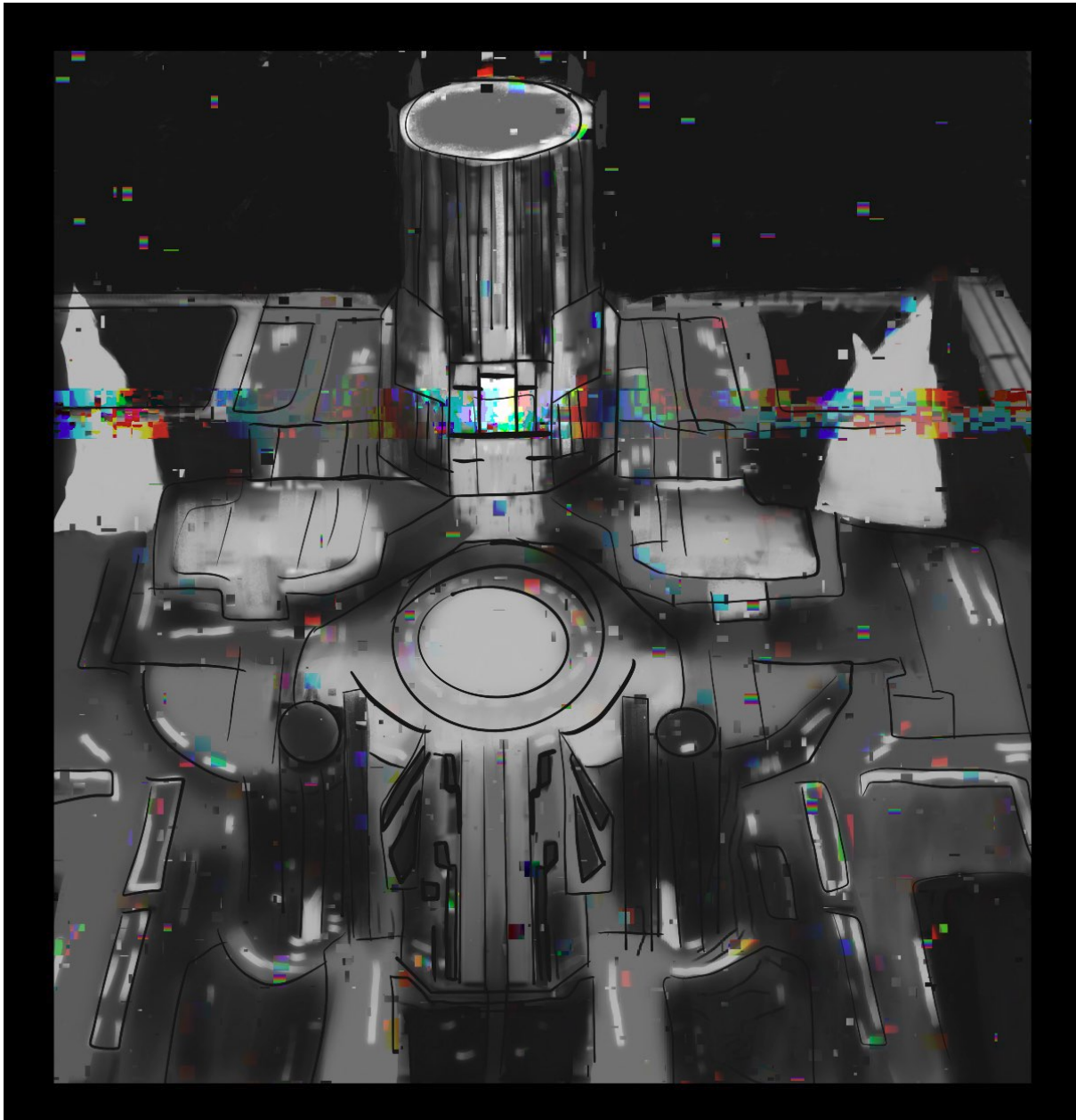


Fortress of the Unchained

Field Reconnaissance Report – Taskforce Shen-7



Holopic 1: High altitude probe droid image of the Fortress of the Unchained. Significant deterioration from baffle static.

