



# THE ALPHA LEGION

**Numeration:** The XX<sup>th</sup> Legion

**Primogenitor:** Alpharius

**Cognomen:** (Prior) Many informal cognomen are listed for the Legion, including: The Harrowing, The Children of Eris, The Ghost Legion, The Unbroken Chain, The Strife Wrought, The Hydra, The Combine, Aleph Null, The Last Unity, Vigil, The Threefold Path, The Left Hand of Darkness, The Azure Serpent, The Amaranth Coil and simply lit. – “Legion”. [732 other recognised cognomen occur in Primaris level archives]

**Observed Strategic Tendencies:** Surprise Assault, Sabotage, Infiltration, Insurgency and Counter-insurgency Warfare, Multi-vector Attack, Interplanetary Pursuit and Decimation Campaigns, and Deep-range Raiding Operations.

**Noteworthy Domains:** Unknown/ Unconfirmed {see Addendum XX-XVX-Omega-V}

**Allegiance:** Traitoris Perdita

*“War is life. In war and in life nothing is so precious as truth, and thus as the ancient wisdom holds: where truth walks, everywhere she should be shepherded always by a bodyguard of lies.”*

The Unspeakable King  
Magnar Albia and Archtyrant of Panpacific  
*Collected Idles and Nightmares, Cantos XI*  
Circa M.27

*“Our name is Legion, for we are many.”*

*The Book of Malignancies*  
*The Apocrypha Terra*  
Origin date unknown

There is no other Legion like the XX<sup>th</sup>. Of all the mighty forces the Imperium commanded during the Great Crusade, there were none so wound about with falsehood, supposition and paradox than they. Any attempted study of the XX<sup>th</sup> division of the gene-seed of the Legiones Astartes, a force that would eventually become known as the Alpha Legion among a myriad of other names, is therefore fraught with difficulty and contradiction, and uncovering ‘truth’ when applied to such a study is a vain hope. This is the case even to a record such as this, compiled with the highest of authorities and most extensive reach possible given the wreckage of the age of war which we have so recently survived.

Long before the vile treachery of Horus came into being, the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion, its formation, use and purpose was shrouded with mystery and deliberate concealment from the rest of the Imperium. This secrecy was colluded in—it is evident—by the highest circles of power; indeed, it cannot be doubted that it was by the Emperor’s will. It is the supposition of this record that the secrecy that surrounded this ‘outsider’ Legion and its hidden purposes, would later serve to conceal a cancerous transformation at its heart which was long in its gestation. This malediction; a delight in strife, and the increasing addiction to the exercising of its own preternatural abilities for subterfuge and destruction, clearly worsened after the ascension of Horus to Warmaster, although it was unlikely responsible for this to any extent except giving the Alpha Legion licence. The Alpha Legion thus became a twisting serpentine thing of formless shadows, as dangerous and venomous as the multi-headed monster of ancient myth that in latter days became its sigil and its sign. It was a weapon neither first the Emperor nor later the Warmaster could fully control.

What follows then is a fragmentary and in parts contradictory record. More so than any other of its type, this record relies on evidence of the Legion’s activities and operations as observed by covert sources, and those who have dealt with the Alpha Legion at first hand as both ally and enemy before the perfidy of Horus was to bear its bitter fruit. Such wisdom was often paid for in blood, rather than drawn from within the Legion’s own ranks—as such inside testimony itself is doubly filled with lies and misdirection. This then is a secret history of the Alpha Legion and in its lies perhaps may be found the truth.

## ORIGINS: THE GHOST LEGION

The pall of mystery surrounding the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion can be traced back to its creation.

The last known of the gene-seed strains used in the creation of the Legiones Astartes at the end of the Unification Wars, factors relating to the XX<sup>th</sup> were kept beyond the usual secrecy and security that the Emperor chose to surround the Space Marine project with. The XX<sup>th</sup>, along with the XVIII<sup>th</sup> and VI<sup>th</sup> proto-Legions, were formed and established largely in separation from the rest of the Legiones Astartes, and it is generally thought created to very specific ends and purposes. What plan of the Emperor’s lay behind this action cannot now be known, and even at the dawnning of the Imperial Age, this was one of many secrets the Emperor kept both from the Imperial Court and many of his closest advisors, and the Primarchs themselves.

Known obliquely in some sources as the ‘Trefoil’, these Legions were kept veiled and distant from their brother Legiones Astartes from the beginning, breeding distrust between them that, save in the case of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Legion—who would later become the widely renowned Salamanders Legion—would never disappear. In the case of the Alpha Legion, it would instead worsen over time. This first mystery would breed others, and questions would continue to go unanswered not simply about the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion’s methods and nature, but about the use to which it was put in its earliest days.

Of the early decades of the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion on Terra and during the re-conquest of the Sol System almost nothing can be said with any accuracy whatsoever, and even the cluster of myths and rumours that would later grow to surround the Legion’s activities is absent. What remains instead are a few sparse but suggestive fragments; anomalous records of unknown Legiones Astartes units carrying out targeted strikes, abductions and

assassinations, both on Terra and beyond, and reports of Space Marine units answering to no known master or Legion allegiance passing through war zones on high priority missions and under the writ of unassailable clearance codes which brooked no question. Rumour and supposition even surrounds the designation ‘Alpha’, which by some records is connected with the XX<sup>th</sup> proto-Legion from a very early period. This, aside from the numerous occult and arcane associations and significance that certain sources choose to derive from this fact, ties into another, more prosaic, potential association dating back to the hidden work of the Emperor’s own gene-labs.

It is apparent from numerous extant sources that during their creation, each nascent proto-Legion after the Primus or I<sup>st</sup> Legion (later the Angelis Tenebraium or Dark Angels), was raised first to active service in a staged process of testing and trials before the full active force was created through mass recruitment. Each stage of creation would result in an expansion of the gene-seed implantation on progressively larger groups of neophytes. The last of these preliminary stages was, according to sources, the ‘Alpha’ induction. This was in essence believed to be the first non-experimental implantation, and its purpose was to create a proto-Legion

at minimum fighting strength to be field tested in open battle. It is notable that at this stage that in the case of the [REDACTED] failed. Tellingly, there is no recorded evidence that the XX<sup>th</sup> pattern gene-seed group, although having been approved by the Emperor after its initial battle tests, was ever ordered to expand to full implantation, or received an allotted intake region for mass recruitment as the rest would do during the early years of the Great Crusade. This then effectively limited the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion to a body of around 1,000-2,000 Legionaries and effectively 'side-lined' them while their contemporaries underwent rapid expansion and deployment through the opening phases of the Great Crusade. The question then remains, why?

Almost certainly it was not a question of gene-adaption; the extant sample records place the gene-seed implantation success for the XX<sup>th</sup> pattern as being in the higher end of the recorded spectrum. The evidence would indicate it was certainly far superior to certain other developed types [the difficulties experienced by the VI<sup>th</sup> and IX<sup>th</sup> patterns being documented elsewhere]. Likewise, their battlefield performance was rated high, removing the other most obvious likelihood for considering the proto-Legion a failure. There are three outstanding theories that have been posited as to why the XX<sup>th</sup> was not apparently expanded to full Legion strength during the early Great Crusade which may each have some merit.

The first is entirely mundane —shortage of suitable manpower— the recruitment assignments of the other Legions during the period now covered most of the suitable genetic and cultural candidates of both Terra and the Sol System, and the disaster of [REDACTED] had proven the folly of attempting to recruit Legiones Astartes stock from potentially tainted sources.

The second is the suspicion that some hidden problem, or potential flaw had been discovered which prevented the proto-Legion's expansion—although this in many ways seems unlikely; for it is to suggest the Emperor was either unable or unwilling to solve such a problem and equally unwilling to ruthlessly eradicate a failed experiment as he had done before.

The third theory is that the XX<sup>th</sup> was deliberately preserved separately as an isolated unit for either scientific or military reasons; possibly to act as a strategic gene-seed reserve (or indeed a 'control group', as some have suggested, to measure gene-

distortion over time in the other Legions). This theory also posits the possibility that the XX<sup>th</sup> proto-Legion was held back to undergo some further development or conditioning unique to them that the rest of the Legiones Astartes had been excluded from by design. There remains no evidence that links this last 'Alpha' stage Legion to the Emperor's later and eternally sealed gene-craft project to create the Legio Custodes, nor indeed involvement in *Labryk Polaris* or the aborted [REDACTED] experiment which has long been the subject of dark rumour.

#### A War in Shadow

Once the Great Crusade was fully underway and the first of the great Expeditionary fleets had set out in earnest to bring unity to the galaxy, the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion then disappears from official history for many decades. However, some sources posit a connection between them and certain shadowed events during the Great Crusade that have never been satisfactorily explained by the official record, even to such as is known to the highest echelons of the Imperium, save the Throne of Terra itself. Some suggest that during this time the XX<sup>th</sup>, without then their Primarch, had a secret role to play in ensuring the Imperium's future. It has been apparent since the earliest days of the Great Crusade and the Emperor's great vision of a united humanity free of the shackles of torment of the nightmarish cosmos, that as well as the many enemies without, there has remained the danger of the enemy within as has been proved time and again. Evidence for this hypothesis can be seen both in the mysterious assault which scattered the Primarchs across the stars, and by the fact that the nascent Imperium was plagued with terrorist assaults, petty rebellions and the desperate plots of renegades and madmen. Some such enemies had slunk into shadowed obscurity following bitter defeats and crushing conquests during the bloody wars of Unification but yet plotted vengeance. Others, twisted by lust for power or tainted by exposure to the horrors beyond, sought to pervert the Imperial dream for their own ends.

