

URTH 10,191

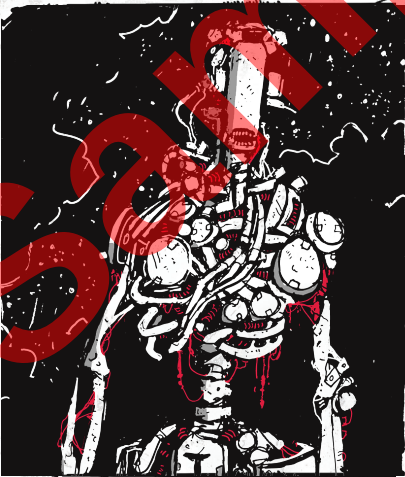
Introduction

Viking Death Squad is a game of desperate odds and thundering drums. It's a world of burning iron and power armor, of supernatural darkness and technological terrors, of heavy metal and lightless starships.

Urth, the year is 10,191. A vast empire called The Infinitum, also known as the War Pigs, has left all in ruin in its endless quest for Immortality and supreme power. To make things worse, Lucifer, Prince of Darkness has joined the fray, using the chaos to prey on mankind from below the surface.

Like all great role play, Viking Death Squad (VDS) is all about telling stories and legendary battles. What adventures lie ahead in such a desolate world? Who will remain to rebuild the solar system when the fires finally cease? Can the armies of hell be used against the endless War Pigs?

Let's play to find out.



Fundamentals

Whether you're new to tabletop gaming or a weathered old veteran, this game is your space to let your heavy metal brain run wild. Here are the inspirations and essentials to dive in.

Growling guitars and sinister synthwave.

VDS was originally inspired by 'War Pigs' by Black Sabbath. This game is the world of that song. Find your heavy metal avatar, your forever jam, and manifest it here. Choose dark, seething synths and tribal drums for your sessions. Make it legend. Just ask: What would Ozzy do?

Demons, machines, and battle axes. If it makes you 'throw horns' when you imagine it, it fits here. Use the 'rule of badass' to know this world, and to play this game.

Basements and black markers. You'll need pencils, paper, sharpies, index cards, maps and a little madness. Like all tabletop games, VDS asks you to do the heavy lifting. Print out your sheet and make a mess.

The all-powerful, ever cruel polyhedrals.

Every player and GM should be armed with an iron chest of dice, especially D6s. With dice, love and hate are one.

The crew. You'll need a few friends. Urth in the 100th century is no place to venture alone. Find the fearless ones, fill their mugs, and face the War Pigs together.

VDS Resources. Use your data unit to access www.vikingdeathssquad.online for session music, character sheets and more.



Death on All Sides

In the 100th century, what remains of humankind is beset from above and below.

From the stars the War Pigs rain down with cathedral ships and swarms of Borg footsoldiers, relentlessly seeking to extinguish mankind. No one even knows why anymore. The Borgs just keep coming.

From below the surface, the legions of hell have been awakened by the carnage. They are drawn to the smoke-filled skies, the vast seas of skeletons, to prey on what remains of their favorite cuisine: human beings.

A small resistance at first seemed doomed, but then something happened. The Immortals, long the unwilling servants of the War Pigs, ancient warriors made mighty by centuries, turned against their masters and joined humanity. For this, they are fugitives as much as their human allies.

The iron skeletons of Annihilators litter the scorched rock, the dead piled like coal-black oceans of cinder. A rumble is heard from the stars, and a stone behemoth hovers across the hellscape impossibly. Huge and lightless. The War Pigs are coming, you and your allies are all that stands in their way.

Now go do what the gods made you to do, avenge the fallen and make safe the unborn. Kill the darkness and ignite the sun. For honor. For all time.

For blood and justice.



The Screaming Skulls

The rebellion against the War Pigs is generally known as the Screaming Skulls, a dwindling confederation of guerilla fighters, rogue Immortals, saboteurs and rebellious Borgs determined to destroy the War Pigs and end their rule of Urth. As the centuries slide by, the Screaming Skulls are losing this conflict, and growing more desperate every year as their numbers shrink.

Mostly, the rebellion operates in secret, staying hidden from kill patrols and hunter ships deployed to root them out, but every few centuries, a group of extraordinary heroes rise from their ranks to threaten The Infinitum directly... That's where you come in.

