



Index Astartes



A regular series
focusing on the
Imperium's finest
warriors, the
Space Marines of the
Adeptus Astartes.

KNOW THINE ENEMY

The Relictors
Space Marine Chapter

by Graham McNeill
& Andy Hoare

Founded to guard against the threat of the Traitor Legions attacking from the Eye of Terror, the Relictors were once counted among the most stalwart defenders of Humanity. Chaos is insidious, however, and a sinister secret now lurks at the heart of the Chapter, a secret that almost destroyed it and now threatens its very existence.

Origins

Originally designated the Fire Claws, the Relictors were founded during the dark days of the Age of Apostasy, or so it is believed; records of events during that strife-torn period are notoriously ambiguous and difficult to uncover. One transcription of the Mythos Angelica Mortis suggests that the Fire Claws may have been one of the so-called Astartes Praesus Chapters, a founding intended to bolster the defenses around the Eye of Terror by deploying 20 or so newly formed Chapters at strategically vital points in the region. The Fire Claws' fortress-monastery was based on an ancient Ramilies Class Star Fort in geostationary orbit around the world of Torva Minoris, and the Chapter served as part of the Imperium's defenses against the forces of Chaos for nigh on 5 millennia.

The Fire Claws are listed in the annals of Imperial history on many occasions and have taken part in many glorious victories. Not least among those conflicts were the Purging of the Cult of the Inner Eye, the First Siege of Cocalus, and the Albrecht IV Landings. The Fire Claws were also part of the relief force that made possible the evacuation of the millions-strong crusade army of Warmaster Hendrik during his ill-fated expedition into the Wheel of Fire, far from the Eye of Terror.

In the middle of the 9th century of the 41st millennium, the Emperor's Tarot revealed the existence of a badly damaged space hulk emerging from the Warp near the forge world of Stygies in the Segmentum Obscurus. The Fire Claws mobilized to intercept it. The hulk, codified as the *Captor of Sin*, contained a renegade Warband led by a Tzeentchian Chaos Champion known as the Excoriator. The Fire Claws' Strike Cruisers crippled the vessel as it entered the Stygies system, and Terminator Assault Squads led by Librarian Decario and the shadowy figure of Inquisitor De Marche stormed the vessel. Realizing they were doomed, the renegades made their stand in the cavern-sized engine room where furious battle was joined and Decario and de Marche fought the Excoriator.

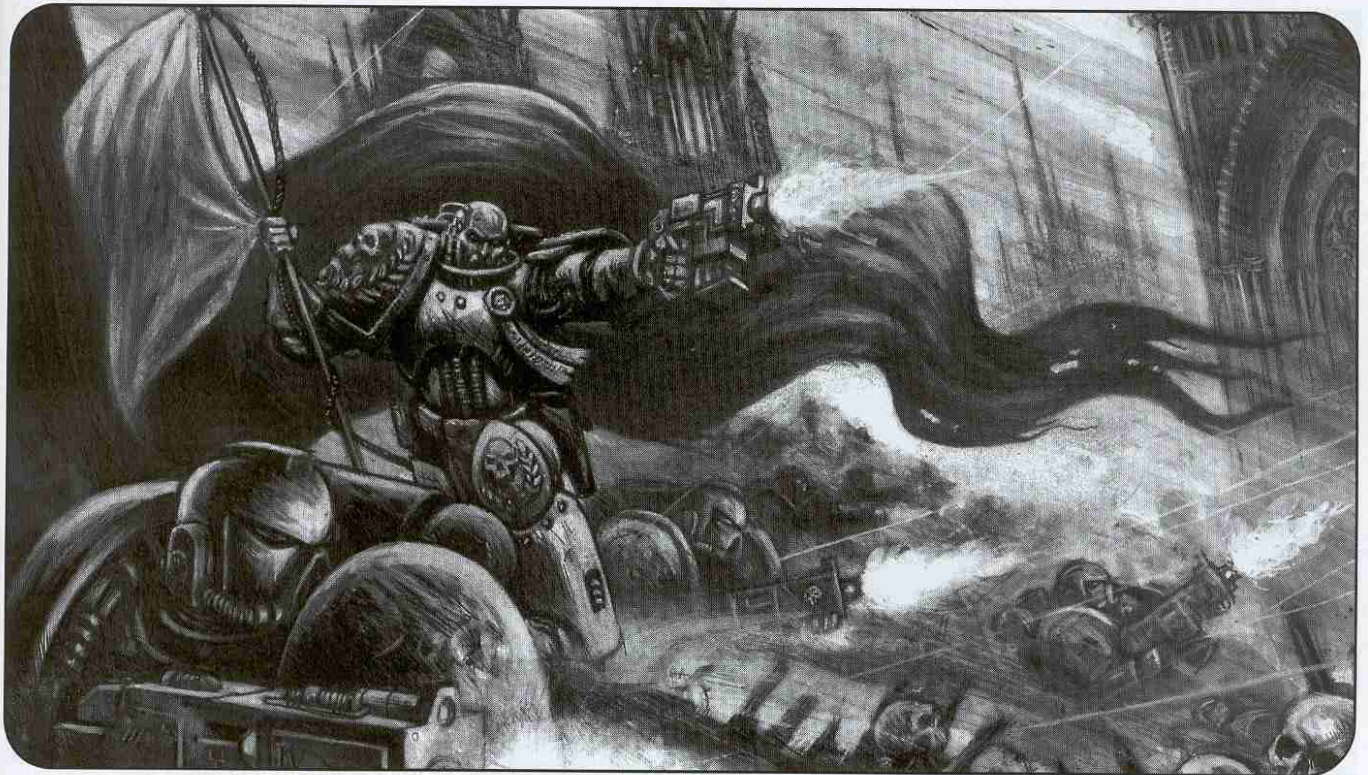
The Champion was a mighty warrior and carried a weapon forged in the heart of the Eye of Terror, a terrible Daemon Sword with the essence of a Greater Daemon bound in its unearthly steel. The Inquisitor hacked at the Champion