No clearer sign that such hidden foes could strike at the heart of the Imperium occurred than the so-called 'accident' that resulted in the gene-seed crisis that was nearly to doom the III<sup>rd</sup> Legion—an act which many have since attributed to the actions of a secret enemy within. It was not long after this dark event in the fourth decade of the Great Crusade, that scattered and apocryphal reports of anomalous Legiones



Astartes activity come to light. These actions were uniformly tactical-scale operations, carried out far from the front lines of the Great Crusade by small detached units, ranging between squad and company in size. The warriors who carried them out were doubtless of the Legiones Astartes by their power, abilities and wargear, but their identity remained concealed. These mysterious Legionaries carried little or no unit markings or heraldry, or in some cases bore unrecognised markings not in the official record. In some stranger instances yet, they operated under a 'false flag'; the livery of a known Legion, often amid a war zone where that impersonated Legion was operating but without that Legion's knowledge, license or command. These actions were uniformly of a covert nature: surgical strikes, assassinations, espionage, sabotage, the recovery of unknown artefacts or the abduction of important individuals or entire groups for some unknown purpose. Such strikes, carried out both at the front lines and within the Compliant worlds of the Imperium, were deadly accurate and seldom left any witnesses alive to tell directly of them.

The predations of what came to be known in certain circles as the 'Ghost Legion' were rare—at least those that came to light were few—and protests by local commanders or planetary governors against them were rebuffed or simply ignored. It was suggested by some within the Imperial High Command that the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion was at work, but as other, specialised agencies of the Imperium such as the Legio Custodes, the Sororitas Inconcessus and the Officio Assassinorum rose to power and established themselves, reports of this unknown force faded and began to enter myth, although they never entirely disappeared. If such a 'Ghost Legion' truly existed as a coherent entity, then it represents the frightening prospect of a Legiones Astartes force whose specialisation was to act in a way that was distinctly different from its peers, and to do so in secret. If this force was indeed the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion, then it may have been operating in the shadows of the Imperium for more than a century, building a web of influence and experience alien to any other Space Marine Legion and undertaking a secret war at once part of and parallel to the Great Crusade itself.

What it became, what it learned during these years remains unknown. But even if this supposition is true and not merely a convenient theory fashioned after the fact to explain what was to follow, it poses yet

another question—why was the purpose of this 'Ghost Legion' in its particular role ended? Had it simply been replaced by more specialised and newly founded powers, or had it become perhaps too unpredictable, uncontrollable or even too dangerous in its current form? Had the Great Crusade's need for a front-line battle Legion to add to its war effort proved too great to allow the XX<sup>th</sup> to remain in the shadows, or had the long-awaited recovery of its Primarch necessitated the change? Irrespective of the truth, the twisting coils of the Alpha Legion rose from the darkness and into the light of the Imperium.

#### UNITY AND LIES

There remains much that is contradictory in the accounts of the first open actions of the Alpha Legion as a force of the Legiones Astartes in its own right. Official accounts found in both the arcanooms of the Logistica Corpus and the more prosaic works of the Remembrancers place the Alpha Legion's appearance as an active Legion force in its own right to either the decade immediately preceding the commencement of the Farinatus Extermination or as appearing as an unexpected reinforcing power during the darkest days of the third Rangdan Genocides. This represents a discrepancy of some thirty sidereal years, but in many regards makes the Alpha Legion the last of the Legiones Astartes to be recognised as a military entity in its own right by a considerable margin, and also the last to be officially re-united with its Primarch [again accounts widely differ as to the exact timing and conditions of this occurrence, and are dealt with elsewhere in this account].

In battle this 'youngest' Legion, driven by its mysterious and taciturn Primarch, became renowned quickly for its discipline and strict and impenetrable organisation and regime, which emphasised the unity of the Legion and its wider actions over the individual in every respect. Its hallmark was a relentless application of force and a terrifying level of co-ordination between its warriors and war machines. This capacity for combined arms warfare, speed and surety of attack was matched by a mastery of the darker arts of war: of sabotage and ambush, terror tactics and assassination. Also evident was its desire for secrecy and talent for misdirection. It kept its distance from its fellow Legions, even when tasked to directly fight alongside them, and in its actions many found a sinister watchfulness, and beneath the façade, the shadow of mockery.

The XX<sup>th</sup> Legion's chosen name—the Alpha Legion (in the ancient form commonly meaning the 'first' or the 'beginning' in the glyph-pattern)—seems an almost deliberately perverse jest in the light of its late inception, as does the name by which its Primarch was generally to become known—Alpharius. Some who have studied the history of this Traitor Legion have chosen to see the adoption of this naming convention neither as irony nor deliberate contradiction of fact, but rather as a statement of ambition and intent. The Alpha may also mean 'Primary' and 'Supreme', particularly in conjunction with the ancient glyph Omega to form the pre-Dark Age of Technology sigil known as the Æternus. This sigil, which was used particularly in the earlier displays of the Legion's heraldry, carries other hidden meanings not limited to themes of unity, continuum and indestructibility. It contains within it the pre-Imperial 'sacred geometry' (Ref: Tellurian Data-Glyph patterns) of the serpent of power

and knowledge coiling around the pillars of physical reality and truth. The serpent also has, since time immemorial, been seen as a symbol of treachery, secrets, strife and lies. The ancient Terran mythic serpent of devastation that could not be slain—for when one head is cut off, two more would uncoil in its place—would provide the Legion's other great icon-type, and one which would become dominant by the time of the Horus Heresy; the symbol of the Hydra. Even then within these symbols alone could be divined layer upon layer of hidden meaning and the promise of baleful intent, ambition and destruction; so would it be with the Alpha Legion.

#### The Harrowing

Unlike the other Legiones Astartes in which could be discerned patterns of Terran culture and intake of recruitment, with the hand of their Primarch's direct influence or that of their founding wrought upon what has gone before, where the Alpha Legion

and their Primarch began or ended were to all intents and purposes one and the same. Their hallmarks were unity, power and the confusion that outsiders encountered in dealing with them. Right from the very beginning, even the Imperialis Logistica could not confirm even the most basic details of the Legion with any certainty, be it the Legion's primary spheres of recruitment, its livery or anything remotely approaching a true gauge of its operating strength. It was a Legion seemingly sprung whole and entire as if from nowhere, complete with tens of thousands of fully equipped Legionaries and a capable war fleet that operated with veteran skill.

Even the name under which it operated seemed in doubt, for while the name of 'Alpha Legion' gained common currency, official battle reports saw it operating under self-given titles such as the 'Unbroken Chain' or more sinister appellations such as 'The Harrowing' as it called itself in the

xenocidal campaigns of the Perfidian Gap Extermination. Likewise, many accounts occur of individual members of the Legion referring to themselves to outsiders by the name of 'Alpharius' or simply as 'One of Many', often infuriating and confounding the forces they served alongside. Whether this policy of anonymity was the result of the unusual focus the Legion placed on unity and solidarity in its ranks, or mere outright addiction to secrecy or a deliberate attempt to mask its numbers is unknown.

Other contrary accounts exist which belie this practice, however. Multiple sources of evidence exist of names originating in ancient long-thought lost dialects being used by the Legion both in communication and as personal cognomen for its members. Further, on at least one occasion, analysis of after-action reports involving a battalion of the Alpha Legion (in this case serving alongside the Klarkash Imperialis Auxillia against the Khraave at Memlock), the names and code



words used by its Legionaries were later found to exactly correlate to the population of a recidivist human world the Alpha Legion itself had previously exterminated (Ref: the Neverlight Contagion). The reason for this falsehood or the function this macabre practice served remains unknown. Such attitudes of deception—in their broadest sense at least—appear to have been tacitly accepted and tolerated by the Emperor and later by Horus as Warmaster, though to what true ends remains unclear.

In battle the Alpha Legion proved itself capable of wielding a devastating mixture of subtlety and overwhelming force, revelling in both meticulous planning and the exercising of imaginative cruelty in war. Quickly, the Alpha Legion developed an unmatched reputation among the Legiones Astartes—save perhaps by the Raven Guard—for the use of espionage, infiltration and sabotage in its strategic planning. But where the Raven Guard sought to use such tactics to achieve victory without unnecessary attrition, or spare a human population it sought to liberate, the Alpha Legion had other, darker, purposes in mind. To them, such covert tactics seemed almost a deadly game of prelude. Where it could, the Alpha Legion would spread confusion and disorder seemingly for its own sake as

well as any tactical gain it conferred, or even perhaps for the bloody spectacle of it. They maimed and bled the foe, forced them to chase phantoms and turn on each other in panic before they struck. Such tactics often brought the Alpha Legion's target to an agonised fever-pitch while simultaneously robbing them of their real strength and forcing them into such vulnerable configurations as the Alpha Legion wished. Then would come the kill. Often this final attack, or 'Harrowing', would be in the form of an assault from a hundred directions at once; a blizzard of different tactics and attack plans used against a foe either utterly unaware of the true danger or already brought to the brink of chaos. The result was almost inevitable catastrophe for the Alpha Legion's victims, as the full might of the Legion would then descend at the point of their enemy's greatest weakness, and what would follow would be, to the onlooker, more akin to murder than battle.

To their allies, the Alpha Legion represented a shifting, protean entity of uncertain identity and active deceit, coupled with undeniable military strength, unknowable goals—and to some observers—unproven loyalty—a dangerous combination and one that did not breed trust. To their enemies they were a true nightmare; a foe that could strike from any direction, a foe that seemed to thwart any stratagem and strike

at weakness no matter how well hidden. The Alpha Legion was a foe that knew neither mercy, nor honour, nor quarter, and one that seemed to delight in destruction for its own sake, and the chaos and anarchy it could inspire before the death blow.