The main fortification of the Children of Mortis was reconnoitered by Taskforce Shen-7, consisting of a combination of Force Sensitive infiltrators and specialist probe droids, ahead of the Brotherhood assault. The Fortress was found to possess

considerable defenses and significant reserves of personnel and arms, enough to sustain a prolonged assault by conventional troops, at least two Regiments' equivalent.

Additional reinforcements were uncovered in the shape of Ascended-class mutants, (number unknown, estimated Platoon sized element +) located beneath the Fortress in dedicated Laboratory spaces. Recommended bypassing via demolitions. As well as two Company sized elements of armor, walker and repulsor, in the central courtyard vehicle depots. Recommended artillery strike on depots as priority target.

Further hazards were located beyond the inner curtain walls at the so-called Court of Stars where operatives noted unstable Force flux. Extreme environmental risk if assault directed this way. Recommended bypass or alternative route. If assault necessary, walker support recommended.

Objective of the reconnaissance mission was reached, but with limited footage from probe droids available for analysis before their destruction. Located at the lowest level of the Fortress, the ritual Chamber was found vulnerable to topside assault, though a below-ground vector is recommended if available.

Defenses at this level are extreme. Losses unavoidable. Use of specialized anti-Jedi troops and urban breaching units necessary for assault. Lodgings located for at least two Company sized elements of 'Truthwarden' specialists. Sub-class: Regises.

Detailed area reports to follow.

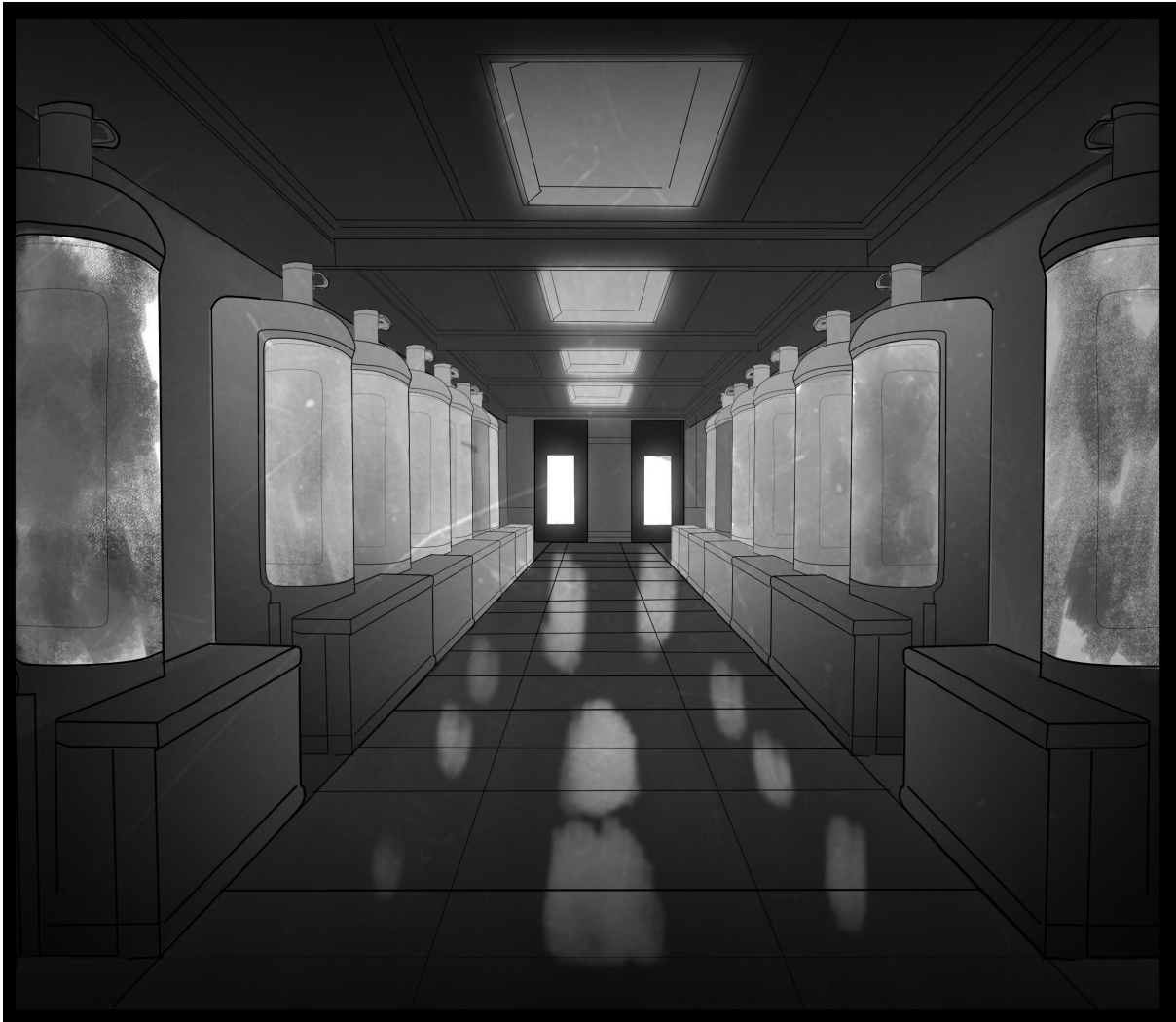
Commander Kodyak
Reconnaissance Taskforce Shen-7