with his power axe, but the unnatural armor of the Excoriator was impervious to his blows. The Chaos Champion retaliated, his Daemon Weapon easily cutting through De Marche's armor and grievously wounding him. With another strike, the Excoriator shattered Decario's force sword and laid open his Terminator armor. Decario staggered but struck back with his power fist, ripping the Champion's sword arm from its socket in a welter of blood. Even mortally wounded and unarmed, the Champion fought with hideous ferocity, smashed the Librarian to the ground, and slaughtered four Terminators. Decario muttered a prayer to the Emperor, reached for the nearest weapon, and struck the Champion. The Excoriator's head left his shoulders. Decario realized that he had picked up the Daemon sword and killed the Champion with his own weapon.

Decario was filled with a sense of utter purpose as he wielded the Chaos sword and instinctively felt that it was a weapon that could be turned against his enemy. The wounded De Marche cautioned the Librarian to put the weapon down and that only he was trained to handle such artifacts. The Librarian handed the Inquisitor the weapon, and the Space Marines returned to their ship. They left behind an Adeptus Mechanicus team to search the hulk for any archeotech.

De Marche explained that he also believed that such weapons could be used to fight Chaos and should not be destroyed out of hand as was current Imperial policy. With the aid of Decario, De Marche was able to convince the Fire Claws' Chapter Master not to destroy the weapon, and under De Marche's guidance, the Fire Claws embarked on a crusade to explore the worlds around the Eye of Terror and uncover more such relics. Over the decades that followed, many such artifacts were discovered, and the Fire Claws Chapter became known as the Relictors.

However, it was only a matter of time before others discovered the Relictors' practice of using Chaos weapons in battle. A cell of Inquisitors backed up by the fleets of no less than four Chapters of Space Marines and an Emperor Class Battleship descended upon the Relictors' fortress-monastery and demanded they hand over De Marche and all recovered



Chaos artifacts or be destroyed. Faced with destruction, the Chapter had no choice but to obey. As penance for dealing with heretical weaponry, the Chapter was dispatched on a century-long penitent crusade. De Marche was taken by the Inquisitors and executed as a heretic.

As part of their crusade, the Relictors took part in the Third War for Armageddon. There, the Chapter was publicly criticized, as the majority of its warriors concentrated their efforts in the equatorial jungle, particularly in the region surrounding Angron's Monolith, despite repeated requests for assistance elsewhere.

Home World

Torva Minoris, the Relictors' home world, is situated in an area of the Segmentum Obscurus notorious for the intensity of the Warp storms afflicting it, and it is believed the world was trapped within such a storm throughout the early years of the Chapter's founding. A plague of Warp storms affected the Imperium during the Age of Apostasy, during which invasion and insurrection were rife. The area surrounding the Torva system was so ravaged by the taint of the storms that frequent pogroms are, to this day, carried out to ensure instances of mutation within the population do not rise above tolerable levels.