Although its history as an active Legion was a short one compared to many—at least under its own name—it proved quickly determined to match any of its brothers in glory—or perhaps more accurately prove itself superior to them—and its tally of victories mounted with surpassing speed. The Alpha Legion, ever watchful, was far from averse from studying the strengths of their fellow Legions, and their weaknesses, and adapting the weapons and tactics of the other Legiones Astartes to their own ends. In this the Legion was not so different to the strategic observances of the Ultramarines Chapter and their master, although it is doubtful that the Lords of Ultramar would have cared much for the comparison, even before the two Legions later came to bitter bloodshed. Such zealotry to prove themselves as part of the Great Crusade at any cost, and the often over-elaborate and needlessly complex and malign way in which the Alpha Legion chose to wage war saw them quickly gain infamy more than fame. This, coupled with growing distrust due to their insular and deceptive nature, brought rivalry and acrimony between the Alpha Legion and much of the rest of the Legiones Astartes.

As time passed, the relationship between the Alpha Legion and its peers soured further. The nature of the Alpha Legion's

arts of war and their lack of adherence to the commands of other Legions placed over them in the field brought Alpharius and both Roboute Guilliman of the Ultramarines and Mortarion of the Death Guard into conflict on several separate occasions, with incidents notably occurring both in the aftermath of the Ullanor Campaign and the later Vasalius Uprisings. More pointedly Rogal Dorn and the Imperial Fists quickly grew to see the entire Alpha Legion as "... *honourless assassins, not fit to bear the Emperor's mark*", and only the direct intervention of the Emperor himself forestalled blood being spilt between the higher ranking officers of the two Legions in an affair of honour after the fall of the Fortress of Jakalla during the Avalorn Compliance.

Beyond these more famous incidents, Konrad Curze of the Night Lords is recorded in the secret transcripts of the Legio Custodes to have openly condemned the Legion as "*hiding their true sins in a shroud of lies*", while the evidence also seems to suggest that the Alpha Legion were discreetly shunned and avoided by the Thousand Sons Legion where possible, although no cause for this discord has ever come to light.

Conversely, if the Alpha Legion could be said to have had an ally or friend among the Primarchs, it was Horus himself, and a potent ally he would prove. Horus saw the Legion as a unique weapon in the Imperium's arsenal, its ambition laudable and its tactics not so very far removed from those favoured by his own Legion. Furthermore, the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion is also known to have successfully campaigned beside both the Dark Angels and the Iron Hands without incident (perhaps surprisingly) on multiple occasions before the outbreak of the war of the Horus Heresy, and also displayed a talent for successfully formulating battle plans which incorporated non-Legiones Astartes forces in its campaigns with great effect, although spending the power and lives of those who served alongside the Legion with coldly calculated efficiency. Standing also in favour of the Alpha Legion was an enviable record of success in military terms, particularly in forcing the Compliance of recalcitrant human colonies, and exposing and rooting out rebellion and treachery on recently Compliant worlds. It had also developed a reputation for hunting down and exterminating Warp-capable raiding forces, nomadic xenos threats and human renegades, at which it had also proven remarkably successful.

After his ascension to the rank of Warmaster, where he gained control over the outward campaigns of the Great Crusade, Horus increasingly gave free rein to the Alpha Legion to operate independently of other Legiones Astartes forces. The Alpha Legion during this time noticeably and swiftly expanded in size, creating the core of several Expeditionary fleets and splitting to form scores of independent deep-range raiding forces, often operating alongside Rogue Traders and reaching into the unknown void well beyond the Great Crusade's frontlines. In the final years before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, there is fragmentary evidence to indicate that even Horus was beginning to doubt his grip on the Alpha Legion, and doubt also the veracity of his own knowledge about the XX<sup>th</sup>, its goals and who it truly served. Secret reports prepared for both the Warmaster and the Imperial Court on Terra during this period show a growing unease about the Alpha Legion, some implying that it was increasingly beyond the Imperium's ability to measure or to control. Furthermore, that perhaps some obsession or madness was taking hold of the Legion's psyche in the way it operated and made war. It has been suggested that the Alpha Legion had begun to seek out battles to fight for the challenge they offered, rather than to suit the needs of the Great Crusade, orchestrating ever more apocalyptic displays of their arcane and malevolent methods of war, even when mere conventional assault would have proved more efficient and expedient.

In time the accusation had started to become such common currency among the Terran Court and many Imperial commanders that the Alpha Legion had now become seemingly addicted to bringing low civilizations by anarchy, fire and blood that might have been brought into Compliance readily through negotiation or a limited display of force, rather than be turned into strife-torn ruins as a test of the Alpha Legion's skills. Worse, it was alleged that this need to orchestrate the elaborate destruction of their foes was no mere affectation but a pathological flaw, and one that was only worsening as the Great Crusade progressed. Such accusations the Warmaster pointedly dismissed.

As the time of Heresy drew closer, the Alpha Legion, as if in response to the growing cloud of suspicion and distrust of them in some quarters, drew further into the outer darkness at the fringes of known space, or at least appeared to. Their deceptions

multiplied, as too it appears did the names that the Legion and its agents were known under, particularly in the dark stars beyond the Imperium's borders, where many of those it came into contact with had no idea of their destroyer's true nature or allegiance until it was too late.

#### BEFORE THE FALL

When the Horus Heresy erupted and the atrocity at Isstvan III occurred, a large Alpha Legion strike force, comprising some 50,000 Legionaries under the direct command of their Primarch were conveniently situated to respond to Rogal Dorn's orders to attack the traitors at Isstvan V. This Alpha Legion contingent is believed to have comprised the combined forces of two separate Expeditionary fleets and their support vessels, having recently returned to the Imperium to resupply and re-arm at the Forge World of Lucius after an extended series of campaigns at the north-eastern Galactic fringe. The Alpha Legion and their Primarch had then been supposedly all but out of contact with the rest of the Great Crusade for several years, and by this fact was Rogal Dorn, Praetorian of Terra, likely assured of their loyalty and lack of involvement with whatever treacherous madness had befallen Horus and his immediate coterie. This could not however have been further from the truth as their involvement in the Dropsite Massacre was to prove—and there have even been unsubstantiated claims since that Alpharius had a hand in the planning of the Dropsite Massacre itself.

It is certain that the Alpha Legion had spread its web of infiltration, espionage and sabotage far and wide through the Imperium prior to the outbreak of hostilities, as was soon to be proved to bloody effect on a score of worlds as part of the Warmaster's opening gambit. At the hands of the Alpha Legion's talent for conspiracy and that of their agents, billions were to die and countless billions more would suffer hardship and disaster in the time to come. Even on planets that would not feel the thunderous footfall of the Legiones Astartes throughout the entire war, would the Alpha Legion's cruel plans and talent for strife wreak untold havoc. However, even as Horus unleashed the Alpha Legion to bury its fangs deep into the body of the Imperium, he neither trusted it nor its master to obey him, nor fight the war he wished them to fight once the hydra had been unchained. History would prove this distrust well founded.

## THE HEAD OF THE SERPENT – THE ALPHARIUS ENIGMA

Of the many mysteries that surround the Alpha Legion, the most fundamental and key enigma is the question of their Primarch, Alpharius. Of all of the Primarchs who remained to draw blood against each other in the Horus Heresy, of Alpharius the least is known for certain. It is widely believed that on diverse occasions members of his Legion each claimed not only Alpharius' name but also his identity, even in council with allied Legions and emissaries of the Imperial Court, and later that of the Warmaster. Beyond this some have made the outlandish claim that there was more than one Primarch of the Alpha Legion, or that Alpharius was even somehow able to 'duplicate' himself physically and appear to be in more than one location simultaneously, perhaps worlds apart. Some have even attributed hidden truth to the emblem of the three-headed hydra that later came to symbolise the Legion in this regard.

Furthering this mystery and the outright deception perpetrated by Alpharius, many reliable reports of the Primarch's physical appearance differ. While he is noted on many occasions to be of similar stature and countenance of any of his Legionaries and able to pass unnoticed in their ranks, other records show him as a towering and fearful figure as were the other Primarchs, bedecked in sinisterly ornate, hydra-chased battle plate and wielding a mighty double-headed spear. Contemporary accounts record Alpharius as a masterful tactician and strategist whose skills were rated by the Imperial Stratagos as akin to the legendary abilities of Perturabo or Guilliman. His erudition was said to be astounding, but one whose great intelligence was as cool and as watchful as a viper's gaze.

He is recorded as having sought out the comradeship and council of none of his brother Primarchs save perhaps Horus, although some reports that place him also on Caliban and Terra at various times cannot be easily dismissed. He is said to have encouraged his commanders to operate with extreme independence of thought and action, and yet the Alpha Legion was known to pride itself on its unbreakable unity of purpose and will. Such are the paradoxes that abound in the wake of the shadowed figure of Alpharius,

and in this he can be said to encompass his Legion, and this is never more the case than in the mystery of his reuniting with the Imperium.

