



The Second Sphere Defence

THE GOONHAMMER UK OPEN MAY 2025

What: Narrative Warhammer: The Horus Heresy Campaign

When: 10th and 11th May 2025

Where: De Montfort Students' Union, Campus Centre Building, Mill Ln, Leicester LE2 7DR

Games: Three games of 2500pts and one game of 1250pts Zone Mortalis

Version 1.0: November 2024 Update - Release

THE SECOND SPHERE DEFENCE

On the surface of the planet where humanity took its first steps there is no night; glimmers fill the void. What appears to be a firmament of blinking stars are the discharges of void shields and engine emissions. Torpedo trails and orbital lance-strikes weave a lattice across the sky. Macro-bombardments and plasma fire fill the heavens and light a second day. A fool would think it is beautiful, but the wise know what it means.

When the denizens of the Sol sleep, they dream of a man with no face.

Horus has come to Terra with a promise. The Throne world shall burn. The Emperor shall die. Humanity shall know a new master. With him he brings armies beyond counting. Raiders, reavers and daemons flock to his banner.

But Lord Dorn, the Emperor's Praetorian, has prepared the Sol System for this onslaught. Every available adult has been conscripted. Every bullet and shell scavenged. Every ship pressed into service. Entire systems fuel the war-machine needed to ensure this lynchpin of humanity stands firm against all that the Traitors can bring.

But before the Traitors can break the walls of the Imperial Palace, they must first press through the fleet defences of the Sol System, and the valuable planets on its outer rim. The shipyards of the Jovian voidclans, the Saturnine space stations, Pluto's seemingly impregnable ring of fortresses around the Kthonian gate, the mining planets of Neptune and the shipping lanes of Neptune's Elysian Gate.

Dorn knows this well, and has fortified the outer systems with all manner of defences. It is here we tell the story of the penultimate battle of the Heresy: the SOLAR WAR.

It is known by all that Uranus and Neptune will fall. The only question that remains is how much the Traitors can be made to bleed. This battle can be won with Blood and Time, for it is known that Lord Guilleman grows closer to Terra with each passing day.

These battles shall see Throne World's salvation or doom.

Welcome to **The Second Sphere Defence**, a Warhammer: The Horus Heresy narrative campaign run by Goonhammer.com. This pack is designed to familiarise you with the format, give some idea of the specific rules we'll be using, how to create an army for the event, and to give you some information about the venue and timings.

The Second Sphere Defence covers the opening salvos and ongoing battles of the Solar War. Our campaign will focus on the moons, vessels and space stations surrounding the planets of Neptune and Uranus. We will explore the untold stories of epic moments within these pivotal conflicts across 4 games of the Warhammer: The Horus Heresy. This event is intended to be the climax of our current season of campaigns, all of which have been building towards the Siege of Terra.

While the Siege is about the great heroes and Primarchs, we aim to focus this campaign on *your stories*, about the characters you all create, and the amazing deeds they go on to enact.

Dorn watches on from Terra and Horus from the void. Both allegiances, loyalist and traitor, will feel the distant words of their commanders, whereas frontline duties have been delegated to Commanders, players with additional responsibilities over the Battlegroups that fight across the different Warzones, each representing a different planet of the event.

Each Commander will command a small Battlegroup of 4 players, following orders from their Primarch, assigning tables and special missions to their team, and commanding a series of special assets they can give to their Battlegroup.

The astute lorekeepers among you may notice some divergence from existing lore material. We'll be stretching out the battles of the Second Sphere so they are more even. Horus and Perturabo have reacted to the explosive demise of the moons of Pluto, and have made sure to not overcommit their forces to capture Neptune or Uranus. We would remind you that remembrancer records during the Heresy are often spotty, portraying conflicting views and impossible sequences of events. This is no exception. This is not *the* Solar War, but rather *your* Solar War; its events are yours to forge.

EVENT FORMAT

The weekend will consist of a narrative campaign following an escalating series of conflicts on Uranus and Neptune.

This is **not** a competitive event.

We're all here to play games, shove models around the table, and experience the thrill of having tanks blow up and warlords run away like cowards. Bring fun, interesting lists and not just the thing you think will dominate on the table. In fact, there are no personal awards for winning the most games or scoring the most victory points, it all goes into the narrative. However, please do be aware that you may end up facing *any* kind of army and plan accordingly - make sure you have the key elements of any list and can face down a variety of foes.

ALLEGIANCES

Tickets are sold on a side basis, either for the Loyalists or the Traitors. Let us know if you want to take additional responsibilities as a Commander.