Ascension Laboratories

Hidden within the lowest levels of the Fortress, the Ascension Laboratories are a hellscape of twisted science and madness. Rectangular chambers holding gestation pods are littered along the central avenue, a wide thoroughfare carved into the shadowstuff of the Ethereal Realm's soil. Cries and moans of the imprisoned fill the air, broken only by the periodic screaming of the victims of the Children's arcane sciences. The atmosphere is cold, yet unnaturally humid, leaving the crystalline stonework with a permanent sheen of moisture that saps the strength and dulls the mind.

Only in the research chambers themselves have protective barriers been built to stave off these leeching effects, maintaining more controlled atmospheres for the arcanists and scientists of the Children of Mortis to delve deep into their Force research. Most chambers feature utilitarian durasteel plating from floor to roof, creating hermetically sealed bubbles accessed via double air locks. Due to the nature of the research, most also feature extensive self-protection suites to terminate any experiments that might have run out of control. These range from simple fire suppressants and oxygen absorbers, to atmospheric ignition devices and sonic purge charges.

The deployment of these measures is controlled by the Overseer's office which maintains a holoivid feed to the research chambers from the end of the central avenue, ensuring that the safety of the Father's plans are not jeopardized by runaway science. In an extreme emergency, however, the purge charges can be activated by pressing a large crimson button located just outside the airlock.



Holopic 2: *Gestation pods inside Ascension Laboratories. Facing East. Corridor width 4.2 meters. Height 3.1 meters. Surfaces blaster resistant only.*

Tactical Considerations

This area poses one of the most immediate and unpredictable sources of Mortis reinforcements. The Laboratories, being located further inside the Fortress, but not quite at the lowest levels, means that any assault wishing to reach the Chain and the Mortis High Value Targets would need to either neutralize or bypass them.

