THE BLACK CHAINS

Unofficial Fan Dossier · Anvil of War

„\"He who sees first survives. He who fires first wins.\"“

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CORE DATA

Kind of formation	Armoured formation
Byname	\"The Vanguard Riders\"
Seat (world)	Zindrel Prime (before its destruction), thereafter without a fixed garrison world
Strength	Regiment – 101 tanks (organisation), 21 named vehicles
Standing / vassalage	Attached to the 447th Zindrel Jäger Regiment as a standing armoured formation
Era	M41, circa 819.M41
Allegiance	Loyal
Origin	Original (Anvil of War)

ORIGIN & SEAT

Founding / rediscovery

The formation \"The Black Chains\" was raised circa 819.M41 by order of the Departmento Munitorum, to provide the 447th Zindrel Jäger Regiment, a pure infantry formation of drop troops, with heavy firepower and reconnaissance depth for the first time. The first vehicles came from the production halls of a Forge World, which has since remained attached to the regiment as a permanent supplier. The core was deliberately chosen from fast and mobile patterns, for the terrain of the home world, dense jungle without fortified roads, demanded tanks that could advance ahead and report before the infantry dropped. The name \"The Black Chains\" was originally an internal Munitorum designation for the first trial of this mixed formation, and it stuck once the trial proved successful.

The world they hold

With the destruction of Zindrel Prime, the formation no longer possesses a home world on which permanent depots might stand. It has since operated from mobile field camps erected in the lee of the infantry: maintenance halls of tarpaulin and steel frame, staging grounds on cleared glades, the earth compacted with steel matting against the mud. Where the column stands for longer, pits are dug for the tracks, so that the rotting mire does not swallow the running gear. Proximity to the forest, wherever possible, is no tactical coincidence, but a need the formation shares with its parent regiment.

The break in their history

During the Damnation of Hive Drennhold, the formation lost seven vehicles of the 8th Company, including two entire squadrons, in a single counterattack from a collapsing hall complex. The setback would have crippled a less well-supplied formation for months, yet the Forge World delivered replacements within six weeks, hull for hull, gun for gun. Since then, it is held within the formation that metal can be replaced, but the gap in the crew roster cannot, and the company no longer carries the names of the lost tanks in any register, out of respect for those who burned with them.

RULE & STRENGTH

Rule and court

At the head of the entire armoured division stands the divisional command tank D00, \"Vanmeer\'s Fist\", under General Uska Dallow, accompanied by the Commissar-General\'s tank D01, \"Grandmother\'s Flatiron\", under Commissar-General Halloran Corrigan. At regimental level, R00, \"Yarnell\'s Will\", under Colonel Havik Holt, leads, flanked by R01, \"Postal Delivery\", the tank of Lord Commissar Renth Marrowdine. These four vehicles form the backbone of the chain of command, never driving at the head of the advance, but wherever the vox-channel stands most secure.

The 8th Company, in which the formation described here exercises its reconnaissance role, is led by Captain Karsk Sorrick in the company command tank 800, \"Kelver\'s Homecoming\", accompanied by the Commissar\'s tank 801, \"Headstone\", belonging to Commissar Skorra Selkarn. Attached to the entire formation is the Enginseer Zantherim, who tends the machine spirits of the column and performs the rites of maintenance upon tracks and guns at every halt.

The Mechanicus bond

The formation stands under the protection of a Forge World whose name is not recorded in the archive, but whose deliveries arrive regularly and abundantly. Spare parts, from road wheels to complete gun turrets, reach the column via supply transports, accompanied by consecrated oils and the prescribed prayers. The good supply allows the formation to make good losses swiftly and even to maintain Super-heavy vehicles such as the Baneblade, which would be unthinkable in less favoured regiments. The Tech-Priest Zantherim is held to be the mediator of this favour, his reports to the Forge World deciding the priority and order of deliveries.

Strength and preferred patterns

The core of the named vehicles is formed by three Leman Russ of the Mars-Alpha pattern (D00, R00, 800), which serve as command tanks and are fitted with improved sensors for the reconnaissance role. Seven Leman Russ of the standard pattern bear the main burden of the squadrons, supplemented by one each of Vanquisher (812), Demolisher (813), Exterminator (823), Punisher (832) and Executioner (833), which give the 8th Company its versatility in close combat as well as at range. A Baneblade (S11) stands ready as the Super-heavy backbone, three Basilisk guns (B11 to B13) deliver indirect fire, two Valkyries of the flight (L11, L12) are attached to the formation as air support.

Within the squadrons of the 8th Company, this variety is deliberately distributed: each of the three squadrons fields a squadron leader in a standard Leman Russ, supplemented by one specialised pattern each, so that each unit can independently respond to armoured targets, infantry, or fortifications. The reconnaissance focus shows itself in that the faster and more manoeuvrable patterns, foremost the Vanquisher with its range, always advance ahead of the main column, while the Demolisher and Punisher secure the flanks.

Doctrine and warfare

The formation advances according to the principle of the staggered advance: light and fast units, foremost Sentinels of other elements of the formation and the forward Leman Russ squadrons, probe the terrain, reporting enemy positions by vox to the regimental staff, before the heavier mass, Baneblade and Basilisk battery, advances and concentrates fire. The Valkyries of the flight not only fly supply and drop missions for the drop troops, but also serve as flying observers, assigning the tanks targets beyond the jungle canopy.

Every crew learns early the saying that speed matters more than armour in the jungle, for he who stands still sinks. The Baneblade, too heavy for most paths, is deployed only where cleared lanes or firm ground can bear it, but there it decides battles single-handedly.

