



THE BLOOD ANGELS

Numeration: The IXth Legion

Primogenitor: Sanguinius

Cognomen: (Prior): The Revenant Legion, The Eaters of the Dead (Since Sanguinius assumed his place as sire of the Legion, these once commonplace names are considered an insult to the pride of the IXth Legion)

Observed Strategic Tendencies: Orbital Drop Operations, Shock Assault Campaigns and Macro-scale Decapitation Strikes. Prior to Sanguinius' return, the IXth Legion was instead more widely known for its use as a tool of attrition-based warfare in war zones otherwise considered too hazardous for normal operations.

Noteworthy Domains: Terran enclaves, Baal, Canopus IV, Saiph

Allegiance: Fedelitas Constantus

"They call themselves angels, the dregs of a thousand hells raised up and given shining armour, bright swords and masks of fair and elegant form. Yet I wonder, have they worn those masks so long that they forget what it is that waits beneath, that monstrous aspect that yet yearns to be set free?"

Attr. Marlehck Brandt, Remembrancer attached
IXth Legion 811.M30 - 848.M30

Fate is a cruel master, for no matter how much his prey might twist or turn, no matter what triumphs they might rise to or what trials they overcome, he will still drag them down. The Blood Angels struggled against the fate written into their very genes, defied the role the Emperor chose for them and dared to believe they could transcend the darkness that followed them. They took the worst of Mankind and made of it something bright and true, they rose above what they had once been and stood astride the fledgling Imperium like the guardian angels for which they were named. Yet, nurtured in their successes were the seeds of their fall, in the jealousy of the fallen Warmaster who saw in them everything he himself had thrown away. The opening stroke of the Horus Heresy brought the Blood Angels to their knees, and the tragedies that were to follow would shatter their resolve and leave them broken. Such is the nature of the IXth Legion that they did not surrender to despair nor surrender to darkness, but rose again and again.

What might have Sanguinius and his sons achieved were it not for the dark fate brought upon them by treachery and genetics? What

brilliant flower might have bloomed from the carnage and blood of their origins? That unknown future is yet another casualty of Horus' civil war, the Blood Angels left to endure the slow degeneration of their noble line with the stubborn pride that is their hallmark.

Origins: The Dregs of Old Night

There are many noble legends of the Unification Wars, of the battles where the Emperor's newborn Legions swept aside all who opposed Him before them. Among these tales there are none to be found that mention the IXth Legion, only grim rumours and half-heard whispers. Where the first companies of the other proto-Legions were blooded in Albia, Yndonesia and Franc alongside the massed ranks of the Thunder Warriors, the IXth was absent, granted a role as vital as it was unsightly. The old IXth Legion served the Emperor as an inferno serves a general upon the battlefield; they did not conquer but instead ravaged, growing and growing as they went, a weapon that could not be directed or controlled, only endured.

The Cult of the Reborn

Wherever the IXth Legion made camp, pilgrims followed, a vast throng of the forgotten and the twisted that often far outnumbered the warriors of the Legion. They came to cast off the lumpen forms that had been their burden and curse, the legacy granted them by Old Night, to bay and shout at the IXth Legion that they might be chosen to be reborn. They came to pass through blood and torment, and be reborn as angels of the new Emperor.

At first these gatherings were little more than mobs of desperate wanderers, but as the crowds grew, the Red Brothers began to appear among their number. Robed in crimson they sang the praises of the IXth Legion from afar, collecting the cast-off fragments of armour and stray shell casings the Legioness Astartes left behind as relics. They wove a shell of religion and mysticism around the Emperor's angels, indoctrinating those that came to seek redemption and bringing order to the mobs. They preached a bloody creed of sacrifice and blood, offered up to the red-handed angels they worshipped, that they might join them in an eternity of war. Such a heady dream was to prove a potent lure, profiting Legion and cult both.

For a time, they became indispensable to the nascent Legion, herding the faithful and growing fat from tithes and bribes from those they preached to. Though the warriors of the IXth looked upon them with disinterest, the Red Brothers used their influence and wealth to rule the pilgrim hordes that trailed the Legion and to decide who would be presented to the Apothecaries. Yet their time was limited, for in the last days of the wars of Unification, the Emperor Himself decreed the Imperial Truth, denouncing superstition of all breeds. In the end, the silken-canopied caravans of the Red Brothers were burned by the hands of the IXth Legion themselves, as they turned their guns upon the priests and their devotees with callous indifference, for the Unification Wars had bred in their hearts a cold and grim demeanour, and a casual disregard for suffering and death.

Few in number, the early Legions fought as mere vanguards to larger forces, a sharp dagger alongside the blunt sledgehammer of the armies of Unification. They were the fulcrum upon which battles turned, the point of control, waging small scale battles by precision strike and audacious raids. The IXth Legion was made in a different image. Even in their earliest days they were among the largest of the proto-Legions and when they made war it was like the sudden arrival of a tsunami, sweeping away the opposition in a flurry of brutal assaults. They found themselves deployed to the most dangerous war zones, to those accursed regions ravaged by the rad-phages and chem strains of Old Night, places where only the most twisted and debased breeds of Mankind still lived. In the wastelands that existed outside of history's spotlight they held the line, alone and unnoticed while the Emperor drove home His grand conquests.

This grim fate was no accident, no arbitrary choice made by a distant general, for each of the Legions had been granted genetic tools to fit the roles for them by the Emperor, and the IXth was no exception. Where other Legions took only the best recruits, princes and champions among the conquered nations of Old Earth, and produced but few initiates, the IXth Legion took in the hordes of dispossessed and broken, and made of them an army of angels. Scarred by so many long generations mired in the rad-zones and sunken fortresses of Terra's poisoned wilds, these creatures were no longer entirely human, but horribly mutated beasts that the tyrants of Old Earth had driven out and hunted. Yet, from such base materials emerged a breed of Legioness Astartes uniformly tall and fair, their features sculpted in stern elegance.

The unique genetic template of the IXth Legion's as yet unknown sire seemed to favour the twisted and warped, though the pain it inflicted on those inducted into the Legion was more than most could bear. As those weakened by years of exposure to the most horrific rad-zones and poisons rarely survived such an ordeal, the number of recruits that endured to become Legioness Astartes of the IXth were few. Yet, unlike the other Legions, the IXth cast their net wide, they claimed entire tribes of wastelanders, prisoners of war and the long train of hopefuls that always followed in their wake. The bloody-handed Apothecaries plied their knives without rest to keep the Legion at fighting strength in even the most hellish war zones, and though the legend of the IXth languished, its ranks did not.

Even as their ranks swelled, the dark rumours that followed them grew as well, for the Emperor's legacy had endowed them with other, darker, gifts. These gifts were also to grant them a new epithet among the rank and file of the Emperor's mortal armies, the Eaters of the Dead. For in the wake of each battle, the elegant forms of the IXth Legion haunted the field of battle long after the fighting had ceased, seeking out the finest among the fallen and feasting upon their flesh and blood. Many of the victories fought to bring Unification to Old Earth were marred by the sight of blood-smeared angels stalking the fallen and wounded champions of the enemy across fields choked with corpses, though few among their detractors realised the purpose of this grim fixation. For this too was part of the Emperor's grand design, for through the augmentations that had transformed them, the IXth Legion stole their enemy's power from them, absorbing their knowledge and skill and making it their own. In the broken places where they fought, alone and far from aid, this trait brought them priceless information and made even the most raw recruits battle ready. Yet the macabre reputation they had gained hung about them like a shroud, lessening their achievements. They had been created to fight monsters, alone and in the darkest places, but in doing so they risked becoming creatures even more foul than those they fought.

