

WARHAMMER

40,000

CODEx



IMPERIAL KNIGHTS









IMPERIAL KNIGHTS



A TALE OF HONOUR, COURAGE AND SOLITUDE

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INTRODUCTION

Imperial Knights are mighty warriors that fight alongside the armies of the Imperium. Each towering suit of almost invulnerable Imperial Knight armour is piloted by a Noble, and wields enough firepower to defeat any foe it might meet.

The Imperial Knights come from the Knight worlds, venerable human colonies that date back to the Dark Age of Technology. Ancient oaths of fealty mean that the Knights are sworn to protect the citizens of these worlds, and also to fight against the Imperium's enemies when called to do so. The Knight Paladin and Knight Errant are the most common types of Imperial Knight armour. Both stand several dozen feet tall and are armed with powerful weapons and protected by thick armour and protective energy fields.

WARHAMMER 40,000

If you are reading this codex, then you have already taken your first steps into the Warhammer 40,000 hobby. The Warhammer 40,000 rulebook contains all the rules you need to fight battles with your Citadel miniatures, and every army has its own codex that acts as a definitive guide to collecting and unleashing it upon the tabletop battlefields of the Warhammer 40,000 universe. This codex allows you to field Knight Paladin and Knight Errant models, either as an additional allied detachment or as an army in their own right.

IMPERIAL KNIGHTS

Imperial Knights fight on battlefields all across the galaxy as part of the Titan Legions of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and as allies of Space Marine Chapters and Imperial Guard regiments. Even one Imperial Knight can turn the tide of a battle, while the combined might of a full detachment is enough to overcome any opponent.

HOW THIS CODEx WORKS

Codex: Imperial Knights contains everything needed to add a detachment of Imperial Knights to your collection of Citadel miniatures. On the following pages, you will find the full history of the Imperial Knights, including details of how they were founded, the Knight worlds from which they originate, and the knightly houses to which they belong. This is complemented by an in-depth guide to the intricate markings and heraldry that adorn Imperial Knights, and a stunning showcase of painted Imperial Knight models. The final section of the book provides full rules for using Imperial Knights in games of Warhammer 40,000, and details of the characteristics, special rules and weaponry of the Knight Paladin and Knight Errant.









Brom Griffith
sat back in the Throne
Mechanicum. His gauntlets
lay heavily on the
armrests. His bronze
augmetic monacle

contracted into near-focus, adjusting to the
candlelight around him. His robe settled, the
ebon dragon crest of his house offsetting the
pallid hue of the tabard pooled in his lap.

Collected emblems and sigils of House
Griffith stared back at him from the
flickering darkness. Empty Thrones ringed
the edge of the circular chamber, cold and
inert without their occupants installed.
Everything weighed heavily – the chill, the
dark, the oppressive baroque stonework of
the Communion Dome. He felt choked by it,
suffocated amid the bastion that he ruled
over, burned alive by its rituals, lost amid its
gloomy spires of adamantium. Brom took a
sip of bloodwine from his iron goblet. It
failed to lift the pall over his soul, as did
every other piece of courtly frippery: the
rich armour, the emblems, the gilt-edge of
luxury that draped each corner of Bastion
Armentes, the stronghold of his house.

Four hundred years had passed since the
day he'd first taken the Ritual, though
he still remembered every moment of it in
acute detail. Some nights he'd wake, bathed
in a sweat, his hands trembling and his
eyes staring. Annalize would reach out to
him then, guessing well enough what he
remembered, and whisper the words he
needed to hear. She would wait with him
until the terror passed, helping him to forget
what the implants had cost, then she would
remind him of his battle-scar, tracing a
finger across his ravaged flesh, summoning
back his predator's pride.

Brom smiled coldly. Annalize was as fearsome
as he was: a soul of fire beating within the
heart of the House. Which, of the two of
them, had become the more dangerous over
the centuries? A difficult question, not all
wars were a matter of machine-mastery.

He put his goblet down. By instinct, he felt
the change coming on. The Throne began to
speak to him – the first whispers heralding
a flood of voices. The mixed exhilaration
and febrile nervousness he'd felt in the first
years was long gone – his soul had mingled
with those of his ghost-like predecessors,
hardening, sharpening. All he felt now, in

his waking hours at least, was the restless
desire for the iron shell, the sleeping god,
the other half of his soul that never quite
went away, not even in the empty hours of
dormancy between riding out into combat.
The candle flames around him lowered,
their promethium feeder-tubes spluttering as
if quashed by unseen hands. Brom felt his
pulse quicken. His hooked mouth twitched,
his fingers clutched at the Throne's armrests.

I hear you.

The floor shivered beneath him as release
pistons withdrew. Brom pressed his head
into the plush Throne-back and closed his
eyes. Neural interface cables shot out like
rearing snakes, segmented and studded with
diamond connector-tips. He barely felt them
connect, a thicket of iron dreadlocks tight
against his scalp. Immediately, the chatter
started in earnest – the half-heard voices,
the sounds of old wars, the deep heartbeat of
a machine consciousness embedded in twists
of mind-infused iron and steel.

The flagstones around the Throne tilted
up, exposing metal hinges beneath.
Lumen-beams whirled as the dull glare of
the descent klaxons broke out across the
chamber. The wall behind him, clad in the
gaudy emblems of House Griffith, folded
back on greased rails. With a hard clunk,
the traction cords pulled tight.

At last. I live again.

With a shudder, the entire Throne
Mechanicum jolted, shifted and began
to slide. Brom felt a lurch in his stomach
as he dropped into the transit tunnel. He
left the opulence behind for the dark spine
of the inner bastion, an ancient skein of
iron fall-ways wrought from metals forged,
so they said, on sacred Terra. The whole
Throne plummeted, sliding hundreds of feet
in seconds, forcing the blood to his head and
making his robes ripple over his armour.

Brom gripped tight, hearing the voices reach
a crescendo in his connected mind. He saw
the terminal hatch gape below him, and for
a brief second, glimpsed the pitted carapace
beneath that, ridged and weapon-scored like
the surface of some steel moonscape. The
cockpit at its summit was already open,
glowing soft red... beckoning.

Then he was down, the Throne slotting into
place with an echoing clang, the carapace
roof closing over him and blocking out the
sounds of the klaxons.

For a moment, as always, he became
disorientated. The Throne took a second
to make its connections: rods slammed out
into sockets, brackets clamped tight, power-
lines sparked up. The machine trembled,
suddenly stirred into full life again. In those
brief limbo-moments, he always doubted
himself, forgetting his name, losing his
sense of who he was and why it mattered.
And then, like storm clouds ripped apart by
venting thrusters, everything fell into place.

I am myself again.

Brom's eyes opened, already coupled with
the photo-reactive optical instruments of the
machine. His body responded, locking in
step with greater muscles of steel and skin
of adamantium. He raised his arm, and
far below him, a massive chainblade swung
into readiness, whining as gears the size of a
man gunned into life. Ahead of him, viewed
through the eyes of the machine he was now
an integral part of, colossal doors yawned
open. Steam vented through the ridged floor
of the Vault Transcendent. Brom was aware
of menials scurrying to clear from his path,
but he paid them little heed. When bound by
mortal dimensions, he would perhaps have
identified with them; now, shackled to the
beating heart of a war-behemoth, they might
have been a different species.

Beyond the doors, he saw the deep purple
skies of Dragon's End. Clouds were
gathering against the horizon, marking the
descent of the forge-ships that would carry
his sacred quest out into the void.

The machine's ion shield crackled into life.
The last carapace seals slammed home.
Runes scrolled down his monacle-display,
feeding him screams of esoteric data in
binaric and Gothic vernacular. The presence
of the machine surged up within, vast and
uncomprehending, thirsting to break the
threshold and be free once more.

Brom said nothing. He no longer needed
to speak: the machine and he were one,
fused by bonds of tech-magick as potent as
memory. An old, hungry mind brushed up
against his, fractured and snarling, echoing
with the souls of the past, impatiently
yearning for the freedom of movement and
slaughter. The oppressive yearning was
forgotten; all he felt now was life.

«Walk» Brom pulsed, sending his first
command across the mind-reel. And at
that, with a deafening war-horn blast, the
Knight strode out once more.

THE IMPERIAL KNIGHTS

Scattered across the Imperium lie certain planets on which stand keeps of stone and plasteel – vast rambling bastions against the howling dark, built on the remains of ancient Terran colony ships. These strongholds are ruled by the descendants of the first human settlers of those far-flung worlds, mighty fighters who go to war in towering armoured battlesuits and who are sworn to protect and guard the Imperial citizens who inhabit their worlds. These proud and haughty warriors can trace their bloodlines back to ancient Terra itself and are known as Nobles.

Each Noble controls a fast-moving, powerful suit of Imperial Knight armour. These ancient battlesuits stand thirty to forty feet tall, are protected by nearly impenetrable ion shields and armed with a devastating array of heavy weapons. The presence of just one of these towering engines of destruction is enough to change the course of a battle, and only the Titans of the Adeptus Mechanicus are more feared by the enemies of Mankind.

KNIGHT ARMOUR

Knight armour comes in a wide variety of forms, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. The two most commonly seen types are the Knight Paladin and the Knight Errant. These both use the same basic body form, but are fitted with different weapon arrays. Each is well-liked for its balanced and deadly combination of manoeuvrability, protection and firepower.

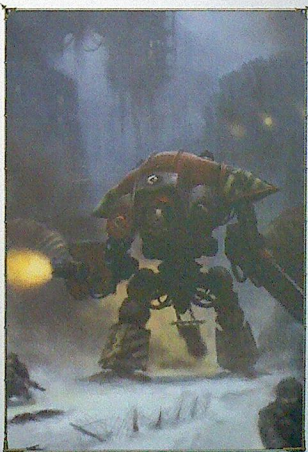
All Imperial Knights are protected by thick adamantium armour and are fitted with powerful weapon systems. Usually, this entails two primary weapons, one attached to each of its 'arms', which will be supplemented by a number of secondary weapon systems fitted to its body and shoulders. The hand-forged armour that protects each Knight was crafted long ago, and elements such as the individual armour plates, helm or crests can therefore vary considerably depending on the skill of the artisan who made them. The armour is often lavishly detailed and adorned with complex heraldry that reveals the Knight's allegiances and the deeds he has accomplished in battle.

In addition to their weaponry, all Knights carry potent field generators called ion shields. This ancient technology works by projecting an energy field across a narrow arc to the front of the Knight. By quickly moving the position of the shield so that it intercepts enemy attacks, a Knight is able to survive even the heaviest fire, whilst still being able to fire its own weapons in return. The exact setting and positioning of the shield is essential, as the ion shield is only designed to deflect and slow shots, rather than absorb them in the manner of the void shields used on Imperial Titans. This means the effectiveness of the shield is partially dependent on the skill and experience of its operator.

Both the Knight Paladin and Knight Errant are traditionally equipped with enormous melee weapons and are famed for their skill with them, charging into the enemy and delivering blows left and right with their massive reaper-class chainswords. This impressive close combat capability is supported with powerful ranged weapons that can blast apart enemy vehicles, and heavy stubbers to mow down infantry targets.

Other, much rarer, types of Knight armour are used on some Knight worlds. Amongst the heaviest types of Knight armour made by the forge worlds are the Crusader and the Castellán. Although slower than other suit types, these two benefit from substantially increased firepower and much thicker armour, and are instead used in a fire support role. The Lancer is a faster version of a standard Knight suit. These agile machines are used to outflank the enemy, scout out their defences and distract hostile forces while slower units get into position to attack. This type of armour is sophisticated and extremely difficult to manufacture, and its use is therefore usually reserved for rulers of knightly houses, or for Nobles that have proven themselves worthy of it in the fires of victory.

However, while the Crusader, Castellán and Lancer are rightly revered, the Paladin and Errant's perfectly balanced combination of speed, firepower and armour make them the supreme examples of Knight design.



THE RITUAL OF BECOMING

Suits of Knight armour are similar to Titans, in that they are controlled through neural interface sockets surgically inserted into the Noble pilot's cerebrum and cerebellum. The pilot sits in a control platform called a Throne Mechanicum, where umbilical interface cords are attached to his neural sockets. The Throne Mechanicum is then, in turn, plugged into the suit of Knight armour, allowing the Noble to control its movements as if it were part of his own body and to receive sensory feedback from the suit so that he can see what it sees, and feel what it feels. This interface allows an Imperial Knight to move with a fluid grace that can only be matched by the war machines of the Eldar.

At the heart of every knightly stronghold is a single massive building known simply as the Sanctuary. It is here that the suits of Knight armour are stored when not in use and where the Nobles undergo the rituals and procedures that allow them to bond with their Thrones Mechanicum. These Sanctuaries are incredibly ancient structures, built when the original colony ships first landed on the Knight worlds. The essential functions of the Sanctuaries also originate from that time, though the changes and modifications made to the equipment over the millennia mean it would be unrecognizable to those that first installed it.

