

CHAPTER II: HONOUR THY ANCESTORS

“When death comes for you, when the Bell of Lost Souls tolls your demise across the ages, do not go to the Emperor’s side mourning the passing of your life. Die with pride, for you did so with honour in the name of the Emperor and the Primarchs. Sing your death song, write the final lines of your saga, discharge your death oath. Do all of these things not as if you take your leave of this life, but as if you are returning home.”

—Deathwatch Chaplain Titus Strome,
at the departure of Strike Force Blizzard

This chapter presents the legends of some of the most celebrated Deathwatch Battle-Brothers ever to have stood the Long Watch in the Jericho Reach. The names and deeds of these individuals are known to every Deathwatch warrior serving in the Reach and perhaps even beyond it. Their battles are recounted in the sermons of the Chaplains and shrines have been built to honour them at Erioch.

These legends serve to flesh out the history of the Deathwatch in the Jericho Reach and represent the pinnacle of service to which the Player Characters might aspire. The events described in this chapter begin with one of the very earliest historical records known to relate to the Deathwatch in the Jericho Reach, and the last took place in the final months of 816.M41.

The bulk of each entry describes, for the benefit of the Game Master, the most well-known facts of the legendary figures in question. These accounts are written for a perspective of privileged, but not omnipotent, wisdom, meaning that there are always plenty of mysteries left to explore. This allows the Game Master to invent additional details to suit his campaign and it inspires players to fill in the gaps. It also means that the figures maintain their legendary character, lifting them higher even than the already vaunted ranks of the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch.

Having covered the history, the next segment of each entry is a description of the primary figures that lived it, generally featuring something of their background, service in the Deathwatch, and a little about their characters. These figures should serve as exemplars for the Player Characters, but they are not always mighty heroes known for the countless battles they have fought. In many cases, being a hero is about performing a single deed, and simply being the right warrior in the right place at the right time. This is something most Player Characters should be able to relate to, and something the Game Master should keep in mind when designing missions for the group.

Each entry contains details of the relics that have come to be associated with the legendary figures, many of which the Player Characters will no doubt wish to field in combat or to utilise in some other way. The last entry is an exception

to this, in that no relics are presented, for a reason that will become clear when that passage is read.

Lastly, each entry includes an sidebar concerning the Kill-team’s legacy. This takes the form of ideas the Game Master might like to use to take these venerable heroes out of the pages of history and have them play a part in the campaigns he is running for his group. Should the players wish to follow in the footsteps of their honoured ancestors, the Heroic Legacy Package associated with each historic Kill-team is presented here. These packages correspond to one of the Heroic Legacy Packages found in **Chapter III**. At the Game Master’s discretion, a Kill-team wishing to follow the example of one of the Kill-teams in this chapter may purchase the Heroic Legacy Package associated with that historic Kill-team.

DEATHWATCH RELICS

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in the rules text, all of the relics presented throughout this section count as “Deathwatch Relics,” even those clearly associated with a particular Chapter. This is because the relics have become relics very much through their relevance to the Deathwatch, and in many cases the original Chapter has granted its blessing for the item to remain at Watch Fortress Erioch. This means that any Battle-Brother can use the items, not just ones from the same Chapter as the original bearer. Cunning Game Masters might like to consider the ramifications of seemingly incongruous combinations, such as a Space Wolves Battle-Brother taking up a relic once carried by a Dark Angels hero, but such things should not get in the way of the game.



THE FIRST MARTYR

“The first accessible record pertaining to Watch Fortress Erioch available to this Clearance level: Balthazar Ho’Tsun, Master of the Vigil, Captain of the Imperial Fists, has died in an action in the Slinnar Drift. The enemy engaged and other forces involved are not recorded.”

—Notes from the *Liber Eriochus*, 267.M35

The tale of the so-called “First Martyr” is no less than a legend amongst the Deathwatch of the Jericho Reach. To the vast majority of those that serve on Watch Fortress Erioch or the various Watch Stations seeded across the Reach and beyond, the First Martyr is a figure of awe akin to a saint; he is a hero of yore to whom prayers are cast on the eve of battle. Watch Fortress Erioch is host to numerous shrines dedicated to Brother Captain Balthazar, as well as one major chapel, within which reside the relics associated with this mighty Space Marine and his brethren. Each is well attended, the First Martyr’s name and deeds recounted at the Hours so that they may never be forgotten – or so the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch believe.

In truth, what is said of the First Martyr is but a fraction of the whole story, details of which are locked securely within the data-crypts of the Watch Fortress and known only to those with sufficiently high clearance to access them. As is so often the case within the labyrinthine power structures of the Imperium, even these are but one facet of the truth. Rather, different ranks within the Deathwatch and the Inquisition are granted access to different elements of the truth, so that only the most highly positioned officers of both bodies have access to the entire story.

The core of the legend of the First Martyr relates to a mission undertaken by a Deathwatch kill-team before the fall of the old Jericho Sector. The Imperium at large possesses very few reliable records of this era, and those held by the Deathwatch are mainly secured behind impenetrable data-gates deep within Watch Fortress Erioch. The basics of the legend are recounted so frequently within the Watch Fortress that every Deathwatch Battle-Brother that serves a vigil of the Long Watch there soon comes to learn them by rote. These basics are as follows.

A BROTHER UNPARALLELED

The First Martyr was a Battle-Brother of the Imperial Fists, a veteran of that celebrated Chapter’s first company and a warrior who had fought every enemy known to mankind, as well as many whose names were never learned before they were erased from history. Brother Balthazar Ho’Tsun fought in the Feast of Blades and won out against all challengers, in so doing earning great honour for his Chapter and coming to the attention of those serving in the Deathwatch. One such witness petitioned the Chapter Master of the Imperial Fists to release this mighty warrior into the service of the Deathwatch, and a year later, Ho’Tsun took the Apocryphon Oath at Watch Fortress Erioch.

