

DEATHWATCH

HONOUR THE CHAPTER



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INTRODUCTION

The Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes are the champions of Humanity—the strongest, bravest, purest and best equipped warriors of the Imperium. Yet, even within this elite warrior brotherhood there exists a company of brethren, each of whom has foregone the fellowship of his kin in order to stand the Long Watch. These are the brethren of the Deathwatch, the elite of the elite, the very best the thousand and more Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes can produce.

While many Battle-Brothers are drawn from the most well-known Chapters—the Blood Angels, the Space Wolves, the Ultramarines, and others of the so-called First Founding—still more hail from lesser known bodies, the Successors of the great Legions. Some of these Chapters are every bit as famous as their celebrated progenitors, while others are all but unheralded. In a small number of cases, the brethren standing the Long Watch might in fact represent the last of their line, their Chapter long lost to the incessant wars of the 41st Millennium.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

HONOUR THE CHAPTER provides a wealth of options for players who want to play characters drawn from one of the numerous Chapters created during the Second or subsequent Foundings. New character creation rules are provided, along with a wealth of relics unique to each Chapter. In addition, the book provides Game Masters with guidance and adventure seeds, utilising the material presented throughout.

CHAPTER I: THE EMPEROR'S FINEST

Chapter I provides players and Game Masters with extensive background information on a number of the most celebrated Chapters of the Second and subsequent Foundings, including the celebrated Blood Ravens. It goes on to provide detailed character creation rules, allowing players to create a unique Battle-Brother drawn from one of these most famous of Space Marine Chapters.

CHAPTER II: LEGACY OF GLORY

The second chapter describes a number of lesser-known Space Marine Chapters, though every one of them is as dedicated to the defence of the Imperium as the most celebrated of bodies. The Chapters covered vary enormously in character and demeanour, meaning that no two Battle-Brothers in a single Kill-team need ever be alike. Each entry contains background

information, character creation rules, and an adventure seed that GMs can use to tie the character in to the overall narrative of his campaign.

Chapter II goes on to provide a special set of rules in the form of the Legion of the Damned Battle-Brother. This unique character becomes available to a player whose Battle-Brother has just been slain, but only long enough for the remainder of the Kill-team to complete the mission.

Lastly, the chapter provides a set of character creation rules for players wishing to create "codex" Battle-Brothers. These are characters drawn from a Chapter that, for a variety of reasons, does not have close ties with its progenitor. This might be because the Chapter simply wishes to carve its own name in the histories of the Imperium, or it might be because its genetic legacy is lost or knowledge of it sealed.

CHAPTER III: THE VAULT OF RELICS

Chapter III provides a trove of unique wargear, each item tied to the nature, traditions, or history of one of the many Space Marine Chapters covered in HONOUR THE CHAPTER and elsewhere. By equipping their characters with such individual and iconic relics, players can make their Battle-Brothers true exemplars of their parent Chapters.

CHAPTER IV: THE CHAPTER'S DUE

The last chapter in the book is a wealth of information, guidance, and ideas for Game Masters looking to integrate the information presented in earlier sections into their campaign. It provides a discussion on how Battle-Brothers drawn from different Chapters might interact with one another. Some of these interactions might prove complementary to one another, making the Kill-team far greater than the sum of its parts. Others might cause friction, but often these are amongst the most interesting, engaging, and entertaining scenarios for players and Game Master alike!



THE SECOND FOUNDING

By far the most celebrated of the Space Marine Chapters are those that were created during the First Founding. These represent the inheritors of the original Legions, twenty of which were created by the Emperor himself at the dawn of the Great Crusade. As history records, half of the Emperor's sons—the Primarchs—turned against him, leading their Legions against those that remained loyal to Humanity. Of two Legions, no records survive, while the remaining nine that turned to the service of Chaos plague the Imperium of Man to this day. Of the loyalists, another nine Legions survived the galactic civil war that was the Horus Heresy, and in its aftermath these were divided so that no single martial body could ever again wield such power as to bring not just the Imperium, but Mankind itself, to the very brink of destruction. The nine Legions were each split into bodies of around a thousand Battle-Brothers, sometimes according to existing internal structures, sometimes according to varying doctrines at large within the Legion. The smaller of the Legions, in particular the Salamanders, emerged from the cauldron of civil war with dramatically reduced numbers, though was ever as numerous as other Legions. The Salamanders were divided fewer times, when compared to other Legions. Most notably the Ultramarines, who had always been a most prolific legion, were divided into several bodies. This event became known as the Second Founding, and it created a second generation of Space Marine formations known as Chapters. Each inherited much of the nature of its “progenitor” and while many remained true to the traditions and doctrines of their sires, others struck out on their own to carve their own legends in the annals of the Imperium's history.

Ten thousand years after the Second Founding, it remains a mystery exactly how many Chapters were created. This is in no small part due to the nature of the Imperium itself. The Emperor's domains consist of an unknowable number of settled worlds and a greater number still of other planets claimed but barely trod by human feet. The Imperium is a supremely superstitious realm scattered across an unimaginable volume of space, and travel and communication between each cluster of worlds is only possible by way of what amounts to witchery. As such, it is difficult to maintain coherent records, and such a task is made all but impossible by the continuous, apocalyptic ebb and flow of planet-razing war. Accounts of the number of Chapters vary wildly and the names and natures of them all remain a mystery guarded by time and forgotten by human memory. Some Second Founding Chapters exist in name only, their deeds interwoven with legend and myth despite there being no material evidence of their existence. It may be that all that remains of some Second Founding Chapters is a tattered banner in a forgotten shrine. Such relics of a long forgotten age hold honours earned in places that no longer exist and name battles in which millions of forgotten heroes might have given all for the God-Emperor of Mankind.