An account of the finding of Alpharius that circulated secretly between the houses and factions of the Imperial Court states that his discovery was an accident of the Luna Wolves Legion. By this, Alpharius was the leader of a confederation of human systems whose fleet of warships, no match in size or scale to Imperial vessels, managed through trickery and ambush to ingloriously lay low one of the outlying Luna Wolves battleships. Responding to this unforgivable defeat, Horus himself and his fleet gave chase, only to find themselves mired in ambush after ambush, tricked into deadly traps and chasing shadows until Horus' own flagship came under attack. In the ensuing confrontation, the Luna Wolves smashed the enemy fleet's desperate attack aside, but in the confusion a single assassin broke into the flagship, and through stealth and murder managed the impossible task of fighting his way clear to Horus' command chamber and slaughtered his bodyguards before Horus himself was forced to confront him. But Horus did not slay the attacker but recognised him instead for a brother; Alpharius. This account is a lie.

Another account torn from the mind of an Alpha Legion Centurion captured by the Legio Custodes after the Fall of Seraphina tells the story of the finding of Alpharius. It speaks of a nameless dead world at the edge of the Mandragoran Stars whose civilisation rose and was wiped out by bloody hands long before Mankind first walked on Terra. On this nameless orb, the nascent Primarch fell into the shattered ruins of a fallen city murdered long ages ago. Utterly alone, voiceless and without aid, he was forced to survive against the tortuous elements of the desolate world and the predations of the hungry ghosts of the charnel pit into which he had been consigned. His solitude was only broken after many long years by a new star falling from the heavens; a corsair ship of degenerate half-human renegades and alien mercenaries intent on plundering the dead ruins for whatever worth might remain amid the shatters. Instead they found only death at the young Primarch's hands, and Alpharius gained their weapons, their knowledge and their vessel as his

own, and with it he set out in search of he who had made him. This account is a lie.

Two other accounts, found encrypted within the pages of certain volumes of the suppressed work of memetic corrosion known as the *Transit of the Human Soul through Strife*, or the *Codex Hydra* as it is sometimes known, offer differing contentions. The first is that the lost Primarch was deposited on a thriving tech-oligarchy world known as Bar'Savor, but before his first decade of life there was done, the skies of Bar'Savor darkened as the nightmarish xenos worm-creatures known as the Slaught descended to feed. Capturing the young Primarch, a being alone strong enough to resist them, the Slaught kept Alpharius as a curiosity, twisting his mind with their horrors and enslaving him and tutoring him as a living weapon to sow strife and discord on their victim worlds before they fell upon them to feast.

It was the Emperor himself who at last liberated him, his golden battle barge ramming into the heart of the vast stone ship of the foul xenos to break it open, the Emperor's wrath like that of a vengeful god of legend in retribution for what had been done to his son. For long years after, Alpharius remained at his father's side as the Emperor undid what had been done to mar his creation. This account also offers a contradictory version of events, saying that Alpharius alone, unfinished in some way, had been spared or at least some part of him had remained behind though gravely injured when the rest of the Primarchs were scattered across the stars by unknown hands. Here, in the shadow of Terra, he grew and was nurtured alone of the Primarchs by the Emperor himself, his existence a jealously guarded secret even from those closest to the Emperor, lest the dark fates move against him. Upon his maturity he became the Emperor's own secret hand and his greatest shield, until he was at last parted from his father, his destiny to fulfil. These accounts are lies.

What then is the truth, if recorded facts suggest none of these accounts are real—and they are but a few of the phantasms that purport to be the secret truth of Alpharius' past? Perhaps, like the most potent of falsehoods, they each contain a grain of truth within them, a hint at a greater secret yet, it is for each to judge for themselves.

## UNIT ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEGION

When faced with the task of elucidating the inner workings and structure of the Alpha Legion, one is once again forced to deal head-on with paradox and contradiction, both by report and the evidence left in the dust of shattered worlds where the Legion worked its arts of war. Where one authoritative report might present the Legion's inner workings as highly stratified and cloaked in labyrinthine secrecy beyond any other, a different report, also by reputable source, might describe the Legion's inner workings as surprisingly open and egalitarian in nature, with each voice heard in council regardless of rank or station. Certain commonalities do however exist, particularly in accounts of how the Legion fought, and to some extent trained its aspirants for war.

The first of these is the emphasis the Alpha Legion placed on unity of action and intent within its ranks. Such co-ordination and faultless discipline was paramount to the rapidly shifting, responsive tactics Alpharius inculcated in his Legion, and the fluidity which characterised the Legion's deployments on the battlefield. It was repeatedly reported that from their first hours as aspirants, the would-be warriors of the Alpha Legion would train and fight together as units, rather than individual soldiers; the success of each one, and even their survival, depending on the success of the unit as a whole. The exercises and trials the Legion's aspirants were put through were said to be in their way as deadly as any of the Legion's Astartes, but required both intelligence and co-operation to overcome, so that no single aspirant might alone survive them.

A second commonality in observations of the Alpha Legion was its superlative expertise in the arts of espionage, sabotage, infiltration and assassination. The goal of which was to leave an enemy leaderless and fractured, a helpless puppet before the Legion's onslaught when it came. In counterpoint, the tactics of attrition and the forlorn hope, the bloody slog of trench warfare and static defence were things shunned by the Alpha Legion unless entirely unavoidable, and even then only ever engaged in on the Legion's own terms. When the time for all-out attack came however, it would be a lethal mistake to underestimate the Alpha Legion's abilities in open warfare, abilities which had drawn grudging praise from both the likes of Horus and Sanguinius in action.

The seamless tactical cohesion and fluid mastery of complex stratagems displayed by the Alpha Legion in the realms of infiltration and covert assault also made them masters of adaption, manoeuvre, feint and ambush in open battle. To fight the Alpha Legion's hosts of warriors and war machines in open battle was akin to fighting a single, vast and coiling entity with myriad limbs and striking fangs, but operating under a single malevolent will.

It is unclear whether the Alpha Legion ever conformed fully to the original operating strictures and organisational pattern laid out for the Space Marine Legions in the *Principia Belicosa* at the start of the Great Crusade, particularly as the Alpha Legion was formed long after the initial muster of the Legions. Outwardly though there was extensive resemblance to the basic Legion patterns, although the command structure and the organisation of the Alpha Legion can be discerned as being radically more fluid and specialised. It seems entirely possible, given the evidence available, that an individual Legionary's role and position within the division he was attached to was adapted and changed as frequently as tactical need demanded, and perhaps to some higher system of purpose whose ultimate goal remains unknown.

The Alpha Legion's companies, battalions and chapters (sometimes referred to as 'Harrows', 'Cohorts', 'Hosts' and 'Instruments' in shifting meaning) were formulated and broken down seemingly at the whim of Alpharius and the Legion's commanders. To this end unit numerations were swapped and heraldry changed and adapted, personnel and resources were reassigned or removed entirely from an order of battle, only to be later again replaced. Such organisational transits were noted not only between active deployments but also even during the course of a particular campaign. This made the Legion's strength, intentions and deployments almost impossible to gauge or track to foe and friend alike.

This shifting and deliberate formlessness may, by some reports, have extended even to a particular Legionary's identity and rank, and is echoed in reports of uncommon similarity in both the physical features and aspect sometimes displayed by the Legion. Needless to say this latter phenomenon is confusingly not constantly observed in the record either, and while some reports

speak of the Legion's members displaying a strange physical uniformity, others infer them as originating from a mixture of genotypes, while others indicate a strange, waxy and unnatural appearance to grey flesh bled of pigment, and sees them adorned with shimmering serpentine electroos. It is entirely possible that all of these reports are equally valid. Whether surgical or memetic implantation techniques, proscribed cognitive manipulation or esoteric technologies were employed to these ends remains unknown, as does just to what extent the individual Legionaries undertook such measures voluntarily—or perhaps were even aware of being subject to them at all.

At a strategic level the Alpha Legion was clearly at pains to maintain a wide spectrum of military assets and capacities, its dedication to flexibility ensuring it was as capable in armoured warfare as it was in surgical drop strikes, artillery fire support or close quarter Zone Mortalis operations. It was supported in maintaining these abilities by voracious demand for matériel, particularly supplied by Forge Worlds such as Lucius, Incaladion and Phaeton—with some of these treaties of provender brokered directly by the Warmaster, no doubt in the hope of further securing the Alpha Legion's loyalty. These arrangements do not however account for the full scope of the Alpha Legion's extensive panoply of war, particularly their known acquisition of rare and specialised wargear notionally only manufactured by the armouries of certain Legions and never released to others, or not yet issued outside of closed prototype deployments.

A case in point is the evidence of the Alpha Legion's access to a version of Corvus pattern power armour, not then in general circulation, as early as the Dropsite Massacre and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Paramar. Later battlefield recovery and analysis of this 'Corvus-Alpha' armour shows it in fact to be a unique variant likely developed separately from an early prototype of unknown manufacture. This suggests that the Alpha Legion may have acquired incomplete schematics by covert means early in the project's life and chosen to develop it on their own without recourse to the Mechanicum. It has been surmised that long before the Horus Heresy was to tear the Imperium asunder, the Alpha Legion had sought to secure its own extensive facilities of manufacture and positioned numerous

hidden supply outposts and arms caches, both within Imperial space and beyond it, the full extent of which will never be known.

On a tactical level, the Alpha Legion favoured freedom of manoeuvre and portability of firepower. Its battle tactics showed particular tendencies towards specialised reconnaissance and infiltration units in opening combat operations, to be quickly followed by the rapid deployment of fast armour, close air support and mechanised infantry units as a main strike force. Attacking from many vectors at once, as well as skilfully employing feints and ambushes, would commonly reveal a foe's weaknesses to the watching Alpha Legion commanders. They would then bring about maximum pressure against the exposed vulnerability, deploying reserves of shock troops, heavy armour and artillery as expedient to deal a shattering death blow. In order to employ these tactics, the Alpha Legion was known to have developed a number of specialised formations and units, often equipped with otherwise unknown and esoteric weapons and wargear. They were also known to form sub-divisions, referred to as 'Splinters', which operated completely in isolation to achieve a particular mission or strategic goal, without regard to the safety or survival of either themselves or other members of their own force. It was often the case that other allied forces, and even the rest of an Alpha Legion deployment in the conflict in which they operated would be entirely unaware of a Splinter's existence or mission.

