



THE WORLD EATERS

Numeration: The XIIth Legion

Primogenitor: Angron the Conqueror

Cognomen: (Prior) The War Hounds

Observed Strategic Tendencies: Shock Assault, Planet-kill and Exterminatus Operations, Close-quarters Actions (Space Hulk Purgation, Boarding Operations, Line-breaker Attacks, 'Forlorn Hope' Objective Assaults).

Noteworthy Domains: Bodt [Muster World], Sarum [Temporary Fortress Station], recruitment rights of several feral worlds in the Segmenta Solar and Ultima.

Allegiance: *Traitoris Perdita*

"I have voyaged the dark stars for five times the lifespan of a common man, long before our glorious Emperor made me one of his, and I tell you this: monsters crawl the blasted faces of myriad uncounted worlds—creatures so foul they would stop a man's heart just to see, and that is only the start of the true nightmare, for there is no mortal mind that can encompass the wickedness of the alien in all its forms and designs.

So then, why should it surprise the wise man that in such a galaxy of terror, that humanity should need monsters of its own—if we are to survive?"

*Captain Kalako Jaq Harlock,
Sanctioned Rogue Trader
-Attached as Pathfinder to the "bloody" 13th
Expeditionary Fleet*

The treachery of many who were to turn their backs on the Emperor is often shocking and near unbelievable, even with the false clarity of hindsight, and in many cases paints a tragedy of a fall from grace. But in truth neither of these things can truly be said of the XIIth Legion, the World Eaters—monsters long before Horus became corrupted and monsters they remained, only now with what little remained of their restraint and their humanity stripped away. Of all the Space Marine Legions of the Great Crusade, none were so savage and dreaded. For while others such as the Night Lords could justly claim to have brought worlds into compliance by fear alone, and others such as the White Scars and the Space Wolves could descend without warning and leave a world burning in their wake, for the World Eaters to be assigned to a campaign meant only one thing for the enemy—extermination. Extermination not by virus bomb or atomic firestorm, but by chainaxe and bolt shell—worlds drowned one-by-one in the blood of their inhabitants.

ORIGINS: "A NECESSARY EVIL"

Such sources that survived the Siege of Terra regarding the origins and formation of the XIIth Legion of the Legiones Astartes are fragmentary at best, and in compiling this record I have been forced to rely on secondary evidence from those who fought alongside them, and the apocryphal accounts handed down by those many who had cause to fear and resent this most dread of Legions.

Of the Terran origins of the XIIth it would appear that there was no particular bias as to the tribe or city state from which the initial influx of recruits was taken as there was in the case of several of the other Legions. There are though tantalising hints towards psychological screening being used to single out the most inherently aggressive and obsessively competitive recruit in an experimental pre-selection program that may have also informed the intake of a handful of other Legions as well. Whether this is true or merely supposition later formed to fit established facts, it is apparent from such records that survive that the XIIth were from the outset deemed a highly aggressive force, its warriors hot-blooded and savage.

The Legion's first recorded engagement saw them used in the Sa'afrik Liberation as a spearhead of shock troops, mounting direct annihilation assaults on enemy forces, both in open battle and fortified positions, and able to carry the attack despite their then relatively small numbers by sheer courage and the fury of the violence they could unleash. The nascent Legion however, after its initial battles, seems to have been largely held in reserve by the Emperor during the latter Unification Wars and right through the re-conquest of the Sol system, perhaps in case of a sudden reversal of the fortunes of war, or as veiled evidence, implies as a weapon to be unleashed in case of disloyalty among the Emperor's own. During this time the XIIth was kept in a state of constant readiness, training relentlessly and steadily growing in numbers and on the occasions it was brought into battle it performed with almost gleeful savagery, tearing apart whatever enemy it was given to fight without mercy or falter, regardless of its own losses and heedless of risk. It is believed that it was during this period that the Emperor himself dubbed the XIIth Legion his 'War Hounds' as a tribute to the savage and tenacious way they fought to pacify the narco-sprawls of the Cephic Hives, and in pride of this the red hound became the Legion's badge of war.

One of the few first-hand accounts of this is found in the war-memoirs of Bashar-Colonel Alves Scorn of the Terran XXIInd Dracos Regiment (who later famously became the Imperial Commander of Proximal Secundus), who fought alongside the XIIth during the Cerberus Insurrection.

The insurrection forces had slaughtered the ruling castes of the hollowed-out asteroid prison colony, and in the wake of the uprising the 3,000,000 or so indentured habitants of Cerberus had risen up in anarchic revolt in a state of near continuous rioting and mob violence, and initial attempts to impose order by Terran troops had been thrown back in disarray as it became apparent that among the insurrectionists was a renegade cadre of outlawed Thunder Warriors—long believed dead—calling themselves the Dait'Tar. With many of the Space Marine Legions already assigned to the first Expedition fleets and en route to the stars, the Emperor himself dispatched his War Hounds to Cerberus (and it appears the irony was not lost on him in doing so) with explicit instructions to reclaim Cerberus colony and carry the Emperor's wrath to those that had defied him.

At 0300 Hours Terran Sidereal time the War Hounds of the XIIth Legion attacked multiple access points on the asteroid's surface, and at 0808 Hours a signal was received from Praetor-Commander Calyb Hax of the XIIth

Legion that Cerberus-Primary had been returned to compliance. When asked by the leader of the waiting second wave how many prisoners to expect to transfer into custody, Hax replied that he had not been ordered to take any...

Alves Scorn, whose command had been part of the second wave, led his regiment in the bleak task of clear-up operations in the wake of the War Hounds' assault, hunting down any survivors hiding in the warren of tunnels and passageways, of which there proved to be precious few. Afterwards he wrote of his experiences in his journals, and records more than once coming across the hulking carcass of an armoured Thunder Warrior, often with three or four of his number in Legiones Astartes dead around him—of choke-points and defence posts turned into blood-soaked charnel houses—and of scores upon scores of insurgents cut down from behind while fleeing in blind panic, their weapons abandoned. The Bashar-Colonel summed up his experiences with the following, sadly prophetic, commentary:

"I do not doubt my Emperor's wisdom in creating a necessary evil such as these fearful warriors, nor do I doubt their effectiveness in battle. It remains my fervent hope however, that though I spend my life making war for the liberation of Mankind that I never again see such inhuman butchery as I have witnessed in the halls of Cerberus."



The Bloody 13th

As the early decades of the Great Crusade progressed, and the first of the Primarchs were found, the XIIth Legion was broken up temporarily into a number of independent sub-commands, each several thousand Space Marines strong. The largest of which, at some 8,000 War Hounds, along with dedicated assault and fleet support elements was designated the 13th Expeditionary Fleet, or the 'Bloody 13th' as it became quickly known.

These detachments were sent as a mobile reserve where the fighting was fiercest in the Great Crusade's front lines. Here they served as frontline assault troops in glorious campaigns alongside the Space Wolves, Iron Warriors and Dark Angels Legions. Elsewhere they would often provide the killing-strike for larger Imperial Army formations in war zones where an impasse had been reached, breaking a strategic deadlock in a single furious attack which sent an enemy reeling. During these times the War Hounds developed a reputation for victory, although at a cost—and it was said every assault they conducted ended in only one of two ways: victorious slaughter or simple slaughter, either of which left the foe in no condition to resist further. However effective there were many who fought alongside them who found them also to be unpredictable, intemperate and dangerous to anything that stood in their path, combatant or otherwise. Rumours began to circulate that they had put to the sword human auxiliary regiments they saw as failing them in battle, and they kept a guarded distance from other Legiones Astartes they served alongside. Outsiders noted that an unusually harsh code of discipline was enforced in the ranks by the Legion's officers and was indeed needed, as the War Hounds themselves could prove fractious, and bloodshed between brothers was far from uncommon.

