

# DEATHWATCH

## ARK OF LOST SOULS



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM  
DARKNESS OF THE 4<sup>1</sup><sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM

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# INTRODUCTION

*“For my house. For my father. For my vengeance, and death to that which cannot die.”*

—Unknown vox transmission, intercepted near Mideal in M34

Welcome to **ARK OF LOST SOULS**, a unique adventure and Game Master’s supplement for the **DEATHWATCH** Roleplaying Game. The events within waylay a Deathwatch Kill-team aboard one of the most iconic locales of the **WARHAMMER 40,000** universe—a dreaded Space Hulk. Stranded deep inside the cursed bulk of *Mortis Thule*, the most feared and infamous Space Hulk of the Jericho Reach, the Kill-team must find their way through the twisted madness and haunted darkness within. During their journey, the Kill-team will encounter numerous perils that threaten not only themselves, but may threaten the whole of the Jericho Reach.

The final chapter of **ARK OF LOST SOULS** is dedicated to the **Space Hulk Mission Generator**. This system of tables, advice, and information provides Game Masters with all the tools necessary to create unique missions aboard *Mortis Thule* or a Space Hulk of his own design. The adventure module that comprises the first three chapters of **ARK OF LOST SOULS** utilises the Generator to flesh out the locales and encounters of *Mortis Thule* between the major events of the adventure itself.

## A NOTE ON THE SPACE HULK MISSION GENERATOR

Chapter IV of **ARK OF LOST SOULS** contains a new system that Game Masters can use to generate near-limitless encounters aboard a Space Hulk. This system is used extensively throughout the adventure module—Chapters I, II, and III of this book. As the Players progress through the adventure, the GM is called upon to use the **Space Hulk Mission Generator** to create his own encounters, calamities, and scenes to bridge the gaps between the major events. It is highly recommended that the Game Master generate these as part of his usual preparation for a gaming session. While the **Space Hulk Mission Generator** can be used to quickly generate these elements on the fly, generating them in advance can make for a much more cohesive session that flows far more smoothly.



# RUNNING ARK OF LOST SOULS

The events of the first three chapters of **ARK OF LOST SOULS** require Battle-Brothers who have a well-rounded set of abilities but are easily balanced to any particular level of power. Therefore, the adventure is appropriate for Battle-Brothers of any Rank, though Rank 2 or higher is suggested, as this will give the Kill-team more access to well-rounded skills. Also, it is recommended that the Kill-team be made up of Battle-Brothers with a range of capabilities and specialities. As a number of events make use of the Tech-Use Skill, a Techmarine or other tech-savvy Battle-Brother is quite valuable. Likewise, both Librarians and Apothecaries will find their abilities and specialities of use. Of course, *Mortis Thule* is a dangerous place and this adventure contains a number of challenging combat encounters, so Battle-Brothers of all capabilities will have a time to shine.

A brief introduction to the Space Hulk *Mortis Thule* is provided on page 6 of this book and further information can be found on pages 61-65 of the **DEATHWATCH** supplement **THE ACHILUS ASSAULT**.

## OVERVIEW OF THE ADVENTURE

**ARK OF LOST SOULS** is a continuous story arc that take the Kill-team through several major events as they try to escape *Mortis Thule*. These events are linked by trials and travails generated on the **Space Hulk Mission Generator**, to give life to the Space Hulk while highlighting its ever-shifting nature. As the Battle-Brothers make their way through the Space Hulk, they find evidence pointing towards three possible tangential objectives, from which they are forced to choose only one to accomplish. In this way the Players are challenged with a tough decision which may have lasting repercussions for the Jericho Reach.

### CHAPTER I: PERIL ON THE HORIZON

This chapter functions as the introduction to the adventure module of **ARK OF LOST SOULS**. In this chapter, the Kill-team finds themselves alongside Watch Captain de Dominova on their way to relieve a besieged Watch Station in the Jericho Reach. During its translation from the warp, the Kill-team’s strike vessel is caught by the unnatural pull of the Space Hulk *Mortis Thule*, with disastrous effect. The Battle-Brothers awake to discover that their ship has become fused into the massive body of the Space Hulk, deep within its bulk. After a cursory assessment, the Space Marines learn that the Watch Captain was mortally injured in the catastrophe and is near death, and the remainder of the strike vessel’s crew either dead or irrevocably driven mad. Dropping into sus-an induced state of suspended animation, the Watch Captain is unable to aid the Space Marines further in the adventure. The Battle-Brothers primary objective is now to get de Dominova, and themselves, safely off the Space Hulk and continue their mission to the besieged Watch Station.

## USING ANOTHER WATCH-CAPTAIN

Watch-Captain de Dominova is an NPC who first appeared in the **DEATHWATCH** adventure **RISE TEMPEST**. As such, Game Masters may wish to substitute a character of their own devising. It might be the case that the Kill-team has a particular connection with a familiar officer, or that the Game Master has something special or unusual in mind for a unique character of his own invention.

