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Unit: Resh-Seven

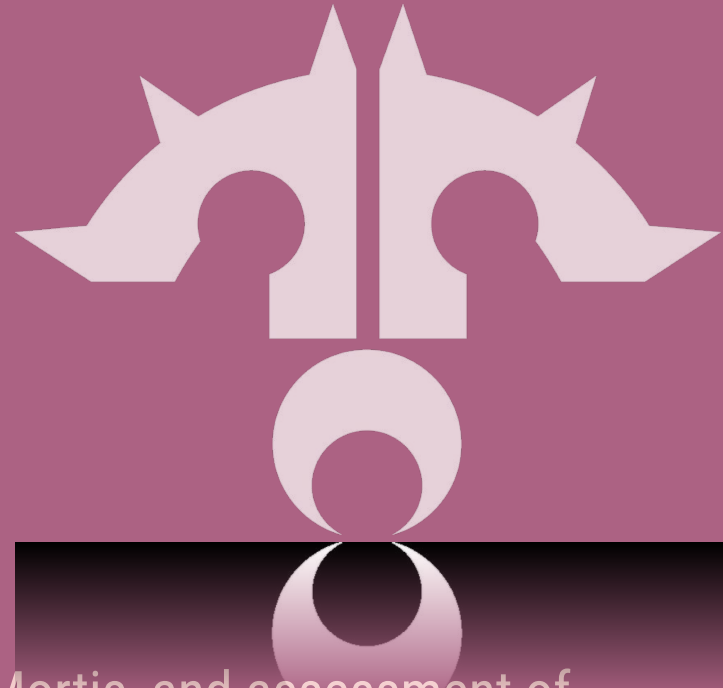
Deploy: sector FORN recon

Status: ongoing

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Objective: reconnaissance of fortress, Mortis, and assessment of Enemy Forces, checking in.

Mission difficulty continues. General issues with comms and equipment in addition to enemy entrenchment making recon HARDER. Suggestion came up from science division to use sonography instead of standard/advanced scanners. "Like in Zainab," with the mining ops mapping glaciers.



Surprisingly, seems to work. Managed to get equipment from foothold in ESK sector foothold and resume scouting.

These sonographs are showing us the actual striations in the crystal structures. They're all layered. Going to make infiltration even worse.

Suggestion: HIGH. YIELD. EXPLOSIVES.

Or a few capital ship cannons.

Team has targeted three (3) breakpoints. More to follow.