It is in the Sanctuary that young Nobles undergo the bonding process that imprints their personality into a Throne Mechanicum, in a procedure known as the Ritual of Becoming. This process takes place in a special room known as the Chamber of Echoes. The imprinting process is a lengthy, sometimes dangerous, business. It has become a rite of passage for young Nobles – the process of leaving behind their childhood once and for all. When he is old enough, a son of the household who is designated to become a Noble is fitted with the sacred neural sockets and then undertakes a vigil, remaining seated in the Throne Mechanicum that has been assigned to him throughout a long night in the Chamber of Echoes. The nature of this ordeal, and the inherent dangers associated with the neural interfacing process, mean that more than a tenth of all supplicants are either driven mad by the process or suffer fatal aneurysms brought about by neurological feedback.

I will uphold the honour of my house,
our brotherhood gives me strength.
I will show no mercy to my foes,
none shall withstand my fury.
I will defend the sanctity of Sacred Mountain,
no enemy shall tread Alaric Prime unpunished.
I will never forsake my oath,
only in death does duty end.

- HOUSE DECALLIO'S OATH OF BECOMING

Assuming it is successful, the imprinting process has two important side-effects. Firstly, the imprint tends to exaggerate dominant aspects of the young Noble's personality, especially with regard to the emotions he is feeling during his vigil. If he is scared, the imprint on the Throne will always be of a nervous tendency, making the suit difficult to control in combat. If the Noble is angry with someone, the imprint will always loathe that person, even if the Noble has long since forgiven or forgotten them. When a Noble dies, his Throne Mechanicum retains some of his character, and these ghosts whisper to each supplicant through the long vigil in the Chamber of Echoes.

However, in addition to imprinting the Noble's personality upon the Throne Mechanicum, the mind-link technology directly affects the personality of the Noble himself. It does this by implanting strong positive associations to notions of fealty, obligation and hierarchy, as well as a deep respect for the Noble's ancestors. Exactly why and how these things are made to happen is something of a mystery, but it seems most likely that the mind-altering feedback routines were intentionally included to limit the potential of a Noble to go rogue and turn on the people he was meant to protect.

Once a Throne Mechanicum has been imprinted, it is stored in the Communion Dome, which lies atop each Sanctuary. This chamber is large and circular, with walls that are lined with all the Thrones Mechanicum of the household's Nobles. When a Noble wishes to interface with his suit of Knight armour, he sits upon his Throne and instigates the Protocols of Joining. Umbilical cords attach themselves to the Noble's neural sockets, and then a section of wall behind the throne yawns open. The Throne Mechanicum slides backwards, and descends from the Communion Dome through a series of transport tunnels, before finally sliding into the waiting cockpit of the Noble's suit of Knight armour. This final step in the process takes place in a massive hangar known as the Vault Transcendent, which forms the ground floor of the Sanctuary. This huge hall is large enough to hold all of the stronghold's Knights. As soon as Noble, Throne and Knight armour are united, the three become as one, and the Imperial Knight powers into life. Vast doors open in the outer walls of the Sanctuary, and the Knight strides forth to battle.

FOUNDATION OF THE KNIGHT WORLDS

The history of the Imperial Knights stretches back over many millennia. The first Knight worlds were founded at the very start of the Age of Technology, when scouts from Terra travelled far through the galaxy seeking planets to use as agricultural worlds to provide food for Mankind's burgeoning population, or as mining colonies to provide the materials needed to fuel their expansion across the stars. Indeed, the Knight worlds had already been established for thousands of years when the Imperium was first founded.

When those first human scout ships discovered a suitable planet for colonisation, gigantic spacecraft were dispatched to settle them. These ships were part of Terra's Long March fleets, named after the duration of their voyage and their destination among the stars. The name was apt; each of the Long March colony ships carried thousands of settlers on a decade-long journey to a far distant planet. Upon arrival, the

colony ship would land and be immediately cannibalised by the colonists to provide the raw materials needed for their first settlements; there was no hope of return.

The struggle for survival on many of these worlds was grim. On some, the settlers found themselves the prey of vicious predators or were attacked by native alien races, which saw the human settlers as invaders. On other worlds, extreme weather conditions or an unbreathable atmosphere made travel outside of domed habitat-zones next to impossible. However, problems like these had been anticipated, and in order to deal with them, the settlers were supplied with Standard Template Constructs that allowed them to build powered suits of exo-armour. The pilots of these bipedal walking machines were protected by a hard shell of plastel and armed with an array of military-grade heavy weapons. The suits proved invaluable: few, if any, natural predators or hostile alien warriors could stand against them, and they could travel through even the most dangerous environment with ease. The towering armoured figures soon became a common sight on the colonies, where they were known as Knights by the settlers, after the legendary armoured warriors and protectors of ancient Terran history.

Compelled by the mind-altering effects instilled by the Thrones Mechanicum, over the course of a few generations, these elite warriors gradually developed a society that evolved into the knightly houses. The plastel plates of the original exo-skeleton suits were slowly replaced with more ornate armour made from adamantium, providing better

protection as well as a panoply befitting the wearer's prestige and rank. The more mundane duties that the Knights had once taken part in on the colony worlds – logging with their mighty reaper chainswords, for example, or blasting apart rock ore with their rapid-fire battle cannons – were delegated to those of lesser ranks, allowing the Knights to focus on the arts of war and governorship. Dwelling in tall strongholds, the Nobles strove to protect the lives of their subjects (as they now saw the settlers they protected) and to bring order to the primeval maelstrom on the planets that were their homes. The knightly houses proved to be highly successful at both of these things, and soon became a vital part of human society during the Age of Technology.



THE AGE OF STRIFE

Tragically, the Age of Technology was doomed to fall and devolve into a shadow of its former glory. Around M22, Mankind's vast galactic empire began to suffer a pandemic of terrible wars and massive invasions, caused, at least in part, by the emergence of the first human psykers and the widespread use of quasi-sentient machines. By M25, ferocious Warp storms had largely isolated the widespread human colonies, and the era that came to be known as the Age of Strife had well and truly begun.



Although swathes of Knight worlds fell to this storm of death and destruction, some survived, aided considerably by the innate conservatism and resistance to change of the knightly houses. Where other planets welcomed psykers into their midst, and revelled in the luxurious lifestyle that advanced thinking machines could provide, the knightly houses had largely shunned both, preferring to stick with the traditions and technology of the past. Thus, when the violence that presaged the Age of Strife struck, hundreds of Knight worlds were sidelined or ignored, and took little direct part in the terrible conflicts that tore the rest of humanity apart. Cut off and alone, the knightly houses were quickly forgotten by the other colonies. Left to their own devices, the warrior aristocracy cemented their control and – encouraged by the psychological manipulations caused by the process of imprinting their suits of Knight armour – almost all of them enforced neo-feudal systems on their home worlds.

The societies that evolved were built upon concepts of fealty, honour and duty; three things that all Knights held in the greatest regard. All of the Nobles on a Knight world owed their allegiance to a knightly house, whose ruler could call upon them at any time to carry out his commands. Each house could also field large numbers of men-at-arms, either mounted or on foot. The houses also had groups of artificers and technicians who maintained the suits of Knight armour as best they could, and over time, became an integral part of society on all of the Knight worlds.

Sometimes the ruler of a knightly house would come from the same family for generation after generation, but more often than not, the death of an incumbent ruler would lead to a period of political manoeuvring or even outright warfare until a new ruler was selected. Competition between different knightly houses on a planet was just as intense, and although full-scale battles were rare, all strived to outdo their rivals in any way they could, be it in the field of politics, ancient traditions, or contests of their skill at arms. On the Knight world of Higroxias, for example, once every ten years, the three major houses compete against each other in a series of trials known as the Honour Games, the winner of which rules the governing council for the next decade.

As the Age of Strife stretched from centuries into millennia, the Knight worlds became increasingly insular and inward looking. Each developed its own titles and terms, so that on one Knight world the ruler of a knightly house would be known as a Lord, while on another they might be called a Ritter or Patriarch, and a Noble's stronghold could be known as their castle, fastness or mansion. Without any outside contact, ritual and etiquette started to dominate daily life within the knightly houses, and the only escape from stultifying tradition lay in donning a suit of Knight armour and taking to the field of battle.

THE COMING OF THE IMPERIUM

After five thousand years, the Imperium arose from the ruins of the Age of Strife. Under the guidance of the Emperor, Humanity returned to the stars and began the Great Crusade to reunite Mankind. Nothing was able to stand in the way of the resurgent Imperial armies, and soon, human colonies on planets all across the galaxy were brought within the fold of the newly formed Imperium.

When Rogue Trader Militant Jeffers rediscovered a Knight world, Chrysis, for the first time, he quickly realized the knightly houses could be valuable allies for the Emperor's armies. In his reports, he pointed out the Knights' many virtues, and emphasised the world's value to the Imperium as a source of born and bred warriors. The Administratum agreed with Jeffers' findings and set about finding the rest of the long-lost Knight worlds.

Although there were thousands of Knight worlds at their height during the Dark Age of Technology, the vast majority had been destroyed or died out during the Age of Strife. Now, only several hundred survive, scattered all across the galaxy. Most of the Knight worlds share certain features, hallmarks of the instructions followed by the original settlers. The Nobles themselves occupy sprawling walled strongholds, each a gothic, ancient structure of dusty, lifeless halls and corridors. Many are built on the same location as the first human settlements on the planet and include at their core parts of the giant colony ships used to transport the first settlers to their new worlds. They can vary in size from small keeps to entire cities bordered by vast outer walls.

Huge farms or strip-mines surround the strongholds, providing foodstuffs and raw materials for local use and export across the galaxy; the colony ships' purpose was always to generate resources for Mankind. It is in these settlements that the vast majority of citizens on Knight worlds live, with few venturing more than a dozen miles from their place of birth. In addition to these settlements, vast grazing herds of beasts wander through the wildernesses between the strongholds – more often than not, these are huge reptilian creatures that were introduced to the planet as livestock in the Age of Technology. Packs of local predators will often pursue the grazing herds or attack the farms surrounding a stronghold, and it is the duty of the Knights to fight to keep them at bay. Even on planets with less ferocious flora and fauna, the Knights must be constantly vigilant in order to keep the herds and farms safe from alien raiders and rapacious pirates.

HONORIFICS AND TITLES

Although all Knight worlds have similar feudal societies, local factors and other external influences meant that the exact nature of these emergent cultures varied somewhat between worlds. Nowhere is this more evident than in the names utilised by the knightly houses for their ranks, battle formations and even their strongholds.

The ruler of House Griffith, for example, bears the rather pretentious honorific of Grand Master of the Lance. None, however, would dare claim that Griffith's current ruler, Bryce, does not merit such a grandiose title, for his skill in battle is legend across the galaxy. Similarly, by long tradition the Nobles of House Skandos are known as Jarls, and their household detachments as Jarlhosts, while the largest stronghold of all the Knight worlds is that of House Raven, which is known as the Keep Inviolable. This titanic edifice is large enough to accommodate each and every one of the many hundreds of Knight suits belonging to the Nobles of House Raven and is one of the mightiest fortifications in the Imperium.

NOTABLE KNIGHT WORLDS

THE STRYKEN SYSTEM

Situated far in the galactic north-west, the Stryken System's principal planet is the smoke-wreathed forge world of Stryken Primus. The system's industrial heart is protected by a ring of three Knight worlds in close proximity – Stryken II, IV and V – and each is home to several knightly houses. These verdant planets were once maiden worlds of the Eldar. The ancient tribes of Exodites that once dwelt there, herding the many different species of giant reptiles and bipedal carnivores, were ruthlessly driven from these worlds by the knightly houses that were established shortly after Mankind's arrival.

With the combined might of no less than eleven knightly houses to call upon, including such luminaries as Houses Arokon and Dorath, the forge world of Stryken Primus has no Titan Legion stationed upon its surface. The planet instead focuses on supplying munitions in enormous quantities for the Imperial forces defending the Cadian Gate. A standing guard of Knights – the Order of Iron – is always present on the surface of the forge world to ensure its protection. Drawn from amongst the greatest and most capable Nobles from each House, competition to be accepted into the Order of Iron is fierce, and it is considered a great honour to join their ranks. The head of the Order is given the honorific title of Forge Warden, and leads the Knights in battle as if he were a ruler of his own knightly house.

DUTONIS

The Knight world of Duttonis is an arid, volcanic world that sits in the galactic north-east of Segmentum Obscurus. Ever tinged with the bitter taste of sulphur on the wind, it is a world of great material value to the Imperium, for it is ripe with mineral ore and rich veins of adamantium fork throughout the planet's mountainous crust. Despite being bitter rivals, two knightly houses – Navaros and Borgeus – have long protected Duttonis from those who would seek to claim this priceless metal for themselves. In this task, they have fought against both alien and traitor alike, for it would be unthinkable should such quantities of this invaluable ore fall into the wrong hands.