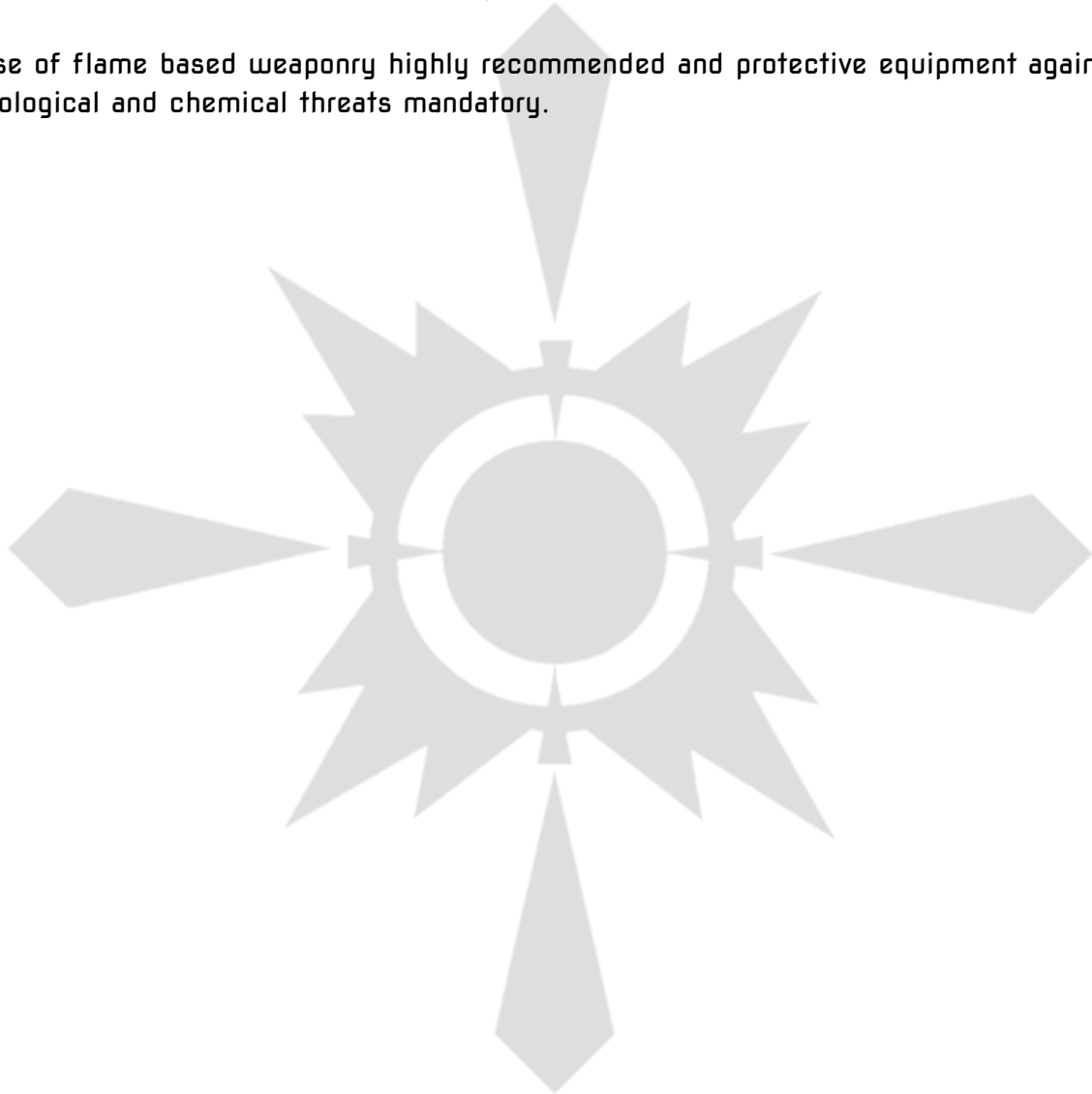
Considering past experiences in dealing with Ascended foes, to mitigate casualties, the second option is recommended. To this end, seismic charges could be used to momentarily collapse parts of the sole access way, causing a localized cave-in and sealing the Laboratories from the rest of the Fortress.

