

IRON HANDS

"Only when by the power of our hate we have truly shed the prison of our flesh, shall we be judged worthy to stand at the side of the returned Primarch. Every foe I slay, every stone I cast down, makes my hatred purer, and the day Ferrus Manus is restored to us a day closer."

—Iron Father Klaanu Johar

The Iron Hands were created by the Emperor as the tenth Legion, forged in fire and war to bring the light of humanity to the long lost human worlds scattered across the galaxy. When the Horus Heresy erupted and plunged the nascent Imperium into total war, the Iron Hands Legion was far from Terra and unable to intervene directly. Primarch Ferrus Manus was enraged by the weakness of the other Legions, and by his inability to fight the traitors. He gathered together his most veteran troops and departed for the Istvaan system. It was there that the traitor Primarchs, Warmaster Horus first among them, revealed the full extent of their treachery. They ambushed the Iron Hands, the Raven Guard and the Salamanders, and although the three loyal Legions fought valiantly, Ferrus Manus himself was lost. Their enemies proclaimed the Iron Hands' Primarch dead upon the blasted wastes of Istvaan V, the Chapter refuses to accept this for nobody was ever recovered. For 10,000 years, the sons of Ferrus Manus have stoked the unquenchable fires of hatred, drawing strength from their bitterness and awaiting the day of their Primarch's return.

DARK MEDUSA

The Iron Hands hail from the gloomy, polluted world of Medusa, which lies perilously close to the Eye of Terror. The skies of this planet are dark and ash-choked, and the lands barren and blasted. Great mountain chains rear above the land, the peaks of countless volcanoes so high that they pierce the black clouds and illuminate them from within as if by the fires of hell itself. The poles are cold and savage, and the Land of Shadows is an eerily silent region strewn with alien ruins seemingly as old as the planet itself.

The people of Medusa are truly the product of their home world. Harsh and unforgiving in their nature, the natives of the planet are hardy and fierce and brook no weakness whatsoever in their ranks. Those who are too weak or sick to survive without aid voluntarily surrender themselves to the elements so that they impose no drain on what scant resources exist. The people organise themselves into nomadic clans, and while in times gone by they trudged the land on foot or on the backs of sturdy beasts, now they travel in vast processions of ramshackle tracked vehicles as large as fortresses, the acrid stink of a thousand engines adding to the pollution in the air. It is from these hardy people that the Iron Hands exclusively recruit, for the world, the people, and the Chapter are inseparable.



IRON OVER FLESH

Central to the unique identity of the Iron Hands is their belief that the flesh is inherently weak; subject to decay and temptation, it is a frailty to be purged to the fullest extent. This belief is likely to be rooted in the Chapter's experience of the Horus Heresy, but the character of the peoples of Medusa is undoubtedly a contributing factor.

Following the loss of their Primarch in the Istvaan V massacre the surviving members of the Legion returned to their home world and fanned the embers of a hatred that would endure for ten thousand years. Isolating themselves from many of their fellow Space Marines, the Iron Hands became bitter recluses, cleaving to their anger as the only constant in a universe of weakness and insanity. It soon came to pass that none were immune from their ire. The traitors had renounced their oaths and turned against their brothers, but the loyalists had allowed it to happen, and the Emperor had fallen. The Iron Hands harboured a special resentment for the other loyal Legions present at Istvaan V. They believe that had the Legions been sufficiently strong and fought on instead of retreating, their Primarch would not have been lost, the traitors would have been defeated, and the Heresy would have been crushed.

The Iron Hands' abhorrence of weakness is not limited to the moral however, for they hold that the body itself, even that of a genetically enhanced Space Marine of the Adeptus Astartes, is frail and impermanent and subject to sickness and aging. The Iron Hands are driven to replace the weak biological matter all men are born into with cold, unyielding iron, a practise that begins when a neophyte is initiated into the Chapter as a full Battle-Brother. The initiate's left hand is removed and replaced with a bionic version in a ritual inspired by a tale of the Primarch when his own hands were encased in living metal following a battle with a great metal serpent. Some initiates sever their own hand during the ritual, while others plunge it into the searing hot lava flowing from the mountains of Medusa, bearing the pain and transforming it to hate.

Throughout an Iron Hand's lifetime, he grows ever more bitter towards his foes and ever more resentful of his own flesh. He appears to come to hate himself, or his biological form at least, like a man forcibly garbed in filth-encrusted rags. More of his organs and limbs are replaced with bionic augmetics, each inherently superior to the original. To some outsiders, this is a supreme blasphemy, for many of the organs eventually discarded are those that make a Space Marine

what he is, and which are the direct inheritance of the Emperor and the Primarch. Nevertheless, a Battle-Brother of the Iron Hands that has reached several centuries of service is likely to appear almost entirely mechanical, every visible scrap of flesh replaced with gleaming, oiled and burnished steel. A few centuries more and the warrior's biological body might consist of little more than his brain and his major organs. It is said that some Iron Hands, those that survive the rigours of war and their own hate-fuelled self-mutilation, are no more than a brain encased in a ceramite shell.

Because of this drive, many of the Chapter's leaders are entombed within the form of a Dreadnought. These form the Chapter Council, for the Iron Hands have no individual Chapter Master. Each company is an all-but independent body called a Clan Company, which maintains its own mobile Fortress-Monastery that trawls the endless wastes of Medusa guarding against weakness in the people and recruiting the strongest into its ranks. Some claim that the Chapter's hatred of the flesh represents the manifestation of a corruption in its gene seed, and certainly the Iron Hands Legion sired only two known Successor Chapters. Whatever the cause, the Iron Hands' resolution and grim determination are beyond doubt, as many of the Imperium's enemies have discovered.

Magos,



In the Omnisiah's name, I beg leave to report evidence of dire tech-heresy in the Jericho Reach. I have borne witness to terrifying biomechanical behemoths, fusing man and machine into living weapons sent forth against the Stigmatus hordes in the Acheros Salient. These beings fought alongside the Iron Hands Space Marine Chapter, and bore their heraldry upon their hulls. I have examined the burnt-out wreckage of another such creature, a weapon-studded vehicle that I believe was animated by the essence of an Iron Hands Battle-Brother who has entirely shed every cell of his biological heritage, little more than pure hate and rage remaining to drive him ever onwards. I have shared my findings with Inquisitor ██████████, and I eagerly await your judgement in these matters.

-Mech-wright Calymn Auros

Dispatch mono-task servitors and a Secutor to the Cellebos Warzone; this Mech-wright is clearly corrupted and requires adjustment.

-Archmagos Zynth. Lord Dragon