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ALL POSTSTechnically chaos space marines are more powerful than normal ones for 2 reasons. 1, they're imbude with the power of chaos and 2, they are generally veterans. But that's not what the game would have you believe. ...also, some are technically first gen SMs which implies the “immortal aspect”I think normal space marines or people generally can experience a similar „Power-up“ as through chaos but through sheer willpower, commitment, righteous (and fanatical) believe, clear mind, concentration,...8In lore, yes on average chaos marines are stronger due to gifts of the dark gods and having more experience. There are still "new" astartes being created by the traitor legions to replace losses who would lack experience however, but that's mitigated by having alot of long war veterans who have been fighting for millennia. The various boons from the gods can also be quite powerful. World Eaters during the siege of terra were often described as being twice the size of average astartes and able to lope across the battlefield on all fours like wolves or gorillas. Very strong, beastial and jacked to the gills on warp induced bloodlust. Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine 2 > General Discussions > Topic Details How are chaos marine factions even able to compete? With loyalists, they have the support of forgeworls, the mechanicus, recruitment worlds, and every other asset the Imperium can provide, with 10k years of war (for some) chaos marine factions that werent in the eye of terror, how are they keeping their numbers and the quality of their space marines up? How are the mainly firstborn chaos marines even able to compete with the latest and greatest Primaris marines the Imperium is fielding? Seems to me that the majority of the traitor chapters hanging on by this point of the lore is purely plot armor to keep chaos chapters still in things. Note: This is ONLY to be used to report spam, advertising, and problematic (harassment, fighting, or rude) posts. There are HOW many Primaris Marines out there? Let’s do a different kind of mathhammer. For decades GW kept 40K in a delicate balance, with the Imperium holding (barely) its borders against a host of threats. Key among them are the forces of Chaos, lead by traitor Marines. The Fall of Cadia and the opening of the Great Rift destroyed that equilibrium, and temporarily seemed to put the Imperium on the back foot. However, the intervention of Cawl and the resurrection of Guilliman along side the introduction of the new Primaris Marines means that Chaos should now be hopelessly outnumbered. Let’s take a look at some numbers. How Many Chaos Marines Are There Right Now? While exact numbers are impossible to come by we do have some vague idea of how many Marines were in the Original Traitor Legions. Though a Legion was once stated to contain 100,000 Space Marines, that number seems to be more an average or ideal than a real number. Looking at various sources, we can see that the Nine Traitor Legions seem to have had between 925,000 and 1,190,000 Marines (with the Thousand Sons and Alpha Legion having a vast range of possible sizes) at the start of the Heresy. This number includes a large number of Marines who remained loyal and either defected or were purged. Betrayal, for instance, states that the loyal members of the Sons of Horus, World Eaters, Emperor’s Children, and Death Guard killed at Isstvan III numbered about 100,000, with the Sons of Horus losing some 60,000 total, loyalist and traitor in the battle. This would suggest that Isstvan III alone cost the Traitor Legions 10% of their number. Even if we assume that no other members of the Nine Traitor Legions remained loyal, which we know is untrue, that puts CSM forces post Isstvan III at somewhere around 800,00-1,000,000. Now we have no idea at all how many CSMs survived the Heresy, or how many have died or fallen since then. It’s mentioned in A Thousand Sons that only 1,000 of the Thousand Sons survived the attack on Prospero (Not the first time they’ve been reduced to that size). This would mean only a 10th of the Legion survived the HH if we take 10,000 as their Pre-Heresy number. If we take the sometimes quoted 85,000 pre-Heresy number that would be only around 1% survived. Even if the other Traitor Legions fared better, it still seems unlikely they got by with more than half their starting numbers intact. It’s possible that as few as 100,000 or less survived. Overall I find it unlikely that the Traitors are more numerous after 10,000 of attrition and losing a war. At least one source mentioned that before the 13th Black Crusade the Black Legion was 10x the size of the Word Bearers, yet we don’t know how large the Word Bearers are in M41. This could put that Black Legion anywhere form a few thousand to “normal” legion size of 100,000, to a