

The members of Deathwatch kill-teams are drawn from many different Space Marine Chapters. Here Graham McNeill looks into the history of one of its most feared leaders, Battle Brother Artemis.

DEFENDER OF THE IMPERIUM

THE ORIGINS OF BATTLE BROTHER ARTEMIS

Protecting the Imperium from the corruption of alien races, the Deathwatch forms the Chamber Militant of the Ordo Xenos. Its members are drawn from many different Chapters of Space Marines, all of whom have sworn sacred oaths to maintain specially trained alien fighters and stand ready to deploy them at a moment's notice.

These warriors are banded together to form Ordo Xenos kill-teams and come under the command of an Inquisitor, though in some cases a Space

Marine Captain may assume command if circumstances dictate.

Battle Brother Artemis is a veteran of a hundred campaigns and his bravery is beyond question. He was recruited into the ranks of the Adeptus Astartes almost a century ago from the feral world of

Posul, a night world shrouded in almost perpetual darkness. The fierce nomadic tribes that inhabit this bleak world are locked in a state of constant warfare, fighting terrible battles and feasting on the flesh of the dead. A bloodthirsty caste of warrior monks rules the tribes and preaches a culture of death worship, their philosophy being that an enemy's strength can be harvested by the eating of his flesh. Death in battle is the goal of every warrior, as he believes that he will be taken to the Hall of Victors to sit at the feast table of the Ultimate Warrior, a divine being who embodies the pinnacle of fighting prowess.

Warriors picked from the strongest tribes are recruited by the Chaplains of the Mortifactors, who were once warrior monks amongst the tribesmen. Even as a youth, Artemis was one of the greatest warriors of his tribe and he paved the floor of his fathers' lodge with the skeletons of the many enemies he killed. His courage and ferocity in battle was unmatched and it was inevitable that many would seek his death to harvest his bravery. Artemis slew all who came for him until at last he was ambushed and set upon by fifty warriors from an enemy tribe. The young Artemis killed them all, but took a score of

wounds, each one grievous enough to kill a man outright. It was here, atop a pile of corpses, that the Chaplains of the Mortifactors found the body of Artemis who, despite his wounds, still lived. This was taken as a great omen for his future and the Chapter's Apothecaries returned to their fortress monastery with the wounded youth to begin the process that would transform him into a Space Marine.

As a full battle brother, Artemis quickly distinguished himself, showing a talent and zeal for the destruction of aliens which earned him a place within the specially trained alien fighters who stand ready to deploy at the behest of the Deathwatch. It was thirteen years before that call came and, when it did, he had perfected the art of killing aliens.



Artemis ritually repainted his armour in the colours of the Deathwatch, leaving only a single shoulder plate with the Chapter symbol of the Mortifactors. In the service of Inquisitor Severnius, Artemis first saw action against a Genestealer cult on the Missionary world of St Capilene, where the prompt action of the kill-team undoubtedly saved the world from falling under cult domination. Inquisitor Severnius personally praised Artemis' bravery and appointed him second in command of the kill-team.

For two decades Artemis fought alongside Inquisitor Severnius, rooting out alien corruption and destroying alien influenced cults wherever they were discovered. On Varnix Prime, Artemis recovered crystalline weaponry now associated with the race of aliens known as the Psy-Gore of Persus. The nocturnal warriors of the Hrud were thwarted in their scheme to capture an Adeptus Mechanicus base and countless nests of Orks were exterminated by the kill-team.

On the agri world of Tarrenhorst, Artemis and Severnius discovered an infestation of warp creatures that had psychically enslaved the entire population. The discovery came not a moment too soon as the creatures attempted to dominate the psyche of the kill-team and bend them to their will. Severnius detected the attempt and was able to shield the minds of his team, but not before three Space Marines succumbed to the warp entities' powers and turned their bolt guns on the kill-team. Bolter rounds filled the air and a further two Space Marines were cut down by the gunfire. Ignoring the hail of shells, Artemis hacked down one of his erstwhile allies with a single blow from his power sword and the kill-team formed a defensive circle as the planet's inhabitants and their alien-dominated comrades fell upon them. Artemis, Severnius and the two remaining Space Marines of the kill-team fought their way clear of the trap and were able to barricade themselves within a small temple dedicated to the Emperor in the town's main square. Severnius was drawn and pale, the effort of maintaining the psychic shield draining his reserves of strength rapidly while the three Space Marines desperately held off the enslaved inhabitants and their possessed brothers.

For six days the kill-team defended themselves against their frenzied attackers until they were finally able to



Brother Artemis, ready to protect the Imperium from any threat.

contact their orbiting ship to despatch a Thunderhawk gunship to rescue them from the surface. Before the gunship could land, the weakened Severnius was killed by one of the enslaved Space Marines and command of the kill-team passed to Artemis. Together with the Inquisitor's body, Artemis and his battle brothers fought their way aboard the gunship and departed the doomed world. Once on their ship, Artemis ordered the planet bombarded with cyclonic torpedoes from orbit, knowing it was the only way to be sure that the Enslavers were destroyed. Artemis and the surviving members of the kill-team returned to the Inquisition fortress of Talasa Prime in the Ultima Segmentum whereupon he was assigned command of the kill-team and given fresh warriors to reinforce his squad.

Artemis continues to serve in the Deathwatch, following the stench of the xenomorph wherever he discovers it. His investigations lead him to the darkest recesses of the galaxy and his talent for unveiling the hidden corruption of alien influence borders on the uncanny. Artemis has dedicated his life to the protection of the Imperium from the threat of alien domination, and there are many worlds in the galaxy which owe their continued existence to his efforts.