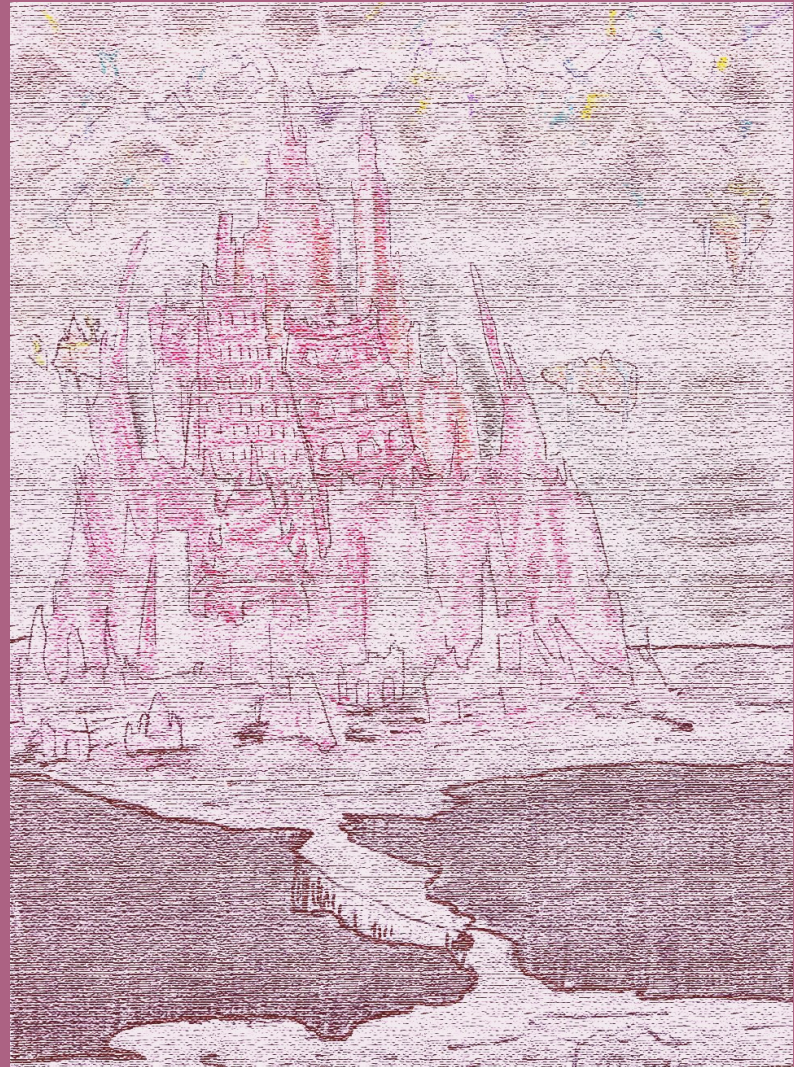


Breakpoints:

- Hangar field (1)
- The tower (2)
- Outer wall (3)

Objective:

- Breach at wall
- Demolish tower
- Demolish or infiltrate hangar



Captured visual of fortress on approach; instrument malfunction makes clearer resolution difficult to obtain.

Reconnaissance Backbrief

Initial recon conducted in box method. Initial surveys found inroads through the mirror-image Eos City. Resistance deemed too heavy in 'Shattered Plains'. Determined safest routes through 'Sky Islands'. Survey droids swarmed to determine gravity well directions and force to plot safe primary, alternate, and contingent routes. Air travel viable along these lanes.

Corpse Fields double-edged sword. Lack of illumination and fog/mist creates marked conditions for concealment. However, 'pyres' directly harmful to personnel and equipment, and large skull-like constructs deploy large numbers of crystalline creatures (see files on Battle of Fort Blindshot). Marked 'safe routes' should still be taken with extreme caution.

Infiltration of 'Fortress of the Unchained' deemed infeasible. Defenses too strong, and limited time ahead of main Brotherhood advance prohibits infiltration. Notes on Fortress compiled largely from remote sensor droids at medium-to-extreme distances.

Recommendation: Breach exterior defenses at extreme range. Use artillery assets to defeat immediate anti-air (AA) threat, then use starfighter runs to defeat major installations and infrastructure. *Direct ground assault too dangerous.*

The Hangar

Seemingly incongruous with the rest of a spooky castle made entirely out of crystal, the hangar and airfield area are distinctly modern in design and include fully equipped interiors. Two hangars are present, each with a singular central control booth on the interior wall, elevated from the ground and heavily shielded with transparisteel and observed blast-plating that can cover the glass as required. There are no visible entrances to the control booths from the hangar floor; access must be further in.

Access ways and maintenance hatches line both eastern and western walls, while crystalline catwalks connect respective sections above. Measured distance from catwalk to the control booth seems to have been considered; the gap is more meters than even a documented Force-enhanced jump would be able to clear, and there are no hand holds or purchase around it. Illumination banks line each entire hangar at intervals, and appear to have been installed into the crystal, rather than made of crystal themselves, standard glass and electricity. There must be wiring and a power generation station somewhere; possible secondary target.

In the smaller hangar, starfighter bays line the wall for quick deploy. No such bays exist in the larger hangar, though shuttles have been seen exiting and entering; presumably, everything is housed in the larger ships themselves.