million strong (if we assume the Word Bearers are at full 100,000 pre-Heresy strength even now.) Also, if the Black Legion was a million strong and ALL the other Legion were are pre-Heresy size this would argue for a maximum of 2,000,000 CSM (not counting odds and ends). However, I’d argue that the actual number is far lower, closer to a million counting renegades. Also, note that the Death Guard Legion is always noted as having survived the Heresy and fallen back to the Eye of Terror INTACT. Their Legion composition in codex Death Guard gives them a legion strength in the hundreds of thousands. N.B. I have not included the Dark Angels/Fallen in these numbers because their allegiance is still unclear and they don’t seem to work with the rest of the CSM. The 8th Edition Dark Angels Codex suggests that the Fallen have gathered in Legion strength, so you could potentially add 100,000 to the CSM numbers, but those numbers could also end up aiding the Imperial forces for all we know. How Many Classic Loyalists Are There? Loyal Marines are even harder to count than CSM since they seem to have grown at lot more after the Heresy. At the time of the Heresy there seem to have been about 852,000 Marines in the Loyal Legions, this is not counting White Scars or Dark Angels as we don’t seem to have any numbers for them. Outside of the Dark Angels, the Loyalist Legions seem to have few defections to Chaos, adding in those two Chapters the numbers between loyalist and chaos are most likely fairly even with both sides having around 1,000,000. How many of those survived the Heresy is unclear. Looking at 2nd Founding sources is does seem like, at least in older Fluff, the Loyalists suffered immensely during the Heresy. The Salamanders are said to have not been big enough to divide into multiple Chapters post heresy, with supposedly only around 700 surviving. Along with the Salamanders, the Raven Guard and the Iron Hands both suffered heavily at the Drop Site Massacre. Currently, the number of Marines is unknown, though some sources talk about there being 1,000 Marine Chapters (pre-Primaris). The traditional listed size of a Space Marine chapter is 1,000. This would give you roughly a 1,000,000 Marines. Due to battle losses not all Chapter are at the full 1000 size, Crimson Fists come to mind. On the other hand, after doing some digging, I found that looking at the standard makeup of a Chapter the real size of a full strength formation should be more like 1200-1400. In addition, some Chapters, such as the Space Wolves and Black Templar are much larger than the Codex 1,000. With all this taken together, we can probably take 1000 as a good average size still and conclude that around 1,000,000 classic Marines is a good number, at least Pre-13th Black Crusade. How Many Primaris Marines Are There? Subscribe to our newsletter! Get Tabletop, RPG & Pop Culture news delivered directly to your inbox. By subscribing you agree to our Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Again we aren’t given any solid total numbers here, but we do have some things to work with. When Cawl delivered the Primaris to Guilliman, he divided them into two groups. Half of the new Primaris were formed into brand new Chapters of their own. The other half were formed into a group known as the Unnumbered Sons or the Greyshields. The Greyshields traveled with the Indomitus Crusade and fought as their own formations. Besides, they were used to form new Chapters as needed and to reinforce existing chapters along the way. At the end of the Indomitus Crusade at the Battle of the Pit of Ruakos, there were still 20,000 Unnumbered Sons, as stated in Dark Imperium. If we take “new chapters” as a bare minimum of 2, that adds 2,000 to the number. Since about 94% of the 1,000 chapters have accepted some Primaris members, we can add a minimum of 940 to the Greyshields, though we know the Ultramarines at least seem to have a full company of them so let’s add an extra 100. Not taking into account any battle casualties this would argue a bare minimum of 23,040 Greyshields and a total of 46,080 Primaris at the start of the Indomitus Crusade. I guess we know there are at least 9 Primaris Marines out there That number is, however, way on the low end. The Unnumbered Sons, only half the total Primaris Marines, were said to have been divided into nine groups (one for each Primarch Gene-line). These groups have been described as each being the size of an old Legion. Now as I discussed above the size of an old Legion could vary from 10,000 to 250,000. However the most common number give for them is 100,000, so I’d guess when they say “legion size” that is the size they are thinking of. This would mean the Unnumbered Sons started the Crusade with 900,000 Marines, and that the Ultima founding formed anther 900,000 into 900 new chapters (if you go by the 1000 Marines to a Chapter, the