Torva Minoris is a satellite of the massive, blood red gas giant Torva Prime and is classified by the Administratum as a Feral world. The population consists of superstitious savages who worship the Relictors as

emissaries of the God-Emperor when the Chapter visits them, once a generation, to carry off the most promising young warriors to its "sky fortress." The tribes are known to revere the artifacts carried by the Space Marines as divine weaponry that can be wielded only by true and worthy servants of the Emperor, an attitude that has become a part of Chapter dogma.

The "sky fortress" is the Relictors' fortress-monastery, a massive Ramilles Class Star Fort that orbits Torva Minoris. Few emissaries are known to have returned from the fortress, but those few who survive speak of a monastery wreathed in perpetual gloom, where acolytes toil within locked cells to transcribe ancient, some say forbidden, texts as part of their training to become Brothers of the Chapter. One such report, recounted by the notorious Heretic Archivist of the Gethsemane Reclusium, tells of the existence of a chamber deep within the fortress, sealed behind stasis fields and protected by the most potent of wards. Exactly what is held within this chamber is unknown, but the account speaks of a miasma of evil that leaks through the meter-thick adamantium blast doors despite the safeguards. The Heretic Archivist's writings suggest that the original witness was driven insane by what he saw and died a slow, painful death within the torture chambers of the Ordo Malleus.

After the Inquisition censured the Relictors for the actions of Inquisitor de Marche, the Chapter lost its feudal rights to Torva Minoris, which meant that the Relictors could no longer recruit from its feral tribes. The Relictors were thus

forced to gather potential acolytes from among the populations they encountered during their penitent crusade. The Inquisition has ruled that no Adeptus Astartes Chapter may recruit from Torva Minoris, and it is believed the Ordo Malleus keeps a close watch on the world to ensure that this ruling is followed. The superstitious natives of Torva Minoris now believe the God-Emperor has forsaken them, and every year, their ceremonies of abasement grow more extreme in their attempts to atone for whatever fault has caused the emissaries of the Emperor to turn from them.





Combat Doctrine

The Relictors follow the Codex Astartes as far as overall organization is concerned, but it has been noted that they have strayed from approved doctrine in a number of other areas.

The major difference between the Chapter's combat doctrine and that of any other is in its use of captured enemy weapons. Many Chapters indulge in trophy taking, but the Relictors have in the past gone out of their way to capture, master, and utilize weapons taken from the forces of Chaos. Despite the evident consequences of Inquisitorial sanction, they are thought by some to be continuing this practice.

Another notable feature of the Chapter's doctrine is the inclusion of more Librarians than is usual, a feature some observers have attributed to the Relictors' proximity to the Eye of Terror. To date, the Inquisition has not acted on this information, though with the Chapter's recent conduct on Armageddon, it will doubtless be led to investigate further.

In terms of battlefield tactics, many Imperial Commanders who have fought beside the Chapter have voiced concerns about its behavior. It has been noted on many occasions that the Relictors will embark upon a specific course of action only if it meets some criterion of which only they are aware. It is obvious that they follow an agenda that only they are party to and will often fight alongside other Imperial forces only if that agenda may be furthered. This almost monomaniac pursuit of their own objectives was evident in the Chapter's actions at Armageddon, where it answered the general call to defend the world from the Ork invasion but ignored all specific instructions and requests, despite the fact that those orders originated from Commander Dante of the Blood Angels himself.

Organization

The Relictors conform, at first appearance, to the organization of a standard Codex Chapter, with 10 companies divided into a standard mix of Battle, Assault, Tactical, Devastator, and Scout Companies. However, in the

higher echelons of the Chapter, many differences become apparent. The Chapter's command ranks are gathered together in a group known as the Conclave, and every decision concerning the Chapter's deployment and operational doctrine is made here. Only those proven in combat and of guaranteed purity are permitted to rise to become members of the Conclave and privy to the true nature of the Chapter. As a warrior rises through the ranks, he is gradually initiated deeper into the Chapter's mysteries. When he is judged worthy to join the Conclave, the truth about the powerful weapons wielded by its senior officers is finally revealed. It is these warriors who, after many days praying and expunging all impurities from their souls, are permitted to carry the Chapter's Daemon weapons into battle. The Chapter's Librarians, which are much more numerous than those in a normal Chapter, screen potential initiates and reject all but the strongest candidates.