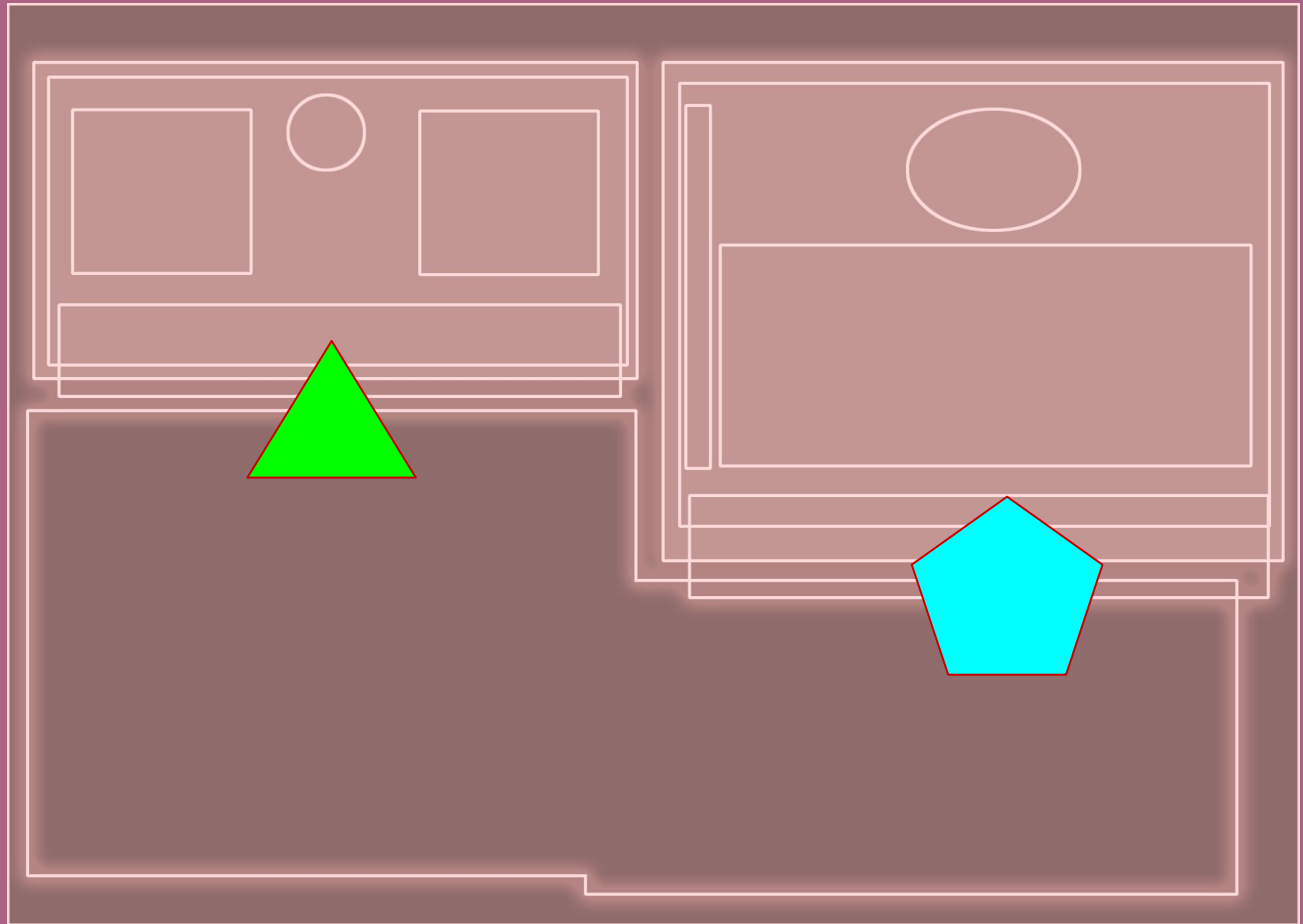
The first, smaller hangar still boasts a large area measuring 500 m long, with one central access point, installed mag shields and blast doors, and wide open cleared ground area outside it for possible takeoff, landing, and transport.