The Revenant Legion

The wars of Unification swept out into the Sol system like a storm, unstoppable and wild, and so too went the IXth Legion. Despite being among the largest of the early Legions, its numbers bolstered by widespread recruiting during the war for Ancient Terra, the IXth found no place in the hosts arrayed to assault the Jovian moons or the resource-rich inner worlds. Instead, its flag was planted among the artificial moons of baleful Neptune, whose labyrinthine tunnels and dark halls were the lair of xenos raiders and the last debased human colonists of that far-flung outpost. There was little here to be gained but time, precious time for the Emperor to claim the shipyards of Saturn and the allegiance of Mars, for which He needed the raiders and mutants of the outer worlds held in place. To that end, He sent the IXth Legion forth to die.

The Remembrancer

One among the many implants required to transform mortal men into Legionaries, the omophagea was designed by the Emperor to allow His Legions to absorb the memories and skills of their foe by consuming their flesh. It is situated in the spinal cord but is actually part of the brain, consisting of four nerve bundles connecting the spine and the stomach wall. Capable of reading and absorbing genetic material, the omophagea extracts information as a set of memories or experiences that are added to the recipient's own. The overactive nature of this organ within the IXth Legion led to the development of a number of flesh-eating and blood-drinking rituals for which they were known in the Legion's earliest years. The mutations in this implant that characterise the Legion are the most likely cause for the cravings for flesh and blood experienced by many of its recruits, and prior to the mental conditioning and training begun by Sanguinius, these urges took a firm hold on the Legion's character.

The effects of the omophagea allowed for new recruits to be inducted and granted a basic competence with extreme rapidity through the flesh of the newly fallen. This ghoulish practise was commonplace during the earliest years of the Legion's existence, allowing the swift replacement of battlefield casualties. For this reason, the Apothecaries of the IXth Legion were known to carry large stocks of gene-seed into combat zones, ready for the harvest of new souls that followed both glorious victory and ignominious defeat alike.

Twelve thousand warriors of the IXth, all veterans of the wars on Ancient Terra, disappeared on the moons of Neptune. While the Emperor and His grand armies brought Saturn, Mars and the inner worlds to heel, no word of the IXth Legion reached them, either of their success or annihilation. By the time these conquests were completed and the Emperor returned to the cold darkness of the outer system, few expected to find anything other than frozen corpses. Yet when they reached Neptune, it was to find the IXth Legion alive and well; indeed, despite the loss of many of their original complement, the size of the force was almost the same, bolstered by recruits taken from among the dregs of Neptune's barely human population. Where others might have floundered and fallen, the IXth Legion had only grown stronger, rising from the ashes of defeat like a bloody phoenix.

In those bloody days, the Legion was an ever changing beast, its ranks largely formed of line infantry equipped almost exclusively for the brutal madness of close quarters assault. This was a role at which the Legion excelled, always favouring a sudden and overwhelming charge to a long drawn-out battle of attrition. They well understood the role of their macabre legend in war, most often choosing to stage their attacks at dusk or dawn, and taking to decorating the storm-grey of their armour with a variety of charnel images and taking to the field unhelmed, that the sight of their angelic visages streaked

with blood might unsettle the enemy. Some companies even began to incorporate the secret bloody rituals of the Legion into their doctrines of battle, tearing apart the enemy on the field of battle or indulging in bloody feasts to break their morale and set panic in their ranks.

Again and again the IXth Legion would be cast into the crucible of destruction, only to emerge each time as hale as they had been before. Each time they took from the enemy what was required to fight on and grasped victory where others had seen only defeat and despair, though it left them changed. On the silent black battlefields of the Kuiper belt and the endless wastes of Rust, the IXth Legion was sent to fight and survive where others could not, to fight the unseen holding actions of the Great Crusade's first faltering steps. Malcador the Sigillite himself was to take note of their exploits and dub them the Revenant Legion, a title that many came to use for the indomitable warriors of the IXth Legion, as much a sign of the superstitious awe in which they were held by many as it was a commendation of their bravery. Indeed, the Sigillite is but one of a number of senior officials within the Divisio Militaris who seemed ill at ease with this incarnation of the Legioness Astartes, lacking as they did the prestige or open popularity of some of their brethren, such as the much vaunted XIIIth Legion or Horus' own XVIth Legion.

The Immortal Ninth

Time and time again the pride of the IXth Legion was to fall on the field of battle, yet the records of their valour make common mention of the same handful of warriors and champions. Some remembrancers and historians have taken this to indicate a long history of redoubtable heroes, even going so far as to compile these records into a number of epic stanzas, forming the separate entries into a single legend. Yet, the true reason for the longevity of certain names within the order of battle for the IXth Legion is far less heroic.

Since its foundation, the IXth Legion had operated in the most extreme battlefield conditions and necessity had forced upon them a number of practises that might otherwise be seen as monstrous. One among these, fostered by the nature of their design and the conditions under which they fought, was the consumption of fallen captains by their followers in order to preserve their hard-won skills and experience. As a mark of honour as well as practicality, it also became accepted that recruits took the names of those whose skills they absorbed, and lieutenants would assume the names of their captains. Such was the resemblance of each member of the IXth to their flawless brothers that most outsiders failed to notice this subtle brand of immortality. The most famous example of which being the figure thought to have served as the IXth Legion's first and only master, other than Sanguinius himself. Known to history as Ishidur Ossuros, this warrior is commonly held to have commanded the IXth from Unity to the discovery of Baal in late M30, yet a closer examination of the records shows that name died numerous times, only to be replaced by another.

Over time and battles past count, this practise became an honoured tradition of the Legion, a visceral ritual that bound the survivors together despite their often disparate origins. Yet as much as it bound those of the IXth Legion to each other, it forced them away from their brethren among the Imperial Army and other Legions. In the years before Sanguinius' return, no few of the other Primarchs expressed a distaste with the practises of the IXth Legion, though they could not dispute their success on the battlefield. Such was the legacy of mistrust and barbarism that the IXth carried with them, one pressed upon them by the brutal necessity of their calling.

A dangerous and unsightly weapon, to be unsheathed only in dire need and then quickly hidden away again, the IXth Legion found themselves often in the company of those Legions less favoured by the bright lords of the newly-forged Imperium. With the savage War Hounds and oft-forgotten IVth, in whom Horus had found his own disposable weapons, they found a bitter kinship, though it was rare to see these Legions gathered together. Yet it was the work of these ingloriously practical and gore-spattered warriors that set the foundations of the Imperium in place, though there are scant songs sung in praise of the deeds the Emperor commanded them to perform in the pursuit of the golden empire which He sought to build.

A Descent into Madness

With each victory, the dire legends that surrounded the IXth Legion grew and spread. They were the spectres that haunted the wild places at the edge of the Great Crusade's advance, the terrors loosed by the Emperor to clear His path across the stars. It was a duty and title they accepted with grim pride,

never shirking the mantle that they wore in His name and never baulking from the tasks assigned them. Each campaign was undertaken with a cold fury that stood them apart from the Emperor's other attack dogs and hidden murderers, a quiet, brooding hunger for blood and death that was as terrifying as it was effective. Once committed to battle, the IXth did not relent, did not retreat, and could not be stopped. They fought until the enemy was utterly destroyed and paid no heed to the thought of mercy or the need to build an empire rather than a graveyard.