Increasingly the warriors of the XIIth were deemed by the War Council as being more suitable for use against targets where annihilation was the goal rather than compliance or liberation, a task to which they seemed eminently suited. As the Legions grew in size and many came to be re-united with their Primarchs the task of reinforcement became less important, and the War Hounds were brought together again under the banner of the 'Bloody 13th' alongside a variety of units who, like the War Hounds, had gained dark reputations for unrestrained violence rather than military discipline, or who were otherwise deemed as unusable for actions where collateral damage

THE LORD OF THE RED SANDS

Most stories told of Angron's early life cast him as being discovered at a young age on an unknown, but technologically advanced, world some sources place within the Ultima Segmentum. Conflicting details of this discovery place the young Primarch badly wounded and surrounded by slaughtered predatory beasts or the bodies of xenos warriors he had slain, but agree that those that found him were in service to the world's human masters, a decadent and vicious ruling elite for whom human blood-sport was the greatest art and principal entertainment. It was to these murderous games that the young Primarch was bound by the slavers and gladiatorial masters, at first as a novelty expected to die, but soon as a favoured champion who rose swiftly to become the greatest gladiator the world had ever known. It was a matter of course that the slave masters used biochemical and cyber-surgical enhancements as well as relentless and brutal training to 'improve' their fighting stock. Angron was to be no exception, and although his Primarch's physiology resisted much they attempted, in one particular method they were successful, and were able to implant deep within his brainstem psycho-surgical devices to augment his aggression to inhuman levels and turn him into a superhuman beast, a killer the likes of which they had never before seen, Angron—the Lord of the Red Sands.

Little did his 'masters' know, or perhaps they did not care, as secure as they were in their overmatching power, but bitter hatred and resentment burned in Angron's heart for his captors, while his only comradeship was with the gladiatorial warriors with whom he fought. Long had he plotted rebellion and vengeance, and soon he shattered his bonds and led a bloody revolt, staged amid the largest Death Games the arena had seen in generations. With his gladiator kin rallying to him he battled his way clear of the arena, slaughtered his captors and reaped a bloody swathe across the settlements and cities that fell before his path. But despite snatching victory time and again against fearful odds and the superior ranged weaponry of the planet's elite, Angron's revolt was ultimately doomed to fail and he knew it. He and his slave army, however individually powerful they might be were simply too few to take on a whole world set against them and were slowly being worn down by attrition, sickness and hunger. Determined as brothers and sisters to stand and die in honourable battle rather than be taken alive, and pursued now by five armies, each one outnumbering them alone ten times and more, Angron and his followers ascended to the high mountains to make a bloody end for themselves where few could hold back many—at least for a time—and awaited their final battle.

Far above the Emperor had watched with pride as Angron had led his outmatched revolt, but now chose to intervene, unwilling to accept his lost son's death in battle no matter how resolved and honourable the cause. Upon confronting Angron and making an offer of a place by his side, to his surprise he was refused and rejected; Angron had sworn to live and die with his followers and that was exactly what he intended to do. The Emperor however would not accept this, and the night before the final onslaught forcibly teleported the enraged Primarch away from the slaughter that followed, as the rebellious slaves were butchered to the last man and woman. This was a deed for which Angron would never forgive the Emperor, and a stain upon the Primarch's honour that would never fade but fester into a soul-deep wound.

was to be kept to a minimum and liberation rather than destruction was the goal. This muster, centred on the harsh, volcanic world of Bodt which had been taken by the War Hounds as a training ground some years before, included regiments of feral world head-hunters inducted into the Imperial Army and brute abhumans on the edge of tolerated genetic deviance. To these were added units such as the Titans of the Legio Audax around who a pall of suspicion had fallen ever since the Lorin Alpha Massacres, and the distrusted Numen Gun Clans—

nomadic techno-barbarians who had bitterly fought against compliance for years before their recent and grudging induction into the Imperium. Upon viewing the reports of the muster at Bodt the Primarch Sanguinius is apocryphally said to have remarked that:

"The Emperor is assembling a carnival of monsters for his amusement, although I doubt whoever he unleashes them upon will see the jest."

In hindsight, it is now clear that this red-handed army was being assembled for a very particular reason, and that it awaited only a new master to command it.

THE PRIMARCH OF WRATH

A very great deal about the finding of the Primarch Angron remains unknown to wider record. There is in fact evidence that this information, including the true name of the world he was found on was known but was kept secret by the command of the Emperor or those close to him. Such that is known denotes a tale of a brutal upbringing, murderous violence, and the bloodlust of idle rulers made corrupt by absolute power, and ultimately of Angron's revolt against them. That his acceptance of the Emperor's intervention was not an easy one is also widely reported, but the exact records of what shape this antipathy took and how it was resolved is a matter of shadowed rumour and conjecture without proof. What can be said with certainty is that Angron's first reaction to his new situation was rage, and it is said that for some time any War Hound who came before him was met with a grisly death for their efforts. It is certain that at this time the Legion Master of the War Hounds, Ibram Ghreer—a respected general who had commanded the XIIth for nearly three

decades—disappears without explanation from any record of the time and no explanation is given by his taciturn Legion for his absence.

That some accommodation, however bloody, was reached is shown by what happened next as Angron swiftly took charge of his Legion. On the world of his youth Angron had led a force in rebellion that came to be known as the Eaters of Cities for its wrath and violence, now his Legion would become the Eaters of Worlds.

Much is said of Angron's physical power—greater even it is said than many of his fellow Primarchs—his berserker fury, his near-insane love of violence and bitter, quixotic temperament, but few comment on what is clearly a native intelligence, fearsome charisma and strength of conviction that marked him out also as the post-human that he was. To his Legionaries the mutilated, bloody, reeking, wrathful figure that now stalked among them as their master swiftly became a kind of savage messiah; a greater warrior than any had known, an exemplar of a brutal ideal of honour and combat that sang to their souls. Angron became to them their first master; displacing for many the loyalty they had once only given their Emperor,

becoming their judge, their general and a conqueror whose banner they would follow into the depths of hell.

Taking charge of his Legion at the mustering ground of Bodt, Angron swiftly worked many changes on his forces, his 'World Eaters' as they were now named. In this he seems to have been given a surprisingly free hand for a newly invested Primarch—not for Angron a period of shadowing one of his brothers while he grew into command, or even time spent in his new-found father's company, instead he was given license it seems to simply take charge of his host and with bellicose energy he prepared it for war. The regime of discipline and training the XIIth Legion abided by in the past had always been noted as among the harshest of any of the Legions, but this proved to be but a shadow of what came to pass under Angron's direction and reform. Conflict was the only measure and the only judge, and training beyond its most basic elements was as real as any war or battle a World Eater would find themselves in—red blood flowing, live rounds and bared blades, fighting pits and gladiatorial combat. Each now wore scars by which to count the lessons learned amid heat and the bitter volcanic sands, and those that failed did not live long enough to try again.

NAME: BODT

CLASSIFICATION: LEGIONES ASTARTES MUSTER/
TRAINING WORLD

[IMPERIAL POSSESSION – CARTA UNCLASSIFIED]

SYSTEM DATA: VVC/00325//P/Σ

STELLAR GRID: 22-GAL-COR/U-05

SEGMENTUM: ULTIMA/COREWARD

NOTATION: VOLCANIC/ARID, LOW REGISTER TERRAN
ANALOGUE, NO NATIVE POPULATION

++[FIEFDOM OF THE WORLD EATERS LEGION]++

++[APPROACH WITH CAUTION]++

Culture within the Legion shifted to ever more violent and bloodthirsty mores and values, which became quickly echoed in the shifting skein of the Legion's own rites and ceremonies, and the martial traditions of Old Terra, never strong in the War Hounds who had prided themselves in their fury and courage above all else, disappeared altogether and were replaced by Angron's own red code of butchery and savage competition. When the World Eaters departed Bodt under their new master for the first time, it was under the symbol of a great fanged maw poised to crush a life-bearing world, an image that was to prove entirely fitting to describe what was to come.