VOLTORIS

Out in the Eastern Fringe lies the tranquil world of Voltoris, home to the mighty Knights of House Terryn. Vast green oceans surround tropical islands the size of continents. Bat-winged monstrosities hunt beneath the jungle eaves, and the giant amphibious predators that are similarly commonplace offer the Knights ample opportunity to perfect their hunting skills. But despite the planet's solitary location having spared this idyllic paradise from many of the terrible events that have beset the Imperium over the millennia, the Knights that dwell there are nonetheless amongst the most warlike of their kind. These Knights commonly travel across the galaxy to defend the Imperium in far-flung campaigns, in a bid to find foes worthy of their skills. In more recent centuries, however, the Knights of House Terryn have been forced to fight ever closer to home. The dual threats posed by Hive Fleet Leviathan and the rapidly expanding Tau Empire ensure that Terryn's Knights remain on a constant war footing, lest Voltoris itself be threatened. Unfortunately for their enemies, these warriors relish any excuse for battle.

RAISA

Far to the galactic south lies the heavily forested Knight world of Raisa. The native flora of this lush world grows with such virility that only the vast plateaus that pierce the evergreen canopy are free from their touch. From atop the largest of these highland plains rises the towering stronghold of House Cadmus, Golem Keep. This monolithic edifice was named after the mighty elementals that once haunted the planet's wildernesses, before they were hunted to extinction by the first Imperial Knights to settle on Raisa many thousands of years ago.

Now, the only sentient creatures to stalk the murky, overgrown trails beneath the forest boughs are an unstable strain of barbaric abhumans. Though the Knights of House Cadmus could effortlessly slaughter the wild tribes descended from their ancient forebears, they choose not to. But it is by no means a misguided sense of loyalty to these pitiable creatures that stays their hand, it is in fact tradition. Instead, the Knights take part in an annual event known as the Cull to keep the mutants' numbers in check and provide an opportunity to hone their hunting skills.

RAPTURE

The paradisaical Knight world of Rapture was once the shining jewel of the Reductus Sector – but the terrible aftermath of an attack by a tendrill of Hive Fleet Leviathan left the planet a near lifeless hush. Rapture is now a dead world, uninhabitable by human life anywhere outside of the last surviving hab-dome. Though the fateful Tyranid assault on Rapture was ultimately defeated, the cost to the Imperium was dear.

The stalwart survivors of House Aramos, however, refuse to abandon their ruined world, unwilling to sully the memory of their ancestors, who first settled Rapture some fifteen millennia ago. From their stronghold of Auric Keep, the Knights of Aramos launch daily sorties beyond the walls of the hab-dome to hunt the persistent Tyranid broods that were able to endure the Imperium's vengeful purge in the wake of Leviathan's defeat.

AVARRIS

Just beyond the far eastern reaches of the Ultima Segmentum lies the war-torn Vidar Sector. The barren Knight world of Avarris can be found within this system, founded unwittingly by its first settlers on a planet once belonging to the Necron Sautekh Dynasty. Thus, it was a great surprise to the knightly houses established on Avarris when, in 975 M41, legions of reawakened xenos machines emerged from their tomb complexes far beneath the planet's surface to assail them without warning. Fortunately, the gauss weaponry of the Necrons, normally so mercilessly efficient at eliminating armoured targets, was somewhat confounded by the ion shields of the Knight suits. With no less than three knightly houses present on Avarris, Imperial forces were able to respond to the sudden Necron attack with immediate and brutal effect. War still rages on Avarris, but the Imperial Knights have already made several successful forays into the vast underground tomb fortresses of the Necrons. Indeed, the rulers of the three knightly houses are confident that the xenos threat on Avarris will soon be overcome, and they will be able to lend their aid to the other Imperial forces fighting throughout the sector.

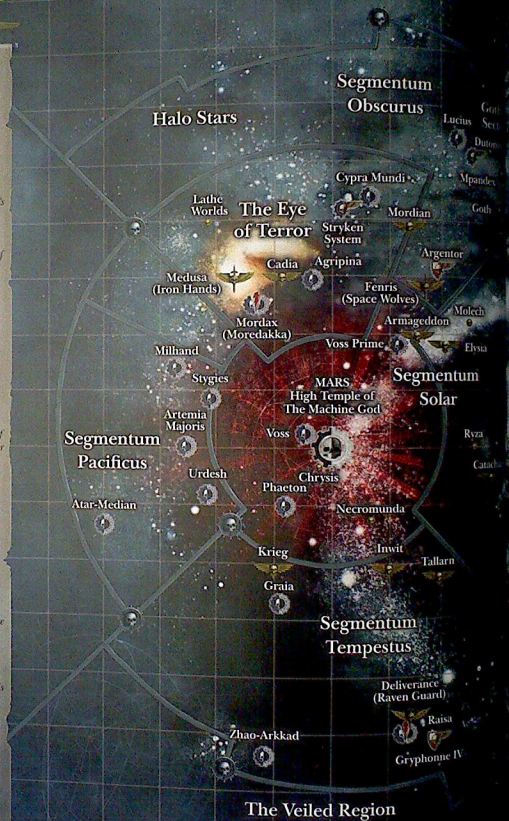
KNIGHT WORLDS OF THE IMPERIUM

There are many hundreds of Knight worlds scattered throughout the vast empire of Mankind. The bold explorers of Humanity's first expansion travelled far and wide into the galactic wilderness seeking habitable worlds or planets that could otherwise be terraformed to sustain human life. Many of these exploratory fleets were equipped with Knight STC technology, enabling them to protect the colonies they established.

More than fifteen millennia after their ancient ancestors set out into the stars, the distant descendants of these colonists dwell still on Knight worlds across the Imperium. Though many knightly houses have risen and fallen over the ages, those that remain can trace their heritage back to a time before the birth of the Imperium, and are justifiably proud of their ancestry. This is every Knight world hearty with the weight of the past, regardless of its galactic location or level of technological advancement.

The knightly houses found on each of the Knight worlds are affiliated with either the Imperium or the Adeptus Mechanicus. The Knight worlds aligned with the Imperium are expected to adhere to the Imperial tithe as does any other planet, but still trade with the Adeptus Mechanicus to keep their Knight suits operational.

The Knight worlds with direct ties to the Adeptus Mechanicus are often found near to the parent forge world with which they are associated. This is no mere coincidence, for many of these forge worlds were specifically founded near to Knight worlds in order to harvest their natural resources. The Titan Legions that set forth from these forge worlds to battle the enemies of Mankind often do so in the company of their allies from the Knight worlds. A partnership between both forge and Knight world is mutually advantageous to both factions, their military strength great enough to shatter cities and conquer worlds.





Pelegron Cluster

The
Ghouls Stars

Solitude

Vorinth

Dragon's End

NEXUS III
ASTRO STATION

ASTRO TELEPATHIC
DUCT

Ultima
Segmentum

Incaladion

Avarris

Vidar Sector

Triplex Phall

Attila

The
Maelstrom

Chogoris
(White Scars)

Solemuntum

Orpheus Prime
(Praetors of Orpheus)

The Eastern
Fringe

Badab

Estaban
System

Orestes

Voltoris

Nocturne
(Salamanders)

Accatran

Agrellan

TAU
EMPIRE

The Rock
(Dark Angels)

Metalica

Kolossi

Ichar IV

Rynn's World
(Crimson Fists)

Macragge
(Ultramarines)

Rapture

KEY

Imperial Knight World

Mechanicus Knight World

Imperial Guard World

Forge World

Fallen Forge World

Dark Mechanicum World

Space Marine Home World

Imperial World

THE FORGE WORLDS

Most knightly houses, though by no means all, are associated with a forge world, and in return for fighting alongside that forge world's Titan Legions, they gain access to advanced technology and knowledge that only the Adeptus Mechanicus possess.

The association between the knightly houses and the Adeptus Mechanicus dates back to the time of the Great Crusade. When the Knight worlds were first discovered, the different organisations that made up the Great Crusade competed ferociously with each other to gain control of the valuable resource the Knights represented. This Machiavellian political contest went on for decades, until the Mechanicum of Mars was finally able to establish their dominance in the right to exploit the Knight worlds. The Mechanicum were driven in this by a desire to gain control of the archeotech that could be found in abundance on the ancient Knight worlds, but were also aware that the vast natural resources and military might of the knightly houses could make them a valuable asset. To this end, once they had established their right to exploit the Knight worlds, they set about making them dependent upon the Mechanicum for their continued survival.

At the time of the Great Crusade, the Tech-Priests' space fleets found an anarchic galaxy where the ancient confederacy of interdependent human planets no longer existed. The surviving Knight worlds that were discovered had not retained all of their old technology and had devolved into feudal states ruled by aristocrats. The Tech-Priests settled amongst these feudal empires, founding many forge worlds, and established contacts with the knightly houses, trading with their worlds and investigating the ancient ruins where surviving technology could still sometimes be found. The ferocious warrior Knights proved invaluable in combating enemies such as marauding Orks and land-hungry Eldar Exodites. In return, the Tech-Priests promised technical expertise and helped the Nobles to rebuild their planets.

The most important thing that the Tech-Priests brought to the Knight worlds was the knowledge and technology needed to maintain the Nobles' suits of armour. Over the

course of the Age of Strife, much of the expertise needed to keep the complex Knight armour working had been lost. Local technicians and artificers did their best to maintain the suits, but in many cases, they simply did not have the necessary ability. When the Knight worlds were rediscovered, most had only a handful of operational suits remaining, and even these were in a poor state of repair. The Mechanicum promised to remedy this situation by inducting the local technicians that had been caring for the armour into the Cult Mechanicus, and teaching them the skills they needed to keep the Knight armour in good repair. Because of this, nearly all suits of Knight armour now bear the mark of the Cult Mechanicus as a reminder of the debt of gratitude they owe to Mars.

Over the millennia, the forge worlds have grown powerful with the Knight worlds flourishing alongside them. Year-long, the Knights battle and patrol until the great cargo ships arrive from a forge world, bringing new Knight suits, weapons, tools and mining machinery. They leave with their holds packed with ores and food. The Tech-Priests and the Knights are now mutually dependent, and many forge worlds form the hub of a tiny empire consisting of a forge world and its surrounding Knight worlds. In return, the Knights have gained much from the Tech-Priests, their worlds gradually returning to being technically sophisticated cultures. However, the relationship between forge world and Knight world is not always an easy one, and nowhere is this more true than in the fraught relationship between the Knights and the Sacristans trained by the Adeptus Mechanicus to maintain their armour.



THE SACRISTANS

Tech-Priests refer to the Knight world artificers that are inducted into the Cult Mechanicus as Sacristans, and this quickly became what they were known as in the knightly houses too. Whenever a cargo ship arrives from a forge world to collect food and resources, it will also take a small party of apprentices from the Knight world. These apprentices are drawn from all levels of society and could be the third son of a Noble, or the offspring of a lowly farmer. Over the course of their decade-long apprenticeship on the forge world, they are trained in the skills needed to maintain suits of Knight armour and then returned to their planet of origin as a fully trained Sacristan. Unbeknownst to the Imperial Knights, however, the trainees are also indoctrinated into the Cult Mechanicus, providing a network of agents who can further the interests of the Tech-Priests.

The local artificers that maintained the Knight armour during the Age of Strife had already established themselves as a vitally important part of each knightly house, and the training they have received from the Adeptus Mechanicus

HOUSE RIVALRIES

It is mercifully rare for relations between knightly houses to deteriorate to the point of war, though it is far from unheard of. Houses Navaros and Borgius are fierce rivals that have been embroiled in a bitter feud dating back several millennia. The troubles on Duton started when the matriarch of House Borgius was accused of seducing the Count of Navaros' firstborn son, then poisoning him after he spurned her advances. Relations have regularly soured between the houses to the point of open war. The Sacristans have, on occasion, even had to request forces from the nearby forge world of Lucius to intervene in order to prevent the fighting from halting production at the planet's adamantium mining facilities. So fierce was the civil war in 156.M41 that the Tech Adepts of Lucius authorised the deployment of a demi-legion of Titans from the Legio Astorum to quell the infighting.

has only served to increase their status. From their first foundation, the Sacristans quickly styled themselves as a priesthood for the half-forgotten mysteries of the technology that they knew, and as their power grew, the relationship between them and the knightly houses shifted and changed. Where in the past, the technicians were seen as mere subjects or vassals, the Sacristans soon began to speak with one voice, and by threatening to remove their services from any house that would not heed their advice, they soon became almost as influential in knightly society as the Nobles themselves.

In general, this has benefited the knightly houses, for the Sacristans act as something of a counterpoint to the natural arrogance and warlike tendencies of the Knights, and have often been able to arbitrate between different houses to ensure they do not wipe one another out in bitter feuds. However, this political might is also an important tool for the Adeptus Mechanicus, which the Tech-Priests use to try and bend the Knight worlds to their will. More often than not, however, the Knights' ingrained sense of honour and duty often drives them to follow a course of action that the Adeptus Mechanicus would far rather they ignore.