An additional, larger hangar abuts the first on the eastern edge, making two distinct buildings that share runway space. The layering of crystal strata indicates this secondary section of the airfield area



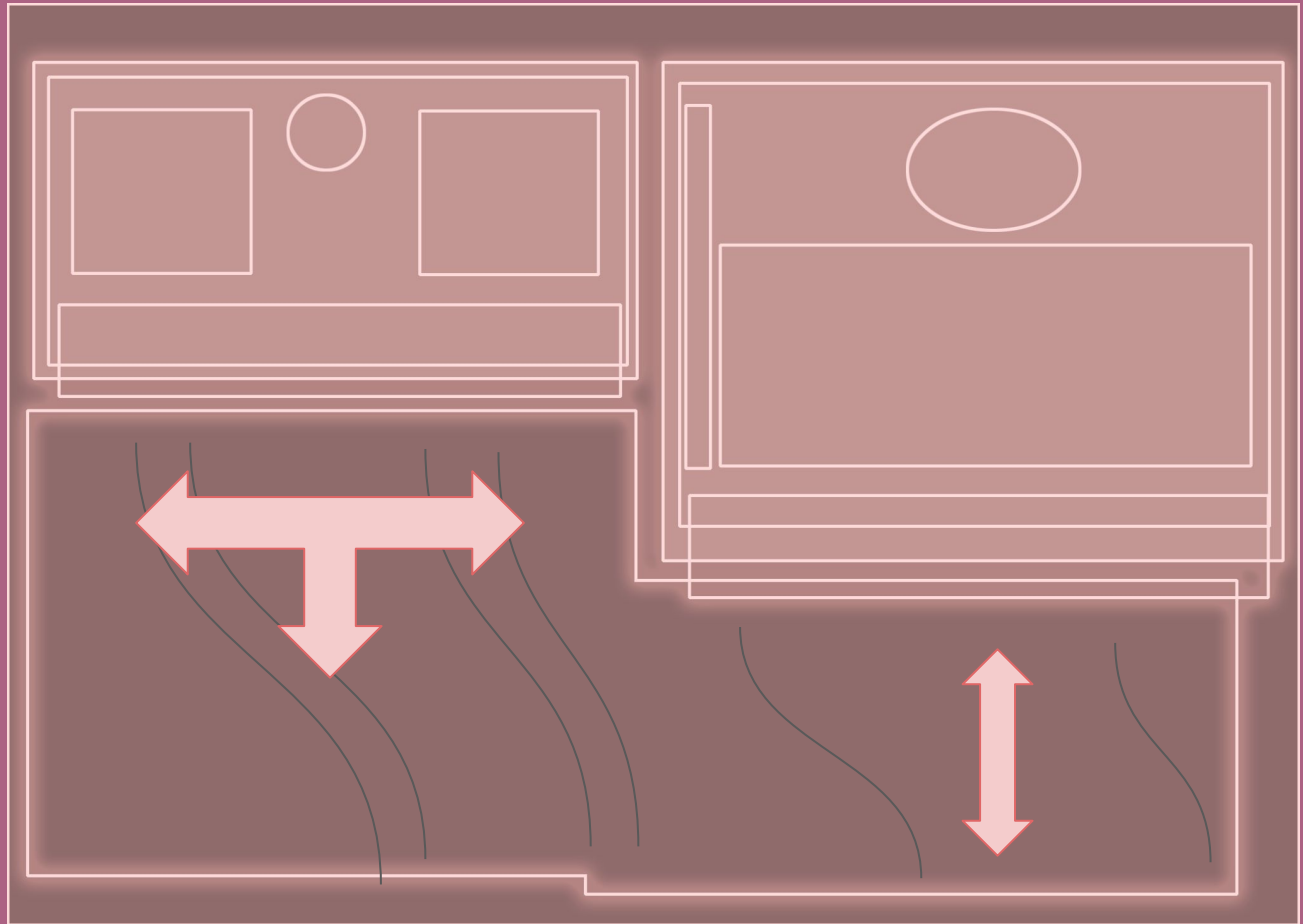
was an addition encouraged several centuries after the original, perhaps due to need to accommodate development of modern classes of ship, including Destroyer and Heavy cruiser models of so called "Ascendant" class developed by the Truthwardens.