In the case of drops or other unforeseen circumstances that the spare player is not available, volunteers will be asked to change allegiance for the campaign. Players who swap allegiances for the purposes for the campaign won't be asked to change their allegiance in rules terms (and thus lose access to its associated warlord traits and so on) if they don't want to.

FRONTS

Our fronts will be waged across the various moons, vessels and space stations in the Second Sphere.

BATTLEGROUPS

Each Battlegroup is made up of 4 players who will fight together across the weekend. One of these players is a Commander, a line officer given special responsibilities by their Primarch.

At the start of each of the four rounds, the Commander will be issued with Marching Orders, containing information about the Front they should report to and the mission they will be fighting. They will also receive extra secondary missions that contribute to ongoing storylines.

RULES, FAQs AND ERRATA

The event will use all Games Workshop FAQs and errata published up to two weeks ahead of the event. It will use rules supplements published up to four weeks ahead of the event. Anything published after this date will not be used (subject to TO discretion).

A number of rules changes and restrictions for list building are outlined later in this pack ("Restrictions").

The event will use custom missions that rely on Line units scoring points by holding Objectives, and Vehicle units scoring points by holding large areas of the board.

Each mission will use different Campaign Specific Rules as the devastation escalates.

RULES QUERIES

If you have any queries related to event rulings, please submit them to contact@goonhammer.com and specify "GHO UK HH" in the subject line.

ARMY LIST SELECTION

Your Warlord must be named - they are your presence in the field and as you win and lose honours so will they. You must submit three lists for the weekend, with a fourth optional list. These lists are as follows:

- **Main Force:** 2500 points list using the standard Crusade Force Organisation Chart or Questoris Knight Households including any optional Lord of War and Allied Detachments
- **Support Force:** 750 points list comprising a single Allied Detachment (from the Crusade Force Organisation Chart), or a single Lord of War Auxiliary Detachment, or a single Titan Maniple Detachment. You may not include any other detachments. Do not choose a warlord or any warlord traits for this force.

- **Zone Mortalis Force:** 1250 point list comprising a single Zone Mortalis Detachment (from the Siege of Cthonia Mission Pack).
- **Primarch Sideboard:** A single, optional Primarch to be played alongside your Main Force with your opponent's consent. ([See Primarch Sideboards](#))

Your Support Forces and Zone Mortalis Forces do not have been drawn from one of the Factions included in your Main Force, although you are encouraged to do this to maintain a consistent narrative. They will also never be deployed at the same time as your Main Force, so the same models can be used in multiple Forces.

We will be allowing Unique characters if they were present at the Siege of Terra, with a maximum of one of each character appearing across the campaign on a first come first served basis. If you want to run a Unique characters at the event, email us at contact@goonhammer.com with the subject line "GHO HH Dibs".

We haven't got a precise list of which of the dozens of Unique characters were at the Siege of not. If you have any queries, drop us an email to contact@goonhammer.com with the subject line "GHO HH Dibs" and we'll let you know our take,

Alpha Legion, you guys can bring as many Dynats and Exodi as you like. The Hydra has many heads.

Designer's Note: We do not recommend running Militia in Goon Mortalis. Deployment zones in this board are small, benefitting elite forces, and if you run 100+ infantry you will end up putting most of your units in reserve. You're welcome to try.

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

8:30 - 9:00 Registration

9:10 - 9:15 Briefing

9:15 - 13:15 Game 1

13:15 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 14:15 Briefing

14:15 - 18:15 Game 2

SUNDAY

09:00 - 09:15 Briefing

09:15 - 12:15 Game 3

12:15 - 13:00 Lunch and Best Painted Army Judging

13:00 - 13:15 Briefing

13:15 - 17:15 Game 4

17:30 Campaign Epilogue and Prizegiving

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your army
- Two printed copies of each of your lists
- A copy of the core rulebook and the Liber(s) that your army is drawn from
- A printed copy of any units you are using from a PDF resource (such as *Legacies of the Age of Darkness*)
- Dice, templates, measuring tapes, a pen/pencil

LIST SUBMISSION

While this isn't a competitive event, please submit your Army Lists by the **1st April 2024 via BEST COAST PAIRINGS** [here](#) (to avoid issues with emails being blocked/etc). Please include your lists including all wargear, warlord traits, rites of war and so on, as well as information on all 3 lists and your optional Primarch Sideboard.

All models are to be *Battle Ready*, painted and based on their correct bases as a minimum. All models are to be modelled WYSIWYG for main guns and armaments, but you do not need to model grenades, non-optional wargear and other minor items. Please feel free to go crazy with conversions as long as it is still clear to your opponent what is going on. While we respect that assembling and painting a full army is a time consuming and difficult challenge, we want all players to have the experience of playing against opponents who have put care and detail into their force.

