

VALKYRIE

The elite of the Imperial Guard's airborne assault formations

Liber Apocalyptica is an irregular column that provides ideas and inspiration for your games of Apocalypse. This month Andy Hoare takes a look at the Valkyrie assault carriers of the Imperial Guard, including a famous ace and the elite formation he leads.

The Valkyrie is a twin-engine, armoured flyer used primarily by the Imperial Guard to launch massive air assaults upon the enemy. Entire infantry regiments can be embarked from their forward bases and transported for hundreds of leagues, the exact range limited only by the availability of refueling facilities. As the formations close on the target, the carriers swoop in low so as to attain maximum surprise. At the last moment, the Valkyries slow to a virtual stop, engaging their wing-mounted jets to hover over the target area so that the infantry may leap from the rear ramp or rappel from the side hatches.

Valkyries are also capable of atmospheric insertion, being launched from Imperial Navy carriers in low orbit. Such formations are at great risk from interception by enemy fighters during these operations, for the Valkyrie is much less manoeuvrable in space. As such, assault formations are often accompanied by Imperial Navy fighter squadrons in order to defend them against enemy fighters.

Organisationally, most Valkyrie formations are part of the Imperial Navy, and based on naval assault carriers. They are called on to transport infantry regiments, and rarely serve alongside a ground-based army beyond the scope of a single campaign. However, there are some Valkyrie formations that have proved particularly successful fighting alongside individual regiments and have therefore been assigned to them on a more permanent basis. In such cases, the Valkyrie crews and the infantry they carry become comrades-in-arms, experts in specialist combined operations.

One such combined unit is the Catachan 22nd Airborne Assault Group. The assault group consists of around 150 Valkyries formally of the 1139th Orbital Attack Group of the Imperial Navy's Ultima Segmentum command. The group was attached to the Catachan 22nd throughout

the course of the second, third and fifth pacifications of Joogunda Prime, a protracted series of wars that saw the Valkyrie crews and the Catachan infantry become proficient in combined assault missions. The conflict was concluded in disastrous fashion amidst the nucleonic fires of Joogunda's capital city, and the 22nd were one of the few Imperial Guard units to emerge relatively intact, thanks in no small part to their mobility and the skills of the pilots. In recognition of the unit's specialist skills, the aircrews were inducted into the regiment permanently and a number of the Jungle Fighters cross-trained as crew chiefs. A few, including the 22nd's commanding officer, Colonel Paseski, even trained as pilots, ensuring the two units were fully integrated and shared a common heritage. This was a great honour indeed, as Catachans are an insular lot and notoriously hard for outsiders to impress. The integration went so far that many pilots, whatever their background, wear the red bandana of the jungle fighters.

The newly restructured regiment went on to earn a plethora of battle honours under the leadership of its daring commander. These victories include the capture of the elusive rebel high command at the Battle of Groxtown, the evacuation of Lord High General Xa'chan, the destruction of the recidivists' orbital defence silo during the invasion of Alat, and the spearheading of Operation Scarlet Wasp. So successful was the regiment at airborne assaults that a number of similar units have been formed along the same lines – around a hundred of these are currently believed to be active in Ultima Segmentum alone.

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“ Entire infantry regiments can be embarked from their forward bases and transported for hundreds of leagues. ”

WARHAMMER
40,000
APOCALYPSE



'BELLEROPHON' PATTERN AIRBORNE ASSAULT GROUP

POINTS: 150 + MODELS

The Bellerophon pattern airborne assault group is the codename by which the formation first used by the Catachan 22nd has come to be known. The formation has yet to be widely utilised, due in no small part to the high level of coordination and cross-training required between the infantry and the aircrews. The nature of the Imperial Guard makes the training and logistical support of such units hard to maintain in all but the most exceptional of

circumstances. As a result, those assault groups that are in active service are composed of veteran units and their services are frequently requested by commanders needing to insert large numbers of troopers into an enemy held area. But, with the success of formations such as the Catachan 22nd, Cadian 172nd and the Valhallan Grey Devils airmobile assault groups, commanders are viewing such tactics with increasing interest.