As the Realm has troublesome gravitational shifts and by surveys of the "air space" seems to be one "plane" with no true atmosphere nor exosphere, it is doubtful the enemy maintains its fleet in any kind of orbital dock. Rather, given documented existence of larger ships than present, it is predicted that the Children houses much of their fleet in our realmspace, and uses their own gates to move ships back and forth from here to there, possibly

allowing for even greater instantaneous movement capability than hyperdrives. It is possible they have no gates of a size to accommodate the largest vessels in their fleet, thus their lack here.

Further predictions: the storage and maintenance of the partial fleet and artillery present may be several kliks underground, with the hangars serving as access points. To be determined if the environment here even descends to such depths.



Enemy Presence

Observed: T-85 X-Wing, IGV-55 Surveillance Vessel, Zeta-class Cargo Shuttle, Marauder-class Corvette

Assumed: Minimum 2-3x companies ground forces, portal capacity for frigate and above-grade ships, extensive supply and refit capacity

Assessment: Key location do DESTROY to ISOLATE enemy space forces and prevent dispersal; likely manned primarily by Truthwarden forces.

Estimated Situation

Summary: Likely presence of Truthwarden forces. These are the most conventional troops of the Children of Mortis, suggesting that any Ascendants are located elsewhere in the Fortress or otherwise deployed entirely to the battlefield outside. Expect enemy to be highly motivated and tactically proficient, with greater capacity for complex maneuvers at the cost of ability to sustain damage unharmed. Maximum infantry presence inside of the hangars on standby for counterattack; foot patrols sized 1x squad or less along periphery of airfield.

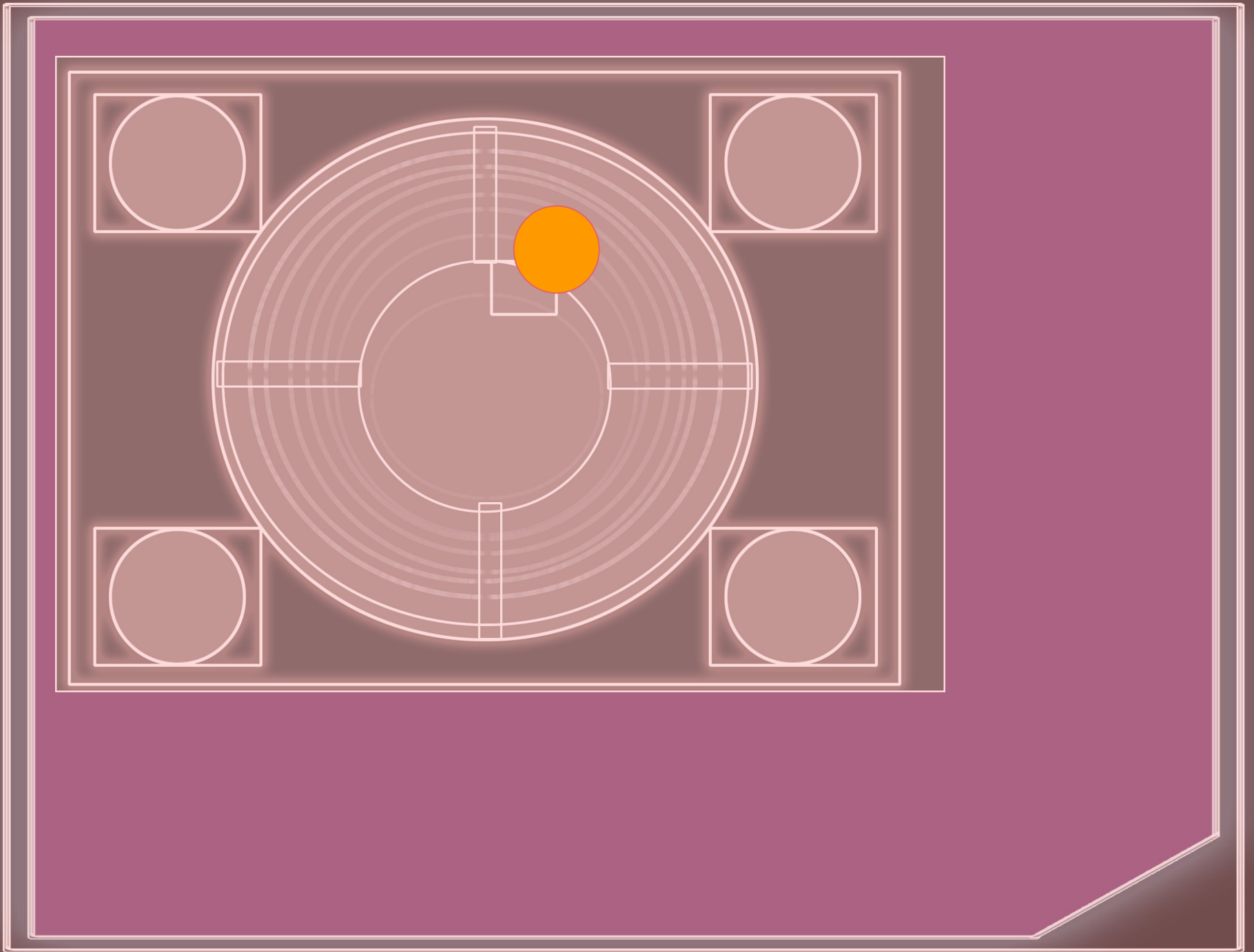
Most Probable: Enemy likely to use control facilities to coordinate defense in the event of attack; patrols provide immediate delaying force to allow time for other troops to deploy from protected interior positions. Deployment of starfighter forces limited to immediate air superiority, focusing largely on evacuation of assets and delaying attacking forces to facilitate.