Trapped within the Space Hulk and unable to contact outside aid, the Battle-Brothers must now find a means of escape, or at least of communication. Burdened with the injured Watch Captain, they seek out the only lead they have as to their whereabouts—a faint augur signal of Imperial origin transmitting from somewhere within the Space Hulk itself. Eventually, the Kill-team finds the source of the beacon, a Cobra-class destroyer buried at the heart of *Mortis Thule*. After a climactic battle with the Tyranids that have overrun the destroyer, led by a horrific new breed of Lictor—who will play out to be a recurring nemesis throughout the adventure—the Battle-Brothers find a safe-haven on the sealed bridge of the ship.

## CHAPTER II: SURVIVAL

Aboard the Cobra, the Space Marines look more closely at their current surroundings and their plight. Using the ship's augur arrays, the Kill-team identifies a possible route of escape—a long and winding series of passages which lead through several ships buried within *Mortis Thule* to an Imperial vessel attached to the surface of the Space Hulk, possibly bearing a functioning lighter or other detachable means of flight. Unfortunately, at this point, the Battle-Brothers also receive a dire warning. The Cobra's navigator, hidden within his cell from the Tyranids without, reveals himself to the Space Marines and forewarns them of the Space Hulk's inexorable pull back into the warp. The Kill-team has only a relatively short time before they are hurtled back into the warp and exposed to the unnatural beasts which swim through the Empyrean. The Cobra's augurs are able to detect a working Gellar Field along the Battle-Brothers' path to the surface, though they have little time to dally.

It is during this Chapter that the Kill-team discovers evidence of the three tangential objectives, though with the ticking clock of the imminent Warp translation, they will have no time to investigate. Instead, they must quickly make their way to what they discover is the remains of the *Emperor's Gaze*, a famous vessel of the Achilus Crusade, said to have been lost to the Imperium. Aboard the *Emperor's Gaze*, those fortunate—or accursed—few who have thus far survived the ordeal await their destiny. What form that destiny will take is a subject of great debate amongst the survivors, and the Battle-Brothers must tread lightly lest they find themselves, unexpectedly, in the midst of enemies.

## THE GM'S CHALLENGE

**ARK OF LOST SOULS** is an unusual adventure, in that the initial mission the Battle-Brothers are briefed on bears no resemblance to the game that is actually played. This means that some of the set-up is necessarily made irrelevant as events unfold, but Game Masters should use this as an opportunity. Ideally, the less the players know about the adventure the better, allowing them to roleplay their characters' reactions.

Particularly canny GMs might like to take this element of the adventure even further by keeping the players completely in the dark about the adventure they are to play. Beyond preparing for series of **DEATHWATCH** sessions, the players should be told nothing at all about the nature of the adventure. This means that, for the first session at least, the GM must go so far as to hide this book from the players, keeping it out of sight (perhaps utilising the **DEATHWATCH** Game Master's Screen to do so). Once the Kill-team's vessel has become ensnared with the vast bulk of *Mortis Thule* and the Battle-Brothers have ascertained something of their surroundings, the Game Master can ease off in his efforts to keep the players ignorant of the adventure they are actually playing.

## CHAPTER III: DARKNESS AT THE CORE

Though they may have found temporary sanctuary, the Battle-Brothers cannot simply abandon their mission. From their current location, the Kill-team has a relatively clear path to their escape, but three dire threats loom before them. Should the players choose to undertake one of the optional objectives, the Game Master can look to this chapter for the resolution of those individual plots. The first of these optional objectives is an infestation of the psychic vermin known as Enslavers. The second concerns a rogue agent of the Inquisition and a powerful alien artefact at the heart of *Mortis Thule*. The third, and final, objective takes the form of a powerful Ork warlord who has built a mighty Waaagh! in the bowels of *Mortis Thule* and is prepared to unleash it upon the Jericho Reach. Upon the conclusion of their chosen optional objective, or should they disregard all three and focus on completing their original mission, the players must make their way through the final hazards of the Space Hulk, winding their way to the Imperial vessel. The Kill-team must hurry, however, as they all begin to feel the tug at their souls as *Mortis Thule* is yet again pulled back to the Warp.

The final climax of the adventure comes as the Battle-Brothers reach the Imperial vessel they seek, only to find that during their struggles, a portion of the vast Space Hulk had broken off from the main body and is now hurtling towards an Imperial fortress world. Should they wish to save the fortress world, one of the Battle-Brothers must sacrifice himself to pilot a ship trapped within the fragment, that it might push the disastrous meteor aside. The remaining members of the Kill-team must fight their way through a mass of Tyranid beasts in order to make their way to the shuttle that will be their salvation. Here they are confronted by the same Lictor from **Chapter I**, the dreaded Beast of Thule. After the epic battle against the Tyranid infestation, the Kill-team finally makes their escape to the relative quiet of the void.

