Rok of Ages comes crashing down onto Meridian, grinding into it with such force that the entire world begins to come apart. Meridian is lost, becoming a realm of war and despair where the sun will never shine again. Congratulations!

# NEXT MONTH

We've explained how to run it, so next issue we find out what's been happening, and document the campaign's climactic finale.



Alex Boyd's Ork horde has been doing as much defending as attacking, so Alex made some amazing Orky bastions.



Glenn More's Eldar have been raiding from the deep forests of Meridian and have even made it onto the Rok itself.