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Humankind

To even have survived this long, every human on Urth has proven themselves resilient and inventive. They are no towering Immortals or bulletproof Borgs. They are flesh and blood, Odin's children, and they refuse to give up.

Many humans grow up on War Pig slave ships, forced to learn, maintain and operate all kinds of machinery. Those who escape have become brilliant machinists, inventors, and builders. Human settlements are hidden, quiet things lit by lantern light.

It was a human who helped turn the Immortals. This war is for the fate of all humankind. If you decide to play a human character, your chances of survival will be low. If it is to be your end, though, oh, what an end it will be.

Technology

After centuries of warfare, complex technology is long gone. Electronics and anything with small, delicate moving parts is slagged and lost in seas of wreckage. What remains is solid state, single-material tech. It's all solid iron and hot steel rivets, link alloy chainmail, synthskin, bolt armor and even stone blades. Only the durable endures here.

The mystery, though, of technology in 10,191 is called 'relic tech.' Relic technology powers the mind-bending War Pig starships. It enables guns that fire burning skulls, blades that crawl with fire, or hovering pyramids in the wasteland. No one knows how it works or where it came from... no one yet anyway.

For those playing VDS, this key detail of technology gives you a vision of the science-fantasy world at work here. There are no conveniences, no advanced communications, no cities, no easy transports, no governments, no roads... it is a world of war wilderness: a world so far in the future it has become savage and primitive all over again.

The sky is darkened with bat wings, the horizon crawls with stumbling Borg warriors, debris from low orbit and the shattered moon fall in streaks of fire from above. Craters glow with hellfire from below.

In this world, whatever technology can be found, can survive, is truly precious.

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The Immortals

The War Pigs have operated for millennia as a secret society of evil-doers and war-mongering profiteers. Among their more ambitious projects were the Immortals: history's mightiest Viking warriors, kept in cryo stasis and augmented with relic technology for thousands of years.

Cryo stasis is torture, so their best weapon turned against them.

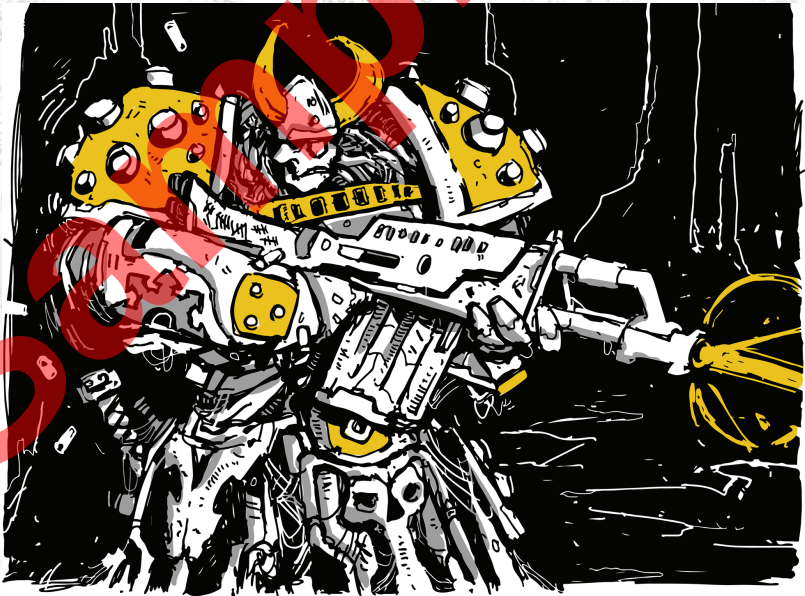
In 10,170, a human engineer aboard a War Pig grave ship betrayed his masters with a madman's plan: destroy the grave ships, and free the Immortals.

Now, holding cells of humans and Immortals still fall to earth, even twenty years later. No one knows how many Immortals remain... some say very few.

If playing an Immortal in Viking Death Squad, you will be a juggernaut. Some Immortals are over ten feet in height, with massive suits of armor, heavy weapons, giant blades, relics from their past, and the rigid code of courage found in the greatest warriors of Urth's history. You will die more than once, but you will live as a fugitive or a slave. There is no middle ground for your kind.

The rest of this section introduces the world of Urth in the 100th century. It's a complex, dangerous place beyond nightmare.

If you're ready to create a character to play in VDS, jump to the *Crucible of Heroes* to get started.