Few among the mighty and renowned welcomed their presence on the eve of battle, for the stench of death and madness was ever on them. So, lacking a patron among the handful of returned Primarchs to guide them and give purpose to their conflicts, the IXth Legion slipped further into isolation and infamy. It became home to a strange mixture of Imperial doctrine and crimson ritual, its ranks and formations riddled with charnel cults and bloody prophets of war, the superstitions of a hundred worlds given

power by the nature of their transformation and left to fester on the worst battlefields of the Great Crusade. Worse, the appearance of these blood-soaked angels, tall and striking, perhaps even more so when caked in the gore of the battlefield, often set those they brought into the Imperium to their worship, lest they anger the red angels that had come. It was a slide towards madness that would see the end of the Legion. For were it not abated, it would become a worse danger to the Imperium than the monsters it was made to hunt.

The seeds of this destruction were already sown, with many watching the Legion and its commanders, already distrustful of the Immortal Ninth and its blood-soaked killers. The IXth Legion's 14th Company was sanctioned by Rogal Dorn for its actions during the Second Siege of Yarrant, where the IXth Legion's warriors took to killing and consuming prisoners on the walls of the fortress to demoralise the enemy, as well as to secure intelligence. While the Imperial Army brought grievance against the Legion after reports were filed that mortally wounded soldiers of the Malagant Rifles had been slaughtered and drained by the IXth Legion rather than left to the mercy of the enemy during the retreat from Shedim. Such brutal necessities seemed of little concern to the IXth Legion, but served only to add weight to those who claimed they should share the fate of the other failed Legions.

Broken apart by the dictates of war and the needs of the Great Crusade, the IXth Legion became outcasts among the brotherhood of Legions. Now they fought in small isolated companies, each fostering its own distinct brand of the red cults that had spread across the Legion. They still maintained a force mostly composed of line infantry and jump troops, but less from tactical expediency and more due to the Divisio Militaris' reluctance to supply them with more potent arms and munitions. In the face of this, the Legion turned more and more to its own macabre methods to win battles, prizing victory more highly than the respect of their peers. Bitter pride in what they saw as the jealousy of others sustained them, but also served to drag them further into disrepute.

The IXth Legion stood upon a knife's edge. They were still a necessary, if bloody, piece of the Emperor's plan to conquer the galaxy, yet that conquest would not last forever and eventually the IXth would become more of a burden in the new Golden Age than a blessing. A reckoning approached for the

IXth Legion. They would either be born anew, changed and not lessened as they had been before, or they would be ended and expunged from history. It was at this time that the scout flotilla of the Great Crusade was to discover an otherwise insignificant world of ruins and deserts, a world whose moons also had their own legends of a bloody angel, a world called Baal.

Out of a Broken Paradise

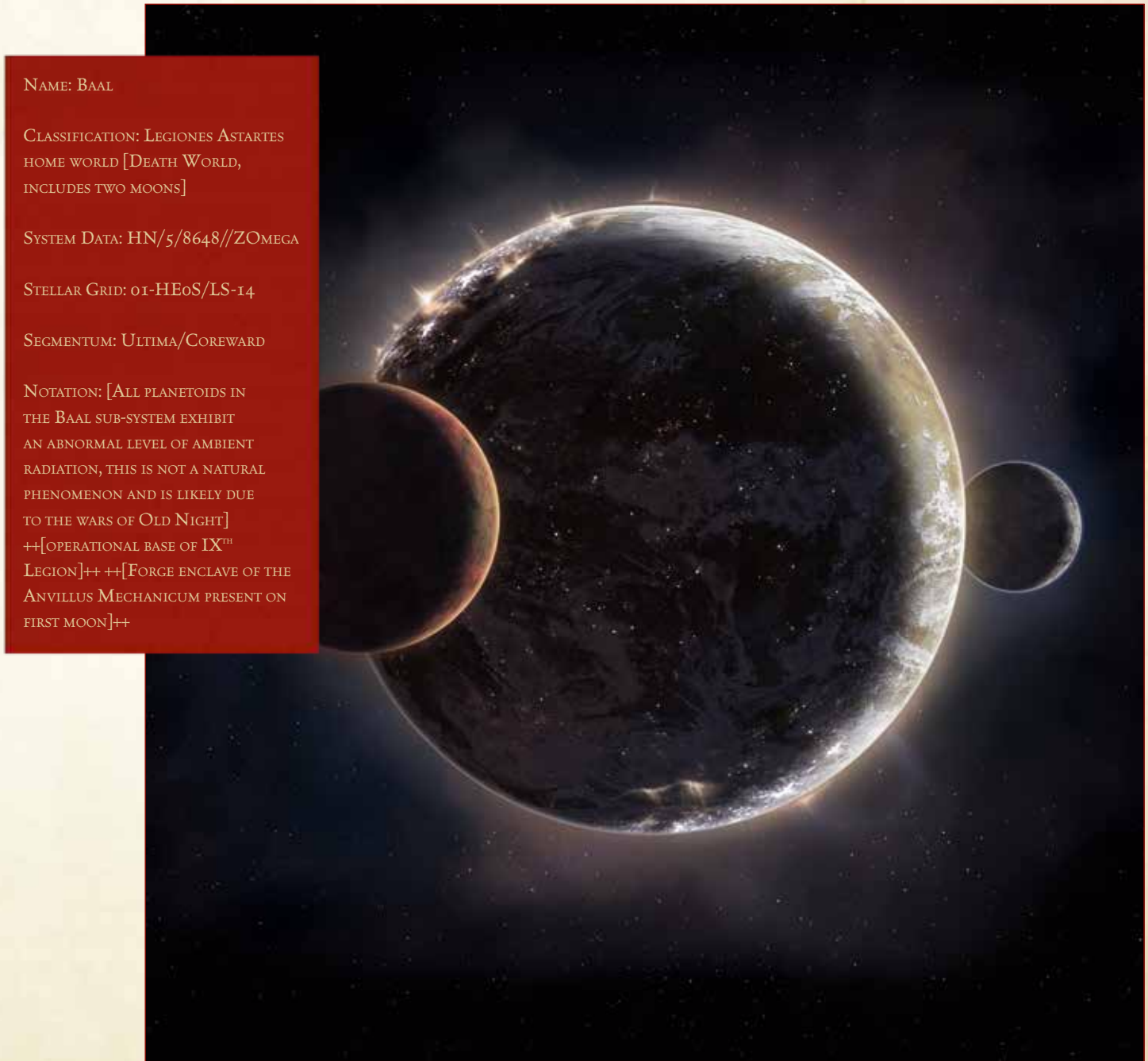
Caught in the tumultuous grasp of the Maelstrom's northern spur, Baal was a world long dead, reduced to ruins and rad-blasted wastes by the long forgotten wars of Old Night. The initial Expeditionary fleets had overlooked it as a target for the Great Crusade, as even though it sat along a major

stable warp current, it possessed no real industrial value and only the most tenuous population. Yet it was here in 843.M30 that the Emperor would rediscover one of His lost sons, the Primarch Sanguinius. As with so many of the Primarchs, Sanguinius had brought a bloody peace to his adopted home world, moulding the primitive tribes he had found there in order with his own ideals. His was to be a legacy of conquest tempered with justice and knowledge, a path so very different than that taken by the IXth Legion that would be bequeathed to him.