The planets upon which the World Eaters fell were not merely crushed—they were destroyed utterly. Where once resistance had been found, now were left only grave worlds in their stead—planets not merely burned or blasted from on high but slaughtered in their streets and palaces, factories and fortresses. Cities were left standing like silent half-ruined cemeteries commemorating the whitening bones and fading bloodstains that littered their forlorn and lifeless spaces. The World Eaters Legion became a byword for unbridled violence and slaughter on a grand scale, shunned by many of their fellow Legions for their excesses and whispered of in fear by those who in theory they had been created to protect.

Under Angron's command the Ork empires of Blitzklaw and Neverlight were exterminated by the World Eaters, as were the Khrave of Serreak-17 where others had failed before them. In one of the most famous triumphs of its time, the Legion entrapped the Eldar Craftworld of Tuonoetra which had endured for a hundred millennia and scoured it of life in a brutal attrition campaign, its vast and empty wraithbone carcass sent hurtling at last into a bloated ancient sun. Nor were human and abhuman worlds spared the Legion's wrath: Susa, Gwydion, Jubal, Badlanding and a dozen more all fell before these Angels of Death and more than once non-compliant planetary systems surrendered wholesale at the rumour of the World Eaters' approach, so potent had their bloody legend grown.

With this legend came dark tales of atrocity and wanton destruction that froze the blood of even hardened Imperial Commanders and caused concern even at the level of the War Council and the other Primarchs. Not least of their detractors was Roboute Guilliman, Primarch of the Ultramarines, who fought beside Angron and his Legion during the Cleansing of Ariggata and saw at first hand the bloodbath they had left in the wake of their attack on the Basalt Citadel, where the last resistance of this non-compliant human world had made their stand. Guilliman had seen the ramp of World Eaters corpses that

had been used to finally mount a breach in the mighty fortress and the vengeful horror the Space Marines had wrought within and been sickened. But Angron's Legion, while friendless, nevertheless had its supporters, most vocal of which were Horus Lupercal of the Luna Wolves who defended their martial record and named them an invaluable asset to the Great Crusade, while Jaghatai Khan of the White Scars more cryptically praised their strength of purpose and purity, and challenged his fellow Primarchs:
“...not to judge those on a path on which the winds of fate decreed that they had never themselves walked, nor ever could.”

As the Great Crusade went on there were increasingly those in the Imperial military who whispered that Angron was mad and his Legion had followed with him into madness. These whispers became openly voiced as widespread discontent and demands for censure when stories began to circulate that Angron had ordered his Apothecarion to conduct widespread psycho-surgery after the infamous Ghenna Massacre came to light. This action, undertaken at Angron's instigation, resulted in the entire planetary population that had rebelled against its installed Imperial Commander being wiped out in a single night of extraordinary bloodshed. The psychic screams of the dying were reported to have been audible by astropaths half a sector distant.

After Ghenna the Emperor was moved to act and called Angron before him for reprimand, ordering the end of such prohibited surgery in the Legion and issuing the World Eaters with orders to depart to the northern fringes of known space, there to harry and reave against xenos far from the Imperium's core worlds. This time of exile, perhaps intended as punishment, was instead for the World Eaters a subtle vindication and it remains doubtful that in any measure they ceased the dark rites and practices from which they had been forbidden. Later, wishing once more to bring the World Eaters back to the fold, the Emperor turned to Horus, then his most trusted son and recently appointed Warmaster, asking him to confront and challenge Angron, to mentor and work upon his fellow Primarch and bring him back into line. In this was a terrible and grievous miscalculation made, for Horus had become himself corrupted by the Warp and in Angron's wrathful heart bitterness soon became treachery.



UNIT AND FORMATION STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LEGION

As with almost all the Space Marine Legions, the XIIth at its creation followed the so-called 'Terran Pattern' of organisation as formulated by the Officio Militaris at the outset of the Great Crusade, but even in this earliest period the Legion's procurement and outfitting showed a considerable bias towards direct assault and operations within the close and deadly confines of the kinds of battlefields designated as 'Zone Mortalis' in strategic doctrine. This would continue under Angron's transition of command, and the Legion's organisational structures were kept largely intact but often further streamlined, with its echelons (as its Chapter-level structures were commonly named) being biased in make-up towards line infantry formations. These were by their panoply and tactics a hybrid of tactical/close assault troops for the main part, supported by dedicated heavy assault units such as Terminators and specialised units such as Land Speeder squadrons.

This organisation lent itself well to a highly aggressive strategic posture and belligerent tactics which while extremely costly in terms of casualties, were also highly effective. One example of such a doctrine was the Legion's preferred pattern of planetary invasion. In this the Legion quickly embraced the use of mass-drop pod attack from orbit in invasion situations to deliver themselves directly to the heart of the enemy without manoeuvre or preamble as a first wave attack. This sudden overwhelming blow was designed to keep the enemy pinned in place fighting this vanguard (which often suffered heavy losses), while a second wave of armour and heavier units followed in its wake and smashed into areas of high resistance revealed by the first wave. In these attacks the Legion pressed its assault with murderous fury, often fighting in conjunction with dangerously close supporting barrages from warships in low orbit, or with Titans and other siege units right in the thick of the fighting with them. By these tactics the World Eaters' onslaught overcame any resistance through sheer fury, hurling themselves again and again at the foe until their enemy broke and was cut down, fleeing in terror.

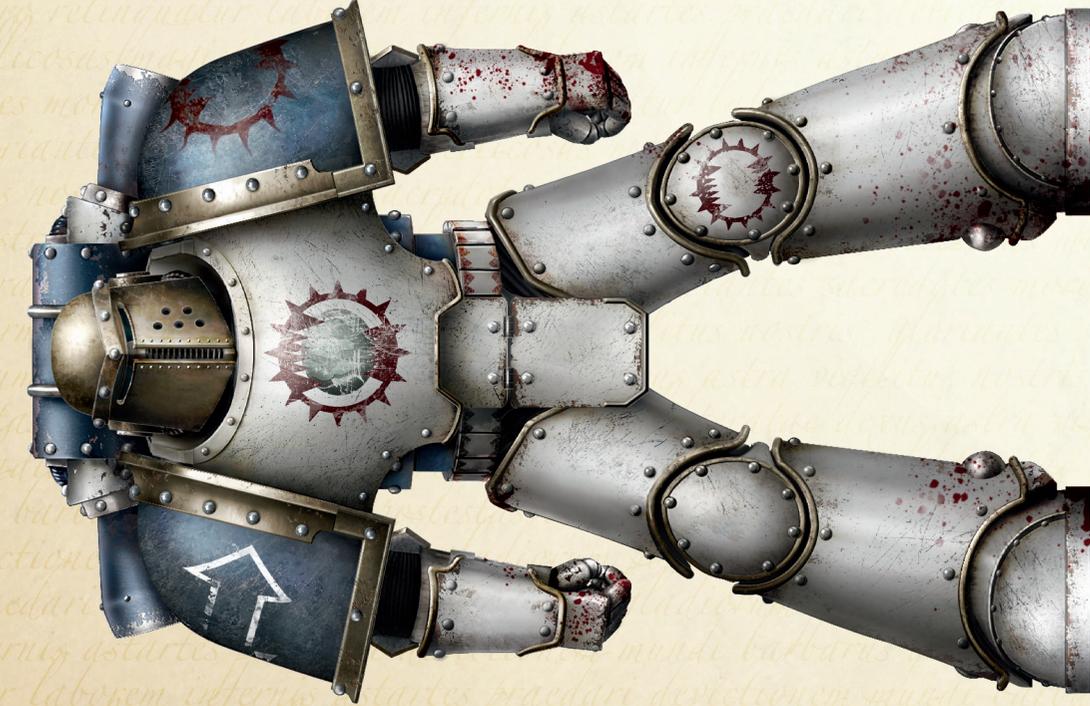
Hand-to-hand combat was always the Legion's preferred form of warfare, even before it took the Emperor-given name of the War Hounds for itself. This did not mean that the Legion lacked ability and competency in ranged engagements or armoured warfare