It is unlikely this will, in itself, prove decisive in dealing with the threat contained within, but the rubble ought to delay the enemy's counter-attack and afford the vanguard an opportunity to assault the sanctum of the Fortress. Blocking detachments

would need to be deployed, preferably with heavy E-Webs, to hold guard at the Laboratories' entrance and defeat or delay any counter-attack that may emerge.

If neutralization is deemed necessary, a path was found to bring heavy armor to the central avenue via cargo elevators. Standard M-2 repulsor tanks should be able to fit, though mobility would be extremely limited. However, their superior firepower would be of great use in pacifying the area. Still, a considerable amount of infantry support would be required and the copious use of thermal detonators, sonic imploders, and demolition charges would need to be provisioned for.

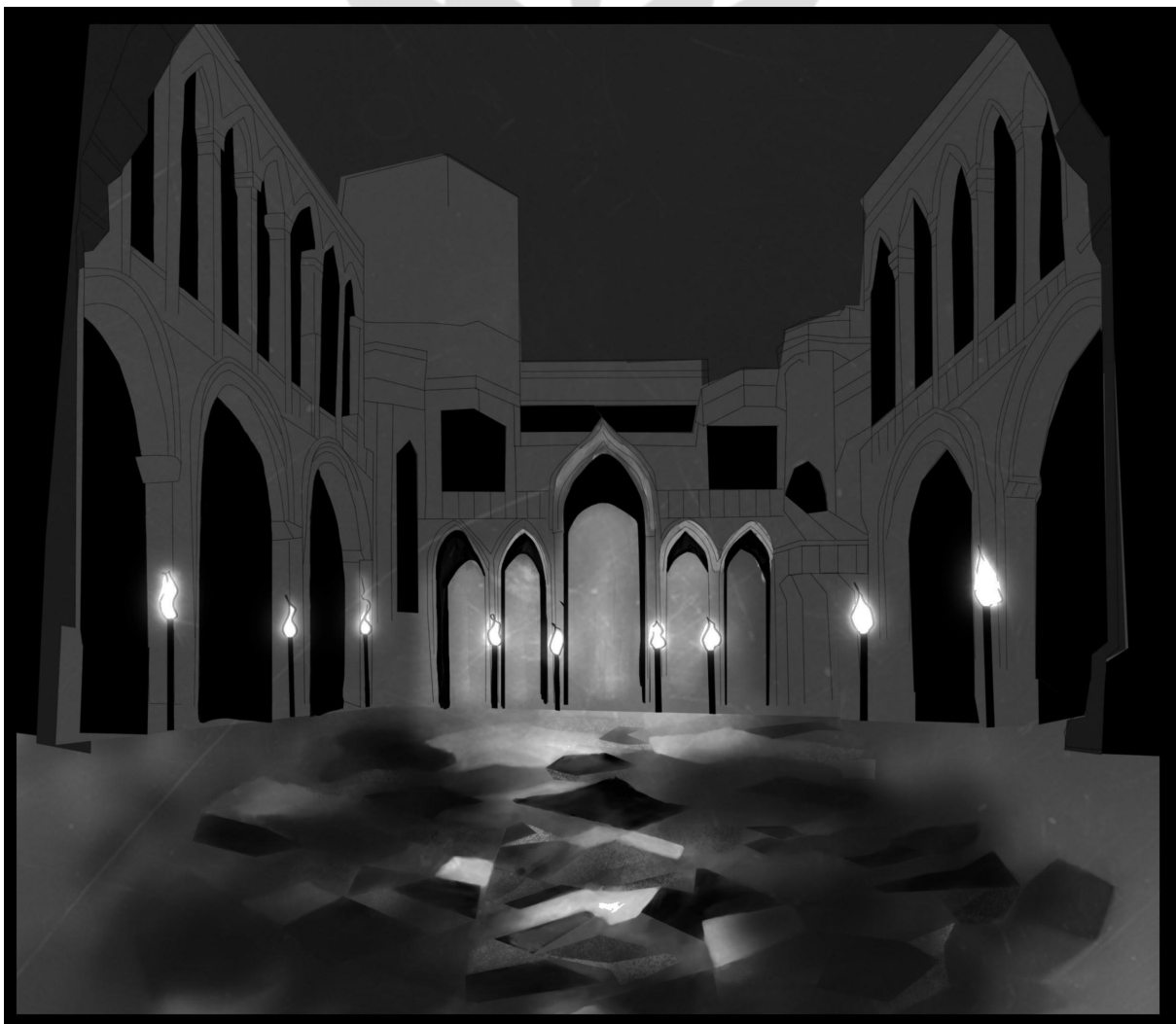
Use of flame based weaponry highly recommended and protective equipment against biological and chemical threats mandatory.