If you're unsure if a conversion is appropriate, reach out to us contact@goonhammer.com with "GHO UK HH" at the start of the subject line.

RULES CHANGES

Several event specific restrictions will apply to the weekend beyond the normal rules.

LIST BUILDING RESTRICTIONS

1. You may select units from the *Legacies of the Age of Darkness* and *Exemplary Battles* supplements freely.
2. Primarchs may not be selected except the [Primarch Sideboard](#).
3. A character with the Unique sub-type present at the Siege of Terra may be included on a one-per-campaign basis. See [Army List Selection](#) for more info.
4. Some Rites of War are not suitable for this event. **You may not take:** Fury of the Ancients and **Armoured Spearhead**.
5. Traitor armies that includes a Primary Detachment that does not use the Ruinstorm Daemons Army List CAN include an optional Allied Detachment drawn from the Ruinstorm Daemons Army List, but not a Lord of War Detachment drawn from the Ruinstorm Daemons Army List.
6. Demon Sovereigns are a 0-1 choice.
7. Shattered Legions can be brought to the event, but must declare their Major, Minor Benefits and Flaws at the start of the game, and they do not change as the result of Mutable Tactics.

8. Any unit with the Dreadnought type cannot have multiple models in the same unit. For example, a Contemptor Dreadnought Talon can have only a single dreadnought in it and additional dreadnoughts may not be selected.
9. Iron Warriors Siege Tyrants, Iron Warrior Havocs, Emperor's Children Sunkillers, Mechanicum Myrmidons of any kind and Legion Heavy Support Lascannon and Volkite Squads are all limited to 5 model units.
10. No model may take Artificer Armour as an upgrade. Exceptions are made for Independent or "attachable" characters (e.g. Apothecaries) or entire units which can purchase Artificer Armour as an upgrade, like the Sons of Horus Chieftains squad.
11. You may bring a Phobos Land Raider instead of a Proteus Carrier when one is permitted by the Dedicated Transport rule.

These restrictions may be updated or changed before the event depending on the publications, FAQs and errata released.

GOON MORTALIS LIST BUILDING RESTRICTIONS

These following rules are in place for [Goon Mortalis](#) missions in addition to the normal listbuilding rules.

1. Max 1 Dreadnought.
2. No Leviathan or Telemon Dreadnoughts, or Automata with more than 6 wounds.
3. No Pride of the Legion.
4. All battlefields will use ceilings, so the use of Jump Infantry is not advised.
5. All missions will contain 3-4 objectives, but all infantry units without a 2+ save will be able to capture them as per "Special Rules" in the [Goon Mortalis Pack](#). You are advised to bring a good amount of Line.

BALANCE CHANGES

The following rules changes will be in effect for the weekend:

1. Interceptor reactions, even those granted by Auspex and other equipment for free, count towards your total reactions allocation of 3 in a single phase.
2. The wounds characteristic of Contemptor Dreadnoughts, Leviathan Dreadnoughts and Decimators (as well as their Legion-specific and Adeptus Custodes equivalents) is reduced by 1.

3. Gravis power fists, Leviathan siege claws and Decimator siege claws are Brutal (2) and not Brutal (3) .
4. Clade Callidus Assassins are not denial units until their Polymorphine rule is no longer in effect (they have made an attack).
5. The Telepathic Hallucinations psychic weapon reduces the Leadership of the target unit by 1 for each hit rather than adding 1 to the dice roll. This means that Stubborn units will not have any modifier to their Pinning Checks.
6. Units mounted on Legion Scimitar Jetbikes, Legion Shamshir Jetbike and Legion Spatha Combat Bikes have Battle Hardened (1).
7. Aircraft can arrive from reserves on Turn 1 on a 4+.

These changes may be updated or changed before the event depending on the publications, FAQs and errata released.

RESERVES AND DEEP STRIKE CHANGES

This event includes a lot of Reserves and Deep Striking

1. The Disordered roll for Deep Strikes, Drop Pod Assault, Subterranean and Flank Assaults do not occur.
2. When arriving from reserves of any type or disembarking from a transport that deployed from reserves that turn, all models in a unit must be deployed as close as possible to the initial model deployed in that unit.
3. When disembarking from a transport that arrived from reserves that turn, all models in a unit must be deployed as close as possible to the transport.
4. When you arrive via reserves within 12" of an enemy unit, they may immediately perform the Interceptor Reaction. Units with an Augury Scanner may perform Interceptor against units that arrive within 18" instead. Units with a Vox Disruptor Array may perform Interceptor against units that arrive within 24" instead.
5. Interceptor Reactions may be used at the end of the Movement Phase against units that disembark from a Transport.
6. Outside of this range, units cannot perform the Interceptor reaction.