The Seeker squads employed by many Legions were, according to some reports, pioneered first by the Alpha Legion to this end, and certainly such squads, along with specialised Reconnaissance squads, were common to almost all of the Legions' battle formations. These tactics were taken a stage further by the Alpha Legion in the creation of an elite unit geared specifically to rapidly inflicting targeted casualties behind enemy lines, known variously as the Headhunters or 'Effrit'—although this latter term may also have referred to the act of assassination, and the sowing of destruction and chaos behind the lines mid-battle, as well as a particular unit type. This preference for high-impact strikes carried out by small, elite infantry units is evidenced by the fact that both Destroyer squads (who suffered none of the opprobrium found in some Legions to those so assigned), as well as specialised Alpha Legion sabotage operatives are also classified as "Effrit" in some accounts and treated as a respected veteran cadre within the Legion.

Another designation, again drawn from ancient myth by the Alpha Legion, was the 'Lernaean'. This cognomen appears to have been given to the Legion's most expert shock assault troops, particularly to dedicated Terminator companies and in some instances breacher squads and Dreadnoughts. In particular, battle recordings of certain Lernaean Terminator units mark them as being equipped with advanced teleportation assault capacity and specialised heavy weaponry such as compact conversion beam weapons and phase-field generator gear. The foremost task of the Lernaean was to swiftly isolate and destroy the most powerful frontline troops and potent battlefield assets a foe possessed, and to do so in such an emphatic and bloody manner that not only was a potential threat to the Alpha Legion's attack ended, but the psychological shock of their attack would further damage enemy morale. Such was the calculated cruelty and cold brutality employed by the Lernaean, that their reputation quickly spread beyond the Alpha Legion itself. Certain records also indicate other named and specialised formations, such as the 'Rhatosthaen', 'Shayatan', 'Quaryn' and 'Echidna' whose nature, if they truly existed at all, remains mysterious. In addition, certain references are made to the 'Chrythsaor' which may have referred to the Legion's Librarius (possibly encompassing a wider intelligence gathering apparatus as well), which was suspected to have been extensive before the Council of Nikaea. Though not believed to have been present at the Council, Alpharius, at least outwardly, appears to have had his Legion abide by its ruling, a stance quickly ended during the war of the Heresy.

Of importance also when considering the particular structure and capabilities of the Alpha Legion is its use of human and augmented-human agents and paramilitaries. Whereas many Space Marine Legion forces utilised the manifold elements of the Excertus Imperialis to support their efforts in the Great Crusade, and many Expeditionary fleets utilised regiments of the Imperialis Auxillia (or Imperial Army) subservient to the Legiones Astartes in their order of battle, the Alpha Legion made particular use of detached elements specifically trained for tasks of espionage, infiltration and terrorism, and these were beholden to none save the Legion itself in fealty. Operating individually or as part of a cell network, these agents and operatives often had little knowledge of each other or in many cases of who their true masters were, but were uniformly highly trained, psycho-

conditioned for ruthlessness and fanatical loyalty, and were often subjected to surgical or biochemical augmentation to further their abilities. When encountering human worlds to be brought into Compliance, these augmented and highly adept agents (referred to as 'Sparatoi', possibly from an ancient term meaning the 'sown men' in some sources), would go ahead of the Legion and infiltrate the population, acting as spies, agitators and saboteurs. They would encourage treachery, spread disinformation and corrosive mimetic patterns, and find or take over underground rebel or terrorist groups. Their role primarily was to promote dissent and cause widespread panic and infrastructural damage, and so seek to critically weaken an enemy before the Legion itself engaged in battle. When the Alpha Legion finally showed its hand, the Sparatoi and their web of puppet-agents would provide a wave of sabotage and distraction attacks, further destabilising the enemy, often at the cost of their own lives. It is apparent that prior to the Horus Heresy, the Sparatoi network was expanded into the Imperium itself and its armed forces, becoming a cancerous presence that was only revealed as civil war erupted. Further reports of actual Legionaries similarly infiltrating civilian populations by unknown means and even the rank and file of others of the Legiones Astartes and masquerading as part of their number cannot be confirmed.

#### COMMAND HIERARCHY

As with so much concerning the Alpha Legion, precise definition of their command structure cannot be determined with certainty, but certain patterns can be deduced as—if not constant—then repeated enough to have been deemed important. The first of these is specialisation. In any given deployment, a chain of command was obeyed unquestioningly, but this chain of command was a fluid one, both conditional and highly decentralised in its nature. While a force would be notionally under the control of an officer such as a captain, the authority held by specialists in particular, such as siege masters or vigilators, was deferred to as a matter of course and was regarded as absolute and not to be questioned in their area of expertise.

Likewise, each unit within the Legion was expected to operate as a self-motivated and self-governing 'cell' without need of exterior command, and expected to display initiative and pursue its part in the wider battle plan under its own cognisance and in any way it judged to be expedient. Such was the emphasis on unity of action and initiative

## ALPHA LEGION TACTICAL MARKINGS AND HERALDRY



Common Legion Heraldry – Power Armour Pauldron



Variant Legion Heraldry – Power Armour Pauldron



Sub-type Legion Heraldry – Tartaros Terminator Armour Pauldron



Echelon Variant Cataphractii Terminator Armour Pauldron

#### CLOTH AND BANNER MARKINGS

Alpha Legion warriors of all ranks have been observed wearing tabards and similar cloth garb bearing complex, impenetrable symbols and characters, and the same symbols are also seen on company, chapter and Legion banners.



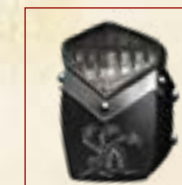
#### BATTLE PLATE ARMOURIAL ICONS

Secondary adornments of apparent cultural or mythological significance. Number of major chain links thought to indicate rank.



#### DREADNOUGHT ARMOURIAL ICONS

Variant Legion icons observed in three war zones between 985.M31 and 998.M31. Trefoil-formed Hydra thought to indicate elite unit designation.



#### CHAPTER ICONOGRAPHY

Many icons used by the Alpha Legion appear to be drawn from ancient Terran Helac script. It is thought that the Helac gamma, omega and delta symbols shown here are commonly used as chapter identifiers, though rarely consistently. The three-headed Lernaean Hydra is shown to the right surmounting the chained alpha-omega icon. Both are common symbols within the Alpha Legion, with numerous combinations and variants adorning armour, banners and the flanks of armoured vehicles.



the Alpha Legion placed on its warriors, that the battlefield co-ordination and responsiveness to changing circumstances the Alpha Legion displayed was arguably superior to that of any other of the Legiones Astartes. The Alpha Legion's commanders seldom were observed to operate as champions or warlords in the conventional sense as might be expected of the Legiones Astartes, craving it seemed neither personal glory nor the experience of sublime clash of arms. Instead they were wont to observe a battle unfold impassively, watching the patterns of force and bloodshed it revealed, intervening only when needed by issuing orders that would tip the outcome in the Alpha Legion's favour, or by direct action, striking personally at the point of vulnerability where they would inflict the greatest damage.

In terms of honorifics and titles, the Alpha Legion seemed to have used a shifting set of terminology to convey authority and role. At times the Alpha Legion appears

to have deliberately aped the systems used by other Legions (such as the Sons of Horus and the Blood Angels) although whether this was done to incorporate a proven pattern of organisation as part of a particular strategy or as some form of mockery remains unknown. Aside from these patterns, close scrutiny of the records also reveals several distinctive additional divisions of command not shown by other Legions. One such unique title known to have been used by the Alpha Legion was that of 'Harrowmaster' or 'Jhariuk' as the leading commander given overall control of all Alpha Legion forces in a given war zone. Although their nominal rank might vary, it was the task of the Harrowmaster to keep track of encompassing the shifting events of a conflict in minute detail and shape the actions of the Legion's forces accordingly, creating and aborting battle plans and stratagems with bewildering speed. The position of Harrowmaster was known to be held as a supreme accolade by the Alpha Legion, and their infamous skill at battlefield

control was highly regarded (even as the Legion itself was often mistrusted) by the commanders and stratagos of the other Space Marine Legions. It is noteworthy that the Harrowmasters were among the few of the Legion, save its equerries, whose personal names are left to the open record, although whether these have any basis in reality or are merely guises worn by a single warrior or perhaps a series of individuals remains unknowable.

#### WAR DISPOSITION

Exact figures for the martial strength of the Alpha Legion at the outset of the wars of the Horus Heresy are impossible to obtain. Sources and estimates vary wildly, some making extravagant claims which may both overestimate or undervalue the Alpha Legion's manpower. Most contemporaneous accounts from around the time of the Dropsite Massacre put the Alpha Legion at between 120,000 and 130,000 Legionaries strong, placing it within the middle tier of Legion strengths. Some theorists have

posited this figure as far lower, somewhere in the 90,000 range based upon the largest concentrations of Alpha Legion forces ever seen in operation in a single theatre. With hindsight and diligent corroboration however, evidence of multiple simultaneous battle groups operating in far distant locales suggests a far higher figure than either of these estimates, well into the range of perhaps 180,000 Legionaries which, if accurate, would make it one of the most formidable Legions in sheer size alone, a factor un-guessed at by both sides of the war that was to follow.