# MORTIS THULE

*"Tis a haunted place, full of old ghosts. Tis a curse to any who board her."*

—Ulysses Argivos, Master-at-Arms of the Rogue Trader vessel, *Light of Ascension*

Should the Game Master require a full description of the Space Hulk codified *Mortis Thule*, the Deathwatch supplement **THE ACHILUS ASSAULT** provides additional information. What follows is a more detailed description of the parts relevant to the Kill-team's mission and to the adventure as it is to unfold. Specifically, this description delves into the details that the Battle-Brothers would themselves know, aiding the GM in communicating to the players information that would be available to their characters.

Details of *Mortis Thule* are presented in four categories. The first details what every Space Marine (and most players) know of Space Hulks in general, and of *Mortis Thule* in particular. The GM can refer to these details should a player request information on the subject. The next section details Deathwatch standing orders regarding *Mortis Thule*, and these are known to all Battle-Brothers of the Jericho Reach Deathwatch. Thirdly, an additional layer of information is provided to cover more restricted information that some, but not all members of the Deathwatch would be aware of. The final section, **A Realm of Death**, details information specifically for the Game Master. While not every piece of information in this last section is secret information that should be kept out of the hands of the players, its primary usefulness is for the Game Master.

In the interest of keeping players in the dark about the truth of this adventure, this information should not be made available to the players until the majority of **Chapter I** has been resolved and the Battle-Brothers become aware of their predicament.

The information presented on the following pages is available to Battle-Brothers making a successful test as detailed on **Table 0-1: Restricted Data**.

## CHAPTER APPROVED BRIEFING

Space Hulks are an ever-present threat to the security of the Imperium and the rule of the Emperor, and have plagued the space lanes at least as long as the Imperium has stood. A Space Hulk is a conglomeration of star ships, space borne rock, and other, less classifiable objects sucked into, or lost within, the Warp. Cast adrift upon the insane currents of the Sea of Souls, the Space Hulk grows ever larger as more wrecks are drawn towards it. Far from being empty tombs, Space Hulks are often infested with all manner of organisms. Most exist in the darkest depths and the deepest shadows, only emerging to ambush any soul brave or foolish enough to board their accursed domain during the periodic interludes where it drops out of the Warp to drift along the space lanes of the Imperium of Man.

It is during these incursions into realspace that Space Hulks become a threat to Mankind. The creatures that infest them are, by their very nature, amongst the most abominable threats to humanity, and they are utilised, often by sheer instinct rather than design, as a means of spreading that taint. Some Space Hulks are host to all manner of alien predators or parasites and, once established upon the worlds of the Imperium, are all but impossible to dislodge. Sometimes, all it takes to begin this tragic process is for an unfortunate boarder to be attacked and evacuated to his parent vessel, then subsequently returned to his home world. All the while, the xenos parasite is gestating within him or hiding amongst his peers. Some infestations spread quickly, bringing the world to its knees before help can even be called for, while others spread slowly, multiplied over generations until every single member of a human population is, knowingly or otherwise, under alien domination. Upon some imperceptible signal, the entire population rises up, shedding what remains of its humanity and sometimes calling down a massive and long prepared for alien invasion.

When a Space Hulk is detected near an Imperial world, the obvious course of action would be to bombard it to atoms. While many wish this were possible, the chance to find lost archeotech or relics of a bygone age is far too great. This is because Space Hulks represent an accumulation of vessels, both human and alien, many of them so ancient they predate the Age of Imperium. The machine systems to be found within these wrecks are beyond priceless in a

TABLE 0-1: RESTRICTED DATA

Information	Skill used	Difficulty	Speciality specific Skill Test bonus
Ancient History	Lore: Scholastic (Archaic)	Very Hard (-30)	Deathwatch Librarian +20
Aliens and Lost Souls	Lore: Forbidden (Xenos)	Hard (-20)	Deathwatch Librarian +10 Deathwatch Apothecary +20
Lost Kin	Lore: Forbidden (Adeptus Astartes)	Hard (-20)	Deathwatch Chaplain† +10 Deathwatch Black Shield† +10 Deathwatch Librarian +10
Inquisitor Rogue	Lore: Forbidden (The Inquisition)	Hard (-20)	Deathwatch Chaplain† +10 Deathwatch Watch-Captain† +20
<i>The Emperor's Gaze</i>	Lore: Common (Imperial Navy)	Very Hard (-30)	Deathwatch Techmarine +10

† These entries refer to the Advanced Specialties presented in **Chapter II** of the **DEATHWATCH** supplement **rites of Battle**.