In battle, the Chapter fights with a balanced mixture of forces, appropriate to the given threat, and deviates little from standard battlefield operation. Only when members of the Conclave take to the field of battle do the Relictors become something much more sinister. Senior members of the Chapter employ the weapons of the enemy against them, and individual squads carry unholy artifacts and use the power of Chaos against its foul minions.

Beliefs

Central to the Relictors' ideology is the tenet that Chaos is not inherently evil but is merely a power that may be turned against those who wield it for evil. This belief manifests in the Chapter's use of captured Daemon Weapons but also extends to their increased reliance on Librarians. As a relatively new Chapter, the Relictors display a confidence of youth that borders on arrogance, as they believe that they have the strength of will and faith to resist the corruption of Chaos. They disdain those who lack the courage to use such artifacts and claim that Chaos is a weapon like any other. The evil that threatens the galaxy warrants the use of such weapons.

The Librarians and Chaplains of the Relictors teach that a warrior who is armored in faith can withstand the temptations of Chaos, and it is their belief that they possess sufficient faith to do so. They believe it is their sworn duty to hunt down such artifacts and study them so that they might better understand the enemy. This attitude has often caused disagreement between the Relictors and other, more conventional Imperial organizations, but thus far open conflict has been avoided.

ARTEKUS BARDANE - CHAPTER MASTER OF THE RELICTORS

A fierce warrior from the wilds of Torva Minoris, Artekus Bardane was the son of a battle chieftain and learned the art of war as soon as he could hold a sword. On Torva Minoris, a child learned to fight quickly or died, and this resulted in a warrior people, living a precarious existence plundering neighboring clans for sustenance. Bardane's confidence and courage allowed him to best his rivals easily, and he was chosen by the Librarians of the Relictors to become a Space Marine. Bardane quickly adapted to the ways of the Imperium and its weapons of war.

His supreme confidence - some would say overbearing arrogance - saw him rise rapidly through the ranks of the Chapter, and he accepted each new mystery revealed to him by the Conclave with ease. His skill in mastering the weapons and artifacts of Chaos led to his command of a company that penetrated deep into the Eye of Terror on a mission to hunt down and capture Chaos weaponry. On the world of Eidolon, Artekus defeated a mighty Champion of Slaanesh: took up his accursed weapon, a screaming flail of daemonic faces; and destroyed the fiend's Warband with the howling Daemon Weapon.

The Screaming Flail was placed in stasis at the heart of the Relictors' fortress-monastery, where it is kept until needed. Before wielding the Daemon Weapon, its bearer must spend many days in penitent fasting and prayer, purifying his soul and steeling his faith to

resist the whispered imprecations of the imprisoned Daemon within. Artekus Bardane continued to serve with great distinction, earned higher ranks, learned more of the Chapter's secrets, and unearthed more and more Chaos artifacts. After the destruction of the Cult of the Scarlet Vein, a bloody battle, which only Artekus survived, Bardane was finally elevated to the rank of Chapter Master at the recommendation of his predecessor, who was mortally wounded in the final battle against the Cult.

When the call for aid came from Armageddon, the Relictors mobilized their entire Chapter and set off for the system-spanning conflict. Artekus ordered his Captains to gather their warriors, and the entire Chapter journeyed to the war-torn world. Artekus led his men deep into the heart of the equatorial jungle, where he believed the greatest potential lay for the study of Chaos, given that the cursed monolith of Angron squatted in its haunted depths. All through the war for Armageddon, the Relictors remained within the depths of the jungle, famously refusing even the personal commands of Commander Dante of the Blood Angels. When the war on Armageddon drew to a close, the Librarians of the Relictors claimed to have had visions of a giant eye, dripping with blood, and Artekus immediately withdrew his Chapter from the war zone.

Following the Conclave's vision, Artekus began the journey towards the Eye of Terror.