In terms of its access to wargear and star-faring vessels, the Alpha Legion was formidably equipped. Again, true estimates are difficult to arrive at, but most pictorial and second party reports show the Alpha Legion as possessing extensive access to the most modern forms of Legiones Astartes equipment, not limited to Maximus and Tartaros pattern armour, the new Sicaran pattern battle tanks and their sub-types,

#### The Colour of Deceit

The question of the Alpha Legion's livery and heraldry of arms is also a matter of some contention in the study of this Traitor Legion's history. It is the case that over the centuries-long conflict of the Great Crusade, all of the grey-clad Legions that first departed Terra changed in appearance to some degree—some very dramatically so—as the consequences of the long war and campaigning took their toll, and most tellingly after they were reunited with their Primarchs. It is also the case that given that an armed force such as a Space Marine Legion numbers in the tens of thousands strong and is often scattered across the vast distances of interstellar void, true uniformity or conformity of livery and appearance is impossible, even for a Legion so stratified and structured as perhaps the Ultramarines or the Iron Warriors.

These factors, however, do not account for the wide variance displayed by the Alpha Legion, and instead it is likely more deliberate misdirection and secrecy plays its part. Various and without recourse to time period or progression, the Alpha Legion has been witnessed in liveries of pale grey, gleaming steel, veridian, dull bronze, sable, indigo, amaranth and azure blue—both in main and combination. It has been variously recorded as displaying *Principia Belicosa* standardised rank and unit signifiers, elaborate stylised reptilian iconography of unknown meaning, and the complex logos-teknika forms favoured by the Emperor-shattered Panpacific Empire on Ancient Terra. It has also gone into battle without emblems or markings of any kind; a faceless, anonymous army of killers without distinction or division in its ranks.

If any deeper meaning is held by these changes and masquerades beyond their use to confuse the enemy and confound those who would study the Legion and know its ways, one of the most outlandish and disturbing explanations is that not even the Alpha Legion itself knew its true shape and form. This theory, postulated since the Horus Heresy, contends that only Alpharius knew the true extent of his Legion and its domains, its strength and its reach, and perhaps then even he knew it only imperfectly. By this token the Alpha Legion had become unknowable; a self-sustaining, self-replicating force, a weapon that had transcended the flesh of the Legionaries that made it up and the hand that wielded it. It would be a force whose limits and extent would forever be unknown, even unto itself, and therefore ultimately unstoppable as no enemy or influence could ever hope to fully infiltrate or overcome it from within.

It was and is indeed the case, that even before the Horus Heresy, entire generations of Alpha Legion warriors could have been trained, fought and died in ignorance of their own Legion's wider operations, purposes and goals. Entire Expeditionary fleets could have operated never knowing the existence of mirror images of themselves, each believing that they were the only Alpha Legion bearing that name. The implications of such a colossal deceit are staggering, if true.

as well as extensive stocks of plasma and conversion beam weaponry and specialised munitions unknown outside the Legion. In terms of warships, the Alpha Legion was known to possess a very extensive and diverse fleet, although lacking in large numbers of heavy capital ships and planetary siege craft in comparison to most other Legions. The main strength of the Alpha Legion's fleets then was found in a plethora of different intermediate and escort vessels, with range and speed being their primary focus. The Alpha Legion was also suspected of utilising a number of captured xenos vessels, and indeed incorporating xenos technology into their warship designs—a practice strictly forbidden without the

sanction of the Mechanicum—but given the Legion's frequent activities far beyond the Imperium's borders and its hidden strengths and bases of operation, such a suspicion was impossible to prove.

As the war of the Horus Heresy raged on, the Legion demonstrated an enviable ability to replace its battlefield losses. While the war continued and many Legions saw their strength shorn away, the Alpha Legion appeared to grow stronger throughout the conflict, despite several seemingly serious defeats. Much like the hydra of myth, where one head was cut from the Legion's body, two more appeared to grow in its place.



# ALPHA LEGION TERMINATOR STRIKE LEADER

UNKNOWN STRIKE LEADER  
UNKNOWN SQUAD/UNKNOWN UNIT AFFILIATION  
LINE ASSAULT TERMINATOR SQUAD LEADER  
THE INVASION OF PARAMAR  
INITIAL ORBITAL RAID ON THE PANOPTICON COMPLEX  
PICT-RENDER: CONFLICT ZONE 34/13

This depiction of an Alpha Legion Terminator squad strike leader is taken from multiple fragmentary records surviving from the initial assault on the Panopticon Complex of the Paramar Terminus facility. This initial attack wave, carried out by Kharybdis Assault Claw vehicles, served to demonstrate both the speed and precision with which the Alpha Legion could operate, as well as the breadth of wargear and tactics available to them.

The attack force is believed to have comprised over a hundred Terminators, utilising at least five patterns of Terminator armour and at least three distinctive unit role types. This observed strike leader bears the older Cataphractii pattern and commanded a demi-squad in standard line assault configuration – the Cataphractii pattern, although more cumbersome than its successors, afforded better protection against the heaviest firepower. This durability no doubt enabled this unknown strike leader to endure into the third hour of the attack against this deadly Zone Mortalis, by which time the wave suffered an estimated 70% casualties before his disintegration by Myrmidon Destructors.

## Panoply of War

1. Reaver Pattern Power Chainaxe.
2. Phobos Pattern Combi-melta: Note unknown syncretic iconography.

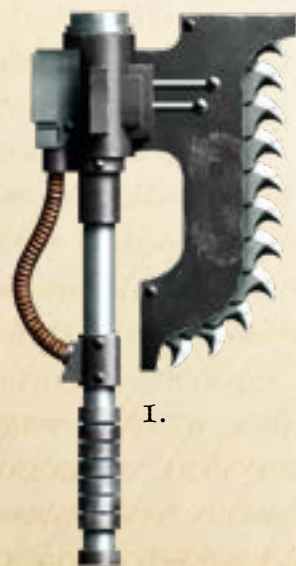


## ALPHA LEGION CONTEMPTOR DREADNOUGHT

ARCHONTAS ORIGO  
UNKNOWN LEGION SUB-UNIT  
ISSTVAN RETRIBUTION FLEET MUSTER

Very little is known of the warrior referred to in the archives of the Logistica Corpus as the 'Archontas' of an unknown chapter of the Alpha Legion, and it is considered unlikely that 'Origo' is even a personal name. According to some extant early Great Crusade archives, at least a dozen different warriors of the old XX<sup>th</sup> Legion bore that name, every one of them falling in combat during the early or mid Crusade eras to be interred within the armoured sarcophagus of a number of different marks of Dreadnought armour, from early Furibundus to later mark Castra Ferrum. This particular Dreadnought is of the Contemptor class, the mainstay class used by the majority of the Legiones Astartes throughout the later Great Crusade era. Of particular note in this instance is the application of a subtle 'scale' motif across areas of the Dreadnought's armour, drawing on one of many mythological themes the Alpha Legion is known to favour.

Archontas Origo's Dreadnought armour is equipped with a pair of power claws with inset flamers, making him a fearsome prospect for any but the most accomplished of melee fighters. He also mounts a cyclone missile launcher, a weapon often utilised to break down the coherency of enemy formations prior to an attack, a broad category of tactic the Alpha Legion are noted as being especially adept at implementing.



I.



2.

# XX<sup>TH</sup> LEGION VETERAN LEGIONARY

UNNAMED VETERAN LEGIONARY  
UNKNOWN LEGION SUB-UNIT  
CRYPTOSI PURGATION

This depiction of a warrior of the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion is compiled from a number of pict-captures committed to central archives in 927.M30. According to the records, the Legionary was part of a sub-company sized unit deployed to investigate atrocities committed in the Imperium's northern reaches by an exotic, meta-dimensional strain of xenos thought to be the species later referred to in some accounts as the 'Cryptosi'. The campaign appears not to have been committed to record, although contact with colony worlds in that region was lost soon after, seemingly as a result of Legiones Astartes activity.

The Legionary is clad in early production MkII Astartes battle plate, itself unusual as this mark was largely obsolete by 927.M30. The armour bears the older forms of iconography observed in use by the XX<sup>th</sup> throughout the early Great Crusade, later almost entirely replaced by the Hydra symbol. The meaning of the icon on the right shoulder is unknown, but may represent an amalgam of company and chapter identifiers. Other markings, rendered in what is assumed to be ancient Terran 'Helac' script can be seen, their meaning entirely unreadable.

## Panoply of War

1. **Thunder Edge Chainsword:** Note the application of azure Legion colouration on hilt and furniture.
2. **Phobos Pattern Boltgun:** Note Delta symbol, possibly a squad identifier.
3. **Krak and Frag Grenades.**



# ALPHA LEGION VETERAN TACTICAL LEGIONARY

LEGIONARY 'ALPHARIUS'  
SQUAD ALPHARIUS  
UNIDENTIFIED CHAPTER  
(POSSIBLY 'THE UNBROKEN CHAIN')  
ISSTVAN V DROPSITE MASSACRE

This Legionary is depicted as he appears in sensorium core data ex-loaded from the armour of one of the few Salamanders Legionaries to escape the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre, the Traitor's name and squad designation transmitted by his armour's amicus/inimicus transponder. This particular Legionary was witnessed operating a missile launcher in a Legion veteran tactical squad, a weapon he used to fearsome effect in the opening minutes of the betrayal when the second wave, of which the Alpha Legion were a part, opened fire on the unsuspecting units of the first wave as they regrouped. Notably, Legionary 'Alpharius' felled the Salamanders Dreadnought, Ancient Khulkran, with a krak missile fired in the opening seconds of the betrayal, which appeared to serve as a signal for his entire chapter to reveal the depths of its treachery.