TRADITION & RITUAL

Since the dark days of the Horus Heresy, the Knight worlds have continued to establish themselves as an important and loyal part of the Imperium. Feared in battle, and almost unwavering once they have given their word, they are welcomed as powerful allies by Imperial commanders whenever their services are available. It is only the relative scarcity of the surviving Knight worlds, and the rigid, hidebound society they have developed, that limits the impact the Imperial Knights have on the galaxy.

Daily life within the strongholds is bound by ancient traditions and rituals that can date back, unchanged, more than ten thousand years, and which the Imperial Knights feel themselves honour-bound to adhere to. This immense awareness of tradition manifests itself in rituals that can dominate and suffocate all other aspects of life within the stronghold. Days are almost wholly consumed tending to the obscure and esoteric tenets of tradition and with honouring household traditions or important ancestors from thousands of years ago. For example, in House Hasburg, at the dawn of every day the entire court must gather to hear the reading of the names and deeds of every ruler of the house, dating back to its foundation millennia before; there are hundreds of names, and the process takes up most of the day.

The only escape from the smothering ennui of courtly life lies in conflict; both the heroic challenge of the field of battle as an Imperial Knight, and the more ignoble but no less enthralling political contests that take place between the knightly houses. The first of these is solely the preserve of the first or second sons of the aristocracy, for only they are allowed to pilot suits of Knight armour. It is difficult to imagine the sheer freedom and sense of power that donning a suit of Knight armour brings to its wearer. At court, the Noble's every move and action is dictated by ancient traditions and rigid social rules; once the armour is donned, all that is forgotten; he is free to act as he sees fit, unconstrained by anything but his own moral compass.

THE HORUS HERESY

The golden age of the Great Crusade was to be cut short by the supreme act of betrayal known as the Horus Heresy, during which the galaxy was gripped by the most bitter civil war humanity had ever seen. Across the nascent Imperium, rebels clashed with loyalists for the fate of Mankind. Space Marines fought Space Marines, Titans fought Titans and, alongside them, Imperial Knights fought Imperial Knights. In those dark days, nobody was to be trusted and treachery was as much a part of warfare as bolter shells, volcano cannons and Drop Pods. One of the most horrific betrayals of the war occurred on the planet of Molech.

As the Warmaster Horus led his armies to Terra, he left a trail of destruction in his wake hundreds of light years wide. His forces seemed unstoppable as garrison after garrison fell before his might, or changed allegiance and sided with the traitorous commander. It was on the planet of Molech that one of the most determined stands was to be made. Loyalist Titan Legions and over a hundred Imperial Army regiments and knightly houses stood ready to bear the brunt of the Warmaster's attack in an attempt to halt his inexorable advance. When it came, it was like a hurricane unleashed upon the verdant world.

Horus' initial assault devastated many cities and strongholds, and amongst the victims were Molech's rulers – House Devine. Dispossessed and unable to fight back, the knightly house slowly succumbed to the temptations of Chaos. Over the following months, the insidious whisper of Slaanesh – Dark Prince of Chaos and god of indulgence and excess – spread through their depleted ranks. Their officers became lethargic, interested only in their sports, using their mighty Knight suits to hunt the towering reptilian beasts that stalked Molech's lush jungles. The seductive grip of Slaanesh grew stronger, as the Prince of Pleasure bent the force of his will to corrupting the noble Devines. Soon, they met in secret cabals, performing depraved rites and ceremonies within the heart of the loyalist camp. No act was too shameful or disgusting; the sensations of the moment became their only desire.

When Horus launched a massive offensive, the Knights of House Devine committed an act of brazen treachery and turned on the troops who remained loyal to the Emperor. The Imperial forces found themselves caught in a trap, with advancing enemy Titans to the front and renegade Knights attacking their ranks from behind. This treachery allowed the Chaos host to punch through the Imperial defences, leaving them with no line of retreat. They were totally defeated, so brutally that only one in a hundred of the Imperial army surviving the campaign.

Since that first betrayal, only a handful of knightly houses have been corrupted by Chaos, even when the forge worlds to which they owed fealty became part of the Dark Mechanicum. The Imperial Knights that did turn to Chaos have long since died but their souls live on as Daemons, floating within the shells of their corrupted war machines. When a daemonic legion marches to war it is sometimes preceded by these Daemon Knights, spreading havoc and despair. In general, though, the innate conservatism of the knightly houses has made them resistant to the lures of the Chaos Gods, and Daemon Knights are therefore an extremely rare sight on the battlefields of the 41st Millennium.

This being the case, it comes as no surprise that Imperial Knights fight with such ruthless and joyful ferocity, or that they are willing to endlessly practice the techniques of battle such that their prowess is only matched by the Adeptus Astartes. When unable to justify wearing their armour for training or battle, Nobles organise contests between themselves to prove who is the bravest and most skilled, and in truth they are only truly content when arrayed for battle in their armour.

However, there is also a darker side to the character of the Imperial Knights, one which drives another form of behaviour that allows for an escape from the traditions and rituals of courtly life. The same mental conditioning that imposes a strong respect for hierarchy and fealty upon the Nobles has the side-effect of making them endlessly ambitious. In short, they are all compelled to outdo their peers and be acknowledged as the mightiest of all. In part, this drives the Nobles' obsession with contests of skill, but it also reveals itself in an equally intense obsession with political intrigue. The courts of the knightly houses are riven with political factions, each trying to outdo the others in any way possible. These political intrigues are not the sole purview of the Nobles themselves. All Nobles have a high-born consort, it being considered vital that the Noble has sons to inherit their name and titles, and daughters to marry as consorts to other knightly families in order to cement alliances. A Noble's consort can have considerable influence, and political intrigue offers them just about their only escape from the drudgery of courtly life. Many a Noble has risen to high power thanks to the intelligence, cunning and ruthless ambition of his consort, while the Noble himself has found his pleasures on the field of battle.

The result is that plots and schemes abound; often these will be inconsequential and only result in one faction or another gaining prestige over their rivals, but at times, such as when the ruler of a knightly house dies, they can become deadly serious. It is not unknown for factions to come to blows, or even to arrange the assassination of a particularly

hated opponent. Most infamously, on the planet Patronis, a dispute about which rituals should be carried out when members of the different houses visited each other escalated into a centuries-long conflict that devastated the planet and eventually led to the demise of both houses.

KNIGHTS AT WAR

When the Titan Legions of the Adeptus Mechanicus march to war, contingents from the Knight worlds march beside them, and knightly houses will also send detachments of Knights to fight alongside other allies when they feel it is their duty or obligation to do so.

Traditionally, each knightly house sends one or more detachments of household Knights to fight when a Titan Legion musters for war. The exact number of Knights in a household detachment varies considerably; when the call to arms is made, the representatives of the forge world where the Titan Legion is based will request that each house provide a certain number of Knights. Knightly houses are honour-bound to obey such summons, and will only fail to comply in the most dire of circumstances. Forfeiting such a commitment is a source of great shame and unlikely ever to be forgotten, either by the house itself, or their peers and rivals. Because of this, it is almost always the case that the full quota of Imperial Knights appear at the rallying point designated by the Tech-Priests, ready to be transported away to join the Titan Legion. Arriving at the war zone, the eager Knights will quickly be hurled into battle.

THE OMNISSIAH

The Cult Mechanicus venerates the Ommissiah as the god of machines. It is unclear when this creed was first established, though it is likely it was founded on Mars during the Age of Technology, when Mankind's mastery of science was at its zenith. Those Knight worlds with the closest ties to the forge worlds often share their beliefs, but this is far from a universal trend – many other knightly houses choose to venerate the divine Emperor instead. This has led to many rivalries between houses of differing beliefs over the long millennia.

Some Imperial scholars believe that the Ommissiah and the Emperor are one and the same, or just different aspects of the same divine force. It is said that the Emperor, when he arrived on Mars before the start of the Great Crusade, channelled the power of the Ommissiah to heal the irreparably damaged leg of Taymon Vertacorda's Knight suit, fulfilling an ancient prophecy of the Cult Mechanicus and thus proving his machine divinity. Whatever the truth of the matter, the Emperor was able to forge a pact between Mars and Terra that still exists today.



Usually, they are either tasked with fighting directly in support of the legion's larger Battle Titans, or operating independently as fast-moving scouts and protecting the flanks of the legion's slower-moving war machines.

For almost all Imperial Knights, the call to fight as part of a Titan Legion is met with a burning enthusiasm. Knights from different household detachments vie with one another in acts of valour and heroism on the battlefield as well as through the spectacle of the banners and individual heraldry emblazoned on their suits. The chance to earn glory while at the same time escaping courtly life not just for days, but for years or even decades, is considered the greatest reward they are ever likely to receive. Occasionally, the Adeptus Mechanicus will decree that a household detachment must remain with the Titan Legion permanently. When this is the case, the Nobles will change their vows of allegiance and heraldry from their house to the Titan Legion they now serve, and will be given an honorific title by the master of the legion to better reflect their new status.

Knightly houses will also fight alongside Imperial Guard, Space Marine and other Imperial forces whenever they feel it is their duty to do so. Sometimes this will be in return for help they received when defending their home world against alien invasion, as in the example seen in 456.M38. The 832nd Lord of House Hawkshroud received aid against Dark Eldar raiding parties from the Mordian Iron Guard. The Mordian troops, under the command of Colonel Vargrif, helped defend the Hawkshrouds' stronghold against the Dark Eldar, foiling an attempt to kidnap Lord Hawkshroud's consort in the process. Since that day, the Hawkshrouds feel honour-bound to provide aid to any descendants of the Vargrif line, should they be called upon to do so.



Knightly houses also send household detachments to take part in off-world campaigns if they feel that their honour has been impinged in some way. Knights are proud warriors, and cannot stand to let any slight be ignored, as many an aggressor has found to their cost. It is not unheard of for a knightly house to hunt down and destroy an enemy that has invaded their home world, or for a house to send household detachments to help their allies defeat a hated enemy. This was something that the Tau Commander Shadowsun discovered when her emissaries so infuriated the ruler of House Terryn with their veiled threats and overbearing attitude, that he led several household detachments of his Knights to help the Imperial defenders of Agrellan. Although Agrellan was eventually overrun, the Imperial Knights proved a formidable opponent for the Tau Empire, forcing Shadowsun to deploy the newly designed XV104 Riptide battlesuit to help counter them. Unfortunately for Shadowsun, the defeat on Agrellan has only deepened Patriarch Tybalt's loathing, and he has decreed that the honour of his house will not be satisfied until the upstart invaders have been driven back across the Damocles Gulf.

FREEBLADE KNIGHTS

In certain circumstances, an Imperial Knight will set off on his own, leaving his home behind and travelling from planet to planet across the galaxy. These Knights owe no allegiance to any house, and are known as Freeblade Knights. They tend to travel alone, or with a small group of retainers and Sacristans, but sometimes circumstances will result in small groups of Freeblades banding together, fighting in much the same manner as a household detachment, but with a bond forged in battle rather than inherited through blood.



The reasons that a Knight becomes a Freeblade are many and varied. In some cases, they simply cannot bear the idea of returning to the crushing rituals of the court, and instead set off alone, rarely removing their suits of armour and living only for battle. Other Freeblade Knights have made a personal oath or pact to carry out a certain task that requires they travel across the galaxy in order to fulfil it. Most commonly, though, a Freeblade Knight is simply the last surviving member of his house, left without a liege lord and with no option but to travel across the galaxy until he finds a new master or dies in the attempt.

In all these cases, and many more, a Freeblade Knight is no longer a member of the house they once belonged to. If they are the last surviving member of the house, they may retain their former heraldry as a mark of respect, but usually a Freeblade will change the colour of his armour and the markings upon it and take on a new name to mark the change in his status. The names of some Freeblades, such as the Knight of Dark Shadows, who fought in the Reign of Blood, and Retribution Incarnate, who travelled alongside Solar Macharius during his conquests, are revered as dedicated warriors that would never admit defeat, no matter what odds were arrayed against them.

Not belonging to a house does nothing to reduce the effect of a Freeblade's psychological conditioning. Freeblade Knights still place great significance on acts of honour and duty, perhaps even more so than before. Once they have given their word or set their mind on a task, they will follow it through, come what may, even at the cost of their own lives. They also feel it is their responsibility to protect those that are unable to protect themselves, and to punish those that prey on the weak. They carry out such tasks with a brutal efficiency, leaving only death in their wake and then moving on. This has meant that the Freeblade Knights have gained an almost legendary reputation amongst the ordinary citizens of the Imperium. Such glory, however, means nothing to these lonely, battle-hardened warriors. They are not interested in either praise or reward from those they defend, and their only comforts are found in their long, endless journey and the hot adrenaline rush of battle.

HERALDIC SYMBOLISM

The heraldry of the Imperial-aligned knightly houses is a product of their long and complex histories. Shown here are a selection of house crests.