and supporting artillery attack—indeed no lesser luminary of mechanised warfare than Ferrus Manus himself praised the War Hounds' armoured assault at Aldebaran Septus as the "epitome of iron-clad rage given form", but for the War Hounds such things were a tactical means to an end. That end being successfully delivering the killing force of the Legion—its Space Marines—where they could inflict the most harm and come to grapple with their foe at close quarters. No clearer sign was possible in the Legion of this preference for dealing death face-to-face than the preponderance of close combat weaponry habitually carried by its rank and file. In addition to the ubiquitous combat blades or gladius, even Legionaries attached to reconnaissance squads and vehicle crews commonly carried chainblades, flay-cutters and mono-serrated bayonets, back-up knives, hatchets and cleavers. While in dedicated assault units particularly this profusion of bloody killing tools was added to by a weapon that dated back to the techno-barbarian tribes of Terra, the broad-bladed chainaxe. With the coming of Angron as their commander, the World Eaters' predilections for hand-to-hand bloodletting reached even greater heights, as the master-gliadiator taught them new weapons and new ways to kill, and what can only be described as a cult of personal combat took hold of the Legion at a fundamental level. The chainaxe was further refined under Angron's direction, and such was the reputation it gained (particularly given its effectiveness against brute beasts such as the Orks), that its use spread to several other Legions. But as an abstract the weapon could be seen as a symbol of the World Eaters themselves: brutal and savage, remorseless and unsubtle, a machine with but one purpose—to kill.

Attrition rates within the World Eaters were high, and fatality levels on recruits during training are believed to be the worst of any Legion in the period, so unrelenting were the World Eaters' methods. Past a certain point in training, gladiatorial contests and battle-exercises became real life-and-death combat with live rounds and wetted blades, with the goal to raise the skill and strength of the warrior to the greatest extent before they could be deemed worthy of joining the World Eaters' numbers. Despite this focus on individual skill, the wider arts of warfare were not neglected in the World Eaters' regime and entire companies and even battalions fought one another in great

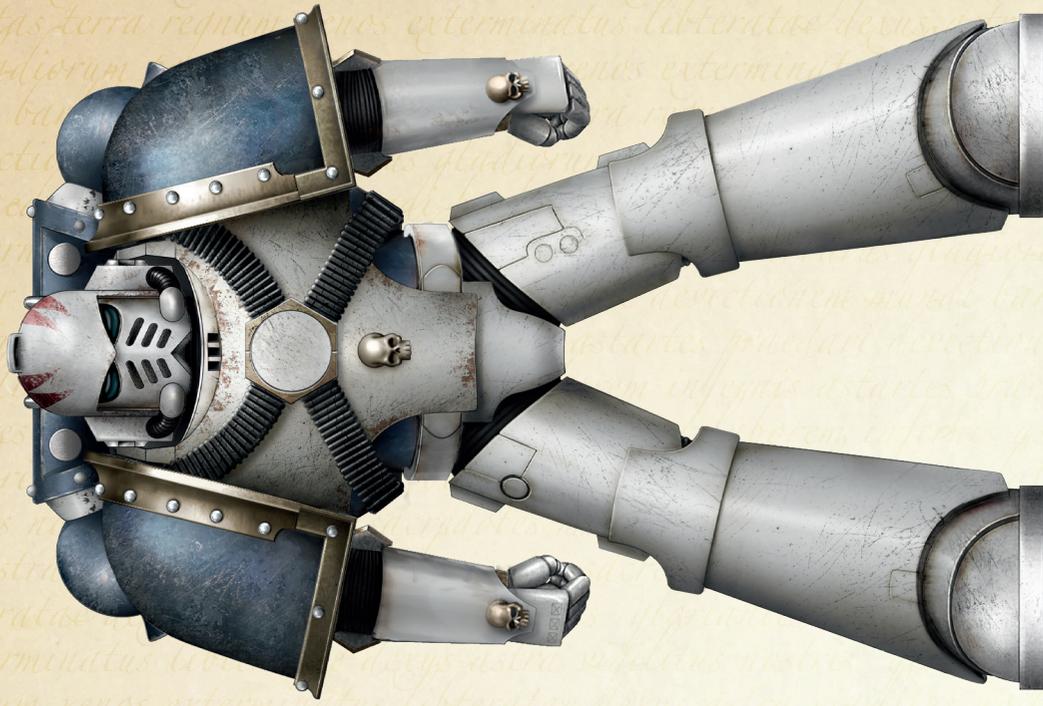
matches and competitions to enforce unit tactics and coherent operations under their Primarch's eye and judgment, but it was always the battlefield that the World Eaters hungered for, and where its champions and officers were chosen.

In order to cope with the rigours of their training and ceaseless campaigning, under Angron's direction recruitment processes were streamlined and accelerated, and recruits were drawn from a number of Feral and Feudal worlds scattered across the Segmenta in order to meet the Legion's demands. The Apothecaries of the Legion embraced the use of the Primarch's own genetic material to stabilise and speed up the progression and implantation procedures—the so-called Grabiya's Theorem. Alongside this a far darker practice began to evolve within the ranks of the World Eaters; the use of psycho-surgical implants to enhance aggression and pain tolerance far beyond that which even the gene-engineered flesh of a member of the Legiones Astartes was capable, but left them devoid of joy or peace save for that found in battle. In this Angron ordered the study of the implants he had been given by his slave masters—the infamous 'Butcher's Nails' to serve as a template. This posed difficulties however, as Angron's implants were relics of a long lost technology, little understood even by their makers, while removing them from Angron for close study would have proved fatal to the Primarch. Because of this, early attempts to duplicate them by the combined efforts of the Legion's Techmarines and Apothecaries appear to have been far from successful, and resulted in high rates of mortality and irrecoverable homicidal frenzy on test recruits. However as time progressed, viable technology was replicated and steadily improved (although it was never fully stable or constant between subjects), and entire newly-formed companies of recruits were implanted, as well as large numbers of existing World Eaters who volunteered for the dangerous operation. The majority of these were absorbed back into the Legion's line units, while those deemed perhaps too unstable for such tasks joined a growing number of near-berserker assault units known as Rampager squads, and within these those too far gone to be anything but restrained between battles simply became known as the Caedere or the 'Butchers'—a frightening portent of what was to come for the Legion.