Named machines

Name	Pattern / class	Role
Vanmeers Faust	Leman Russ Battle Tank	D00 · Divisional command tank
Großmutters Bügeleisen	Leman Russ Battle Tank	D01 · Commissar-General’s tank
Yarnells Wille	Leman Russ Battle Tank	R00 · Regimental command tank
Postwurfsendung	Leman Russ Battle Tank	R01 · Lord Commissar’s tank
Kelvers Heimkehr	Leman Russ Battle Tank	800 · Company command tank
Grabstein	Leman Russ Battle Tank	801 · Commissar’s tank
Zuletzt gesehen	Leman Russ Battle Tank	811 · Squadron leader
Freundliche Grüße	Leman Russ Vanquisher	812 · 8th Company · 1st Squadron
Pförtner	Leman Russ Demolisher	813 · 8th Company · 1st Squadron
Porto bezahlt	Leman Russ Battle Tank	821 · Squadron leader
Ohne Wiederkehr	Leman Russ Battle Tank	822 · 8th Company · 2nd Squadron
Nachzügler	Leman Russ Exterminator	823 · 8th Company · 2nd Squadron
Sonntagsbesuch	Leman Russ Battle Tank	831 · Squadron leader
Ohne Aufschub	Leman Russ Punisher	832 · 8th Company · 3rd Squadron
Hausbesuch	Leman Russ Executioner	833 · 8th Company · 3rd Squadron
Gravitas Imperii	Baneblade	S11 · Super-heavy company
Zweite Lieferung	Basilisk	B11 · Battery commander
Unbesehen	Basilisk	B12 · Battery
Mittagsläuten	Basilisk	B13 · Battery
Warteschleife	Valkyrie	L11 · Flight leader
Bitte anschnallen	Valkyrie	L12 · Flight

RITES & FLAW

Rites, traditions, rivalries

Before every deployment, the crew binds a fresh, living branch to the antenna or turret of their tank, after the fashion of the liana the infantrymen wind around their rifles, as a pact with the land they traverse. If the company loses a tank, its name is not reassigned; the crew, if they survive, instead receive the right to choose the next name for their new vehicle themselves, a silent compensation for what was lost.

The flaw

The doctrine of reconnaissance makes the formation vulnerable to surprise from ambush: the forward squadrons are light and fast, but often outmatched in direct fire engagements against heavier enemy tanks before the main body can advance. Several losses of the past, including the breach at Hive Drennhold, trace back to this structural gap between vanguard and core.

CAMPAIGNS & TIES

Campaigns and ties

The formation took part in the Battle of Kasthul as a young formation, where it tested its reconnaissance role in open terrain for the first time, still uncertain in the interplay of its patterns. The Damnation of Hive Drennhold is recorded in greater detail: here, the 8th Company, sent ahead to scout a hall complex, advanced too deep into enemy-held terrain and was trapped when the structures collapsed. The breakout, which cost seven vehicles, is held within the formation as an object lesson on the limits of pressing ahead, yet also as proof of the tenacity with which the remaining tanks fought free.

The 447th Zindrel Jäger Regiment is bound to the formation not only as parent formation, but as closest ally, their drop troops and the formation\'s tanks fighting side by side in almost every engagement. Regarded as a rival by the formation, though never officially noted, is another armoured formation of the same division, whose more ponderous tactics have repeatedly given the Vanguard Riders company cause for quiet mockery.

Campaigns (structured)

The Battle of Kasthul

Epoche: 834.M41 to 835.M41

Gegner: unknown xenos adversary

Ausgang: Victory with heavy losses

The Damnation of Hive Drennhold

Epoche: 836.M41 to 837.M41

Gegner: Rebellious hive factions

Ausgang: Pyrrhic victory

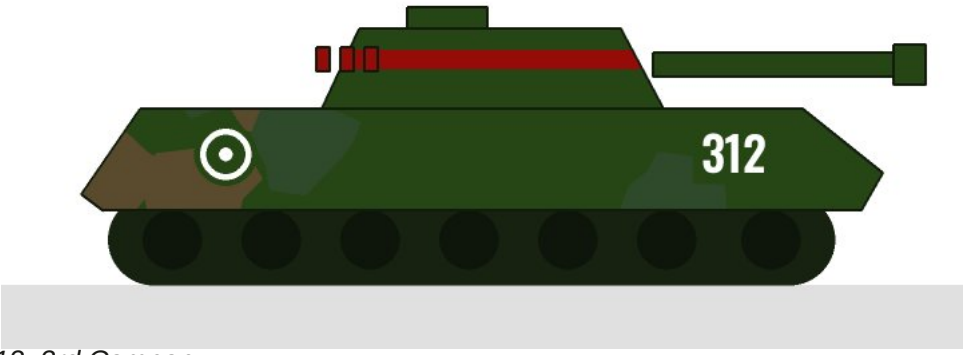
The Forest Fire

Epoche: 837.M41 to 840.M41

Gegner: Guerrilla resistance

Ausgang: ongoing

VEHICLE LIVERY



Battle tank 312, 3rd Company

Part	Colour	Citadel	Source
Theatre	Jungle and swamp · Blotch camouflage		
Base colour	#264715	Castellan Green	Uniform base tone
Camouflage 1	#2F4A2A	Castellan Green	theatre standard
Camouflage 2	#5A4A2E	Steel Legion Drab	theatre standard
Turret band	#960C09	Mephiston Red	Rank Knot (Sergeant)
Markings	#FFFFFF	White Scar	Sergeant White

Hull recipe: Castellan Green (Base) · Athonian Camoshade (Shade) · Loren Forest (Layer) · Elysian Green (Edge)

Derived from the heraldic colours of this dossier; the silhouettes are our own sketches, not copies of any Games Workshop model.