These are made up of various elements relating to each house's legacy. At the centre of the crest is a shield with the household emblem on the left. Typically these emblems reflect some great event from the house's past or represent the temperament of the Knights in that house. The shield itself is halved with the right portion sporting the Imperial aquila. This split shows the dichotomy of the Imperial houses in the form of their dual loyalty to their own brethren and their Imperial tithemasters.



Below the shields are scrolls showing the house name and above are the helms of Knight suits. A variety of bladed weapons are usually arrayed symmetrically around the House crest.

This serves as a reminder that the Knight houses are, first and foremost, organisations of powerful warriors.

Surrounding and enclosing these elements is a pair of stylised raptor wings, many houses having added this detail to honour their joining the Imperium. Rather than matching the

Imperial aquila, however, the style and colour of these wings is commonly dictated by the local customs and wildlife of each house's Knight world.



Even though the Imperial-aligned houses swear no fealty to the Adeptus Mechanicus, many Knight suits still bear their makers' plates nonetheless.



A maker's plate represents a sign of respect for the Adeptus Mechanicus and a stylised hallmark of the forge world that built the Knight suit.

The heraldry of the Adeptus Mechanicus Knight houses looks significantly different to their Imperial-aligned cousins. They use embossed enamel and metal badges to best reflect the magnificent technology their allies revere. Although the shapes and materials of these crests are different, they too make use of house emblems derived from their long histories. These share a central diadem with a Mechanicus skull and cog occupying the other half. Again, this split represents the dual loyalties of the knightly houses.



Encircling this diadem are often wreaths, cogs or chains, signifying the mystical aspects of that particular branch of the local Cult Mechanicus. Weapons or arcane tools are arrayed behind these elements. The exact number of rays and the combination of metals in the outer edge of these badges is extremely important and has obscure meanings which are only apparent to learned servants of the Adeptus Mechanicus. These crests are often worn pinned to the lustrous tunics of a house's Nobles as a proud declaration of their long heritage.



FREEBLADES

In stark contrast to the heraldry of the Imperial or Adeptus Mechanicus-aligned houses, the Freeblade Knights often spurn the heraldry of their old house, creating their own emblems as they strike out for a life of heroism and adventure on their own. While house emblems reflect the collective history of a Knight world's Noble families, Freeblade icons are very personal to that individual. Mottos are often used as part of the design, and it is not uncommon for stylised skulls and skeletons to be used as a reminder that the Knight's quest will likely end with his death.



RETRIBUTION
INCARNATE



AMARANTHINE



THE OBSIDIAN
KNIGHT

THE KNIGHTLY HOUSES

There are many hundreds of knightly houses in the Imperium, each with its own unique heritage. It is believed that by studying the heraldry of a knightly house, it is possible to learn much of its history by noting the subtle differences and intricacies of design.

Although life has changed in some ways since the arrival of the Imperium, the knightly houses carry on much as they have since their foundation. The ruler of each house will have his court at the largest and most prestigious stronghold, and the Knights that owe the house allegiance will either dwell within the walls of the lord's bastion or at smaller halls of their own.

HERALDRY

The Knights that make up a house bear livery that denotes both their house and their own deeds. They use these, with adapted Imperial heraldry, to signify rank. Newly appointed Knights, known as Knights Apparent, use the basic livery of their house (usually the colour or pattern that is dominant on the house's banner). More experienced Knights have additional emblems and colours added to their heraldry to denote the famous deeds they have carried out and their increasing rank and importance within the house. Campaign banners and battle honours are often added while the Knights are on crusade with Imperial forces.

GREAT HOUSES

Of all the knightly houses, there are some that stand as giants amongst their peers. Having attained their esteemed position by performing legendary deeds, or perhaps earning the favour of one of the Imperium's great institutions, the Great Houses, as they are known, are the mightiest of all knightly houses. Listed below are some famous examples.

HOUSE TARANIS

The first of the knightly houses to be established was that of House Taranis. This truly ancient house predates any other by many hundreds of years, for it was first founded on Mars during the Age of Terra. As the industries of the red planet developed into a vast metropolis of technological mastery, so too did it evolve to become the first and foremost of the forge worlds, and the Knights of House Taranis were its guardians. The STC technology supplied to many of the expeditionary fleets during Mankind's expansion across the stars included designs for armoured suits of exo-armour based on those first developed to be used by the Knights of Taranis. When the Knight worlds were first rediscovered during the Imperium's Great Crusade many thousands of years later, it is likely that the Mechanicum used their intimate knowledge of the Knight suits worn by House Taranis to help win the loyalty of those worlds.

HOUSE KRAST

The Knight world of Chrysis was the first to be rediscovered at the outset of the Great Crusade by Rogue Trader Militant Jeffers. Its proximity to Mars meant that the knightly houses of Chrysis were able to swiftly resupply their Knights with new weapons and equipment. Foremost amongst these knightly houses was Krast, and their strength at arms

was bolstered further still by their new alliance with the Mechanicum. Gladly did the full might of House Krast set forth at the bidding of Mars to fight in the Emperor's wars, leaving the lesser houses to consolidate the alliance with the Mechanicum on Chrysis.

However, the Knight world's proximity to Mars was to ultimately prove its undoing when the full might of Horus' traitor forces descended upon Chrysis as he carved a bloody path across the galaxy towards Terra. The Knights of House Krast returned to their planet only to find it devastated and the lesser houses all but erased from existence. Ever since the Horus Heresy, the Knights of House Krast have vowed that whenever the threat of Chaos rears its malformed head, they will be there to sever it at the neck.



HOUSE TERRYN

Hailing from the tranquil world of Voltoris, the Knights of House Terryn have earned countless battle honours over the ages. Their house's storied history is replete with tales of valour, strength and glory in battles fought from one side of the galaxy to the other. But it is said that the tedium of their daily life at Furion Peak only encourages them to campaign so far away from their peaceful home planet. Some may say at such a notion, yet there is undoubtedly a kernel of truth behind this – after all, House Terryn is famed almost as much for the laborious ceremonies they stringently adhere to as they are for the magnificent skills their Knights display in battle. The daily intonation known as the Thousand Canticles of War Long Awaited is one such ritual, and lasts nearly three hours.

HOUSE CADMUS

For thousands of years, the Knights of House Cadmus have gathered every midsummer's eve to prepare for an annual hunt to keep the mutant numbers of their forested world of Raisa in check. This much-celebrated event is known as the Cull. Bio-reading cogitators are attached to their Knight suits before every Cull, enabling each Knight to track the number of savages he has slain during the course of the day-long hunt. The Knight who claims the greatest number of kills is the winner of this macabre tourney, and will rule the affairs of the house for the next year. So has the leadership of House Cadmus changed hands with far greater frequency

than any other knightly house over the centuries. However, the current ruler, Baron Roland of Swinford Hall, has retained command for the last thirty-two years, such is his incredible run of victories in the Cull. It is well that a leader of such experience still rules, for the fighting strength of House Cadmus has suffered greatly in defence of the nearby forge world of Gryphonne IV after it was overwhelmed by Hive Fleet Leviathan. A grim future yet awaits House Cadmus if the Tyranid menace cannot be defeated.

HOUSE RAVEN

Of all the knightly houses in the Imperium, House Raven is the largest by far. Indeed, Raven's Knights number in the hundreds, with dozens of households ready to answer the summons of the Adeptus Mechanicus should they be called to war. Quite why there are so many Knight suits available to House Raven is something of a mystery. However, ancient records dating back to when their world, Kolossi, was first settled refer to a piece of STC archeotech that long ago fell into disrepair and was lost. Whether this STC system and Kolossi's natural resources served as the perfect combination for producing Knight suits, or if the first human settlers merely prioritised the creation of Knight suits above all else, remains an enigma.

House Raven first allied itself with the nearby forge world of Metalica during the Great Crusade. Lord Gregor, Raven's ruler, struck a deal with the Tech Adepts of Metalica to ensure that his house would have sufficient Sacristans to service his full host of Knights. In return, Gregor swore eternal fealty to Metalica – a pact that remains to this day.

HOUSE GRIFFITH

The Knights of House Griffith are a fierce and proud warrior caste who value courage and skill at arms above all else. Duels of honour are commonplace amongst Griffith's hot-headed Knights. A regular jousting tourney, the Field of Adamantium, dictates the standings of each family in society; a Knight can be preeminent one day, but overshadowed the next, should one of his rivals emerge triumphant.

The Knights of House Griffith use Errant armour almost exclusively, the exo-suit's powerful thermal cannon befitting these close range specialists. Such is their aggressive nature, however, that many of Griffith's Knights eschew the use of ranged weaponry in battle unless absolutely necessary, preferring instead to charge forwards and strike down their foes with reaper chainswords in glorious combat.

HOUSE HAWKSHROUD

To the noble Knights of Hawkshroud, honour is the single most important virtue of all. So essential to their way of life is the esteem and reputation of their house that Hawkshroud's Knights will honour any call to arms from those that have earned their loyalty or respect. It is for this reason that, at any given time, almost all of House Hawkshroud's Knights are away on campaigns to uphold past alliances. Though he would never admit it, the ruler of House Hawkshroud, Viscount Tudon, fears the day that his home world of Krastellan comes under attack. With so many Knights scattered across the galaxy, his skeleton force would need significant support to defend Krastellan against a determined enemy. But would Hawkshroud's allies come to their aid as readily to honour past bonds of friendship?

LESSER HOUSES

There are hundreds of lesser knightly houses scattered across the Imperium whose deeds, no less impressive than those of the major houses, are not as well known beyond the boundaries of their own planetary systems. There are the houses of Mortan, Althalos and Thalmus, who saved more than 100 billion lives by defending the hive world of Hexis Alpha when a Warp rift spawned a tide of Daemons across the planet. House Dorath's valiant Knights have ever dominated the ranks of the mighty Order of Iron – the elite guardians of the forge world, Stryken Primus. The cbon Knights of House Winterville have thwarted dozens of Dark Eldar raids in the systems surrounding their home world, earning bitter enmity from the scions of Commorragh.

FREEBLADE KNIGHTS

Most Freeblade Knights are doomed to die solitary deaths on distant battlefields many light years from home, their past deeds forgotten and buried with them. But for some, the path of the Freeblade has led to such fame and glory that their exploits become legend, their stories recounted by countless Imperial citizens across the galaxy. Justice, Bane of House Drakon, was one such Knight, the Obsidian Knight of the Damocles Crusade was another. Retribution Incarnate was a seemingly invincible hero of the Macharian Conquests. Only very recently, two Freeblade Knights, known as Wrath and Blade of Finality, have risen to prominence in the wars against the Red Corsairs striking out of the Maelstrom in great numbers.

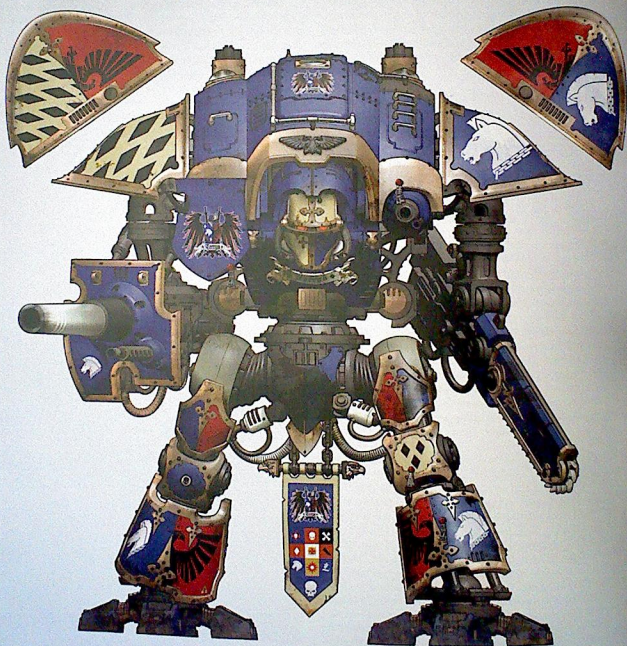


HERALDRY & LIVERY OF THE KNIGHTLY HOUSES

The colours and iconography displayed by the Imperial Knights have many different meanings. To one unschooled in the heraldic symbolism of the knightly houses, their significance is often lost amid the array of colours and myriad patterns. However, to the Nobles that pilot the Knight suits, every emblem and motif represents fifteen millennia of honour and sacrifice.

HOUSE TERRYN

It is believed that when the knightly house of Terryn was first founded, the Nobles chose the sapphire hue of their livery from the beautiful azure oceans of their home world. However, over the many thousands of years since House Terryn was established, microscopic algae found within the seas of Voltoris have gradually reacted with the system's twin suns to turn its waters an emerald green. Regardless of this natural phenomenon, the Knights of House Terryn proudly continue to bear the cobalt blue of their ancient ancestors.





