

EXECUTION HOUR

A battle based on Gordon Rennie's novel 'Execution Hour'

by TIM DRISCOLE

" SOMEWHERE FAR OUT on the fringes of the Belatis system, something vast and terrible ripped its way out of warp space and back into the realm of the real universe. Following in its wake, dragged through the breach in the fabric of reality by the pull of the object's massive warp drive field were numerous smaller vessels, some of them formidable weapons of war in their own right, but none of them as terrible and powerful as the object they clustered around. This far out-system, it would take many light-minutes for the energy of the object's unique and massive warp-burst signature. The current situation is this. The planet of Belatis is doomed, its execution hour has been set and Abaddon the Despoiler's Planet Killer fleet are en route through the Warp. The Imperium have no hope of defending the planet, so are hastily abandoning it.

The Imperial Navy have constructed an evacuation fleet to rescue important people and resources from the planet before the Planet Killer arrives. This fleet is currently in orbit around Belatis and includes an Adeptus Arbites Strike Cruiser, *the Inviolable Retribution*, to collect the embattled Arbites garrison. Two Sword class frigates, *the Pegasus* and *the Achilles*, are posted out-system to guard against the Chaos fleet's approach.

Rumours of the planet's imminent demise has sparked mass panic on the surface, and using the rioting as cover, misguided Chaos cultists have overrun most of Belatis, including capturing the ground based orbital defence weapons. Only pockets of Imperium resistance remain on the surface.

In one of these pockets is Imperial Navy Captain Leoten Semper, commander of the *Macharius*. He was on a mission to the surface when his shuttle was hit and crashed. The crew of the *Macharius*, now under the command of First Officer Ulanti, believe their Captain is dead, until the ship's astropath receives a message from the surface using Semper's personal security codex. Ulanti then seeks to rescue his Captain.

As a subplot, amongst the Chaos fleet is the plagueship *Virulent*, commanded by Bulus Sirl. Sirl was humiliated at the battle of Helia IV by the *Macharius* and has been plotting the *Macharius'* destruction ever since. He has managed to secretly infect the *Macharius* with a Plaguebearer which is lurking in the lower decks ready to cause havoc. Sirl wants nothing more than to destroy his nemesis!

For more explanation read the book... it's great.



The *Graf Orlock*, *Borodino*, *Inviolable Retribution* and *Macharius* leave Belatis' orbit as the Planet Killer fleet approaches.

"LIKE THIEVES IN the night, the evacuation fleet slipped out of orbit and stole away into the

stellar darkness, heading away from doomed Belatis.

Aboard the *Macharius*, the mood on the command deck was sombre and subdued. It had been several hours since the final wave of evacuation shuttles had docked with the cruiser *Inviolable Retribution*, carrying the last of the planet's *Adeptus Arbites* garrison force. In their wake had come a battered, damaged *Arbites Eagle* shuttle craft, barely managing to limp its way up out of the gravity well. The heavily

Imperial Forces

Lord Solar Macharius (Ld 7)

Dictator class Cruiser

Drachenfels (Ld 9) Gothic class Cruiser

Graf Orlock (Ld 8) Lunar class Cruiser

Borodino (Ld 8) Lunar class Cruiser

Inviolable Retribution (Ld 9)

Adeptus Arbites Strike Cruiser (see below)

Pegasus and *Achilles* (Ld 7)

Sword class Frigates

15 Imperial Transports

1 Orbital Dock

2 Space Stations

2 Orbital Laser Platforms

2 Orbital Weapon Platforms

150 points of Imperial Escort vessels (with random leadership) of any class

Chaos Forces

Arriving on Turn 1

Charybdis (Ld 8)

Murder class Cruiser

2 squadrons of 5 *Infidel* class Raiders (Ld 8)

From Turn 2

3 defence laser silos (may start firing from Turn 2. They may not be attacked until they have opened fired)

Arriving on Turn 3

Virulent (Ld 8) Slaughter class Cruiser, commanded by Bulus Sirl, Chaos Lord with Mark of Nurgle

3 defence missile silos (may only fire once)

Arriving on Turn 5

Scylla (Ld 9) Styx class Heavy Crusier

Kali (Ld 7) Slaughter class Cruiser

Planet Killer (Ld 10) commanded by Abbadon the Despoiler, Warmaster of Chaos

Harbinger of Doom (Ld 10)

Chaos Space Marine Battle Barge

Deathlord (Ld 10) Desolator class Battleship

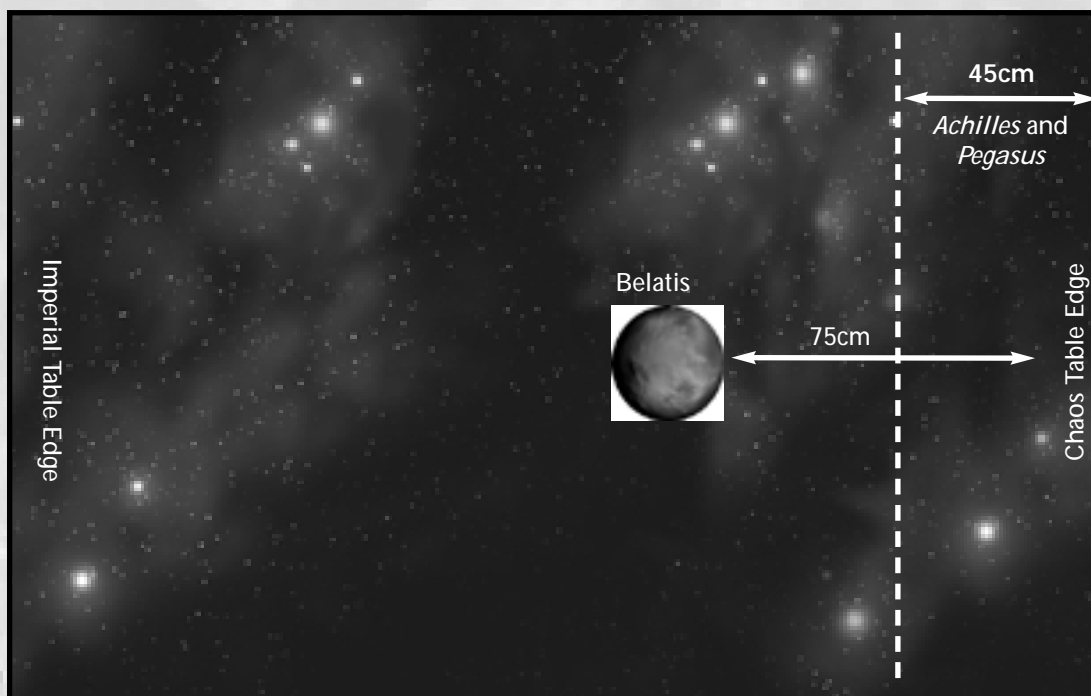
Despoiler (Ld 10) Desolator class Battleship