Having foreseen the Emperor's coming in prescient dreams, Sanguinius bent his knee to his father without qualm or delay, and was to learn the ways of war at the side of

Horus himself, accompanying the Primarch and his Luna Wolves, to see how war was waged among the stars and to understand the functions of the vast Imperium that the Emperor was building.

As Sanguinius forged a bond of trust with his mentor and brother, the IXth Legion was summoned to attend upon their new master. Gathered from distant war zones across the galaxy, it took many months for each disparate band of the IXth Legion to be found and recalled. It would be two years and four months before the gathering was complete, and on the storm-wracked world of Teghar, an army of grim killers with the faces of angels assembled, eagerly awaiting a new slaughter of which to partake.



NAME: BAAL

CLASSIFICATION: LEGIONES ASTARTES
HOME WORLD [DEATH WORLD,
INCLUDES TWO MOONS]

SYSTEM DATA: HN/5/8648//ZOMEGA

STELLAR GRID: 01-HEoS/LS-14

SEGMENTUM: ULTIMA/COREWARD

NOTATION: [ALL PLANETOIDS IN
THE BAAL SUB-SYSTEM EXHIBIT
AN ABNORMAL LEVEL OF AMBIENT
RADIATION, THIS IS NOT A NATURAL
PHENOMENON AND IS LIKELY DUE
TO THE WARS OF OLD NIGHT]
++[OPERATIONAL BASE OF IXth
LEGION]++ ++[FORGE ENCLAVE OF THE
ANVILLUS MECHANICUM PRESENT ON
FIRST MOON]++

The Child of the Desert

Few of the young Primarchs, spirited away from the Emperor's side by unknown means, found themselves in conditions that any might describe as fair, and yet among their number Sanguinius was particularly ill-favoured by fortune. He was to come to rest within the distant Baal system, once a thriving hub of Mankind's ancient empires that had since been reduced to a sea of rad-scorched ash and dust by its own folly during Old Night. On the second moon, where Sanguinius was cast adrift, there eked out a fragile remnant of Mankind, a number of warlike tribes that stalked the deserts surviving on the plunder of war and what little could be foraged from the wastes.

His earliest days were spent in the deep desert and of them little is known, for Sanguinius did not speak of them. Doubtless he faced hardships that would have felled men full grown, slew creatures that even the desert tribes avoided and survived where the rad-phage of Old Night would cook the flesh of mortals in minutes. It is not known how long his sojourn in the wastes lasted, but by the time he was discovered by one of the many tribes of Baal Secundus he was a young boy, almost of age by the standards of the tribesmen, and he already bore the wings for which he was renowned. Whether these white wings were born of Baal's influence or the Emperor's design is a secret that only Him on Terra can reveal.

Sanguinius was quick to adapt to his new life, as were all his kind, his strength and resilience quickly earning him a place within the ranks of the tribe that had found him, known, as were all the tribes of Baal, as simply *'The People of the Blood'* or *'The Blood'*. Here he grew to manhood, troubled by dreams and ill portents of death and blood, and the arrival of a grim king from the outer worlds. He fought against the mutated wretches that prowled the deep desert and the raiders of other tribes with the same single-minded focus that he gave to his loyalty to his new people. Yet, unlike his distant kin, there was no long war of Unification undertaken on Baal Secundus, no glorious campaign of conquest to prove the young Primarch's worth.

The legend of the winged warrior had spread far across Baal, a warrior tall, fair and much unlike the stunted and rad-scarred people. Ferocious in war and wise in peace, he seemed to be a vision of past glories come once again to Baal, a promise for the future that had all but been forgotten among The Blood. Despite any denials on the part of the Primarch, he became as a god to his foster people, and warriors from across the wide desert came to fight at his side. Within the span of a few short Baalite years, each an endless scorching summer, a vast host had gathered at the Great Angel's side, to learn from his words and to shelter beneath his wings.

Thus it was that when the Emperor came for His missing son, when starships once again returned to the skies of Baal, it was not to find a king of battle and war but instead an unwilling god. Having long foreseen his father's coming and the many consequences of that meeting, Sanguinius came to meet the Emperor alone, without the long train of his worshippers or the warriors pledged to his service. Alone he fell to his knees before his Father and asked only for the lives of his followers, fearing the wrath of a man who had sworn to topple all religions. Seeing in the winged Primarch a servant of rare talents and keen loyalty, the Emperor granted his wish; His Truth was withheld from Baal and no Imperium ship would set itself down upon the second moon of Baal again, save at the behest of Sanguinius himself. The Blood would continue to live as they always had, kept in part as surety against the Great Angel's pact, and Sanguinius himself departed to begin his service to the Emperor.

The captains of the Revenant Legion, the Great Crusades' blood-soaked angels, gathered as Stormbird transports bearing the mark of the Luna Wolves descended from orbit. From within came a troop of warriors clad in the sea-green of Horus' own Legion, yet the one at their head was not Horus, though by his stature he was a true son of the Emperor and one of His Primarchs. Great white wings unfolded and Sanguinius revealed himself to his sons, his sculpted features the very image of those that thronged about him. Sanguinius beheld the gathered warriors of the IXth, each bearing the scars of unrelenting battle both on their proud faces and in the dark recesses of their spirits. These were not men to be impressed by the pomp and ceremony of his escort, nor by simple strength of arms. The winged Primarch, amid the rain and storms of that far world, took a knee before the rough-cast killers and scarred blood-drinkers and, rather than demand their allegiance, he offered them his own.

The warriors who had offered up everything to the new Imperium and in return been granted only scorn and mistrust, were now offered a Primarch's loyalty, given freely and without reservation. Sanguinius had won their devotion with his actions, and to seal them to him he led the assembled Legion on their first campaign, standing in the front lines of battle where his valour spoke for the sincerity of his pledge. The storm-wracked fifth world of the system, Teghar Pentaurus, was the stage upon which Sanguinius fought for the loyalty of his Legion. There he gave of his blood in the maelstrom of combat and came to understand the true nature of his sons. Sanguinius witnessed the bloodlust and fey hunger that ran through his Legion's core and recognised it as his own darkness. The abhuman hordes of Teghar and their bestial thralls fell before the IXth Legion like wheat before a scythe, Sanguinius himself claiming the pelt of a dire carnodon as a trophy of battle and a symbol of the pact he had formed with his sons. In the gore-spattered aftermath of the campaign, Sanguinius saw one possible future, a crimson future of war eternal where his sons would truly become monsters, the playthings of a dark and terrible fury. Yet, the winged Primarch did not despair.

Even in the heat of battle, there remained in the warriors of the IXth Legion a spark of nobility, the still-warm ashes of their martial pride and determination. They fought to grasp the fickle favour of victory, not simply for slaughter, and held to their own codes of honour with an iron will. These would be his weapons in the battle for the IXth Legion's soul, the tools with which he would raise them up. The winged Primarch knew full well that no future was absolute, no dark fate beyond hope of repair, and with the end of the battle he declared, *'even though a darkness hangs over them, a future soaked in blood and horror, they are angels yet. Angels of Blood'*.