Airborne Assault Group

COMMAND FLYER

Steel Eagle



Using Valkyries and Vendettas in Apocalypse

You'll notice that we've given the Valkyries here the Flyers and Hover Mode special rules. This is to represent their use in the larger battles represented using the Apocalypse scenario. If you plan on using Valkyries and Vendettas from Codex: Imperial Guard in your games of Apocalypse then counting them as flyers is entirely appropriate, and is the perfect role for these great models.

VALKYRIE ASSAULT SQUADRON

Squadron Commander



Squadron 2nd in Command



Squadron Number 3



FORMATION:

- 1 Command Flyer (Valkyrie or Vendetta, or Steel Eagle – see overleaf)
- 1+ Valkyrie Assault Carrier Squadrons (see Codex: Imperial Guard)
- Any number of Vendetta Gunship Squadrons (see Codex: Imperial Guard)

SPECIAL RULES:

Airborne Deployment: All Valkyries and Vendettas in the formation are Flyers and have the Hover Mode special rule.

Strike Force: The airborne assault group is used to transport infantry units. Infantry units and carriers are assigned to one another before the game begins, and the group and all the units assigned to its carriers count as a single formation for

the purposes of reserve rolls, deployment and so on. All carriers in the formation must enter the table within 12" of the point entered by the command flyer.

Coordinated Insertion: The assault group's final approach on a target is often screened by a coordinated blind barrage. The formation grants the Blind Barrage strategic asset, the target point for which must be visible to the command flyer.

RED FLIGHT, CATACHAN 12TH AIRBORNE ASSAULT GROUP

Shown below is Red Flight of the Catachan 12th Airborne Assault Group, demonstrating the organisation of a typical Airborne Assault Group

Red Company HQ



Flight Commander (Major or Captain)

Red Company Support



Flight 2nd in Command (Captain of Senior Lieutenant)

REGIMENTAL ATTACHMENTS:

- Scout (Vulture Gunship)
- Fire Support (Vendetta Gunship Squadron)
- Search and Rescue (Valkyrie)
- Navy Liason (Valkyrie)
- Supply Squadron (Valkyrie)

A Platoon Command



A Squadron Commander (Senior Lieutenant)

B Platoon Command



B Squadron Commander (Lieutenant)

C Platoon Command



C Squadron Commander (Lieutenant)



A Squadron 2nd in Command (Master Sergeant)



B Squadron 2nd in Command (Master Sergeant)



C Squadron 2nd in Command (Master Sergeant)



A Squadron Number Three (Sergeant)



B Squadron Number Three (Sergeant)



C Squadron Number Three (Sergeant)



'STEEL EAGLE' COLONEL PASESKI'S COMMAND VALKYRIE

POINTS: 200

Colonel Paseski started his military career as a lieutenant of the 22nd Catachan Jungle Fighters, and by the time of the fifth pacification of Joogunda Prime had risen to command the regiment's Delta Company. It was following the death of the commanding officers of both the Catachan 22nd and the 1139th Orbital Assault Group, during the abortive evacuation of Joogunda Prime's capital that Paseski took command of both units. He soon demonstrated to sector command that a permanently combined force was not only viable, but could be highly successful in specialist mass airborne assault missions.

Over the next few years, Colonel Paseski and his staff perfected the formation's airborne tactics, which revolved

around the massed rapid deployment, support and extraction of airmobile infantry. Colonel Paseski has a reputation as a daring leader and is well respected by the officers and men under his command. Although a dedicated Imperial servant, the Colonel demonstrates the rare quality of giving a damn about his troopers, a trait that has earned him the enmity of his peers but the loyalty of those brave men who follow him into battle. He has gathered an elite aircrew, who accompany him on every mission. His crew always includes a pair of twins, Kade and Hauser Bruga, infamous as the regiment's champion marksman. These two snipers continuously compete with one another, whether they are firing in the regimental trials or from the side doors of their Colonel's circling Valkyrie.



ARMOUR			
BS	FRONT	SIDE	REAR
5	12	12	10

UNIT: Steel Eagle

TYPE: Vehicle, Flyer

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT:

- 1 lascannon
- 2 multiple rocket pods
- Searchlight
- Extra armour

SPECIAL RULES:

Deep Strike, Scout, Grav Chute Insertion, Hover Mode.