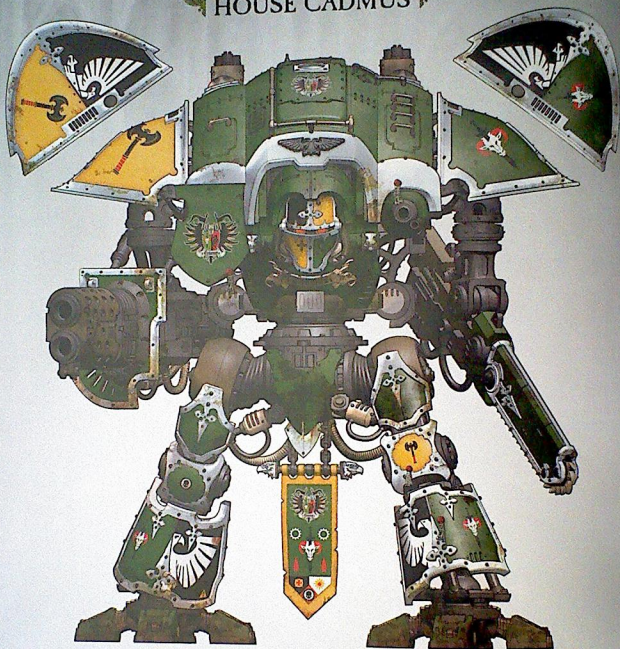
HERALDRY OF HOUSE TERRYN

Having no formal ties to a forge world of the Adeptus Mechanicus, House Terryn's crest is dominated by a pair of stylised wings to acknowledge its allegiance to the Imperium of Mankind. The house emblem of a white stallion's head is proudly emblazoned upon Terryn's traditional field of azure blue, and shares the tiling plate with the Imperial symbol of an ebon demi-aquila.



The three Imperial Knights displayed above formed one of the household detachments from House Terryn that accompanied Patriarch Tybalt to the hive world of Agrellan to fight the invading Tau forces of Commander Shadonuns. During the course of the conflict, the three Knights became known as Tybalt's Triumvirate, for they fought at the side of the ruler of House Terryn in every sortie from the capital hive city's gates. Whenever they engaged the xenos forces, the Tau were hardest pressed. At the Battle for Agrellan Prime, Tybalt's Triumvirate were in the heart of the fighting, standing back to back in a seemingly impenetrable triangle amid the Tau lines, punishing the invaders with every salvo of their mighty guns. Only after sustained railgun fire from the renowned Hammerhead tank ace, Longstrike, caused irreparable damage to two of the Knights were they forced to fall back.

HOUSE CADMUS



From the foundation of their knightly house, the Nobles of Cadmus were a fiercely independent breed, each family proud of their honour, deeds and heritage. It was this fact that made it all the more surprising when, in the early years of the 31st Millennium, Baron Godfrey signed a concordat swearing fealty to the nearby forge world of Gryphonne IV. Their ruler's decision was met with unanimous uproar throughout the Noble families of House Cadmus, who deemed the treaty to be a heinous betrayal of all that they stood for. Godfrey's most damning act of all was in changing the heraldry of House Cadmus.



According to the knightly house's new patronage, it now bore the cog of the Adeptus Mechanicus at its heart. With the full might of the Cult Mechanicus behind him, none dared to oppose Godfrey openly, and he lived out his days like a feudal king.

However, the recent demise of Gryphonne IV beneath the onslaught of Hive Fleet Leviathan has somewhat freed House Cadmus from their obligations to Tech-Priests. To the horror of Raisa's Sacristans, but the delight of its Noble families, Baron Roland has since reinstated the original heraldry of House Cadmus, replete with wings and the crest of a slain mutant.

BARON ROLAND OF SWINFORD HALL

The current ruler of House Cadmus hails from Swinford Hall, a cavernous and luxurious wing of Golem Keep. Born of an old and powerful baronial family, Roland is an uncompromising man who doesn't lightly suffer the presence of fools. His courage in the face of adversity is legend. In times of war, Roland leads the Knights of House Cadmus from the front, resplendent in his modified Lancer armour, to lay low all who oppose him. Unusually, Roland chooses to pilot the suit of Knight Errant armour shown on the left when competing in the Cull, unwilling to claim an unfair advantage over his rivals by using the bespoke suit of armour afforded him by his rank. However, his unbroken run of thirty-two victories has long since silenced any critics who claimed he did not take the Cull seriously.

LIVERY OF HOUSE CADMUS

The arboraceous Knight world of Raia undoubtedly inspired the bottle green of House Cadmus' livery. The Knights are difficult to spot from above as they stride beneath the vast forest canopies of their home world – an advantage they have utilised whenever faced with the threat of invasion. However, should Hive Fleet Leviathan ever encroach upon Raia, not even the forests will offer the Knights sanctuary...



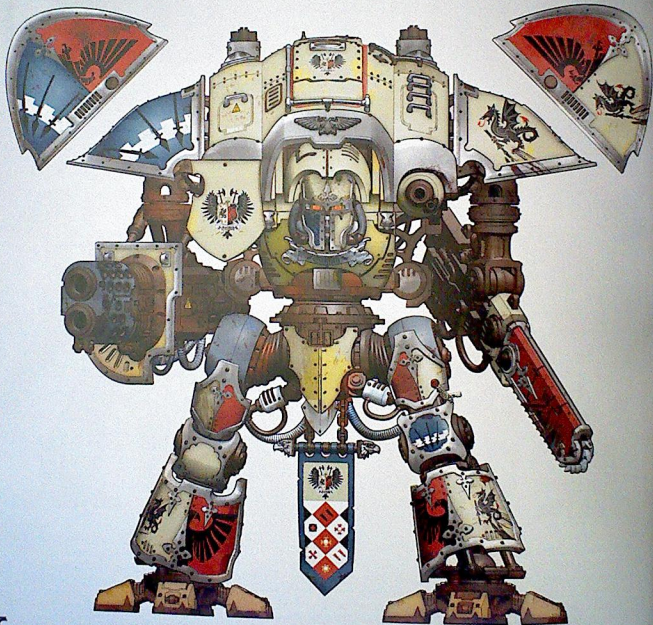
The three Knights displayed above are the only surviving veterans of the war on Gryphon IV. Many of their peers fell in battle with the implacable alien hordes before the forge world was overrun and the remaining Imperial forces ordered to withdraw. Sir Malcolm (pictured top-right), was instrumental in the defence of the forge world's manufactorum district, eventually holding out alone against wave after wave of Tyranid assaults long after the Skitarii phalanx stationed alongside him had been overwhelmed. Sir Roderick and Sir William, displayed above, fought as part of a household detachment tasked with the destruction of a Tyranid Dominatrix that was masterminding a massed assault on the Mechnonomicon, a vast temple-shrine to the Omnissiah. Though they ultimately succeeded in their mission, four of their fellow Knights were slain by the terrible creature before it succumbed.

HOUSE GRIFFITH

The heraldry of House Griffith owes much to its founding ruler, the great Knight Nathaniel. It was he who chose the crest of his house, which depicts the great dragon Alvirax holding the broken lance with which Nathaniel slew him. Even the livery worn by Griffith's Knights is in honour of the legendary dragonbone lance Nathaniel wielded. To this day, the ruler of House Griffith, the Grand Master of the Lance, bears a stylised lance emblem on his Knight suit in Nathaniel's honour. The Errant armour of Griffith's current ruler, Bryce, is shown below.



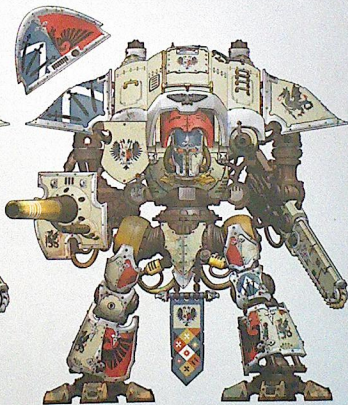
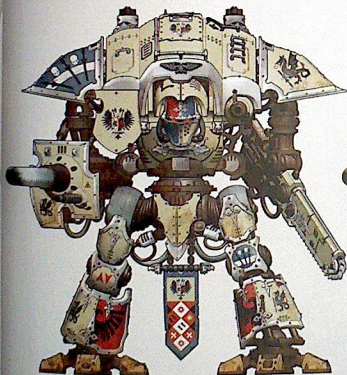
The Grand Master of the Lance also has the honour of wielding the reformed Lance of Nathaniel in the jousting tournament, the Field of Adamantium. Intricately carved from the femur of a great dragon, this weapon dates back over fifteen millennia, and is the most revered relic of House Griffith. In the Field of Adamantium, Nobles joust against one another from horseback in the manner of their ancient forebears. The lances are dangerously sharp, but instead of wearing the obsidian armour of old, each Noble dons full adamantium plate to avoid injury.



DRAGON'S END

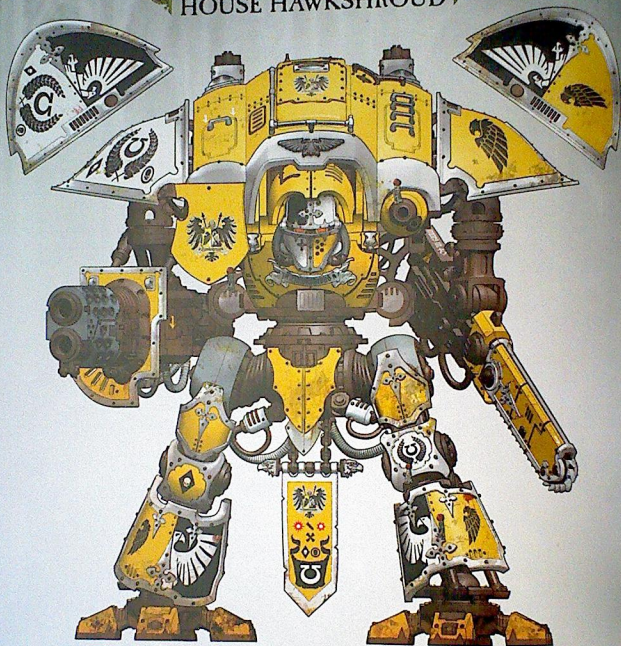
The volcanic Knight world of Dragon's End was named for the winged drakes that, millennia ago, soared on the thermals and preyed on the vast megasaur herds that grazed in the valleys before they were hunted to extinction. It was the arrival of the planet's first human settlers, and the foundation of House Griffith soon thereafter, that saw irrevocable changes made to the planet's primordial ecosystem. The colonists brought with them a huge number of Terran horses, and the Nobles that would eventually go on to found House Griffith became adept riders. But as their colony expanded, the humans sought to claim dominance over the megasaur herds, leading to inevitable confrontation with the dragons that fed upon the giant creatures.

Before the first Knight suits were completed, the Nobles took to fighting the dragons on horseback, clad in baroque armour crafted from locally-mined obsidian. Against such terrible creatures, the Nobles were forced to become great warriors in order to overcome them. The mightiest of their number was Nathaniel, who slew three dragons with his dragonbone lance before eventually becoming House Griffith's inaugural ruler. Even though the Knight suits enabled the Nobles to finally overcome the dragons, they never forgot the skills they had mastered. To this day, Griffith's Knights are amongst the very deadliest in battle.



The deadly dragon battles fought by the horse-riding Nobles that eventually founded House Griffith ensured that its Knights became amongst the most capable warriors of their kind. Though the war with the dragons had taken a terrible toll, the Nobles that survived were battle-hardened and mighty heroes all. House Griffith soon became renowned for the skills of its Knights, and is one of the Imperium's greatest knightly houses, despite being one of the smallest in number with less than fifty Knights at its disposal. In honour of the cavalry formations that once battled the dragons of their ancient home world, House Griffith refers to a household detachment of its Knights as a Lance. The Knights displayed above are from Dragon Lance, a household detachment renowned for their ferocious charge and for killing even the largest targets with a single stroke of their reaper chainswords.

HOUSE HAWKSHROUD



The heraldry of House Hawkshroud is held in great reverence by its Knights. To bear its image on their Knight suits is an ambition to which every young Noble on Krastellan aspires. Indeed, to have one of their number inducted into the ranks of House Hawkshroud's Knights will bring a family both wealth and respect. For this reason, the mightiest dynasties on Krastellan will do everything in their power to ensure that their sons are accepted into the knightly order, thereby securing the future of their lineage. Failure to do so has been the ruin of many great families over the millennia.



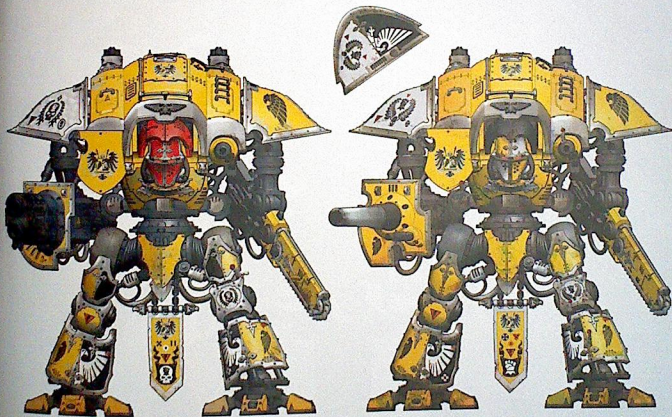
The primary reason that House Hawkshroud's heraldry inspires such pride and devotion in its Nobles invariably comes from their disciplined upbringing. From an early age, the children of Krastellan are taught to honour and respect their fellows. Kindness is remembered and returned tenfold to those who offer it, and no request for aid is ever denied. Thus is House Hawkshroud famed for answering any call for aid, even if doing so will leave their own forces woefully under strength. As a result of this zealous sense of honour, Hawkshroud's Knights are well versed in fighting battles against the odds.