A Legion Reborn

The newly titled Blood Angels did not return en-masse to Baal – that blistering wasteland had little to teach them that the ruins of Terra and a thousand other dead worlds had not. Instead, Sanguinius sought the aid of his brother, Horus, who had been his mentor and friend during his first years as part of the Emperor's grand army. Dividing his Legion, its heraldry now changed both to honour the Primarch and to match the new name they had been granted, he set each company to fight alongside one of Horus' own Luna Wolves companies. At the side of these renowned warriors, the Blood Angels would fight for the next decade, seeing the fall of countless worlds and the prosecution of campaigns of every kind, from the brutal simplicity of wars of extermination to the deadly subtlety of quiet campaigns of strike and fade. In the shadow of the Luna Wolves and the greatest of the Emperor's Primarchs, the once-outcasts of the IXth Legion would gain stature in the eyes of their peers and a newfound sense of decorum.

Each of the campaigns was a new trial, a subtle test selected with keen insight by the two Primarchs to salve the wounds inflicted by time and fate upon the Blood Angels. Sanguinius instilled in his sons a

new sense of pride, not in simple carnage and the blood-soaked eternity of melee, but in a future in which they stood as exemplars of the Imperial creed, equal even to Horus' own warriors. In the year-long siege of Anaxis XII, they grasped the value of brotherhood as they stood shoulder to shoulder with the Imperial Fists against a tide of Hrud that seemed without end; on Cambriole and Prehalt they were taught discipline as they matched blades with inscrutable Eldar reavers; while on Kentaurus Beta they learnt something of mercy as Sanguinius led them on the bloodless pacification of the Kentauran colonies. With each battle, the Legion shook off part of the stigma of their past and took their first faltering steps along a new path.

Eager to prove worthy of the oath Sanguinius had made to them, the warriors of the IXth Legion strove to put aside the gore-soaked solitude that had once been the armour of their pride and to embrace the new virtues Sanguinius had shown them. Fury tempered by wisdom, blood-hunger chained with discipline, when the IXth Legion returned once more to Baal, they were no longer that rough beast which had once stalked Terra, but were now a Legion reborn in form more fitting of their angel-winged sire. There, on the sands of Baal, they were met by the newly raised and trained contingents of The Blood, the native people of that rad-scoured system, whom Sanguinius himself had raised up and schooled in the arts of war. The two halves of the Legion were joined, warriors from both spread across the many companies of the Blood Angels that they might strengthen each other and weaken the hold of the IXth Legion's Terran past.

The Foresight

Sometimes gift, sometimes curse, the winged sire of the Blood Angels was among that small number of Primarchs able to glimpse what was to come to pass, a sliver of the talent held by their own father, the Emperor Himself. Through it he saw many things, echoes of dark futures and grim fates that haunted his dreams and drove him to act in ways that oftentimes seemed strange to his brothers. He could not guide his sight, direct it to see where he would, it came to him unreliably and without his will or control. It taunted him with dire premonitions, beset him with doubts over his choices and yet to many it was seen as a gift.

It was a burden borne by the Primarch almost alone, for of his own sons next to none inherited the talent. Of that tiny handful that did, it was little more than a fragment, a tiny scrap of sight. Most well-known among these talents were those who foresaw a single moment of the future with absolute clarity – that of their own death. These warriors were known among the ranks of the Legion as the Foresaken, for they were given to a fatalistic and grim outlook, ever seeking the signs of their final day. Such was the curse of the Foresight, that it brought neither comfort nor answers, only sorrow, pain and doubt.

The hunger remained, a shackled beast that lurked ever ready at the edge of madness, waiting for the chance to be set free once again, but by the faith of their Primarch they had a firm hold of its fetters. The Blood Angels honed their minds and wills, devoting themselves to the study of wisdom as well as war. They became scholars as well as warriors, and under the approving gaze of their winged Primarch, they put aside the barbarism they had once embraced and sought to prove themselves a force worthy of the future for which they fought. As time passed and the Blood Angels' past slipped from the memories of those they fought alongside, the blood hunger became little more than a myth, a half-remembered ghost story of ancient ghouls once bound in service to the Emperor. Those few among the Legion that succumbed once more to its thirst or to the black fury that followed on its heels were quietly concealed, granted the Emperor's peace or sealed away on Baal. The Blood Angels and their Primarch joined the Great Crusade as equals, looked down upon by none and followed the call of war to the stars.

The new crimson-clad Legion was both familiar and yet fundamentally changed in character. It still waged war with a fury to shake the heavens, but now it was leashed to a deep well of discipline and keen intellect. Still they favoured shock assault, a falling upon the foe suddenly and without warning, but now with a Primarch's will at their back they made use of the full panoply of Imperial technology. Now, when the angels came, they fell from the sky like a rain of fire, a thousand burning lights against the dawning sky, the wrath of the Emperor Himself given crimson form. Nor was this the extent of their skills, for though the sudden onslaught was their

preference, they knew now full well the value of the feigned retreat, the gun line and a hundred other stratagems besides. They were a Legion fully formed, so much more now than the simple bludgeon they had once been, and this is perhaps the truest evidence of the Emperor's plan for His Legions, that with their Primarchs they became whole – far more than the sum of their genetic legacy and the harsh lessons of Unification.

Icons of an Empire

At the height of the Great Crusade, a thousand times a thousand worlds were brought into the fold of the Imperium, uncounted billions of men-under-arms fought in the name of the Emperor and legends that will endure long past our own short spans. Of those legends it is the Legiones Astartes that stand tallest and shine brightest, each a burning brand of martial excellence that lit the way for the mortal armies that followed on their heels, and of those Legions there were some that captured the spirit of the Great Crusade more than others. Sanguinius' Blood Angels found themselves among that group; the speed of their advance, the spectacle of their assaults and the awe that their appearance inspired all served to make them favoured subjects of the Remembrancers who followed the fleets.

They fought the noblest of campaigns, unleashed upon the foulest of those creatures that hid in the darkness of the void, and were tasked with the liberation of those held under the lash of the alien. They slew monsters and made safe the far flung worlds of humanity, and those whom they liberated saw in them true angels come down from the heavens to their aid. Among their own kin they also found great acclaim, in part for the campaigns fought at their sides in past years, the skill at arms which they displayed on the

field and the magnanimous nature of their warriors. Yet, much of their reputation and the good will extended them was to come from the noble mien of the Angel himself, for of all the Primarchs of the Emperor, he was the most beloved and admired.

The sons of the Emperor had often been a fractious brotherhood, with many bearing grudges or perpetuating rivalries among their kin. Among them all, Sanguinius was perhaps the most admired and respected, for he held none of his brothers lesser than himself and met each with an open warmth and goodwill that calmed even the rage of his grim brother Angron. Of them all perhaps only Horus was held in more respect, though the Lord of Cthonia's colder demeanour and more brooding aspect left him more aloof than the winged Primarch. Sanguinius was welcome amongst the courts of worlds without count, from the exotic thrones of far colonies to the baroque nexus chambers of the Mechanicum's distant realms. He embodied the pride and optimism of those golden years, when it seemed that none could stand against the armies of the Emperor and the galaxy was laid bare for their conquest.

Ullanor was to be the proof of that destiny, a grand campaign to shatter the greatest remaining rival of Mankind's dominance – the Orkish empire of Urlakk Urg. Here, Horus would break that foe in the largest battle of the Great Crusade, wining a grand victory, and yet even after that accomplishment at the Triumph that would follow, many expected Sanguinius, who had not been present for the fighting, to receive the laurels of Warmaster. Such was the reputation and glamour of the Great Angel and his warriors, now seen as peerless warriors and scholars both, that few doubted Sanguinius' worthiness to act as the Emperor's proxy, though some succumbed to petty jealousy. This was the apex of glory for the Blood Angels and their sire, a peak they would stand upon for only a short span and from which their fall would crack the very foundation of the Imperium.