The Legionary is clad in prototype Astartes battle plate, later post-designated 'MkVI', itself a mystery as at this time the only Legion listed as having any suits of this trial mark was the Raven Guard. The armour is decorated with a number of icons and markings commonly observed in use by the Alpha Legion, including the Laernean Hydra Legion icon and the older Alpha-Omega symbol of the XX<sup>th</sup>. This possibly indicated that the Legionary is a veteran of the old Legion prior to its unification with the Primarch.

## Panoply of War

1. **Proteus Pattern Missile Launcher.**
2. **Umbra Pattern Boltgun:** Note 'Unbroken Chain' iconography.



# ALPHA LEGION SEEKER

UNKNOWN LEGIONARY  
 UNKNOWN SQUAD/UNKNOWN UNIT AFFILIATION  
 WARGEAR INDICATES OPERATION  
 AS 'SEEKER' TACTICAL SUB-TYPE  
 THE INVASION OF PARAMAR  
 ASSAULT ON THE PARAMAR TERMINUS COMPLEX  
 PICT-RENDER: CONELICT ZONE 34/71

Presented as an exemplar of the Alpha Legion line forces encountered during the Invasion of Paramar, this Legionary can be observed to be equipped with modified MkIV 'Maximus' power armour, and displaying particular livery and insignia believed in part to be indicative of the forces of the Harrowmaster Armillius Dynat (in particular the use of bronzed elements), although this cannot be accurately confirmed.

The iconography displayed can be seen as a mixture of more recent hydra' design utilised by the Legion and the older 'aleph-null' or 'Æternem' emblem of earlier record. The helm stripe may indicate veterancy or special deployment, while the significance of the trophy skulls remains unknown.

## Panoply of War

1. **Customised Power Sword Variant:** Constructed with an unknown type of ceramite composite and non-standard disruption generators. They actively suppress rather than shed light and electrostatic discharge, leading to a cognomen of 'shadow' or 'spectre' blades in observed use by other forces.

2. **Umbra-Ferrox Pattern Boltgun:** Standard 'Seeker' issue featuring multi-selector expanded magazine and enhanced cyber-optical sighting slaved to the auto-sensory system of the user's armour.



# ALPHA LEGION TERMINATOR LINE OFFICER

UNIDENTIFIED LEGIONARY,  
 UNKNOWN FORMATION,  
 ISSTVAN V DROPSITE MASSACRE, UNCONFIRMED PHASE

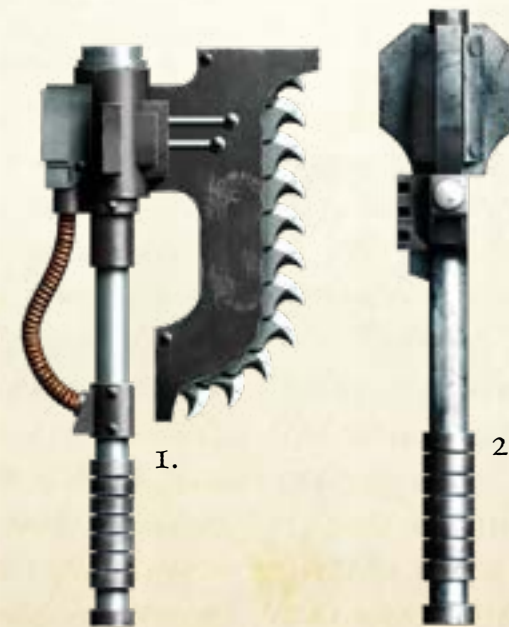
This depiction of an unidentified Alpha Legion warrior is based on sensorium data ex-loaded from the armour systems of several Raven Guard Legionaries after their extraction from Isstvan V. By his wargear, the warrior is assumed to be an officer, most likely a squad sergeant or part of a line company's command cadre. He bears common Legion iconography on both shoulders of his Tartaros pattern Terminator armour, and the skull and lightning bolt symbol mounted on his chest armour predates the uniting of the Alpha Legion with its Primarch, suggesting the warrior is a veteran of the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion of old. The meaning of the symbol mounted on the Legionary's left leg is less clear. It incorporates a six-headed version of the common hydra motif, though this may simply be the standard three-headed version mirrored for some unknown reason. The obvious reading of the 'XX' numeral is as the Legion number of the Alpha Legion, but given the deliberate obscurity for which the Alpha Legion is well known, this cannot be taken for granted.

## Panoply of War

1. **Charatran Pattern Chainaxe:** Note the addition of hydra motif to chainblade cowl.

2. **Unknown Variant Pattern Power Maul:** Line officer issue.

3. **Ryza 'Hellshot' Pattern Plasma Blaster:** Personal requisition. Note application of hydra head motif.



# OPHION ARMOURED ASSAULT HARROW

The Alpha Legion has been observed to deploy a wide range of formation types, some mandated by the architects of the Great Crusade, but many others entirely unique or novel, and being unsurpassed masters of disinformation and guile, the records of the Great Crusade cannot possibly make a full account of the scope or nature of more than a handful of these formations. Indeed, it is believed that individual units within the Legion routinely change tactical markings between and perhaps even during deployments, making it all but impossible to track them from one war zone to the next.

The Ophion Armoured Assault Harrow is one such unit, thought to take the form of a company mounted in heavy transports such as the Land Raider, supported by its own squadrons of battle tanks and support vehicles. Its presence was noted in the Muror

system mere hours before the deep-æther tracking station located on the planetary fragment ZK-Upsilon-12 fell silent. Later investigations determined that the Ophion Harrow had been deployed by Thunderhawk transporter to the fragment's surface, the approach of the carrier vessel masked by the twin plumes trailing behind. The tracking station was defended by a Cybernetica cohort, which deployed its Castellax and Vorax Battle-automata into the surrounding wastes the instant the attack was detected.

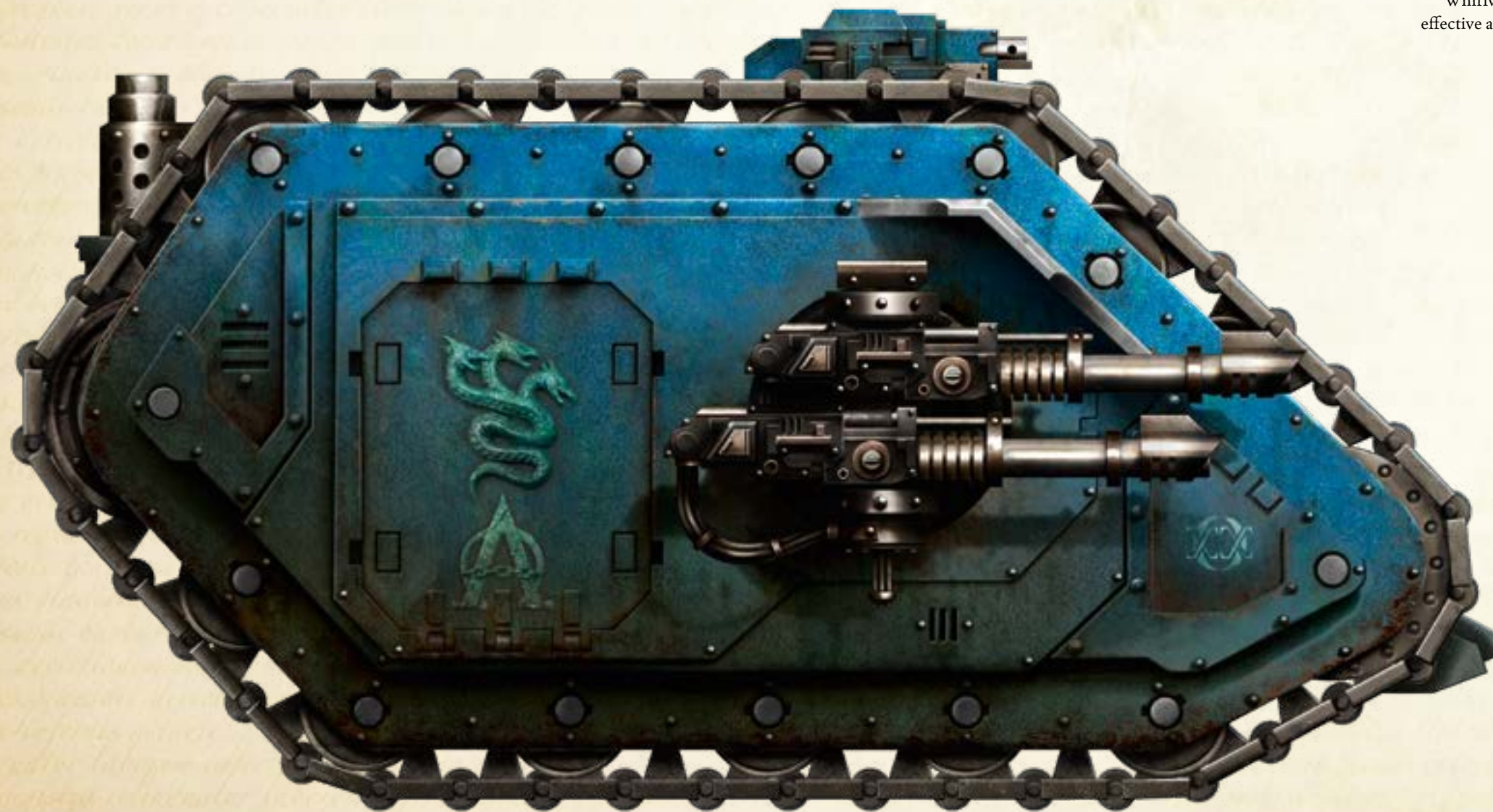
The resulting battle is known to posterity only by the fractured and disjointed pict-captures that survived the destruction of the Muror facility to be recovered much later. An armoured duel erupted across the airless, cratered wastes, between the armoured war engines of the Alpha Legion and the mighty Battle-automata of the Cybernetica.