HONOUR MARKINGS

The strict code of honour with which the Nobles of House Hawkshroud are raised often results in many of its Knights being spread far and wide across the galaxy in support of those that have earned their loyalty and respect. Unlike many of the other knightly houses, Hawkshroud's Knights often sport campaign markings, army badges, Space Marine Chapter symbols and other such emblems as a sign of respect for those they have sworn to aid in battle. This not only serves as a sign of dedication to the cause of their allies, but acts to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between the Knights and those that they fight alongside.

THE OATHSWORN

Such is the unusually tight association between the Knights of House Hawkshroud and their brothers in arms that it is not uncommon for a Knight to remain on campaign far beyond the length of service that was initially offered or requested of him. In doing so, these Knights are, in theory at least, walking the path of the Freeblade Knight. Unlike many Freeblades, however, these lone Hawkshroud Knights, or Oathsworn, as they are often called, still proudly display their house's heraldry and livery. Unless they are slain in battle, these Knights will one day seek to return to Krastellan, where they will be welcomed back with honour.



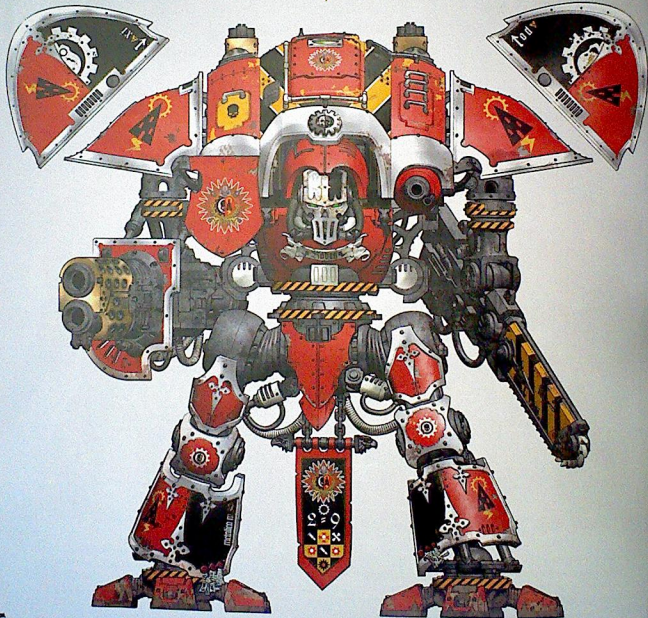
Honouring a debt that dated back to the Horus Heresy, the household detachment of Hawkshroud Knights displayed above fought beside the Imperial Fists Chapter during the Tyros Gulf Campaign. The Knights engaged Eldar from the Alaitoc Craftworld alongside the sons of Dorn in a number of crucial engagements. Most notable of these battles took place on Lobas, where the canny Illite Nightstear launched a surprise attack, seeking to slay the Chapter Master of the Imperial Fists, Vladimir Pugh. The Knights proved instrumental in helping to fend off the xenos assault, earning great praise from the traditionally stoic Chapter Master. The Knights have yet to return to their home world, leading many to believe that they are now Oathsworn.

HOUSE RAVEN

House Raven is the largest of the knightly houses, with many hundreds of Imperial Knights at its disposal. The heraldry of this ancient house proudly displays their allegiance to the Adeptus Mechanicus, for they have been allied to the forge world of Metalica for over ten millennia. The bond between House Raven and their associated forge world is particularly strong and mutually beneficial – Kolossi's Sacristans are highly trained and the strength of Legio Metalica is greatly bolstered by House Raven's knightly host.



The crest of House Raven depicts their colossal adamantium-clad stronghold, the Keep Inviolate. Not only is this magnificent structure a mighty fortress, but is also the capital city of Kolossi. There are few fortifications in the Imperium besides the Emperor's Palace and the Fang on Fenris that are as impressive to behold. So does Raven's crest depict its greatness, their house icon a symbolic pillar of strength that bears the cog of the Adeptus Mechanicus, for they can field enough Knights to rival the power of a Titan Legion.





THE IRON BROTHERHOOD

One of the secrets behind the strength of House Raven is the large and highly skilled order of Sacristans that oversees the repair and welfare of its legion of Knight suits. Known as the Iron Brotherhood, these Sacristans spend many long years on the forge world of Metalica learning the way of the order and entrusted with the stewardship of a suit of Knight armour. As a result, the Sacristans of the Iron Brotherhood are amongst the most skilled of their kind in the galaxy, save perhaps those that serve House Taranis on Mars itself.

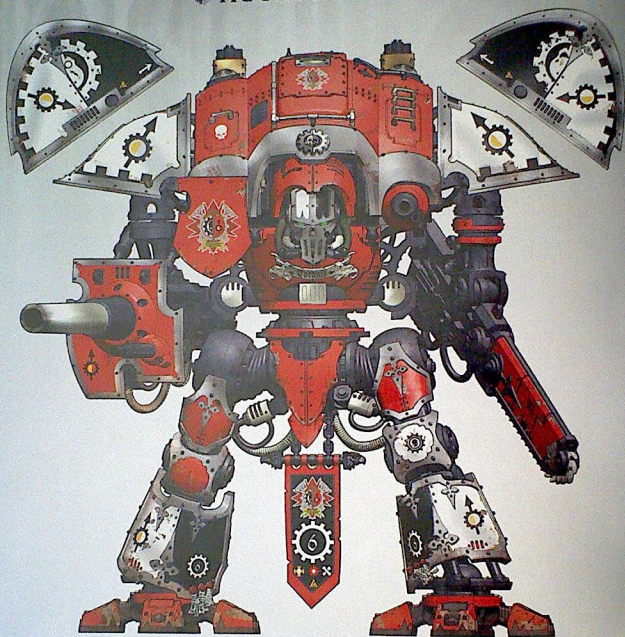
THE ORDER OF COMPANIONS

One of Raven's first rulers, Lord Grunwald, introduced a further layer of knightly elite within the hierarchy of House Raven. Known as the Companions, this inner circle of Nobles comprises many of the most powerful and experienced Knights of House Raven. Despite the many Knight suits available to House Raven, the overwhelming majority of them are Errant and Paladin patterns. Knight suits maintain constant streams of noospheric communication between each other, so there is no need for any visual means of identifying a Companion – House Raven hold that such a marking would only benefit their enemies. A Knight commander thus instinctively recognises these veteran Knights and can better utilise their expert skills.



The proximity of Metalica to the Knight world of Kolossi, and the sheer number of Imperial Knights it can summon to join its armies, has ever ensured that it remains one of the galaxy's foremost forge worlds. When the Knights of House Raven must lend their strength to the formidable might of Legio, there are few more powerful fighting forces in the entire galaxy. It is not uncommon for a Titan Princeps or Tech Adept of Metalica to be so impressed by the deeds of a Knight or household detachment that they petition House Raven for them to be permanently seconded to the Titan Legion. Such a request is rarely if ever denied by the ruler of House Raven, as it is deemed a great honour for a Knight to serve the forge world in such a way.

HOUSE TARANIS



The name of House Taranis is heavy with the weight of deeds performed in an ancient time steeped in infamy. Yet even before the dark days of the Horus Heresy, House Taranis bore the honour of being the first knightly house. Indeed, the crest of House Taranis bears the stylised cog of Mars at its centre, for the red planet of the Adeptus Mechanicus is its home world – a fact that grants it peerless status amongst the other knightly houses of the Imperium. House Taranis has ever proudly borne the red of Mars as its livery, though this symbolic field has since been adopted by many



of the other knightly houses that are directly aligned to the Adeptus Mechanicus. The sword that divides the crest of House Taranis from the demi-cog symbol of the newly founded Adeptus Mechanicus was added in the wake of the Horus Heresy. Raf

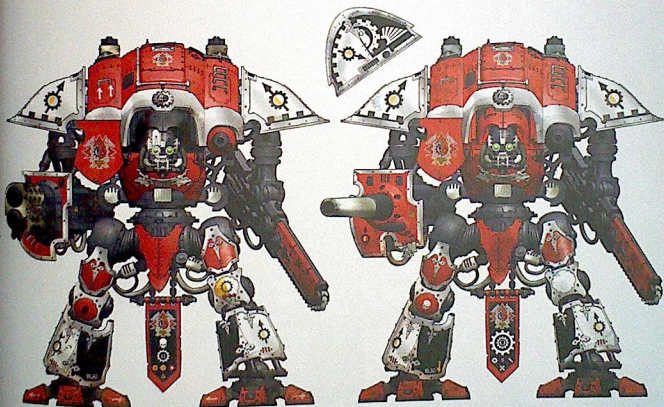
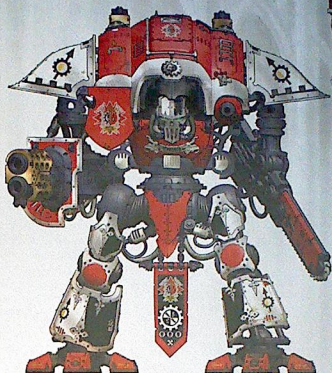
Maven, a valiant Knight who not only survived, but went on to rebuild and rule House Taranis after the disastrous civil war on Mars, insisted on adding the emblem in honour of his kinsmen who died in the bitter fighting. This legacy combined with its illustrious home world ensures that Taranis is the foremost knightly house.

GENESIS OF THE KNIGHT SUITS

The first Knight suit was one of countless technological wonders created on Mars during the Age of Technology. The pioneering Nobles of House Taranis became the original Imperial Knights, and piloted the very first prototypes, fresh from the forges of Mars' industrial heart. Uniquely amongst the Nobles of the other knightly houses, however, the subtle mind-altering technology was noticeably absent from the Thrones Mechanicum of Taranis' Knights. This was in part due to the fact that the Martian Nobles who became the first Knights were already fiercely loyal to their Mechanicum overseers and House Taranis was an integral part of Mars' infrastructure. The Imperial Knight STCs were upgraded to include the subliminal stimuli in preparation for Mankind's exodus across the stars, the better to prepare the Nobles who would be responsible for the protection of others.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES

The civil war that erupted on Mars during the Horus Heresy saw House Taranis suffer grievous losses during the fighting. As the internecine conflict drew to a close, only two Knights remained. Raf Maven, one of the survivors, dedicated himself to overseeing the gradual rebuilding of his shattered house. His incredible commitment, and the skill of Mars' Tech Adepts, saw House Taranis survive its darkest hour.



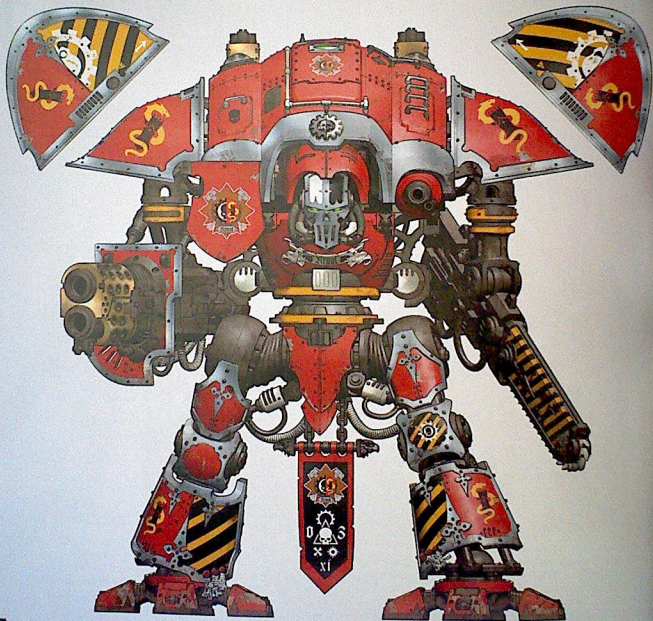
Many of the Knight suits piloted by the Nobles of House Taranis were archaic compared to those of the 'younger' houses, for they included the very earliest patterns and marks of Knight armour amongst their number. The destruction of so many Knights during the Horus Heresy saw this balance redressed, however, and Maven's house was ultimately to be reborn with the very finest Knight suits at its disposal, as befitted the first of the knightly houses. Never three Knights departed above all date back to the time of Taranis' renewal, each proudly emblazoned with the amended heraldry of their house. Never again has the strength of House Taranis been so sorely tested, for it returned from the precipice of annihilation greater than ever before.

