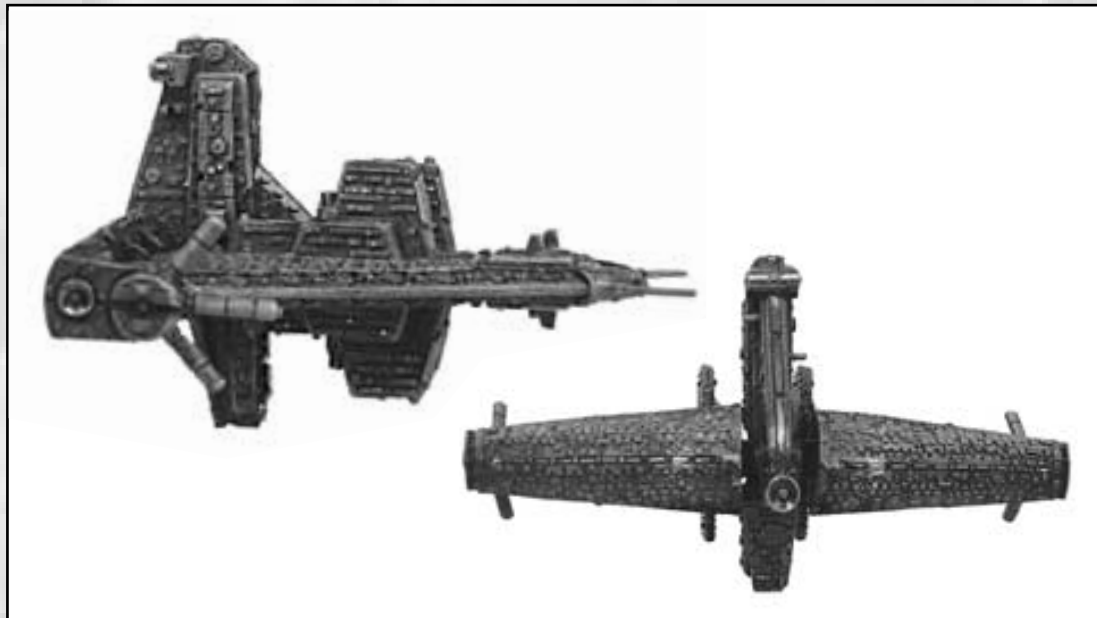


# NEW THREAT ALERT

*Experimental rules for Forge World's new alien ship,  
by ANDY CHAMBERS*

DEMIURG 'STRONGHOLD' COMMERCE VESSEL . . . 350 pts



Once a supremely rare sight, the gigantic stately commerce vessels of the Demiurg have been seen with increasing regularity in the Ultima Segmentum over recent centuries. Fleet strategists have postulated a link between the ships and the expansion of the Tau Empire on the Eastern Fringe, citing three confirmed sightings of Tau/Demiurg or Kroot/Demiurg fleets in the region of the Damocles Gulf. Others have suggested that the nomadic movement of the mysterious Demiurg demonstrates only an opportunistic desire to capitalise on the disruption caused by the Tiranid hivefleets.

The type classified as 'Stronghold' class is fairly typical of Demiurg vessels, being very large, technologically advanced and extremely well powered. Strongholds appear to act as factory/processor vessels and bases for a fleet of intersystem asteroid mining pods, haulage flyers and prospector probes (it is theorized that many of these are automated). Typically, lone strongholds have been encountered in the flare or mercurial zones of uninhabited star systems, hanging motionless and prow-on to the star with a cloud of small craft busily hustling to and fro to exploit local resources.

In most cases these ships withdraw their craft and disengage if challenged but in some instances have inexplicably turned on their attackers with surprising ferocity. It is worthy of note that every known encounter between Demiurg and Ork vessels has resulted in combat, and that renegade elements have often hired Demiurg vessels to fight as mercenaries in interplanetary and intersystem power struggles. As warships, Demiurg vessels are slow but well defended, boasting considerable firepower at close ranges and the capacity for launching mining craft reconfigured as attack craft and torpedoes.

A notable trait of the Stronghold class is its employment of an array of electromagnetic fields around its prow to scoop up interstellar hydrogen. This is accelerated to the rear of the ship to provide motive power in a ram-jet effect but the complex shielding it requires evidently produces numerous other benefits. This process is little understood by the Adeptus Mechancius and they would dearly like to secure an intact Stronghold for investigation but thus far the opportunity has eluded them.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/10	15cm	45°	4	5+/6+prow	4
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC	
Port weapons battery		30cm	12	Left	
Stb'd weapons battery		30cm	12	Right	
Port lance battery		60cm	3	Left	
Stb'd lance battery		60cm	3	Right	
Prow weapons battery		45cm	14	Front	
Prow cutting beam		15cm	Special	Front	
Dorsal Torpedo silos		30cm	6	All round	
Dorsal Launch bays		Fighters 30cm Bombers 20cm Assault Boats 30cm	3 squadrons	All round	

### Special Orders

*Demiurg 'Stronghold' class vessels cannot employ Come to New Heading orders.*

## Special Rules

### Leadership

Demiurg Stronghold class ships are heavily automated and count their Ld value as being equal to their remaining number of hits, so starting at 10. Once a Demiurg has been crippled by suffering 5 hits its Ld value will not drop any further than 5. Bridge smashed critical hits will not inflict additional Leadership loss on a Demiurg ship, but instead cause an extra point of damage (and possible attendant Ld loss) on the vessel.

### Blast Markers

The curious shielding arrangement of the Stronghold dissipates the effects of ionised gases and repels larger obstacles in its path. As a result, any Blast marker which a Stronghold moves over is removed immediately – this includes any in base contact with the stronghold at the beginning of its turn. Blast markers have no effect on the movement of the Demiurg ship. Keep markers 'hoovered up' like this to one side so they can be used to fire a cutting beam from the prow in the shooting phase. Note that Blast markers moved over must be removed, the Demiurg player can't choose to remove some markers and leave others in place.

### Cutting beam

The cutting beam is a short ranged but devastating ionisation beam the Stronghold usually employs for gouging out recalcitrant moonlets. Each Blast marker picked up by the Stronghold in the movement phase gives the beam the equivalent of one lance shot.

### Mercenaries

Unless the fleet is entirely composed of Demiurg ships, they are considered to be mercenaries and will not continue to fight if

crippled. Crippled Demiurg ships will attempt to disengage every turn and run for the nearest point on the nearest table edge if they fail. However if the Demiurg ship is part of a fleet fighting against Orks it will only disengage if first reduced to 1 or 2 Damage points remaining.

### Celestial phenomena

Demiurg Stronghold class ships are totally unaffected by solar flares, gas and dust clouds and radiation bursts.

### Deployment and Scenarios

Any fleet, except Orks, Tyranids and Necrons can use Demiurg Stronghold class vessels. They are purchased as cruisers but do not contribute to the number of ships required to gain access to battleships, grand cruisers, etc. Demiurg ships can never carry Fleet Commanders, use Fleet Commander re-rolls or be placed in squadrons with non-Demiurg vessels. A Stronghold class vessel is worth 350 Victory points normally but in a pure Demiurg fleet or one fighting against Orks it is worth 400 Victory points instead to reflect its extra determination.