The battle raged for several hours, but came to a sudden halt when it transpired that the armoured thrust was but a means of drawing the Battle-automata away from the facility itself, which was silenced, so it is presumed, by the hand of Alpha Legion infiltrators deployed by a wide-flanking sub-unit within the formation. When the infiltrators struck, the tracking station's mighty array of deep-æther scanners fell quiescent, as did every one of the several hundred Battle-automata fighting out on the wastes.

With the destruction of the tracking station at Muror, the Legiones Astartes loyal to Terra lost the ability to track the movement of warp vessels voyaging along the vital Warp conduits linking the Isstvan system with the Segmentum Solar. With the loss of such vital intelligence, the Warmaster's long march to Terra could begin in earnest.



**Whirlwind Scorpius:** The Ophion Armoured Assault Harrow is known to have deployed the Whirlwind Scorpius in large numbers. Its potent armour-defeating warheads were fearsomely effective against the ceramite shells of the Cybernetica Battle-automata defending the Muror facility.



**Armourial Detail:** The few surviving pict-captures from which accounts of the destruction of the Muror deep-æther facility are constructed depict several dozen Whirlwind Scorpius tanks, all of which displayed similar iconography to that shown here. It is notable that these markings all appear to relate to the Legion itself, and if any identify the individual vehicle or its position within the Ophion, they are evident only to those who claim themselves to be conversant in the complex and ever-shifting visual language of the Alpha Legion.

# ALPHA LEGION ARMoured ECHELONS

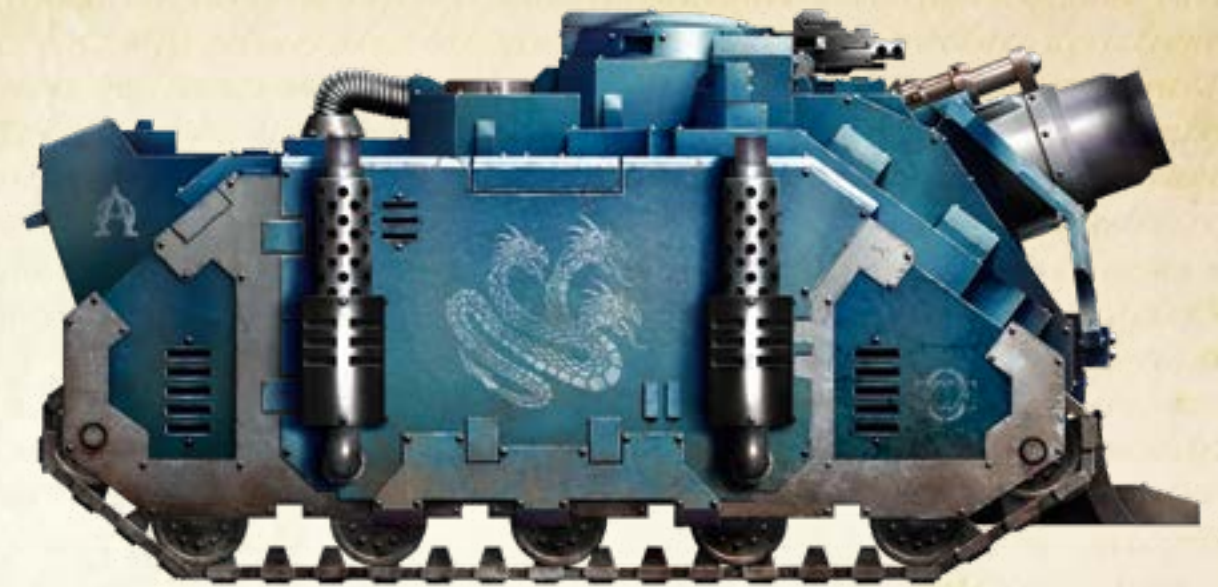
## PARAMAR INVASION FORCE

The assault tactics used by the Alpha Legion against the Paramar Terminus Complex involved the mass use of rapid-moving armoured spearhead columns, supported by mobile artillery and siege units. Often depicted in the popular conception of their Legion as a force which favoured infiltration and asymmetrical tactics over brute strength, the Alpha Legion's excellent record in the

use of armoured warfare during the Great Crusade is often overlooked, but it would be this key expertise that would carry their victory in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Paramar.

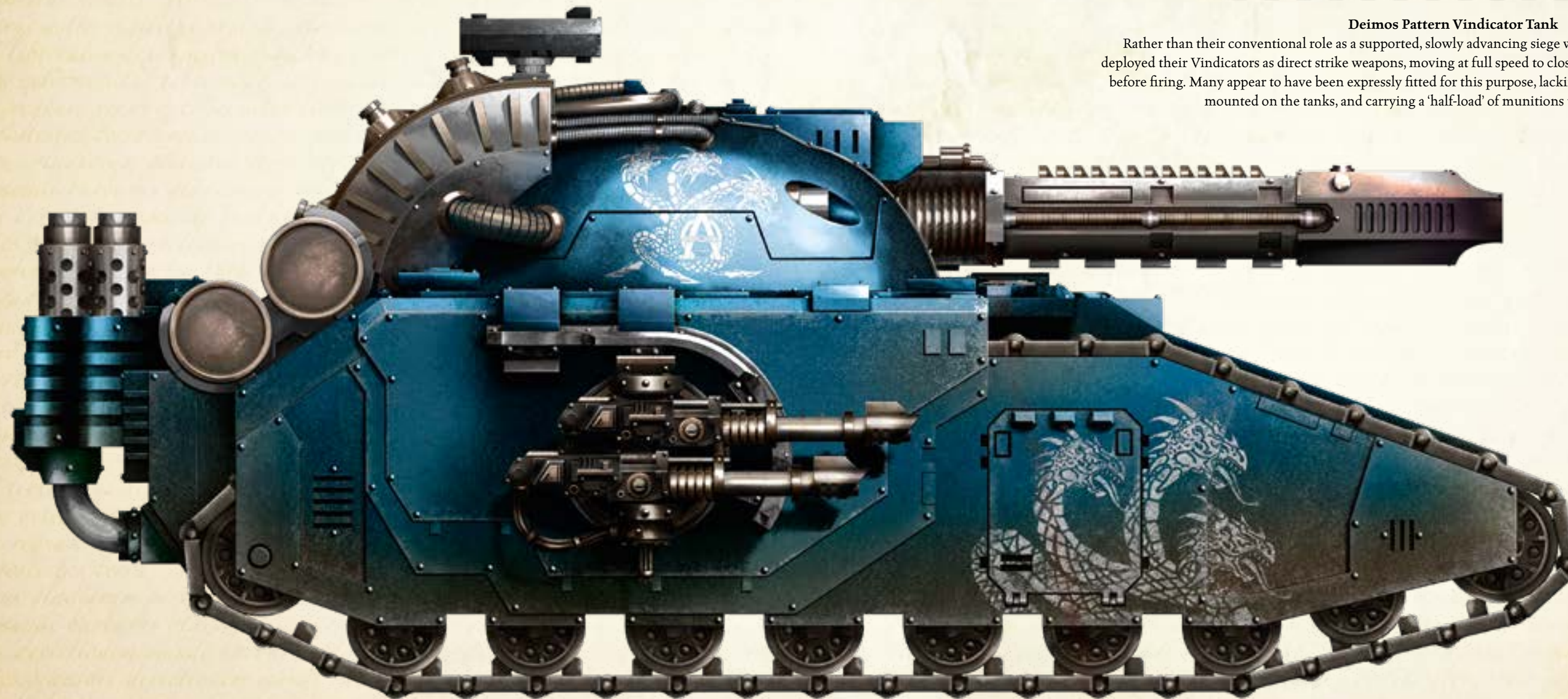
The invasion force deployed an armoured contingent that was both extremely numerous and varied, but which focused chiefly on mobile rather than deploy-to-fire

units, with particular strength ranging in various Predator and Vindicator chassis light and medium tanks and large numbers of the newer Sicaran type fast battle tanks and Sicaran Venator tank destroyers. The heavy elements of this force comprised several squadrons of Malcador tanks, supported by advanced Fellblade and Glaive super-heavy tanks.



**Deimos Pattern Vindicator Tank**

Rather than their conventional role as a supported, slowly advancing siege weapon, at Paramar the Alpha Legion deployed their Vindicators as direct strike weapons, moving at full speed to close to point blank range with their targets before firing. Many appear to have been expressly fitted for this purpose, lacking the cumbersome siege shields often mounted on the tanks, and carrying a 'half-load' of munitions to reduce their weight.



**Legion Glaive Super-heavy Special Weapons Tank – Designation Unknown:** One of the most advanced war machines in the Legiones Astartes arsenal, the Glaive is built round the powerful Volkite carronade field-effect ray weapon. During the battle these weapons would prove both a boon and a detriment to the Alpha Legion attack, providing highly effective firepower against troops protected by conventional fortifications, but also igniting under-ground storage vessels filled with promethium and munitions. This in turn triggered waves of uncontrolled explosions during the mid-battle phase, cutting off the Alpha Legion's own line of attack for a time.

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