300 pts of Chaos Escort vessels

(with random Leadership) any class

First turn

The Chaos fleet takes the first turn.



"He watched as Belatis receded into the distance behind the retreating evacuation convoy. It was a tomb now, he thought to himself, not just for Semper but for all still left alive upon it. They had less than a day to live, if the estimates of the astrogation lexmechanics were correct. For, moving through the outer system towards Belatis was the Planet Killer, closing slowly but inexorably on its target. Long-range surveyor scans showed that most of its escort fleet were still with it, moving slowly in-system

Set Up

Place a medium planet 75cm from the Chaos table edge in the centre of the board. There are no other celestial phenomena.

Chaos ships arrive on the turns noted, moving on from their table edge.

All Imperial ships, except Pegasus and Achilles, start in low orbit. Pegasus and Achilles must be deployed no more than 45 cm from the Chaos table edge.

Number of Turns

The game lasts until all the Imperial transports have left the board or have been destroyed.

Special Rules and Sub Plots

The Imperial transports cannot leave orbit until Turn 3.

The *Planet Killer* must destroy Belatis before moving past it. To do this see the Exterminatus scenario in the BFG rule book.

After the *Planet Killer* successfully destroys Belatis roll a D6, after this many turns replace the planet with an asteroid field.

For the first three turns of the game Imperial ships are not affected by gravity.

The *Harbinger of Doom* may not attempt to exterminate the planet and is immune to the 'You have failed me for the last time...' special rule.

The Adeptus Arbites Strike Cruiser counts as the Space Marine equivalent in all respects, except it carries assault boats instead of Thunderhawks

Subplot One

On turn 5 the *Inviolable Retribution* and *Macharius* must attempt to retrieve Captain Semper by sending an attack craft wave to the surface where they must wait for one turn and return to base contact with either ship. If all the attack craft are destroyed coming back Captain Semper is killed and you fail. During this the two ships count as a squadron, if you recover the Captain the Macharius becomes Ld 8.

Subplot Two

If it is in range the *Virulent* must attempt to fire any weapons in arc at the *Macharius*. It can fire weapons not able to hit the *Macharius* at other targets, but it must fire at the *Macharius* if it can.

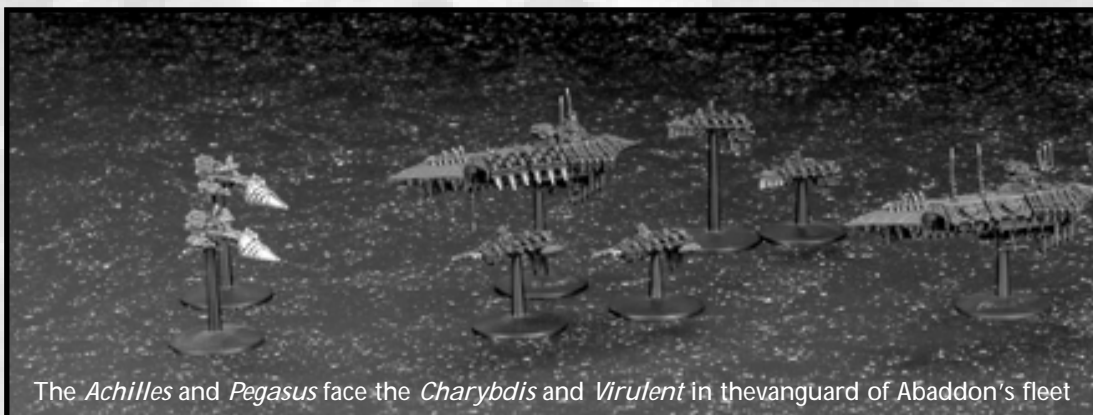
Subplot Three

The *Macharius* has a Plaguebearer on board. At the end of turn 4 roll a D6, on a 1 or 2 the ship suffers an immediate engines damaged, thrusters damaged and shield collapse critical. None of these criticals cause any extra damage and may all be repaired, including the shields.

Victory! (and defeat)

To see who wins consult the table below.

	Belatis Destroyed	Belatis not destroyed	Planet Killer destroyed
0-5 transports escape	Chaos Victory	Draw	Imperial Major Victory
6-10 transports escape	Chaos Minor Victory	Imperial Minor Victory	Imperial Major Victory
11-15 transports escape	Draw	Imperial Victory	Imperial Major Victory



The *Achilles* and *Pegasus* face the *Charybdis* and *Virulent* in the vanguard of Abaddon's fleet