

DEVIATOR (SOLUTION)

by Ong Kah Kien

The 8 given clues are vague, and therefore require the use of the feeder answers as confirmation of their intended clue answers. Each of the four feeder answers for this meta comprise two words, making 8 in total. This matches the number of clue answers, hinting a possible pairing of these. One possible approach is to pair each of the feeder answer words with each of the clues in turn, to try to see if there is a way to match/link (e.g. transform or reference) it to a clue answer. The hints in the flavortext to the aha for this puzzle are the phrases “changes” and “switch back”. The 8 feeder answer words are a type of wordplay (termed by the [National Puzzlers League](#) as “switchbacks”) where the word or phrase becomes another when its first letter is switched/changed, and the sequence of the remaining letters are reversed. E.g. The first letter of one of feeder answer words TARDY, can be switched to H, and the remaining letters reversed, to transform into the word HYDRA, which can then be paired as the intended answer to the first clue.

The table below summarizes the clue answers, paired switchbacks/feeder answer words, and switched letters:

Clues	Clue answers	Switchbacks	Switched letters
Mythical creature	HYDRA	TARDY	H
With wings	ALATE	METAL	A
Something unsatisfactory	LEMON	GNOME	L
Nimble	FLEET	STEEL	F
Port city	ODESA	CASED	O
Accepted practice	USAGE	VEGAS	U
Pertaining to a particular organ	RENAL	PLANE	R
More stable	SANER	ARENA	S

The switched letters, which are the initial letters of the clue answers, can be read off in the given clue order for the answer to this meta – **HALF OURS**. Because the nerve gas released from the munitions of the Deviators changes the allegiance of enemy combatants for thirty minutes, the Ordos end up mostly using our own units during battle, as well as needing to often track half-hours time units until such troops switch back.

Constructor’s notes:

This meta are based on the special units of each of the Houses, so in this case it is the Ordos Deviator. With there being 3 round metas, I also decided to use wordplay as their aha and solving step, to keep these metas relatively straightforward so that there is less risk of solvers being stuck at these milestone achievement points. The key theme of the Deviator tank is how it could allow you to temporarily take control of opposing units, before they switch back their allegiance after 30 minutes. Hence the wordplay of switchbacks is used for this meta. The use of two-word feeder answers for this round allowed for a longer extraction and meta answer phrase, while keeping to the practical overall number of puzzles solvable within the hunt duration.