Gene-Seed

The source of the Relictors' gene-seed is largely based on gene stock taken from the laboratorium on Mars and is thought to be composed of that grown from the Ultramarines and Dark Angels. If this is the case, then it would appear that the reluctance of the High Lords of Terra to sanction the usage of Dark Angels' gene-seed in the creation of new Chapters has relaxed somewhat. There are no recorded instances of unacceptable levels of mutation in the Relictors' gene-seed, though given their work with the powers of the Warp, the Apothecaries and Librarians maintain close watch on the purity of their Battle Brothers for any signs of aberration. It is rumored that zygotes that display mutation are allowed to mature before implantation into a host organism in order that the Apothecaries might better study the workings of Chaos on the flesh and how best to defeat it. The source and veracity of these rumors are unclear. In all likelihood, they are the product of a fevered imagination.

Battle-Cry

"Strength of will, courage of will!"

THE THIRD WAR FOR ARMAGEDDON

When the Ork Warlord Ghazghkull Mag Uruk Thraka led the largest Ork invasion in many centuries against the Hive world of Armageddon, the Relictors were among the first of the more than 20 Space Marine Chapters to rush to its aid. Commander Dante of the Blood Angels took overall command of the Chapters present, and each was used to the best of its abilities towards the goal of pushing back the millions-strong Ork horde.

Alone of all the Chapters, the Relictors did not acknowledge the authority of Commander Dante or of any other Imperial leader. Dante was far more forgiving in this regard than General Kurov and others, who publicly decried the Relictors as oath-breakers, after the majority of the Chapter spent most their time on Armageddon engaged in operations of their own in the vicinity of Angron's Monolith. The equatorial jungle in this area is dark and twisted. The only living creatures frequenting it are the Feral Ork tribes who were said to perform dark ceremonies beneath the gloomy jungle canopy.

As the first phase of the campaign drew to a close and the Season of Fire approached, a

cease fire of sorts was achieved, with both sides digging in to weather the coming storms. Many Space Marine Chapters withdrew, as their lightning attack style of warfare was of less relevance in this new stage of the war. First to withdraw were the Relictors, who, with no explanation whatsoever, emerged from the jungle, boarded their Thunderhawk gunships and simply left. Imperial Navy picket ships in orbit challenged them, and a violent confrontation between supposed allies was only narrowly avoided when Commander Dante ordered the pickets to stand down and allow the Relictors' ships to rendezvous with their fleet.

The next time the Relictors were seen was 1 month later, when they arrived at the orbital shipyards of Belis Corona and demanded a complete resupply of their entire fleet. After some tense altercations with officious Departamento Munitorum officials, the Chapter's demands were acceded to, and their ships were resupplied. With no further explanation, the Chapter left in the direction of the Cadian Gate.

Nothing has been heard of them since.

USING A RELICTORS ARMY IN WARHAMMER 40,000

A Relictors force is selected from *Codex: Space Marines*, with the following additions and amendments. You will also need *Codex: Chaos Space Marines* to use the wargear options.

SPECIAL RULES

Outcasts: A Relictors force may not take allies (such as DeathWatch, Assassins, etc), with the exception of Radical Daemonhunters from *Codex: Daemonhunters*.

DAEMON WEAPONS

One character in the army may be designated the bearer of a single Daemon Weapon at a cost of 25 points, which counts against his wargear limit. Note that the rule requiring a character to bear a specific Mark of Chaos is waived in this case. Daemon Weapons come in many forms. Their effects may vary a great deal, but the weapons described in *Codex: Chaos Space Marines* are a good cross-section and can be used to represent the type of weapon the Relictors might use. Roll a D6 before the game begins to determine what type of weapon he carries. Rules for these items can be found in *Codex: Chaos Space Marines*.

D6 ROLL WEAPON

1	Dark Blade
2	Dread Axe
3	Axe of Khorne*
4	Pandemic Staff
5	Needle of Desire
6	Warp Blade

CHAOS RELICS

Just as the senior members of the Relictors bear Daemon Weapons to war, so too does the Chapter make use of captured banners, icons, and standards. Its members believe that the unholy powers bound within these relics can be turned upon their erstwhile masters. A single Standard Bearer (i.e., a member of a Command Squad) may be equipped with a Chaos standard, at the cost of +50 points. Roll on the following table before the game to determine which relic is available.

D6 ROLL RELIC

1	Icon of Chaos Undivided**
2	Icon of Chaos Undivided**
3	Banner of Rage
4	Plague Banner
5	Rapturous Standard
6	Blasted Standard

*The Axe of Khorne counts as a Daemon Weapon in the hands of a Relictor.

**The Icon of Chaos Undivided confers no Daemon Summoning ability, but any unit or model within 6" becomes Fearless.)