Court of Stars

One of the more pleasant parts of the Fortress of the Unchained, the Court of the Stars is the domain of the Shadowseers. A vast open courtyard just beyond the outer walls, the Court of the Stars is a site where the Force flows freely and with unpredictable patterns. One step may switch gravity, while another may steal your momentum entirely, a third filling your head with visions and the fourth nullifying your connection with the Force. For many Shadowseers, honing their skills of Precognition and Farsight to the extent they can traverse the Court without suffering ill effect is a mark of mastery and dedication.

The floor of the chamber itself is made of a crystalline mosaic depicting the Father breaking the Chain with a mallet, rendered in brilliant azure, ivory and gold. Along its sides, nestled in the shade of covered walkways, lie rows of esoteric brass instruments of celestial purpose. Crystal lenses set within exotic apparatus allow those strong in the Force to peer through the fabric of time and see the past, future, and present in ways impossible within realspace.



Holopic 3: *Court of Stars, looking towards Fortress of the Unchained.*

Tactical Considerations

The Court presents an open space with little cover and is extremely hazardous to even Force Sensitives. This funnels any attack along the sides where the collected observatory equipment provides at least some cover, if not concealment. However, fire superiority over the center of the Court will be crucial in ensuring any potential assault is successful.

The risks presented in any assault operation across the Court are numerous and the chokepoints favor the defender heavily. Primary recommendation is to avoid the area if at all possible. Alternative routes were found that lead further inside the complex.

If an assault is deemed necessary, prodigious use of firepower elements is recommended. Walkers with elevated fields of fire, such as the AT-ST, would be preferable as they could hold a commanding view over the twin walkways. Alternatively, jetpack equipped troops *may* be used to bypass some of the defenses as the verticality of the space allows a degree of freedom. However, the recon team did not have enough time to test the maximum altitude to which the Force effects reach. Any airborne assault would be at the commander's own peril.



The Chamber

The ritual chamber containing the Chain of the Force spans the deepest core of the Fortress of the Unchained, having been built around it over time to protect the Children of Mortis' attempts at breaking it. The vast chamber defies normal understanding of scale, the Ethereal Realm affording leniency from the usual laws of physics that would make such constructs impossible in realspace. Effectively toroidal, the chamber floor is built up close to where a singular link of the Chain passes through the Ethereal Realm, its top and bottom lost in a hazy interdimensional mist. Tall walls of crude black crystal like volcanic glass rise up impossibly high, while the platform itself is a polished durasteel engraved with arcane runes and channeling lines.



Hologic 4: *Chainber, platform level. Chain of the Force continues further some four links (425 meters) before vanishing in a portal. Probe droid did not survive the translation attempt.*

Tactical Considerations

The reconnaissance on this area is extremely limited. Due to the highest possible levels of Mortis surveillance activity, all probe droids were soon destroyed and the mission had to be aborted before agents suffered further casualties.

The Chain itself was deemed stable at the time and visual evidence suggests it is sturdy enough to withstand conventional weapons fire up to capital ship grade. As is, no special concern need be paid to its potential fragility and it can be discounted from collateral assessments. This *may*, however, change with the performance of rituals and as such it is still advisable to avoid needlessly exposing the chain to further damage.