Command Valkyrie: All friendly Valkyries, Vendettas and Vultures within 24" of Steel Eagle may re-roll Immobilised results on the damage tables.

Sniper Cover: Instead of door gunners armed with heavy bolters, Colonel Paseski's crew includes a pair of master snipers. Each is armed with a sniper rifle, and one fires from each side door. The sniper rifles may always fire, even if not normally allowed to, and may engage any enemy unit they can see, not only ones fired at by Steel Eagle's other weapons. Once per game, you may declare a single, 'champion' shot to be fired by each sniper. This rolls to hit as normal, but is at Strength 10 and AP1, and rolls 2D6 armour penetration if fired at a vehicle. The snipers may be lost as a result of weapon destroyed results (one per result).

Regimental Headquarters: Steel Eagler is a Supreme Headquarters, as described in the Strategic Assets section of the Apocalypse rulebook.

MARKINGS OF STEEL EAGLE

As a command Valkyrie, Steel Eagle has seen countless battles. Chad Mierzwa has converted a Valkyrie to represent this ace carrier.



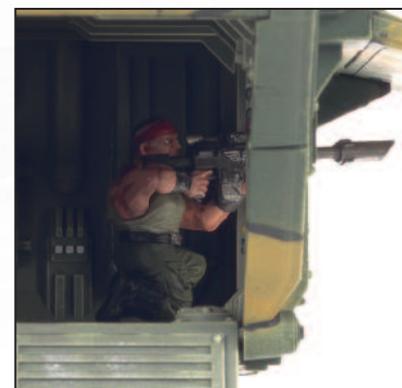
Chad used spare heads from the Catachan Command frame instead of the normal pilot heads. The crew of Steel Eagle have either been inducted into the Catachan regiment, or are drawn from the death world itself.



Whilst Steel Eagle's searchlight could be represented by the sensors on the edge of the cockpit, Chad wanted to make it a feature of the Valkyrie. He added a searchlight from the tank accessory frame to the nose of the Valkyrie.



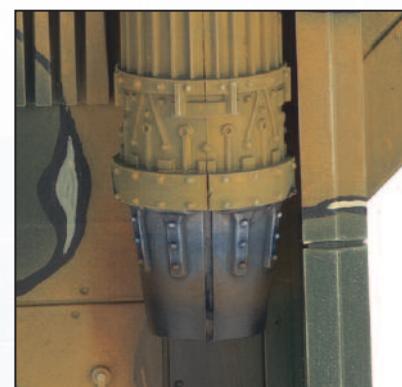
Chad used the Spray Gun to basecoat the Valkyrie Dark Angels Green, and then drybrushed it with Catachan Green. He masked off areas with adhesive putty and sprayed the camouflage pattern with Tausept Ochre.



Instead of a pair of heavy bolters mounted in the side doors, Colonel Paseski employs a pair of champion sharpshooters to pick off targets of opportunity as Steel Eagle circles the battlefield. Chad left the heavy bolters and mounts off when assembling the kit, and instead added a couple of Catachans armed with sniper rifles taken from the Catachan Command Squad frame. To emphasise the fact that the snipers are twins, Chad assembled them both from identical components.



Chad added some directional weathering to the Valkyrie by drybrushing on Boltgun Metal. Chad also added claw marks onto the wings, representing a run in with a Catachan skyborne predator or a winged Tyranid beast.



Chad achieved the scorched effect on the exhausts by first applying a wash of Asurmen Blue over the Boltgun Metal. He then drybrushed the end with Bestial Brown, and overbrushed them with Chaos Black.



The squadron markings have been taken from the Imperial Guard tank transfer sheet. The skull denotes that the squadron is the command squadron, the number that Steel Eagle is the first vehicle in the squadron.



Similarly, the Catachan regimental name has been taken from the transfer sheet. For a Valkyrie to be adopted into a regiment is a great honour. The stripes have been painted on freehand, and denote that it belongs to the HQ flight.