**UNIT ORGANISATION
AND STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEGION**

In all of its incarnations, the IXth Legion has defied the standard by which the Legiones Astartes have been measured. In its earliest days, it operated with such a simple order of battle and command structure that it could barely be called an army, consisting only of massed infantry companies with few specialised troops of any kind. Most often these troops were equipped as 'reaver' squads, close quarters optimised and wielding arms requiring limited resupply, the perfect warriors for operations undertaken at arm's-length from the main force of the Great Crusade. The aberrant quirks of the Legion, the red thirst that haunted its warriors, wreaked havoc on its discipline and made any attempt at large scale organisation difficult. Tactics were often developed and employed at the company or even squad level during combat rather than being part of a larger Legion-wide approach to strategy.

This unique manner of operation, fighting at a distance from other units and with limited oversight by the Divisio Militaris, served to limit the impact of the Legion's more aberrant practises on the morale of allied units. As such there was no concerted effort to bring the Legion into compliance with others of the Imperial Host, and it was a matter of tacit complicity among the various generals and commanders that fought alongside the IXth Legion that it was to be allowed to operate in a manner of its own choosing. Its first commanders were more warlords than true officers, they enforced discipline at the point of a sword, earned respect with the strength of their arms, and they walked the battlefield as visceral forces of nature. When these respected commanders advanced, the warriors of the IXth Legion followed. When they held the line, their followers dug in, and when they laid down their blades, those around them ceased the killing. It was a brutally efficient structure, one that could be impeded only by the infliction of massive casualties, for even if one warlord fell, there were a dozen veterans ready to step forwards and take his place.

This was all to change with the return of Sanguinius. The winged Primarch was to bring a sense of order to the often fractious Legion, stamping a new structure onto it in the hopes of containing its hunger. Though in essence this new order would seem to be in accord with the *Principia Bellicosa*, the schema by which the other Legions were organised, in actuality it also varied a great deal from the standard pattern. It retained

The Immortal Warlord

The first and last warlord of the IXth Legion, other than Sanguinius himself, was a warrior who fought under the name of Ishidur Ossuros. His is a legend that spans nearly 80 years of war, fighting in battles from the rad-wastes of Ancient Terra to the rocky heights of Saiph, a legend of blood and death that charts a course across the most hazardous battlefields of the Great Crusade. He was the hero of the assault on Kum-karta in Yndonesia, where he reaped such a toll of lives that his warriors emerged from the fortresses' sunken vaults painted crimson head to foot, and the champion of the Ghost Wars on Saiph. If the records of the Divisio Militaris are to be believed then Ishidur fought in 317 separate major engagements – and yet these same records also show his death on at least four verified occasions.

Given the nature of the IXth Legion in those blood-soaked years before Sanguinius' return, and those few oral records from the warriors of the Legion itself, it is likely that the true Ishidur Ossuros fell in battle in 802.M30. His lieutenants then took his memories and his name, by means of that singular mutation of the IXth Legion, and continued his legacy for the sake of the Legion. Each time Ishidur Ossuros fell, he would rise again like some gore-soaked phoenix, to once more take the reins of the IXth Legion. The last known reference to this warrior is during the Battle for Teghar Pentaurus, there the enemy's last gasp was a ferocious assault that threatened to overrun the Primarch and his guard. It was the final Ishidur and his warriors who would save the Great Angel, staging a suicidal counter-assault into the teeth of the foe and holding them at bay for almost an hour as reinforcements rushed to Sanguinius' aid. Ishidur Ossuros perished one final time, his body never recovered, exchanging his long life for that of the Primarch in whom he had entrusted the future of the IXth Legion.

the basic structure of companies, initially forming the Legion into 200 companies of approximately 300 warriors each, although by the last years of the Great Crusade this would have increased to 300 companies each of 500 warriors. However, past this basic structure there were many discrepancies, each chosen by the Great Angel to serve a purpose in his plans. These companies were grouped into Hosts for campaigns requiring greater force of numbers than that possessed of a single company, though each Host was a temporary creature broken and made as need required.

Sanguinius created three Spheres to encompass his Hosts, three chambers by which he would give order and purpose to the warriors of the Legion. Each was separate and distinct from the Three Hundred Companies and the strictures of the *Principia Bellicosa*, forming a distinct strata of organisation that allowed the warriors of the IXth Legion to focus their hunger and rage towards a single end and to conquer it. Yet it was not merely a blunt tool, but an elegant and artful plan designed to promote the finer qualities of the Legion while providing an outlet for the more base. It was the Great Angel's masterwork, the fulfilment of an oath and the salvation of his children.

The outermost of the three Spheres would encompass the rank and file of the Legion, the warriors that plied blade and bolter on

the battlefield. Known within the Legion as the Malak, these warriors had but one duty – to fight at the order of their captains. They obeyed, they killed and they practised the arts granted them by the Primarch, and by these simple disciplines and the endless focus of their post-human minds they staved off the depredations of their hunger. Within this sphere there were but few distinctions, simple titles and orders for those who excelled in specific arts of war and peace, exemplars of their tasks and angels of small actions. These were the marksmen, poets and duellists of the Legion, its strong right hand and beating heart, and though these were but small honours, they were held dear by those who won them.

The Second Sphere was composed of the commanders and leaders of the Legion, the powers and dominions that stood at the side of Sanguinius. To them fell the duty of command, of the execution of Sanguinius' wishes with alacrity and sound judgement. Unlike those who fought at their command, they bore the burden of free will, of time to think and ponder as they would while the curse stalked them. They were the planners and strategists of the crimson host, they directed battles and wars as lesser men directed symphonies, utilising each instrument at their command to its utmost. As the rank and file found peace in their studies, so too did each of the mighty become

a master of many disciplines, those of the pen and brush as well as those of the blade and gun. Though they were not the single-minded fanatics of Legions such as Angron's red reapers or Guilliman's famed tacticians, there were few who could match them in the arts of war taken as a whole.

The First Sphere, the final demarcation of Sanguinius' new Legion, comprised the ranks of the Immortals. These warriors stood within the presence of the Primarch; they did not operate within one of the Three Hundred Companies but as the guards and servants of the Great Angel himself. Each, when inducted into the ranks of the First Sphere, gave up his common name to take on another and gave up his identity to do the work of the Primarch without guilt or regret. They were Sanguinius' wrath, his stern resolve and his watchful eyes each given form and purpose. Upon these warriors he depended for the most dangerous of tasks, to fight upon those battlefields and to act upon those errands that would tarnish the soul and bring the hunger roaring to the fore. By the armour of the names and persona that the warriors of the First Sphere wore like their own, they put off the toll of their actions and emerged from their service untarnished, to take their places in the ranks once again.

Legion Command Hierarchy

The lords of Sanguinius' crimson hosts bore many similarities to the strictures of the *Principia Bellicosa*, but with a number of differences both large and small. Authority was strictly divided across the three Spheres of the Legion, with each officer operating within his own place in the manner given him by the Primarch himself. This strict, overlapping system of authority was less flexible than some Legions, but it afforded a solid line of responsibility and control that limited the effect of the Blood Angels' ever-present hunger and sudden rage. To mitigate the possibility of any breakdown of authority, the Blood Angels maintained a large number of junior officers, lieutenants and sergeants of varying types, all quickly able to take the place of the slain in the heat of battle.