MILITIA AND AUXILIA CHANGES

Only the finest mortals stood a chance during the Solar War. This was not a place for lesser forces or vehicles pulled off of parking lots and abandoned armour depots.

Primary Detachment Imperialis Militia armies at the Second Sphere Defence may either:

- Ignore all effects of the Third-Line and Militia unit subtypes. The Militia sub-type is only used to determine who is affected by Provenance of War.

OR

- Take a third Provenance of War.

Primary Detachment Solar Auxilia armies at the Second Sphere Defence may choose a Legion that they are the Legiones Auxilia of. They gain the following effects:

- They gain the Legiones Auxilia effect of their chosen Legion.
- If they take a Solar Auxilia Marshall as their warlord, they may take a Warlord Trait from their chosen Legion. Any reference to Legiones Astartes within these Warlord Traits instead affects all Solar Auxilia units from that detachment.
- If they take a Cohorts Vexilia, once per game a unit within 12" of that banner may use the Advanced Reaction of their chosen Legion as if they possessed the Legiones Astartes trait for that Legion.

Alternatively, they may choose to be unaligned and take a Warlord Trait from the Imperialis Militia book.

CAMPAIGN SPECIFIC RULES

As the forces of the loyalists and the traitors clash over the planet of Vendar, a number of new rules will be used to represent the progress of the campaign and also track the experiences of the heroes fighting in it.

GOONHAMMER APPROVED MISSION PACK

The games you play while at the event will use deployment maps and mission rules as provided in the [Goonhammer Approved Mission Pack](#). You will be told which mission you are going to be using for each game as you are assigned a table and opponent for each round.

We're working on 6 new Goonhammer Approved missions we're hoping to use for the event.

GOON MORTALIS MISSION PACK

The games you play while at the event will use special rules, deployment maps and mission rules as provided in the [Goon Mortalis Mission Pack](#), which differ from normal Zone Mortalis boards and are typically played on a 3x3 board with a small points value.

You will be told which mission you are going to be using for each game as you are assigned a table and opponent for each round.

PRIMARCH SIDEBOARDS

Each player has an optional Primarch Sideboard, made up of one Primarch from the same Legion as taken as the Primary Detachment in your Main Force.

Only Primarchs present at the Siege of Terra may be taken. Horus himself will not take to the field in this battle, reserving himself for the oncoming battle aboard the Vengeful Spirit.

If both players bring a Primarch Sideboard and wish to use them in their games, they may agree to do so. The Primarch receives their Warlord Trait in addition to the Warlord Trait gained from the Main Force.

Unlike other heroes, these epic characters are not unique across the campaign. Primarchs fight with such lightning pace it sometimes feels possible they are in two places at once!

INTERVENTIONS

If a player finishes their game then their round is not over: they should present themselves to an Event Organiser to record their scores, and then to their Commander for further instructions. This is where your Support Forces can be used.

Once completed, their Commander can choose to send them to an ongoing game in the same Front. They will place a Timed Action card on the board to represent incoming reinforcements arriving in the oncoming game.

Support Forces may not be deployed onto a board unless both players are happy with an additional player joining their game. If either player feels the arrival of new players would be an unfun experience for them, they can veto the arrival of support forces without hesitation. The role of Support Forces is to make fun, exciting events that are enjoyable for both players. If two players are having fun in a game by themselves, let them get on with it!

At the start of the next friendly turn, the Support Force player arrives from reserves. They may enter from any board edge, not just the friendly board edge, and use any special rules they have (Deep Strike, Outflank, Subterranean Assault, Drop Pod Assault, etc).

These units may not be targeted by Interceptor Reactions unless they Deep Strike.

The game is now a doubles game for one side. When playing a doubles game, each team counts as one player, but each army is its own list with its own detachments. No matter their factions, the armies on the team consider each other Fellow Warriors. When calculating the Cost of War consider the total points value of both lists together.

A team can never have more than one warlord. If a player is fielding their Support Force then they do not have a warlord anyway.

Each team has a reaction allocation of 1 per phase, which they must share between them, plus any bonuses from the warlord or other sources.

Interventions are not possible in Goon Mortalis games.

So the event runs on time, we will not be allowing interventions within the last half hour of the 4 hour slot.

PRIZES AND SPONSORS

The Goonhammer Open could not happen with support from our Event partners and sponsors. We'd like to thank each of them and encourage you to check them out!