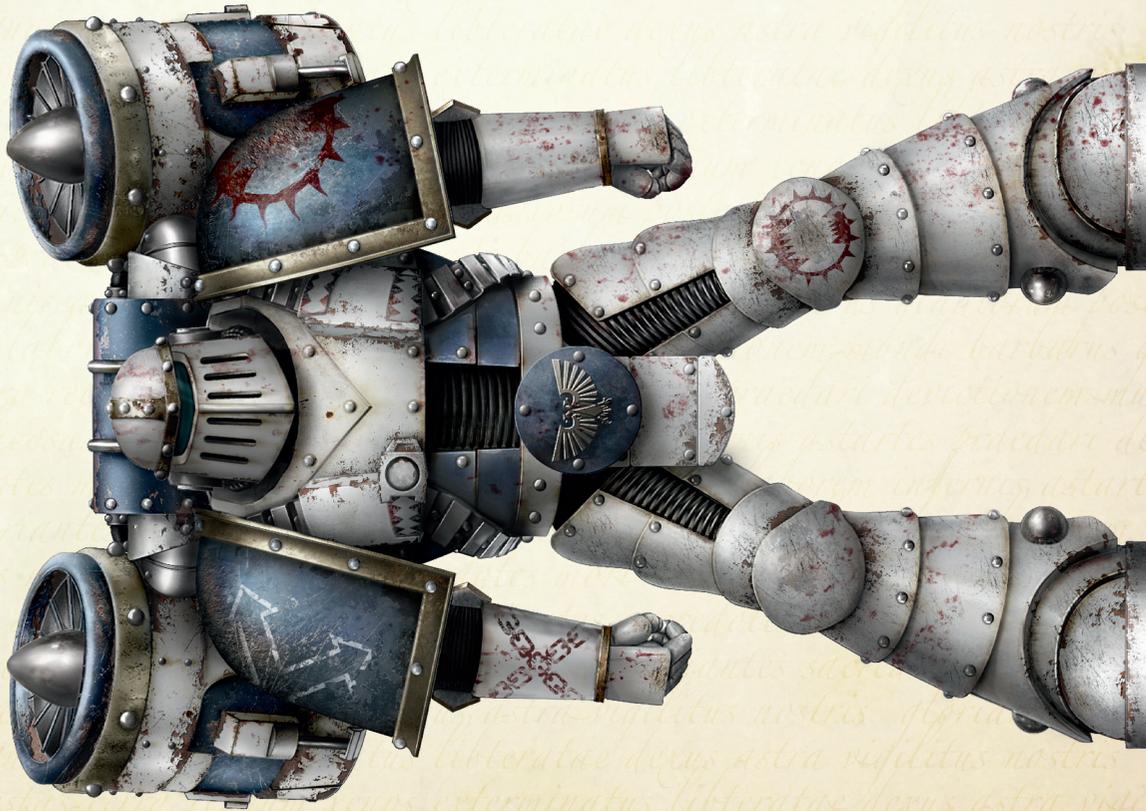
Unknown World Eaters Legion Veteran Tactical Marine [Pict-capture Isstvan III Atrocity]

This unknown World Eater was one of the assault wave led by Angron down to the surface of Isstvan III in the wake of the viral bombardment. Note: 'Iron' pattern powered armour – older Legion issue, with modified helmet (brazen colouration denoting veteran status); several versions of Legion symbol adorning armour denoting long service.



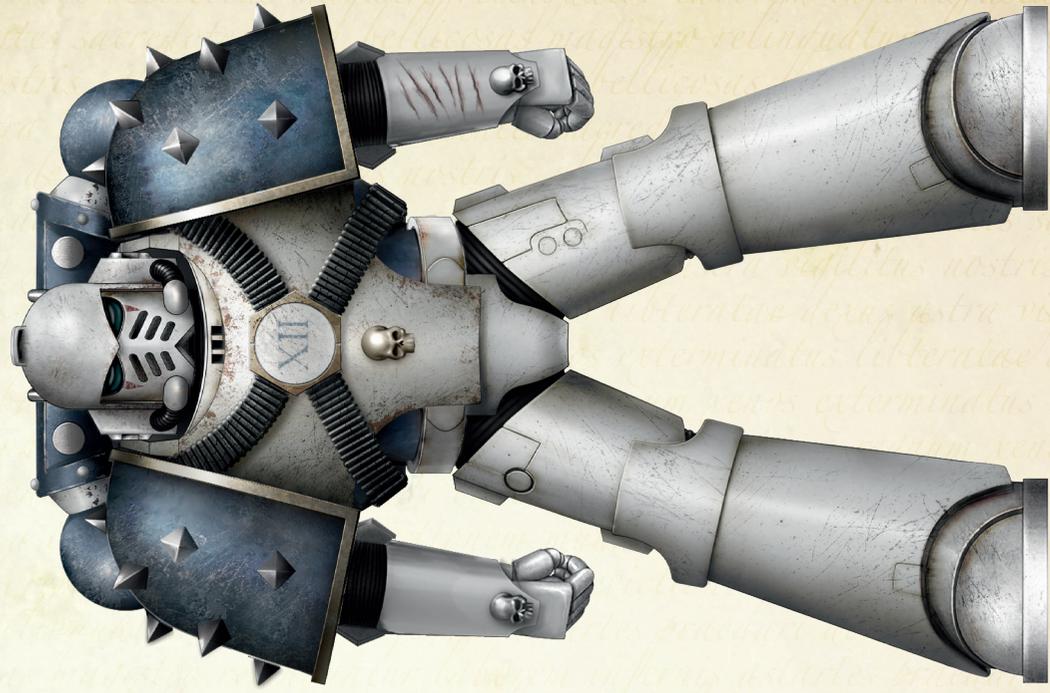
Unknown World Eaters Legion Space Marine [Pict-capture Isstvan III Atrocity]

In contrast to the previously presented image, this Space Marine, also part of Angron's assault wave, can be seen as a recent initiate into his Legion, owing both to the condition of his armour and lack of full Legion heraldry (as this was customarily an earned right of service). Note: Recent issue 'Maximus' pattern power armour. The red striations on helmet are a personal decoration echoing psycho-surgical cortex implantation.



Assault Legionary Kharad Huygan, World Eaters Legion [Pict-capture Issstvan III Atrocity]

Huygan was a Terran veteran of long-standing, deployed with the first wave to re-conquer Issstvan III. He is recorded as being part of the assault force sent to take possession of a northern sector communications relay. His fate following the firestorm remains unknown. Note: 'Crusade' pattern power armour with Serpha-V Jump pack system: the 'crossed-chain' decoration on vambrace accords him status as having killed a fellow World Eater of higher rank in a sanctioned arena duel.



Unknown World Eaters Legionary [Pict-Capture Ghenna Massacre]

This Legionary's armour shows modification of a type not uncommon to the World Eaters Legion, designed not only to evoke fear but also to turn the armour's surface into a weapon in its own right. Note: Red 'tears' thought to denote ritual scarification: Kill tally marks incised into vambrace.