Of the Second Founding Chapters that remain in existence, some retain close links with their progenitors, while others barely acknowledge any kinship at all. Where the two share some inherited genetic abnormality, as is the case with the Blood Angels, the progenitor and its offspring are likely to remain close to one another, sometimes working together to overcome whatever afflicts them. In the case of the scions of the Ultramarines Legion, many Second Founding Chapters have chosen to maintain close links with their sires because they share a common martial code and ancient traditions. So closely knit are the Ultramarines and their Successor Chapters that the entire group often refers to itself as the Primogenitor—the First Born—Chapters.

THE THIRD AND SUBSEQUENT FOUNDINGS

As the Age of Imperium ground on and in time those Primarchs that had not perished during the calamitous Horus Heresy fell in battle or simply vanished from the ken of Humanity, more Foundings were required. The Third Founding was not achieved by sub-dividing another body as was the Second Founding. The High Lords of Terra ordered that the Adeptus Mechanicus should undertake the regular “genetic tithing” of the Adeptus Astartes. A vast archive of gene-stock was established, allowing for the monitoring of the genetic purity of each of the Chapters. Those samples found to be tainted were placed under seal, never to be used again, while those found pure were cultured so that they could be used to create new Space Marine Chapters. From the earliest days, it was found that the most reliable gene-seed was that of the Ultramarines Chapter, and so when the Third Founding was called, many of the new Chapters were created from this stock.

With each Founding, and for every Space Marine that takes his place in the ranks, dozens, perhaps hundreds of Aspirants and Neophytes die, their bodies horrifically mutated as unstable or corrupt implants wreak havoc on their systems. Ten thousand years after the First Founding, twenty-five more Foundings have now passed, the most recent only a handful of centuries ago. The vast majority belong to the line of Roboute Guilliman, though many do not know or acknowledge the familial link. Others have been founded from the gene-stock of other Legions, though for myriad reasons some gene-seed is rarely, if ever, used in such a manner. In the case of some, such as the Space Wolves, the genetic deviation is clear and few Chapters are ever created using its inheritance. In the case of the Dark Angels, no impurity is known to exist and yet still few Chapters are created from their line, the reasons unknown.

Two of the Foundings—the 13th and the 21st—are cloaked in mystery and shadow, the progeny cursed or otherwise afflicted by tragedy.

An Unheralded Arrival

The Jericho Reach is a realm of numerous perils, from the slaving alien swarms of Hive Fleet Dagon to the treacherous grav-swells that tear apart unwary vessels travelling in the vicinity of the Black Reef. By far the most terrible danger, however, is the Hadex Anomaly, a vast, pulsating warp phenomenon that casts its baleful, crimson glare across the entire Ultima Segmentum. While clearly a manifestation of the Warp, the Hadex Anomaly's true nature is unknown even to the most lore-steeped Warp-seer, for in a galaxy riven by Warp storms, it is totally unique. Most disturbing of all of the anomaly's traits is the effect it exerts over the passage of time. The closer a vessel, or indeed a world, approaches the Hadex Anomaly, the more pronounced the distortion becomes. At first, words yet to be spoken echo weirdly at the edge of hearing, but soon brief passages of time disappear from the logs. If a vessel experiencing these phenomena does not turn back, it soon finds itself snared in a temporal nightmare. The laws of cause and effect become stretched before snapping entirely, time jumping back and forward and looping back upon itself according to what some survivors have described as some utterly unknowable design. Vessels and worlds known to have been destroyed centuries before might emerge from the anomaly's flickering light and, very occasionally, vessels from other times and places entirely might appear from its crimson depths.

Such a phenomenon occurred in mid 799.M41. For several days the Hadex Anomaly had been visibly disturbed, its unpredictable motions seeming to lock into something approaching a stable rhythm as its baleful light strobed and flickered rapidly. This itself was sufficiently unusual that the Chamber of Vigilance convened to debate the matter. This convocation coincided with the arrival at Watch Fortress Erioch of an unregistered vessel bearing the highest Inquisitorial cipher. The vessel's sole passenger sought admittance to the Chamber and upon displaying his Inquisitorial Rosette took his place alongside the others in attendance.

The stranger remained silent throughout the ensuing discussions, speaking only when the debate was all but concluded. Withdrawing a hand from his voluminous coat, the stranger held up a sand timer, its contents all but drained. As the council looked on, the last of the silvered sands sifted through the glass's neck, but before the very last grain could fall, the stranger turned the sand timer over, announced "once more, it begins," and departed before any could question him.

With the chamber in the grip of stunned silence, a senior Deathwatch Chapter serf rushed to the side of Watch Commander Mordigael in a state of obvious anxiety and proffered his master a roll of parchment. The parchment contained a message from the station's augur arrays, warning of the emergence of a vessel from the Hadex Anomaly; a Gladius class frigate bearing the name of Sollemnus and bearing livery entirely unknown to the Watch Commander and his adjuncts. It was transmitting a dire message on all available channels. The message was not a distress signal, but a warning: "Stay away, or die."