There is much verticality in the space, affording avenues of attack both from above and, presumably, below. No direct path was found to levels deeper than this, but if such can be uncovered during the assault, they could be used to bypass much of the security.

The ritual platform itself, though alchemically treated to withstand copious damage, is physically tethered to the relatively fragile crystalline walls. If an infiltration team could reach the chamber from below and apply explosives undetected, the ritual could be undermined with little loss of Brotherhood forces.

Similarly, a topside assault via jetpack, would provide a significant advantage as little cover is available for anyone in the ritual circle beyond the Chain itself, although similarly the descending element would be left vulnerable in a relatively cramped space.

Entry to the Chainber at platform level is via a single spiral staircase, though larger entry points are available further up. These are large enough to allow for passing of even heavy equipment and likely how the Mortis were able to get their own equipment down to the platform. This means that in order to properly assault the Chainber, several levels further up must be secured in order to establish fire supremacy and prevent escape by fleeing hostiles.

Once secured, an elite detachment may assault on foot at platform level to engage the High Value Targets.

Reconnaissance Efforts

Taskforce Shen-7 infiltrated the target area at T+3 hours ahead of the main force from reference direction 'East'. The taskforce consisted of seven operatives, all trained in the arts of the Force. Further, a detail of twenty-one probe droids (miniaturized DRK-1 class) were attached to the taskforce and assigned to each operative in triplets.

Prior reconnaissance efforts on the Children of Mortis had shown an almost geometrically growing likelihood of discovery past the first hour of surveillance. Consequently, normal methods of slow ingress and egress were discarded and the operatives divided into pairs to cover more ground.

Each pair received the same objective of reaching the deepest level of the Fortress, gather as much intelligence as they can within the set time limit, and egress. The taskforce commander remained at a vantage point to observe the disposition of Mortis defenders, map the outer defenses, and to provide communication uplink to command in case teams were compromised.

Team Aurek breached the compound from the relative 'East' side. They encountered few internal guards, but noted prepared defensive barricades along all major transport arteries. Probe droids were dispatched to prominent lodging or armory areas whenever encountered. The probes reported visual data confirming at least one Regiment sized force on the 'Eastern' side of the Fortress.

Team Aurek managed to reach the central areas of the Fortress before hostile contact was made. To their credit, the operatives chose to descend along the fissure of the Chain directly towards the objective, though they had been exposed. Combat footage captured by probe droids was used to estimate the relative endurance of construction materials in the Chamber before contact with team Aurek was lost.

Team Besh breached the compound from the relative 'West' side. Initial guard presence recorded was significantly higher than encountered by Aurek. Infiltration speed was greatly diminished, though active defenses were recorded along the path leading to estimates of another Regiment sized force on the 'Western' side of the Fortress.

Team Besh did not manage to reach the objective. However, they uncovered the presence of the Ascension Laboratories and proceeded to provide significant and detailed intelligence about the location, including the readiness for creating Ascended-class mutants. Team Besh exfiltrated successfully upon mission time-out.

Team Cresh breached the compound from the relative 'South' side, facing the most challenging route. They recorded gun emplacements along the path, as well as vehicle depots containing reserves of walker and repulsor tank elements; in total two Companies' worth.

Team Cresh proceeded inside the compound after which communications were lost. Their accompanying probe droid managed to send only a single image of a pair of glowing eyes.

Taskforce Commander observed competent and professional behavior from defenders. Exploitable habits not found. Designation 'Court of Stars' denoted as dangerous terrain after observing Mortis rituals in the area.

Upon mission time-out, Commander exfiltrated successfully and rendezvoused with Team Besh. Taskforce left the target area at T+4 hours 35 minutes.

Casualties suffered: 4 operatives. Casualty rate: 57% (Acceptable)

Tali Sroka - 14782

Prætor Socorra Erinos di Tenebrous Buttonæ - 12648