World Eaters Legion iconography – Later Great Crusade

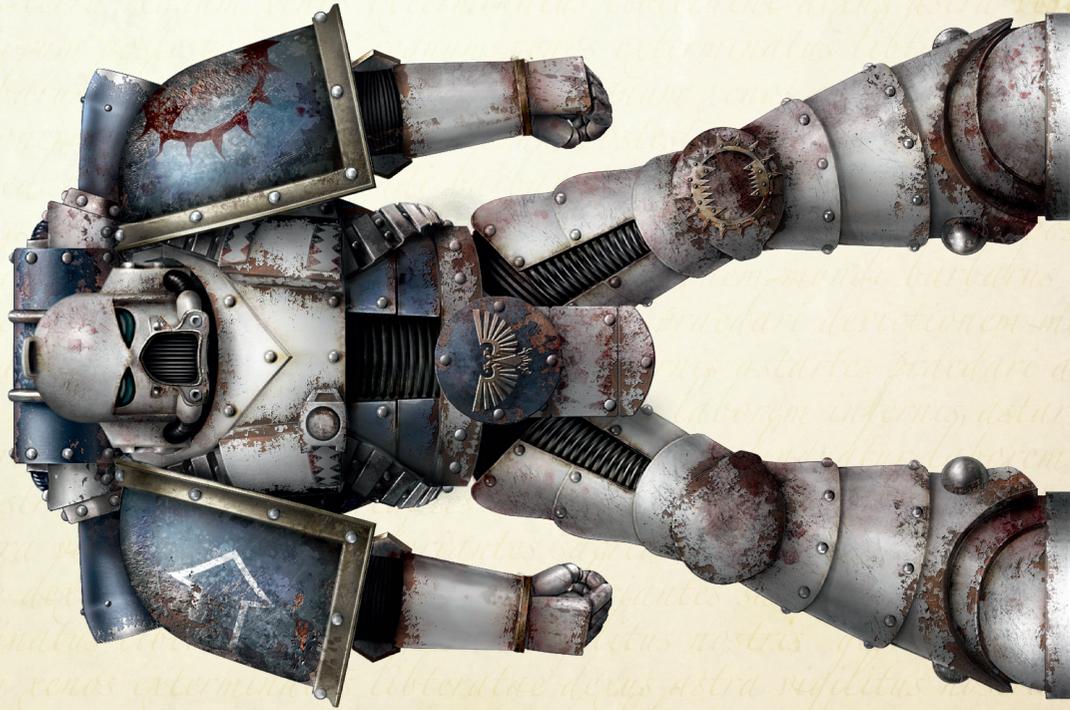


"Devourers" – World Eaters variant iconography



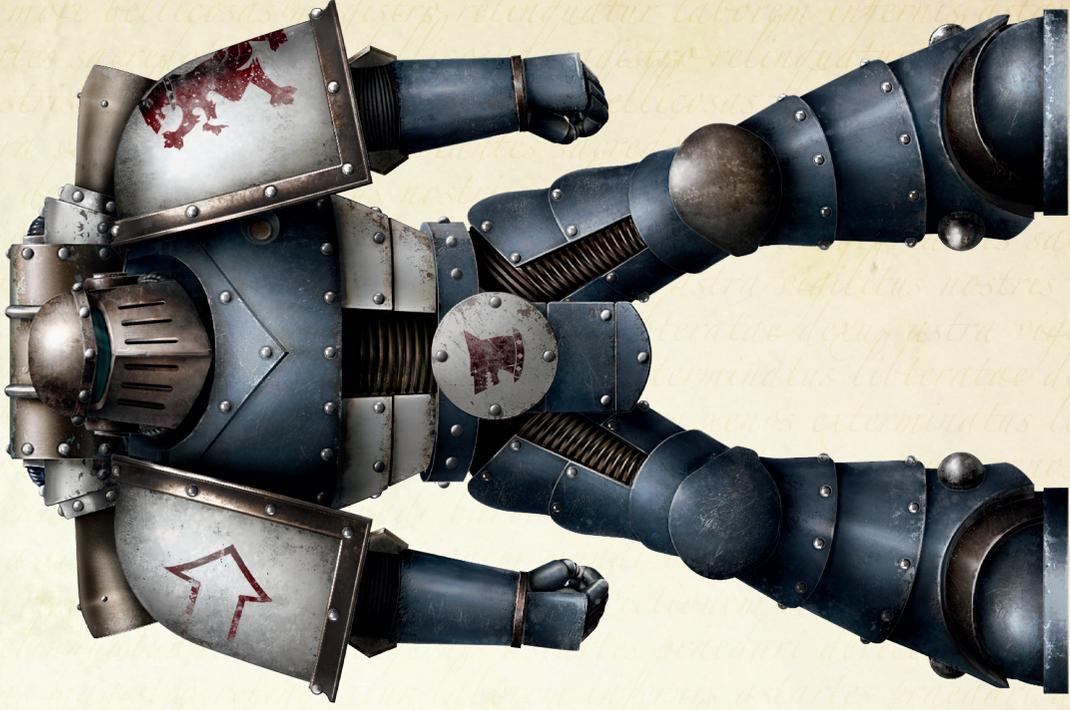
Unknown World Eaters Destroyer Legionary [Pict-capture Revash-Prime Assault]

The World Eaters were known to maintain a strong Destroyer cadre in their ranks, the Legion favouring their tactical use against monstrous xeno-forms and during extermination campaigns. Note: The Destroyer's 'Maximus' pattern armour has been subjected to radiation and thermic damage, most likely from the Destroyer's own weaponry. This Destroyer carries the 'Red Hand' across his faceplate, denoting an award for bloody victory by his commanding officer in his previous battle.



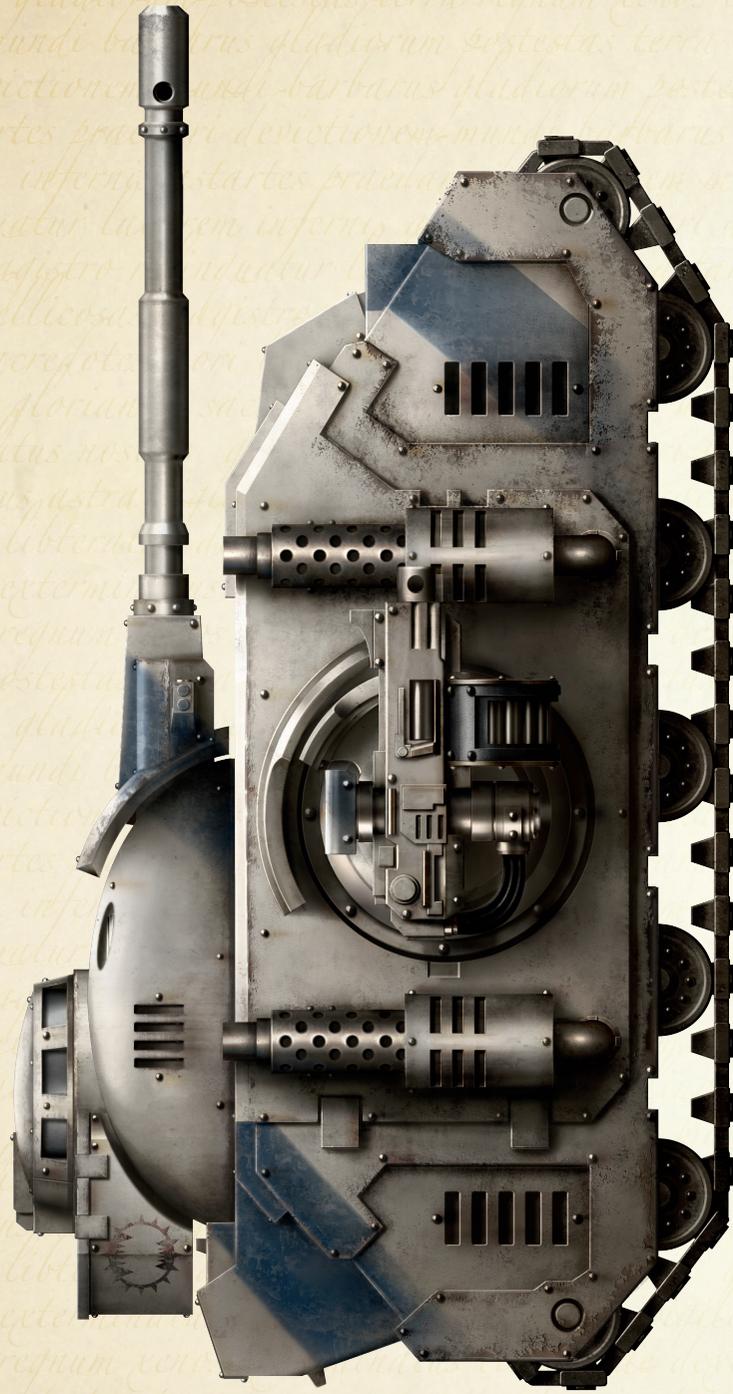
Loyalist World Eaters Legionary Mica Vulkov [Pict-capture Isstvan III Atrocity]

Vulkov was a section leader for a Tactical squad attached to the first wave on Isstvan, III managing to survive the virus bombardment by virtue of being engaged against Isstvanian rebels in the depths of a manufactory unit during the initial attack. Incensed to the point of madness by his Legion's betrayal, he fought relentlessly against them, finally falling fighting alongside loyalist Death Guard forces in the northern city zone. Note: Early issue 'Crusade' pattern armour with 'Sarum' type respiration mask.