Most Dangerous: Stationed ground forces include armor and artillery. Delaying actions by local forces allow time for reinforcement from/through (extradimensional) portal system. Limited requirement for maneuver by enemy allows for phalanx-type defense by large capital ships (cruiser-grade and higher) in static positions against concentrated Brotherhood forces (“fish in a barrel” defense approach).

The Tower

While there are many "towers" in the fortress, referenced here is the tallest and set in the "middle section" about 6 klicks from the outer wall and 2 klicks southwest of the hangars. Four smaller ancillary support towers line the base of the main tower, and sonography has revealed the sheer thickness of the exterior walls. Concentric rings of crystal form a cylinder with a very narrow interior chamber compared to the overall area of the building itself. Only one stairway is present, and travels all the way to the top of the tower, which seems to function as the main operations center.

There are four tunnels that cut through the tower at the base, serving as entrances to the interior ground floor chamber. Besides the durasteel doors, the entire structure is composed of crystal like everything else. Team was unable to get an agent up those stairs to the control room, and aerial droid scans are too deteriorated for a clear picture of the interior from the outside. However, radio equipment can be seen at the top of the tower, and it's believed this particular unit is a comms relay station, if not the chief one from which the Mortis forces communicate.



Enemy Presence

Observed: pedestrian movement; limited droids for apparent cleaning/maintenance; towers mounted with 2-3x anti-vehicular cannons for point-defense

Assumed: multiple internal defense positions of a small scale (1x squad or smaller) using constructed and makeshift cover; possible Ascendant Trooper presence, but space(s) too small for other Ascendant creatures or vehicles. Base structure likely protective bunker for high value targets and battle planning/coordination headquarters.

Assessment: Structure is hardened but exposed, with its tall silhouette allowing it to be visible from extreme ranges even outside of the Fortress' exterior curtain wall. Key communications node with supplementary organic positions of redundancy; all towers would need to be destroyed to nullify the towers' command-and-control capability.

Estimated Situation

Summary: Mixed Lightbringer and Shadowseer presence expected, with focus on infantry over vehicles. Personnel focused on controlling perimeter and entry/exit points of the structure. Tactical response expected to be simple static defense. Proximity to other positions and generally central location within the Fortress offers ability to reinforce from multiple directions.