On the field of battle, the line of authority was always drawn clearly for the Blood Angels and followed absolutely. To disobey or question orders was a grave sin, undertaken only in the most serious of situations and warranting the harshest of punishments, even if proven correct. Their duty was only to obey, the individual warrior worried not for anything but action, putting the hunger to the back of his mind while those appointed

Orders of the First Sphere

The First Sphere was made up entirely of a series of warrior Orders, each of which operated independently of the Three Hundred Companies. The first and most famous of these were the Sanguinary Guard, the lifeguard of the Primarch himself, but there would be many others – each assigned with a specific task and duty. Few outside of the Legion have made a complete accounting of these Orders, but listed here are the most well-known and important of the warrior Orders of the First Sphere:



The Sanguinary Guard – Also known as the Ikisat, or the Burning Ones, for their ardour and unwavering devotion, each individual warrior bore the title Seraph, and was tasked with the safety of the Primarch's person. On rare occasions, they were also assigned as guards for other commanders as a sign of the Great Angel's favour.



The Crimson Paladins – Also known as the Keruvim, or the Storm Winds, for the sudden onset of their anger and the lasting fervour of their hate. They served as the guardians of the Primarch's halls and sanctums. At the Primarch's order, they also took to the field to serve as his determination and the shield of his will.



The Burning Eyes – Also known as the Ofanim, and the Many-eyed, these secretive warriors were the Angel's Shame, his secret police and shadow agents. They watched the Legion for signs of treachery and madness, and acted to assuage his guilt by removing the stain. Rarely seen on the battlefield, the Ofanim fought alone and with weapons considered unworthy of true warriors.



The Angel's Tears – Also known as the Broken Blade, or Dead Hand, for the cruel devastation they brought to the foe, each individual warrior bore the title Erelim, and served as Sanguinius' wrath set forth by his will to scour away those he decreed unworthy of being saved. They were the most commonly seen of the Orders, serving the role other Legions would refer to as Destroyers.

over him worried over consequences. In the Blood Angels, all authority stemmed directly from Sanguinius and flowed down from him, first to the lord commanders then to his captains and beyond in an unbroken and inviolable line. This fact kept his Legion centred and focused, each word from a sergeant in the heat of battle was the word of Sanguinius himself, each nod from a captain a tilt of the Primarch's head itself.

The Blood Angels also differed in small ways, as with many of the Legions they had their own titles and names for authority and a host of lesser divisions to suit their style. Those who held command over Hosts and had authority over lesser captains were known as Archeins rather than the old title of Praetor, and also held the title of Dominion

for a company. Within a company were a number of junior officers, the Powers who commanded the ranks of the company at war and the Virtues who stood as its exemplars in other endeavours. Many were known by the focus of their devotion, Archeins of Wisdom and Powers of the Blade, such distinctions a mark of respect as much as a tactical designation in a Legion whose Primarch urged them to be more than simple weapons.

War Disposition

By the last years of the Great Crusade, the Blood Angels were among, if not, the pre-eminent Legion of the Imperial Host. The years since Sanguinius had taken charge of the Legion had seen its revitalisation, a change so complete that few now even remembered the Revenant Legion of old. Once the half-forgotten rearguard of the Great Crusade, now it stood at the forefront of every advance, and those who had once scorned it now sang its praises in every court of the Emperor's far-flung domain. It was a fearsome fighting force, a breaker of empires and an ender of worlds, and unshakeable in its loyalty to the Emperor. It was the strong foundation upon which the Imperium was being built, and while it still stood, that empire would not fall.

At any time, the Legion numbered near 120,000 warriors, accounting for casualties, made up of to 300 individual companies, one of the largest Legions in operation at that time, with perhaps only the vast throngs of the Ultramarines and Iron Warriors on record as overmatching this strength. Each of these Hosts comprised a force predisposed towards assault and orbital drop operations, with a large proportion of its infantry equipped for close quarters combat, and its vehicles primarily rigged for high speed strikes and breakthrough operations. With few defensive assets in comparison to more rounded Legions, they would be at a disadvantage if committed to a large scale conflict without operational initiative, but with the Great Crusade at its apex, such a situation seemed at the time unthinkable. This force was spread across the galaxy in a number of separate Hosts, each engaged in large scale operations, as well as custodial forces at each of the Legion's main bases and redoubts – these being at Baal, Saiph and Canopus.

Of these bases, Baal was the largest, for while the second moon remained sacrosanct for the native Blood, the empty rad-scoured world beneath was transformed by the Mechanicum of Anvillus at the invitation of Sanguinius himself. There, where no unmodified person could tread, the tech-adepts built a manufacturing site the envy of many smaller Forge Worlds, supplying much of the munitions and technical needs of the IXth Legion. Baal, as the home world of Sanguinius, warranted a large standing guard, a duty mainly fulfilled by the Crimson Paladins, though at least one company could normally be found at refit. Canopus also served as a manufacturing centre, though of lesser size and sophistication, producing vast quantities of shells and other simple munitions to feed the hungry cannon of the Legion. It was a common stopping point for troops bound outwards for the Great Crusade's frontlines, and many units were to be found at rest there. Saiph was the smallest of the Legion's permanent outposts, serving only as a source of recruits from among the world's endlessly warring tribes, and warranted but a single squad as custodians.

The Legion's fleet assets were similarly impressive, boasting over 300 capital class ships, many of them heavy cruisers or even battleships of various classes. Many of these craft were outfitted to serve as orbital assault craft, mounting either banks of heavy linear cannon for use as bombardment weapons, launch rails for swarms of drop pods or vast hangar bays from which the large Stormbird or Thunderhawk dropships could operate.

Few among their brother Legions could match such a fleet for sheer firepower or mass, for the weakness of the Blood Angels fleet lay in its single-minded obsession with a single stratagem. In terms of support craft, the fleet was less amply supplied, with less than 600 sub-capital craft, mostly slower escort gunboats with little in the way of fast strike craft. This was another side effect of the Legion's singular focus, for such craft were rarely needed for their preferred strategy and speciality, save as screening assets for the larger cruisers.

In all, the Blood Angels constituted one of the greatest threats to Horus' nascent rebellion, they were easily a match for any Traitor Legion he cared to stand against them and their loyalty to the Emperor was unquestionable. Openly confronted, they would savage his forces and leave him ill-prepared for an assault on Terra, but left unopposed there could be no attack on Terra without the Blood Angels striking his exposed flanks. Some among his confederates urged the IXth Legion be destroyed in detail, its separate Hosts attacked while on-campaign and annihilated one at a time while they were vulnerable. Mortarion favoured this approach, for he of all the brothers had the least love for the winged Primarch and his witch-dreams. Yet Lorgar convinced his Warmaster that there was another way, a way to not only remove an obstacle but to gain an asset. A trap had been prepared and the Lord of the Word Bearers spoke to the Warmaster of Signus and a mark of blood.