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The Warlands

On Urth's surface, where the roving machine legions of The Infinium rule, pockets of human resistance, frozen wastelands, secret cities and smoldering scars of magma are all that remains of a once green world. In the smoke, the will to fight the War Pigs cannot be extinguished. As a traveler in this landscape, there will be no safe harbor. Here are a few of the scenes you can expect to encounter.

The Dogs. They're everywhere. Under every rock, skulking in every ruin, emerging from smoke and fire, or sweeping across the bedrock in packs. These iron-skinned horrors are a creation of the War Pigs, but have spiraled out of control. Their numbers are inestimable. Once dropped in massive pods from orbit, they have formed their predatory population now, and seem to be replicating themselves somehow... hunting all that moves.

Rebel Settlements. Despite all their efforts, the War Pigs have failed to completely erase humanity. Those who remain have organized into hidden towns and lantern-lit villages on the scorched surface. Decimated by their unseen overlords, humankind works to muster strikes against The Infinium, work with Immortal allies, and smuggle weapons tech to rebel efforts.

These settlements are all somewhat similar, centered around a shadowy tavern, gear depot or trading post. With almost no communications technology intact, a network of secret roads, tunnels, and flight routes connect this desperate web of towns.

If the War Pigs detect any hint of rebel activity, the terrible hunter ships are soon to follow.

Fire Storms. Centuries ago, The Infinium used superdestructive thermite warheads, fired from orbit to burn Urth's atmosphere to smoke. These experimental weapons induced a chain reaction that continues to the present day in the form of occasional fire storms.

These storms are fast-moving clouds of pyroclasmic heat, wind, and ash. They range in size from small vortices to horizon-spanning fronts of pure fire.

Despite their deadly heat, fire storms are pursued by a rare breed of fearless scavengers. Their prize? Raw thermite deposits left behind the storms. Thermite is a powerful explosive even in its raw form... a central resource for the guerrilla war and sabotage operations waged by the Screaming Skulls.

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Hell holes. The punished surface of Urth has fractured so deeply in places, open shafts lead straight down through the mantle, into the upper layers of Hell itself. These shafts give off slow-burning columns of brimstone vapor. Some are jagged caverns, others are sheer-faced chasms.

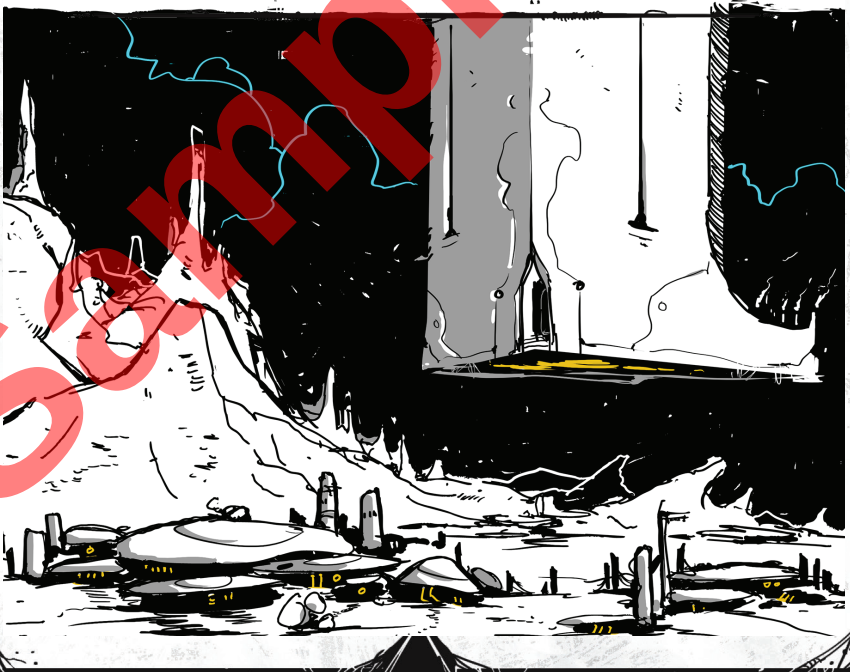
Hell holes are mostly avoided, as they are constantly monitored by The Infinitum for demonic activity.