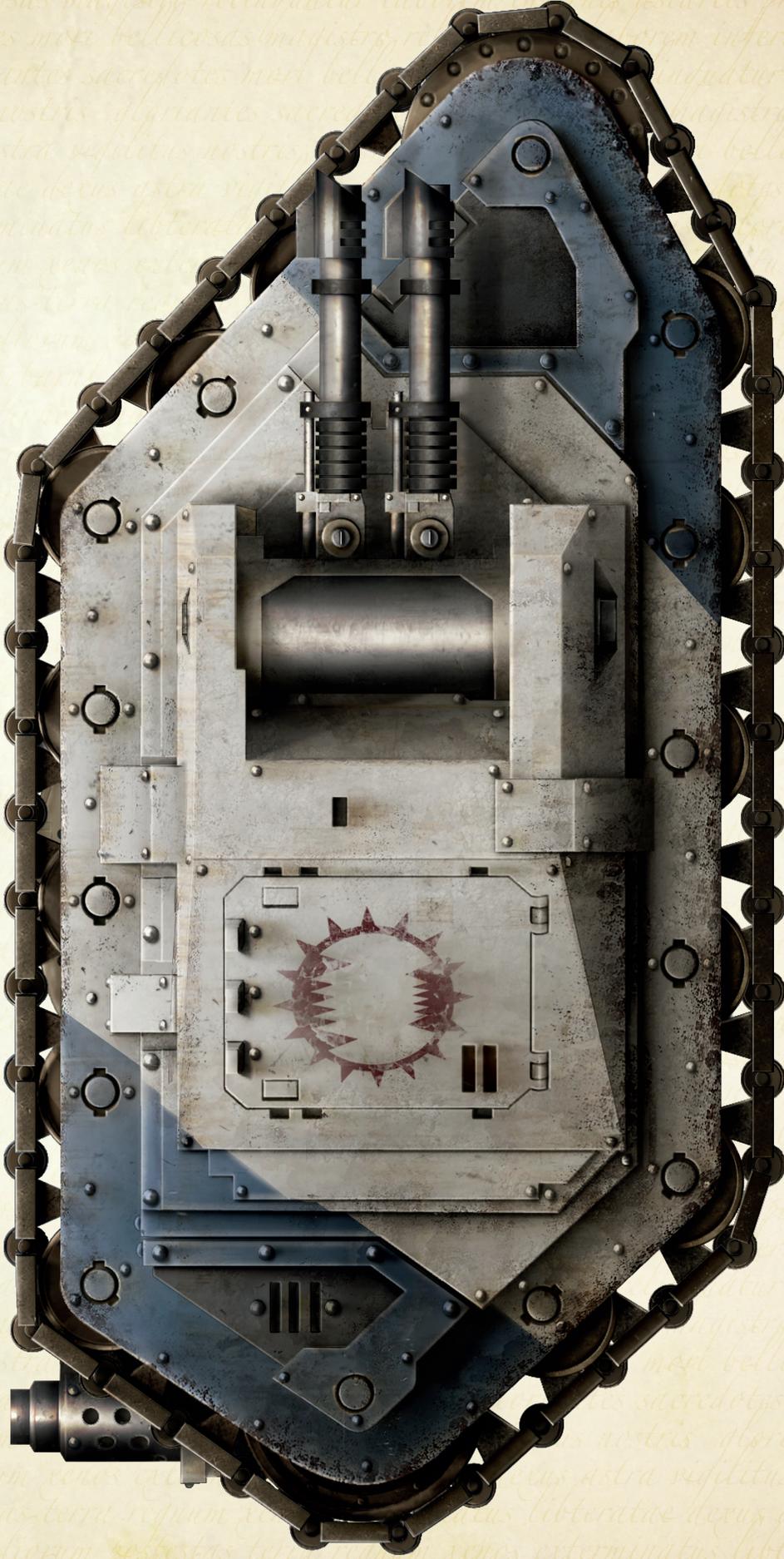
Historical Record – Panoply and Heraldry of the War Hounds Legion [Pict-capture Cerberus Suppression task force]

The War Hounds Legion were among the first to be equipped with the fully integrated and environmentally sealed version of power armour that would be later designated as 'Crusade' pattern.



World Eaters Legion Deimos Predator Tank [Pict-capture Revash-Prime Assault]

The Predator was a relatively uncommon armored vehicle within the World Eaters Legion compared to its extensive use in many other Space Marine forces. Where present in the Legion's dispositions it was typically employed in roving hunter-killer squadrons tasked to pursue and destroy enemy armour and other targets of opportunity rather than for infantry fire-support missions. Note: Standard 'Destructor' configuration.



World Eaters Legion Land Raider Proteus [Pict-capture Issrivan III Atrocity]

The most common heavy armour vehicle of the Space Marine Legions, various patterns of Land Raider were in service within the World Eaters Legion and used first and foremost in the role of assault transport. Note: This Land Raider Proteus has been retro-fitted with enhanced armoured sponson embrasures to increase protection for its primary lascannon armament.

Ember Wolves and Crimson Priests

Close-knit and often isolated as the World Eaters Legion was, it is important to note that it was not without its allies and support structures. Originally the make-up of the 13th Expeditionary fleet of which Angron had been placed in command had contained a number of auxiliary forces, although many of these would be destroyed by attrition or as punishment for their failures. One, the Legio Audax—or the Ember Wolves to give them their common name—would continue on to become synonymous with the World Eaters Legion. Originally a Vanguard Demi-Legio, comprising only of Scout class Titans of various types, the Legio had quickly developed an alarmingly savage and dangerous reputation, and was looked on as becoming almost bestial by the Titan Legions it fought alongside. The match of this savage set of semi-outcasts with the World Eaters was a natural one, and in battle the tendencies of both for brutal, direct assault married well together, although the close allegiance of the Ember Wolves to the Primarch Angron, over their distant Mechanicum masters was cause for growing concern for the Collegia Titanica. This matter only worsened with the breaking of the siege of Sarum by the 13th Expeditionary fleet in the opening action of the great Golgothan Slaughter.

Sarum was a besieged Age of Strife Mechanicum outpost with whom shaky and intermittent contact had been maintained for nearly a century. Its masters, the Tech-priests of the Redjak Covenant, had remained nominally loyal to Mars down the centuries, but had been forced by fighting a relentless battle for survival alone to become something many within the wider Mechanicum were deeply suspicious of—a highly militant and schismatic sub-faith with secrets of their own. The Redjak Mechanicum of Sarum quickly embraced their saviours, the World Eaters, as allies and swore to Angron and his Legion directly many oaths of fealty and entered into pacts of mutual protection and support.

For the World Eaters this provided the Legion and its Techmarines with a ready source of resupply and armament far outside the Imperium's inner spheres. This allowed, among other benefits, the reconstruction of the Legion's badly damaged flagship Battle Barge, the *Adamant Resolve* into the heavily-armoured *Conqueror*, fitted with arrays of Ursus Claw systems—great void-harpoons designed to spear enemy vessels and drag them within reach of bloody boarding actions. Smaller-scaled versions of these Ursus weapons would be modified to also arm the Warhound Titans of the Legio Audax and the World Eaters' assault Dreadnoughts in turn. As for the crimson Redjak Magos, in the World Eaters they gained powerful protectors who shielded them from the scrutiny of their erstwhile brother Mechanicum. Although as the Warmaster's rebellion drew close, this relationship prompted the suspicious Fabricator-general of Mars (and ally of Horus) to despatch Archmagos Veneratus Vel-Kheredar as representative to the World Eaters Legion both as spy and ambassador on the eve of the war.



Despite its risk and its costs, evidence exists that this psycho-surgery was embraced, not simply because it enhanced the fighting ability of the Space Marine who survived the implantation, but also because that by doing so the World Eaters believed it brought them closer to their Primarch spiritually, becoming one with his tortured soul and his rage.