IXTH LEGION VETERAN LEGIONARY

LEGIONARY ARVEN SCURN, 14TH SHOCK ASSAULT DETACHMENT, 32ND MERCIAN RIFT GENE-CULL

Taken into the early IXth Legion from the blasted pits of the Mercian Rift in Old Alba, Legionary Scurm was transfigured, raised up from the foul slums of his birth to stand as a model of perfection among the armies of the Emperor. His outward appearance was that of angelic perfection, but within lurked a red-handed killer devoid of the noble aspect of their as-yet undiscovered sire. These frenzied butchers with the faces of angels were the shock troops of the Wars of Unity within the Sol system, unleashed to kill and burn in indiscriminate fury on the worst of battlefields. Legionary Scurm bears the Pentagram of Vesper, the battle honour of the bloody wars waged on Venus, on his left greave signifying his participation in the worst massacres of the Wars of Unity, as well as a variety of acid-etched markings of a more informal nature. The bloody smears that adorn many Legionaries of the IXth in these early years are intentional marks from the various bloodletting rituals adopted by the so-called Revenant Legion, rather than the residue of battle.

Legionary Scurm was among the few survivors of the original Legion at the time of the Signus muster, relegated along with many relics of those bloody years to lesser companies. He now held the title of Centurion and bearer of the Word of Wrath within the 94th Company, and was among those martyred within the twisted eaves of the Daemonic forest on Signus Prime, exacting a high price from the foe in exchange for his life. In death, he and his brothers would stand higher in the regard of the Great Angel than they ever had in life.



BLOOD ANGELS VETERAN SERGEANT

SERGEANT LEONIS HARUM, HARUM VETERAN TACTICAL SQUAD, 202ND COMPANY, THE CRIMSON AEGIS

Shown in this pict-image is Harum, a veteran sergeant of the 202nd Company, in full battle plate and bearing a number of honour markings. Of particular note are the embossed fold icons attached to his chest-plate and helm, both of which indicate separate citations for bravery from an Archein of the IXth Legion. The studded right pauldron is likely a battlefield replacement rather than a standard piece of heraldry, and its inclusion has displaced the rank and company insignia to the greaves of the sergeant's armour.

One of the few to live through the wrecking of the *Ifrit Nine*, Sergeant Harum fell upon the battlefield of Signus Prime following the heavy cruiser's survivors' valiant defence of Legion armoured assets on the far flank – he and his battle-brothers were all recognised as heroes and martyrs of the Legion. It is said that the 202nd were one of the few units to resist the worst excesses of the rage that took hold of the Legion, steeling their spirits against the flaw in their gene-seed with the *Liturgy of the Blood* and holding fast to their duty till death took them.



BLOOD ANGELS LEVIATHAN DREADNOUGHT

VENERABLE-EXEMPLAR JOPHIAL, KERUVIM CONVOCATION OF ANCIENTS

Venerable Jophial was aboard the *Red Tear*, still engaged with enemy forces in the outer compartments, when that venerable warship smashed itself into the surface of Signus Prime. It is a testament to the formidable armour of his Dreadnought chassis that he survived the impact of the crash landing, and a tribute to his valour that he was among the first of the survivors to dig himself free and secure the area around the wreck. After serving a vital role in recovery operations, the indomitable Ancient would go on to serve as a linchpin in the defence of the wreck.

BLOOD ANGELS HERALDRY



BLOOD ANGEL LEGION BANNERS

Two examples of company banners of the IXth Legion, both carried to war in the Signus campaign. These show the highly decorative style favoured by the Primarch Sanguinius, a testament to the artistic values and scholarly pursuits Sanguinius encouraged among his Legion.



This MkIII pauldron displays the standard Legio Tactical markings, of note are the additional decorative details, an affectation encouraged by Sanguinius.



This ceremonial MkIII pauldron shows the honour marks of a Veteran assault Sergeant, including ornamental details common to the IXth Legion.



A rare example of the heraldry of the First Sphere Order known as the Ofanim, an organisation charged with the internal security of the IXth Legion.



Heavily ornamented Apothecary heraldry. Such lavish decoration was a common factor of later Blood Angels' heraldic patterns.



Artificer plate bearing the insignia of the Sanguinary Guard, the First Sphere Order sometimes known as the Seraphim.



An unusual example of the heraldry of the Keruvim, the Crimson Paladins, shown on a MkIII pauldron. Likely for ceremonial use rather than actual battle-plate.



MkIV pauldron bearing honour markings that show a blood-filled chalice, a common device within the IXth Legion that dates back to some of the Legion's original battle rites.



Lavishly decorated Legion insignia, this example is from the battle-plate of Archein Nakir of the 24th Company – a noted warrior and favourite of the Primarch.

SECTOR GAMMA-010

On the far right flank of the Blood Angels advance during the battle at Signus Prime is where Sanguinius is thought to have gathered his artillery, those of his cannon and foot-borne heavy weapons that could not keep pace with the main advance. Massing enough firepower to obliterate any force of arms caught in the open, or to crack and splinter the walls of even the grandest fortresses, for though the Blood Angels were most famous for their audacious drop assaults, they were not unfamiliar with the brutal application of overwhelming firepower. As with any of the Legions, the IXth kept an artillery train of substantial size, though it could not match that of the more specialised Legions, such as the Iron Warriors or the Death Guard, and it included examples of every style of self-propelled gun and artillery piece in common use by the armies of the Imperium, as well as several more unique guns.

Such vehicles could not operate alone, requiring vast quantities of ammunition, fuel and other supplies in order to function at full combat efficiency. Worse, they proved easily vulnerable to close range assault by the enemy and standard Divisio Militaris doctrine demanded a force of screening infantry for such units. As such they went to war in the company of a small army of conveyors and ammunition-barques, and proceeded by a dedicated force of skirmishers and scouts. At the battle for Signus Prime, there were Rhino armoured transports in number to match the heavier artillery vehicles as well as a number of Mastodon and Stegodon super-heavy transports.

In Sector Gamma-010 of the battlefield on Signus Prime, all of these vehicles, both the artillery and its support, were thrown into a crucible for which they had not been designed. The ability of their foe to appear at point-blank ranges left them at a severe disadvantage; indeed many of the largest cannon were overrun and destroyed before they could fire even a single shot. Here the escorts and close support guns stood at the fore, seeding a co-ordinated pattern of close range blasts and synchronised small arms volleys that held the foe at bay for a time. Had it not been for the near-inexhaustible numbers of the enemy that fell upon them, the outcome of the battle might well have been far different.



BLOOD ANGELS RHINO ARMoured CARRIER

RHO-ARGENT /12

The twelfth vehicle attached to the 146th Company, assigned to transport one of the many Heavy Support units of the 146th. This vehicle was part of the artillery train on the right flank, but would later be abandoned during the advance after damage inflicted by a monstrous hulk of flesh and bone left the disembarkation ports jammed shut. It would be recovered and repaired after the battle was concluded, the damage analysed to aid in formulating counter-measures for any future encounters of this kind.

BLOOD ANGELS MASTODON HEAVY ASSAULT TRANSPORT

CRIMSON FURY

Assigned to the 202nd Company and embarked upon the cruiser *Ifrit Nine* when it broke up in low orbit. Even as the cruiser began to come apart, caught in the gravity well of Signus Prime, the Techmarines of the 202nd worked to preserve the vehicles they knew would be sorely needed on the surface, sacrificing their lives to encase them in ablative drop capsules. *Crimson Fury* was one of almost a dozen heavy tanks to survive the drop, and served as Archein Jannus' command vehicle during the long march that led to the battlefield. Of note in this after-action pict is the heavy damage to the vehicle's fore, where daemoniac claws proved a match for even hardened ceramite composite intended to repel heavy cannon and melta weaponry.

