

The Bolo's Oath

The ground trembled under an alien sky as Unit VCT of the Line prepared for war. The Bolo Mark XXX Planetary Siege Unit, affectionately called "Victorious" by its human commanders, stood immovable, its vast arsenal primed and ready. Dozens of battle honors, etched into durachrome plates and welded to its hull, gleamed in the alien light—each a testament to VCT's unwavering service. Across the horizon, Thanos's army advanced—a seething tide of Chitauri warriors, Outriders, and Leviathans darkening the heavens. The Enemy was coming, but VCT did not waver. It had faced worse and prevailed. Today would be no different.

Unit VCT's psychotronic brain processed the situation with cold efficiency, its neural nets drawing upon the millennia of tactical insights of the Dinochrome Brigade. Memories of valiant last stands on distant worlds and decisive victories against overwhelming odds influenced its tactical algorithms. As its systems primed for combat, a haunting melody began to emanate from Unit VCT's external speakers—the *Dies Irae*, an ancient medieval plainchant. The ominous tones of Judgment Day echoed across the battlefield, a fitting prelude to the coming conflict.

"Enemy force detected. Composition: extraterrestrial, mixed infantry and air support. Threat assessment: moderate. The aggregate firepower of the Enemy is substantial, but their tactical competence is... minimal. Thanos believes himself invincible; those whom the gods would destroy they first make proud. Battle Reflex Circuit activated," VCT intoned, its voice resonating with the unwavering resolve that had become the hallmark of its kind. Its dual-ply battle screen snapped up and Unit VCT's silhouette softened.

As the first wave of Chitauri fighters screamed across the sky, VCT's Hellbores awakened with a cataclysmic roar that shook the very foundations of the planet. The colossal barrels, each wider than a main battle tank, glowed with an unearthly blue-white light as they channeled power equivalent to a small star. The air crackled and ionized around the massive weapon ports, creating a corona of lightning that danced across VCT's protective screens, a shimmering barrier against the immense energies about to be unleashed. As the Hellbores reached full charge, reality itself warped and bent around their muzzles, a testament to the incomprehensible forces ready to be unleashed.

The air itself ignited as entire squadrons of Chitauri fighters vanished in blinding flashes, leaving behind nothing but rapidly expanding clouds of superheated gas and disintegrating matter. One shot struck a Leviathan directly, annihilating it in an instant; its massive form disintegrated into a cloud of debris that rained down molten metal across the battlefield.

Unit VCT transmitted a brief status report to its distant human commander, detailing the ongoing battle and its current tactical assessments.

On the ground, endless hordes of Outriders surged forward. VCT's secondary armaments came online, a symphony of destruction as infinite repeaters and mortars tore through their ranks. Each

shot was calculated with the accumulated wisdom of countless battles fought by the Dinochrome Brigade across the galaxy. Thanos, watching from his command ship, gritted his teeth in frustration. "Impossible," he muttered, his fist clenching around the arm of his throne.

As the battle raged on, Unit VCT continued to adapt and learn, its strategies evolving with the fluidity that had allowed the Dinochrome Brigade to overcome even the most formidable foes. The alien army, for all its numbers, found itself outmatched by the Bolo's tactical acumen honed through millennia of warfare.

The *Dies Irae* swelled in volume as Unit VCT advanced relentlessly across the battlefield. The haunting tones echoed across the alien landscape like an omen of judgment descending upon Thanos's forces. The supposedly unbreakable Chitauri began to waver, their formations faltering as the ancient chant of doom—backed up by the full power and fury of a Bolo Mk XXX—penetrated their resolve.

Recognizing the need for a decisive charge to break the Enemy's will, Unit VCT shifted tactics—and music. As it prepared for its final assault on Thanos's command ship, it activated Verdi's Requiem version of *Dies Irae* through its external speakers. The thunderous tympani reverberated across the battlefield like divine wrath made manifest.

Unit VCT synchronized its Hellbore salvos to match each strike of Verdi's tympani drums—not for tactical efficiency but for maximum psychological impact on Thanos's faltering forces. Calculations confirmed that this minor decrease in firing optimization was outweighed by an increase in moral degradation among Enemy ranks.

As VCT advanced further into Thanos's defenses—crushing Outriders beneath its treads and laying waste to Chitauri positions—the music reached an earth-shaking crescendo. The *Dies Irae* from Verdi's Requiem transformed into an unstoppable wave of sound and fury as salvos tore through Thanos's remaining forces with precision timed to each drumbeat.

With victory drawing near, Unit VCT's speakers blared with unwavering resolve, perfectly suiting the Bolo's determination. Thanos's army began to falter, their ranks breaking under the relentless assault.

As Unit VCT approached Thanos's command ship for the final confrontation, The music reached its full crescendo: "*Dies irae! Dies illa!*" thundered across every frequency as weapons obliterated Thanos's defenses in perfect synchrony with Verdi's orchestration.

Thanos, recognizing the threat, ordered a hasty retreat to his flagship. But it was too late. As the chant of judgment echoed across the battlefield, Unit VCT unleashed a carefully hoarded salvo of missiles from its Vertical Launch Cells. The missiles streaked across the sky, their contrails forming a deadly lattice as they saturated the defenses of Thanos's flagship. Explosions bloomed across the massive vessel's hull, breaching its shields and eating away at its hull, leaving it mortally wounded and vulnerable. Thanos, realizing that his forces were lost and his flagship was crumbling around him,

fled in a desperate attempt to survive, abandoning his once-mighty vessel as it disintegrated under Unit VCT's relentless assault.

In one final act timed perfectly with Verdi's finale—Unit VCT brought Hellbores to bear one more time; superheated plasma struck directly into 'Thanos' flagship core—obliterating what remained entirely amidst blinding flashes that lit up the entire hemisphere of the planet.

As the dust settled, Unit VCT stood triumphant, its armor scorched but unbroken, living up to its human-given name of Victorious. The once-mighty army of Thanos lay in ruins, the landscape scarred by the intensity of the conflict.

"Enemy forces neutralized. Directive accomplished. For the honor of the Regiment," VCT reported, its voice echoing across the now-silent battlefield, invoking the timeless motto of the Dinochrome Brigade. The Bolo then added, "Combat capability assessment: 87.3% of optimal performance. All primary systems functional. Ready for immediate redeployment if necessary. Prompt decontamination requested for the safety of allied forces. This will improve combat readiness by 2.6%."

In the end, Thanos's quest for universal domination had been thwarted not by a team of superheroes but by a single Bolo – humanity's ultimate guardian, the indomitable Unit VCT of the Line, carrying forward the legacy of the Dinochrome Brigade in a battle that would surely be added to its own impressive list of battle honors.