LEGION COMMAND HIERARCHY

As the War Hounds, the XIIth Legion was known for its harsh enforcement of internal discipline and the hot-blooded temper of its Legionaries. Command within the Legion was gained through a mixture of martial prowess on the battlefield and displays of leadership on the front line, with specialists singled out by aptitude early on. No rank or role within the Legion was exempt from the expectation that they would fight as hard as the rest however, nor was the desire to grapple with a foe and cut them down by blade-stroke discouraged if the opportunity arose, be the Space Marine in question an Apothecary or Artillerist rather than a line fighter. Compared to many other Legions, order and discipline did not come as naturally to those of this gene-seed as might be expected—tempers seethed, slights perceived or real were met with anger and more often than not violence should their sense of honour be impugned. Any officer of the Legion knew they were expected to back up their commands by force if needed, and punish infractors by their own hands as was the Legion's way to disobey an order in battle was a death sentence to be carried out without delay. To the XIIth Legion life itself was war—a conflict that never ended from cradle to grave and the Legiones Astartes was this concept given its purest form. Failure in battle was not tolerated, surrender was never countenanced and mercy was a quick death delivered to a foe that had fought with bravery—cowards deserved no more than savage butchery in reward of their fear. This simple but resolutely brutal code of war was the Legion's article of faith and they extended it to both their own number and their enemy.

The arrival of the Primarch Angron brought a primitive, almost tribal unity to the newly renamed World Eaters, and he quickly became the pinnacle of warrior-hood to be aspired to for his Legion. Under his influence, the competitive, hot-blooded tension that had always roiled under the surface of the Legion's psyche was channelled and given form. Gladiatorial combat—never without blood spilled, and when taken to its extremes fatal, became

both the crux of the World Eaters' training, honing their individual battle skills to a razor's edge and a vital outlet for the pent-up aggression and frustrated bloodlust of the Legion between war zones. Trial by combat was also the Legion's preferred route of settling disagreements within its ranks, and bloodletting by warriors in open discord was an honourable thing both in Angron's eyes and that of his Legion. Here also could one of higher rank be challenged for the right to command, although such rare contests were always to the death. The most revered measure of this latter practice was membership of the Devourers. This cadre within the Legion was a dedicated bodyguard unit for the World Eaters' Primarch (whether he needed one is another matter). In battle they fought encased in Terminator armour and carried the most savage weapons the Legion possessed. This warrior band numbered only twelve members, and access to its ranks was only attained by defeating a Devourer in single combat to the death or, should one of its number fall in battle against an enemy, a successor was selected by a contest open to all in the Legion, only one of which would survive.

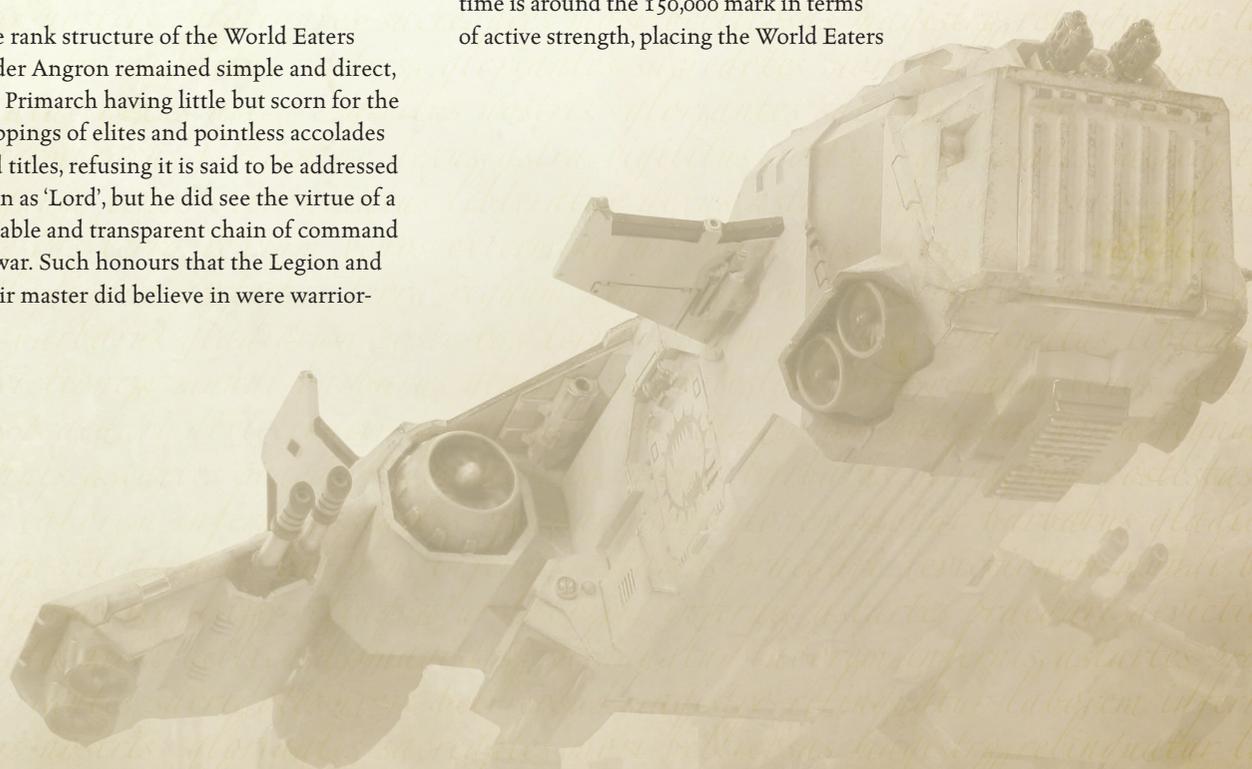
The rank structure of the World Eaters under Angron remained simple and direct, the Primarch having little but scorn for the trappings of elites and pointless accolades and titles, refusing it is said to be addressed even as 'Lord', but he did see the virtue of a reliable and transparent chain of command in war. Such honours that the Legion and their master did believe in were warrior-

marks of brotherhood and the scars of battle; these things transcended rank and spoke to the worth of the Space Marine beneath the armour. The sundered chains of one who had fought overwhelming odds and lived—an allusion that spoke to Angron's own bleak history, and the bloody handprint over the face or heart bestowed by a battle leader for a warrior whose fury had transcended that of his brothers—to the World Eaters these meant more than any mere bauble, title or trinket.

WAR DISPOSITION

At the time of the Isstvan III atrocity, a precise estimation of the World Eaters' fighting strength and disposition is impossible to make account of. It was known however to be well-supplied and supported both by the Ember Wolves Titan Legion and a fleet of at least sixty Capital class vessels. The Legion itself had been heavily engaged in near-continuous battle for decades, and had suffered huge casualty rates, and maintained a through-put of new recruits that not even the Warmaster was likely to have been able to keep track of. Our best estimates in their observed strength at this time is around the 150,000 mark in terms of active strength, placing the World Eaters

Legion in the higher-mid levels comparative to its contemporaries. Perhaps three quarters of this number accompanied their Primarch to Isstvan III and of these a full third were placed into the first attack wave, and betrayed unto their deaths on the surface. Of all the Legions that sacrificed a proportion of their own number on the surface of Isstvan III, the make-up and selection of the World Eaters force remains perhaps the most impenetrable to fathom in some regards. While many in the spearhead were indeed of Terran stock, others were not, and Terrans remained at Angron's side, nor were the rest entirely selected from those who had not elected for psycho-surgery, as indeed there were precious few such individuals remaining at this point. By whatever mechanism Angron chose, choose he did and tellingly, and after it became apparent that Horus' treacherous blow had not had its desired result, Angron defied the Warmaster and descended with his own to do his warriors the honour of killing them face-to-face.



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