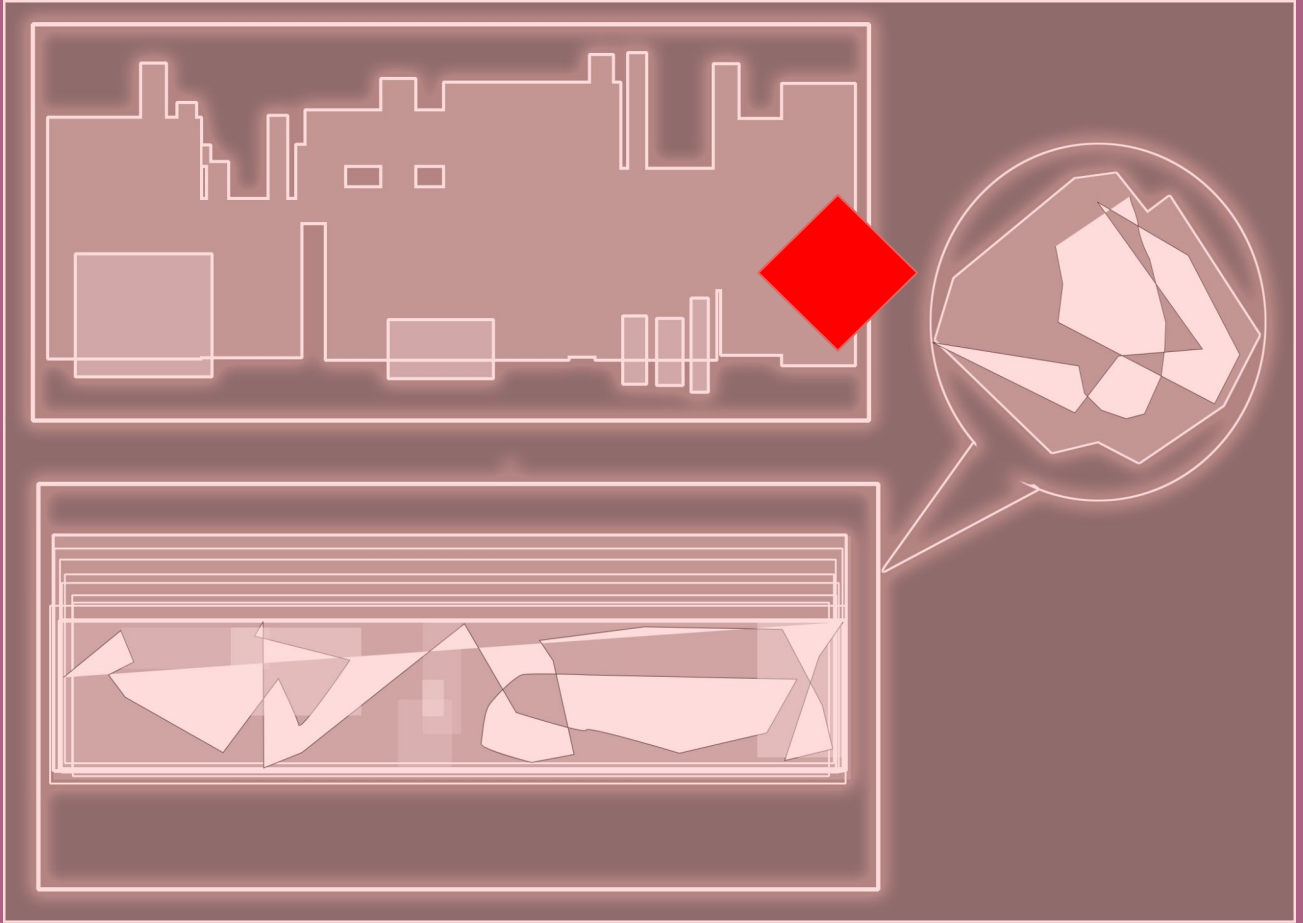
Most Probable: Enemy will use the tower as a command-and-control node, using the hardened construction to sustain direct and indirect fires from Brotherhood forces. Fortress defense will primarily be coordinated from this point to direct troops to outer defensive positions. In the event of compromise, the Tower will conduct delaying action for other CoM forces to escape to inner defensive positions and/or escape.