Element Games have come through with some amazing prize support for everyone. Prizes will be awarded for the following:

- Most Honoured Loyalist Warlord (Individual Sporting / Painting / Gameplay Prize)
- Most Honoured Traitor Warlord (Individual Sporting / Painting / Gameplay Prize)
- Best Loyalist Army (Painting / Theme / Conversion)
- Best Traitor Army (Painting / Theme / Conversion)
- Best Loyalist Battlegroup (Group Sporting / Army / Gameplay Prize)
- Best Traitor Battlegroup (Individual Sporting / Army / Gameplay Prize)

The EOs will determine these results, with the assistance of voting from players and guest judges where relevant. In addition further spot prizes will be available on the weekend, as a treat.

REFUNDS

Requests for a refund on the ticket price can be made on Eventbrite up to 30 days ahead of the event.

ACCOMODATION

Being in the heart of Leicester there are plenty of options for accommodation for all different budgets within short walking distance.

We did have a few people get caught out by renting cheap student flats on AirBnb which got cancelled on them last minute when they found out they weren't students – so be mindful of that.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The Goonhammer team will also be taking photos throughout the event. Our privacy policy is published on the Goonhammer Open UK events page on the website.

ACCESSIBILITY

We want to ensure our event is accessible to everyone. If you have any specific accessibility requirements or if there is anything we can do to make your experience more comfortable please let us know at contact@goonhammer.com with UK GHO in the subject line.

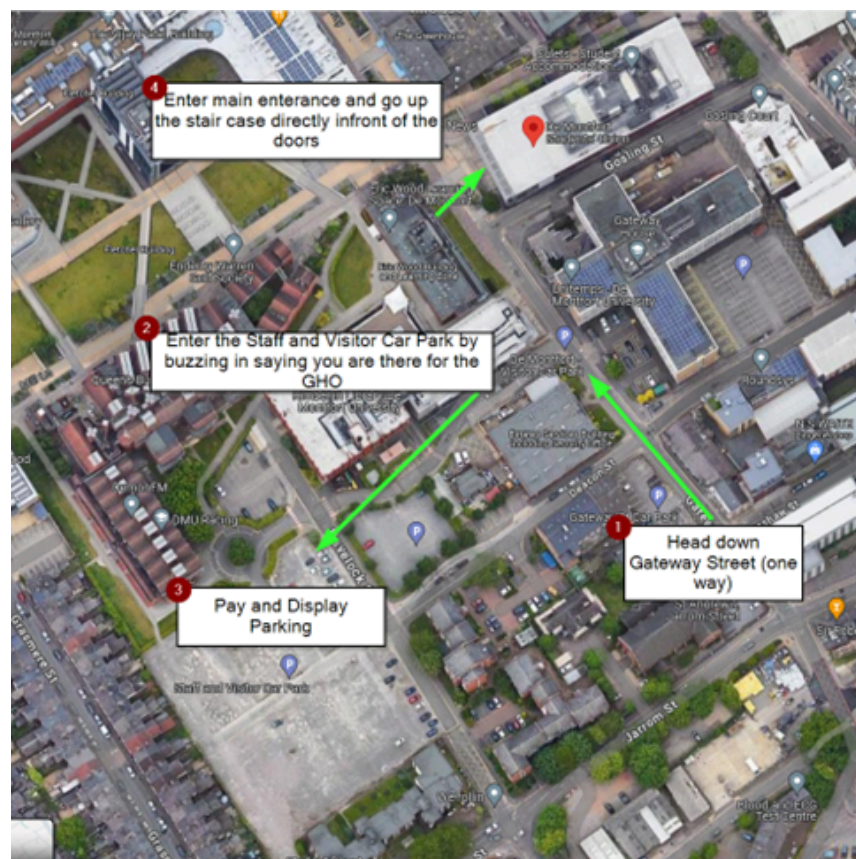
FOOD AND VENDORS

The venue will have a staffed bar serving refreshments and snacks throughout the weekend. Alcoholic beverages are available; we kindly ask that you check with your opponent before getting a drink out of courtesy. Any drunken behaviour will not be tolerated at the event, drink responsibly.

The Student Union is well placed for a short walk to numerous different food options - such as Tesco, Dominos and burger joints five minutes away. The lobby has a lounge ideal for having your lunch if you bring it in or have it delivered. There is no issue with bringing outside food into the venue.

Finding the Venue and Parking

The event is hosted at the De Montfort Student Union building (LE2 7DR) pictured below. We have use of the onsite parking at the Staff and Visitor Car Park which needs to be **prebooked** in advance using a link that will be shared closer to the even via email and updated in [this pack on the events page](#).



As inner Leicester is all one way roads, do not overshoot the parking entrance (pictured below) – this will cost you 5 minutes of looping back around!