number is closer to 700 Chapters if you take the actual 1200-1400 Marine size of Chapters into account.) This would suggest that the Ultima founding nearly doubled the number of existing Marine Chapters and that there are about twice as many Primaris Marines as classic Marines. Follow up, how may Primaris Marines are secretly women? One final thing to take into note, however, would be Post 13th Black Crusade/Opening of the Great Rift losses among Classic Marines. If 94% of Marine Chapters accepted Primaris reinforcements, and we say that the average size of the reinforcements was a company, we would want to reduce the number of classic Marines by about a 10th, though this would not change the numbers of Primaris Marines. Total Numbers Putting this all together we can estimate that at the start of the Indomitus Crusade there were around 1,000,000 active CSM, with at most half being original traitor Legionnaires and the other half being more recent converts. To counter this, we can say there were around 900,000 classic Marines and 1,800,000 Primaris Marines. Each side is aided by near infinite numbers of supporting troops, from cultists and daemons to Astra Militarum and Custodes Guard. Overall these supporting forces tip the balance of power towards the Imperial forces or at the very least cancel each other out. However, for this, we are still just focusing on Space Marine forces. Both sides have indeed suffered heavy losses since the start of the Crusade, but we have no real way of judging them or reason to suspect that Imperial forces have suffered worse than Chaos forces have. These numbers are of course just estimates based the information we have available to us. Actual numbers could vary very widely. I think 900,000 is far too low for Imperial numbers given the survival of the Imperium. I also think that 1,000,000 is far too high for Chaos, suggesting that the traitor legions are still at roughly the same sized they started the Heresy with. Even with additional Marines falling over time, I don’t think they could keep their numbers up. It also seems unlikely that CSM outnumbered Loyalist before the introduction of Primaris Marines, which seems illogical to me. However, I have no data to support these feelings. So How Can Chaos Win? Given these numbers, it seems that Chaos Space Marines are outnumbered by about 3 to 1 by loyalist Marines. Even if your average Chaos Marine is stronger than a classic marine, the new Primaris are supposed to be man for man the equal of your average Chaos Marine. So how can Chaos hope to win (at least in the short term) given the numbers? The traditional answer has been that the Imperium is facing a lot of other foes at the same time and is more spread out. Chaos, however, is also currently pretty spread out fighting on a lot of fronts and against many foes. Moreover, many of the other major threats seem to be in some sort of remission/biding their time. The Aeldari, of all factions, are tied up with their own drama when they aren’t actively helping the Imperials. Necrons are a growing threat but don’t seem to have peaked (and also hate Chaos). The major Nid threat was blunted at Baal (though Leviathan remains a threat). So while other threats still exist the major danger is currently Chaos, focused on the 13th Black Crusade. Give the numbers I don’t see how the 13th Black Crusade has a path to victory. I’m also not certain why Guilliman didn’t lead the Indomitus Crusade to confront Abaddon. At its start, Guilliman had more Space Marines in one place than the Imperium as a whole had ever contained since the Great Crusade. He, in essence, had a Great Crusade’s worth of Marines on hand, ready to hit Abaddon with overwhelming force. And he didn’t. A fact that is mind-boggling. Still, if 1,000,000 Marines has been enough to hold the line for the past 10,000 years, the addition of nearly 2,000,000 more, and better, Marines should leave Chaos with no hope. Are there too many Marines for Chaos to win, or does Abaddon have something up his sleeve? Let us know down in the comments! Abe is that rare thing, an Austin local born and raised here. Though he keeps on moving around, DC, Japan, ETC., he always seems to find his way back eventually. Abe has decades of experience with a wide range of tabletop and RPG games, from historicals, to Star Wars to D&D and 40K. He has been contributing to BOLS since almost the start, back when he worked at and then owned a local gaming store. He used to be big into the competitive Warhammer tournament scene but age has mellowed him and he now appreciates a good casual match. He currently covers 40K tactics and lore, as well as all things Star Wars, with occasional dabbling in other topics. Abe remains in mourning over the loss of WFB to this day. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. 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