Most Dangerous: No change to command-and-control intent. In the event of breach of outer defenses/compromise, Tower will attempt DEMONSTRATION tactics to concentrate Brotherhood forces on its position. Tower will coordinate flanking and enfilade counterattacks to defeat in *en masse*, incl. reinforcements from Hangar.

The Wall

The outermost wall of the fortress is the biggest mystery here. Given the fortress seems to grow OUTWARD, it's uncertain how the outer wall isn't constantly in the way every few centuries. However, this thing seems to move WITH the fortress as it grows, if the dating on these crystal samples and the stratigraphy is to be believed. There are layers that are millenia old and ones on the outside that aren't months old.

The wall lacks much of the rigidity of structure that other sections like the hangar and various barracks, towers, etc seek to mimic, as if the crystal had mostly been allowed to grow as it pleased, encompassing the castle in a jagged barrier of peaks and valleys. The wall is nearly a klik thick all on its own, and the varigrated elevation makes climbing it a poor prospect, as does the jaggedness of the crystals along the top at their various points. Several inlets in the wall itself can be seen at visual distance, suggesting interior tunneling or structure for patrols, and smaller buildings of crystal sit around it at the base, perhaps serving as outposts.



Enemy Presence

Observed: T-85 X-Wing, TIE/SK Atmospheric Fighter, basic infantry, tanks/armor, Ascendants

Assumed: Artillery placed to rear of the wall, or immediately opposite the peaks; planned corvette support

Assessment: Physical capacity to destroy the wall limited and will require intense concentrated fires/munitions. Nature of the wall prohibits direct-fire defense by CoM. Defense largely conducted by coordinated air/artillery strikes, with roving patrols of Ascendant troops and creatures to supplement lack of dedicated fighting positions.

Estimated Situation

Summary: Anticipated concentration of Truthwarden forces of minimum 2x regiments, with supporting Ascendant forces from the Shadowseers. Command nodes constructed into the wall likely small but hardened, capable of being moved with the changing strata position. Nodes provide targeting data for artillery and close-air-support strikes while Ascendants form primary counterattack body.

Most Probable: CoM conducts DEFENSE IN DEPTH, covering the entire length of the wall with layered forces. Command nodes coordinate artillery and starfighter strikes to “soften” attacks. Local Shadowseer Ascendants counterattack with limited support from Truthwarden armor. Withdrawal to subsequent positions on 2 or more breaches of the wall by 2+ companies of attacking forces.

Most Dangerous: CoM conducts MANEUVER DEFENSE. No change to command coordination method, but may include Marauder corvette support deployed from the Hangar. Ground forces (mixed composition Truthwarden/Shadowseer of 1-2 battalions each) retained behind the wall for protection and deployed in large concentrations to DESTROY attackers, with ability to either withdraw for further redeployment, or defeat-in-detail after initial success(es) outside of the wall.

Conclusions

In summary, the Children of Mortis and the Fortress of the Unchained will be a tough nut to crack. They have the advantage of hardened defenses developed over centuries with the added bonus of modernized technology. They have equal capacity to reinforce themselves from external locations as they have to evacuate for continued hostilities with the Brotherhood.

Casualties expected in direct assault will be high, especially if unsupported by armor, artillery, or starfighter/airspeeder forces. I don't care how powerful some of these other Clans or Council folk think they are: running at this thing headfirst is suicide.

Presence of all branches of Arconan military in theater gives us a marked advantage over other allies. Recommend focused support of allies at key locations by starfighter forces, and deployment of heavy ground forces on a narrow front. We are designed to hit fast and hard; not sit still and soak up damage. Deployment of the 11th Regiment in air assault against the Hangar may allow more rapid closure of CoM reinforcements and rapid defeat of forces at the Chain.

Arcona invicta.

//End Report