Those mad few who dare a descent here face numerous dangers, none greater than the mantle: a miles-thick layer of molten metal and stone. Over the centuries, the most established way to puncture this layer of magma has been orbital drops, where Immortals or 'dart ships' gain enough speed to blast through, and access the vast domain of Lucifer.

Hunter Ships. The scourges of the warlands are the hunter ships: gigantic columns of stone and iron hovering silently over the wastelands. These war ships patrol all of Urth, ever watchful for enemies of the War Pigs. When activated, they descend to the ground like huge cathedrals filled with thousands of cyBorg war machines, tanks, and detention units. To see a hunter ship on the horizon is the nightmare of all who dwell in the warlands.

Little is known of the interiors of the hunter ships. Those who enter do not return.

In all the conflicts over the millennia, a hunter ship has never been brought down. Their use of relic technology makes them all but impregnable. It is widely believed they gather somewhere to repair and refuel, but this is unconfirmed.



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The Kings

Above the ravaged planet Urth, a series of rings have formed over the last 5,000 years. They are mostly made up of rock fragments from Urth's moon, which was destroyed long ago. These endless clouds of rock and dust hide far darker secrets than most mortals know.

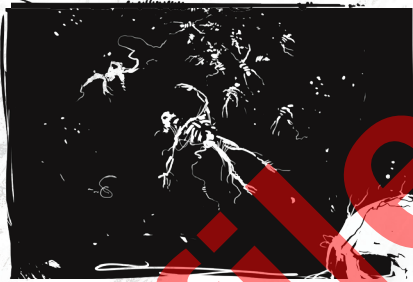
Here in the cold of space The Inifinitum , also called the War Pigs, have their lightless strongholds. Some of the bigger rock fragments are home to human outposts, ever hunted by their infinite enemy.

The Inifinitum Fleet. Black steel cubes, immense cathedral-like columns of iron, and lightless blocks of stone comprise the largest warfleet ever to clutter the planets of Sol. This is where The Inifinitum makes its lair.

In the 100th century, no digital or complex technology has survived. Space travel, and all technology, is entirely driven by materials such as cold iron, thermite, gravity stone and a hefty supply of iron rivets. Starships in this time are torch-lit things. Windowless coffins the size of cities. Within, the War Pigs build their machines, devise new plans of doom, and live out the centuries in artificial immortality.

This brand of space travel is more luck than technology. There is no radar, no computers. Like The Inifinitum , those who dare the rings simply sail on a sea of nothingness, hoping to find safe harbor, sturdy moorage, and reprieve from the endless barrage of rocks and dust.

If the War Pigs have a weakness, it will be found here.



Dead Clouds. Over the centuries, countless ships have been smashed to atoms by the War Pigs and their rivet cannons. As a result, there is a macabre scene often found in Urth's orbit: vast clouds of corpses drifting like leaves in a river.

Some are bare skeletons, others still confined in vac suits or hard-shelled combat gear. Some say a billion souls litter the spaceways here.

Skull Outposts. The human rebellion, known as the Screaming Skulls, have established outposts on some of the largest rock fragments in low orbit. Hidden and made safe by the hazards of asteroid travel, these outposts have proven to be a key asset to fight The Inifinitum .

The outposts are much like tiny towns, but vac-sealed in web membranes or built in hollowed out moon shards. They use a system of reflective beacons to guide in allied starships, keeping a profile beyond low.

The rebellion hides its greatest assets here, including weapons, scientists, top thinkers and religious zealots. They are within striking distance of their enemy, but so far lack the strength to make a decisive strike.

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Quantum Gates. In their desperation, as the 100th century unfolds, the War Pigs have developed a new kind of travel using energy portals called quantum gates. These gates access different locations in space instantly.

All that is known of this new technology is that there are only a few such gates, hidden in the outer orbits, where few starships can travel. The radiation of deeper space is simply too deadly for anything to survive out there.

What are they planning? How do these new gates function? Could they be used against The Infinium somehow?

Last of the Grave Ships. Once, the giant grave ships, coffin-shaped starships containing thousand of Immortal clones, littered the rings. Since the great betrayal, though, the grave ships are nothing but wreckage. The details of that cataclysm are shrouded in history.

Despite this, an Infinium traitor has recently revealed that one grave ship escaped the chaos. If this is true, the War Pigs have a final legion of Immortals among their assets. This could spell doom for the rebellion, and all life on Urth.

This ship, even if it is real, has never been found.