HOUSE KRAST

House Krast hails from the Knight world of Chrysis, and was the first of its kind to be rediscovered at the outset of the Great Crusade. The proximity of Chrysis to the Sol System saw it quickly fall under the jurisdiction of Mars. However, Krast was the only knightly house on Chrysis to survive the calamitous events of the Horus Heresy, forcing its ruler to rely heavily on the forge world's support to recover his losses. Thankfully, Mars was happy to oblige, for it was desperate for resources and Chrysis still had them in abundance.



With such strong connections to the forge world, House Krast has ever borne the red of the Adeptus Mechanicus as its livery. In the wake of the Horus Heresy, the house crest was changed by the unanimous consent of its Nobles. Instead of the lion rampant, the crest now depicts an iron fist squeezing the life from the serpent of Chaos. Each Noble then swore a mighty oath of vengeance against the traitor forces of Horus. Ever since the bitter wars of the Scouring, House Krast's Knights have been in the forefront of the fight against Chaos.



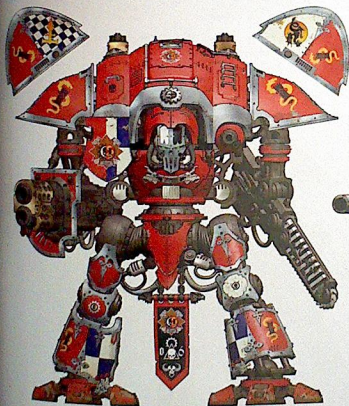


THE HEADTAKER TITAN HUNTERS

Of the bitter betrayals that led to the destruction of all but one of the knightly houses on Chrysis, House Krast holds the base treachery of Legio Mortis to be the worst. As one of Mars' own Titan Legions, the Death's Heads fought alongside the Knights of House Krast on many occasions during the early years of the Great Crusade. However, after siding with Horus during the ensuing civil war, the Death's Heads were reborn in the image of the plague god Nurgle, and led the assault that devastated Chrysis and annihilated the planet's lesser houses.

The Knights of House Krast have ever sought to avenge their fallen kinsmen, and seek out the Titans of Legio Mortis above all others in battle. Should a Knight claim a Titan kill, his deed will herald many celebrations on his return to his home world. However, such revelry will pale in comparison to that on Chrysis should a Knight of Krast fell one of the Legio Mortis. The Noble will be treated to a triumph in his honour and he will henceforth be known as a Headtaker. Each Headtaker bears a broken Death's Head symbol on his Knight suit or tabard – a battle honour reminding all of his heroic deed and celebrating the destruction of a hated foe.

Rumoured sightings of the traitor Titans of Legio Mortis amongst the Chaos forces besieging the Cadian Gate has led to House Krast redeploying to that war zone in great force.



House Krast has been involved in a number of great victories over the forces of Chaos, though they never shirk their responsibilities to their Adeptus Mechanicus allies should the Tech-Priests of Mars summon them to war. During the Battle of Herald's Fall, four household detachments of House Krast's Knights fought the invading Ork forces of Waaagh! Splenirrippa alongside the Cockatrices Titan Legion. Though they lost fully half of their number over the course of the fighting, the three survivors above earned what passes for acclaim from the Fabricator-General himself after bringing down Splenirrippa's Great Gargant in a combined assault before it could smash apart the irreplaceable war machine, Ordinatus Mars. In the wake of the battle, Headtaker Forillus, the Knight who gutted the Warlord's Gargant with his reaper chainsword, was seconded to the legion.

FAMOUS FREEBLADES

LONE KNIGHTS

Despite the fact that there have been many cases of Freeblade Knights working in concert – even as part of a household detachment – over the Imperium's long history, the vast majority of them choose to fight alone. The reasons behind this solitary existence are many and varied, but it is certain that each Freeblade would have a long story to tell if ever he chose to reveal his past, though it is unlikely that the truth would ever be a pleasant one.

A FORGOTTEN PAST

It is their mysterious history that leads many Freeblades to forsake their origins and take on a whole new identity. Many of these Knights choose to hide behind a cryptic name, though whether or not it is possible to discern a glint of a Freeblade's past from his choice of title is an enigma in itself. It is likely that after many long years of relentless warfare, some Knights may even have forgotten why they took their first step along the path of the Freeblade.

Unlike household Knights, Freeblades commonly choose a single colour as their suit's livery, adopting simple designs or patterns if any at all. Many choose to only show significant iconography on their tabard, though even these are symbolically selective in decoration. A Freeblade Knight's choice of livery and what passes for heraldry is unique, and no two Freeblades will ever look the same.



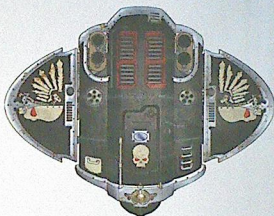
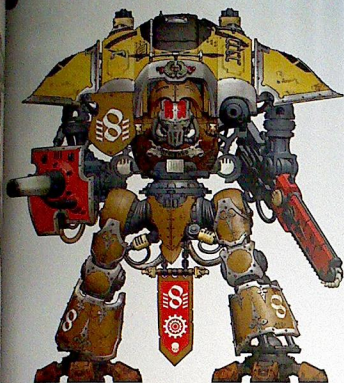
The Crimson Reaper is as notorious for his murderous tendencies as he is for his deadly skill in battle, leading few commanders to fully trust him.



It is believed that Retribution Incarnate was the last of a knightly house destroyed in the Macharian Crusade. The truth has never come to light.



Amaranthine was a Freeblade Knight whose legend was forged during the bitter Tiberus Wars. Countless were the foes who died by his hand.



It is believed that Auric Arachnus fought alongside the Ultramarines during the Battle for Macragge, where he slew a mighty Dominatrix.



Gerantius, the Forgotten Knight, emerges from the depths of Sacred Mountain to fight any who threaten his home world of Alaric Prime.

Little is known of the Obsidian Knight's past, but the dark form of this mighty Knight spell doom for many of the Tau invaders upon Agrellan.

A LEGACY OF HONOUR

THE ANCIENT TIMES

M1 - M15 The Age of Terra

A combination of an enormous boom in population and Terra's rapidly-diminishing natural resources leaves humanity's birth planet on the brink of anarchy. As these problems increase in severity, Mankind begins to look farther afield – towards the stars.

Mars is the first planet to be terraformed and settled. Colonial expeditions to explore space beyond the boundaries of the Sol system meet with success. However, the settlements furthest from Terra are forced to become increasingly self-sufficient due to the limitations of interstellar travel.

M15 - M25 The Age of Technology

STC technology is mastered by some of the greatest scientific minds in Mankind's history and heralds a golden era of discovery, innovation and expansion. By harnessing the otherworldly gifts of the human psykers known as Navigators, Warp travel is developed, enabling star-faring ships to swiftly travel enormous distances across space.

STC systems transform the way that new worlds are settled. The first Knight worlds are established as human colonies begin to flourish on more than a million worlds. Towards the end of this remarkable era, the ever-increasing number of human psykers and an over-reliance on technology ultimately leads to the downfall of Mankind's glorious expansion, which descends into turmoil, anarchy and war.

c. M23 The Knights Stand Alone

Influenced by the Thrones Mechanicum of their Knight suits, the aristocracy of the feudal societies established on each Knight world remain conservative and most are instinctively mistrustful of any psykers in their midst. As a result, many of the Knight worlds resist the madness that grips so many other human colonies. Though daemonic possessions and devastating psychic backlashes do indeed threaten many Knight worlds, the military strength of the Knights and their rigid societal organisations largely serve to protect them. The ancient records of many knightly houses bear reference to this troubled time, of Knights duelling gigantic Warp entities or battling knee-deep against an endless tide of Daemons from beyond the veil of reality.

M25 - M30 The Age of Strife

Human worlds throughout the galaxy are isolated by Warp storms of terrible ferocity. A disastrous age of suspicion and dread begins as internecine conflict tears human civilisation apart. Fear and superstition lead to a regression in Mankind's mastery of science and many technological marvels of the previous age are lost to paranoia and war.

Aliens and Daemons alike prey on Humanity's vulnerability, and although many planets are subjugated or lost, the surviving Knight worlds continue to stand firm through this turbulent time – however, none do so without earning scars that linger to this day.

c. M30 The Emperor Arrives on Mars

Knight Taymon Verticorda, of House Taranis, is the first to encounter the Emperor on his arrival on Mars. In his guise as the Omnissiah, the Emperor forges an auspicious alliance between Mars and the newly unified Terra that forms the backbone of his fledgling Imperium. Preparations are made for a great undertaking to reunite the lost worlds of Mankind.

798.M30 The Great Crusade Begins

c. 850.M30 The First of Many

The Knight world of Chrysis is rediscovered. The Mechanicum uses its influence to claim exclusive trading rights with many of the Knight worlds that are later found. Forge worlds are established near mineral-rich Knight worlds, and bonds of mutual respect and military support become commonplace between the Mechanicum and the knightly houses.

005 - 014.M31 The Horus Heresy

In an act of staggering treason, Warmaster Horus declares himself the rightful ruler of Mankind. The base treachery of the Emperor's favoured son shatters the newly founded Imperium and sets the galaxy aflame. Brother fights brother as fully half of the Space Marine Legions side with the traitor Horus, alongside numerous Titan Legions and countless regiments of the Imperial Army.

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009.M31 A Divine Treachery

On the planet of Molech, the sudden defection of House Devine proves to be the pivotal factor in the defeat of the loyalist forces seeking to halt Horus' relentless advance on Terra. As the Warmaster unleashes a massive coordinated assault, the planet's defenders are thrown into disarray when the plasma reactor of the Emperor Titan, *Paragon of Terra*, is destroyed. Thousands of loyalists are immolated in a blinding flash as a miniature sun erupts from the Titan's core to leave a smoking crater half a mile wide. In the wake of the catastrophic blast, a spearhead of traitor Titans marches through the gap in the Imperial lines. Caught between the treacherous Knights of House Devine and Horus' rampant forces, the shattered remnants of Molech's defenders are slaughtered without mercy.

c. M31 The Death of Traitors

Horus lies dead at the hands of the Emperor. But so high is the cost of victory that many seek solace in hounding the fleeing traitors across the stars rather than face the task of rebuilding the shattered Imperium. This campaign of vengeance is known as the Scouring. The surviving knightly houses with the strength to fight unanimously join in this crusade of retribution. Believing the honour of the many to be stained by the treachery of the few, the Imperial Knights hunt down the knightly houses that sided with Horus with extreme prejudice, seeking to redeem their tarnished reputation. Filled with righteous indignation, a combined strike force of Knights from Houses Cadmus, Tervin and Borgius annihilates the remnants of House Devine as Imperial forces reclaim Molech.

544.M32 Defiance on Vorinith

An Ork Waaagh! of unprecedented scale sweeps into Imperial space. Hundreds of worlds are devastated before the Ork menace is finally defeated. Lying directly in the path of the enormous greenskin armada, the Knight world of Vorinith is one of the first planets to fall. Though they fight bravely, the Knights of Houses Illius and Nero are hopelessly outnumbered and die to the last in combat with the all-conquering Orks. With the main greenskin host advancing on Adamant Keep – the stronghold of House Illius – the surviving Knights of both houses gather for one last charge. The Orks are totally unprepared for the sudden ferocity of the Knights' counter-attack and suffer heavy losses as the battle cannons of the Paladins blast smoking holes in the Ork lines. The Knights Errant take advantage of the stalling Ork assault to crash into their crude vehicle squadrons and carve them to ruin. Only when a mob of twenty Stompas rampages into the fray are the Knights finally overwhelmed. Twice, the solemn tolling of the Bell of Lost Souls is heard as Terra mourns the passing of the rulers of Houses Illius and Nero.

369.M34 The Aphex Wars

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M40

M41

784.M34 A Long-awaited Return

After more than a century of self-imposed exile as a Freeblade household detachment, the Agaron brothers return to the Knight world of Silverdawn after the death of their father. The siblings are welcomed back as heroes after the disastrous reign of their sire. Basilio, the eldest of the three, re-establishes trade with the nearby large worlds of Estaban III and VII.

104.M36 The War of Recovery

Twelve full houses of Imperial Knights accompany an expedition led by the Adeptus Mechanicus into the system of planets known as the Mortuum Chain. Despite the fighting against the region's xenos overseers dragging on for more than a century, the campaign is ultimately a resounding success. Many human colonies are freed from alien servitude. This is an irrelevance to the Adeptus Mechanicus, compared to the priceless fragments of STC artefacts that are recovered.

550.M37 Betrayal

For the first time in thousands of years, a knightly house betrays its oaths of loyalty, joining the Apostles of the Blind King to cause ruinous destruction across the northwestern fringe. Though the Blind King's rogue Tech-Priests are eventually defeated, the traitorous Knights of House Drakon remain unaccounted for.

463.M38 The Hunt for Andronicus

986.M38 Justice

More than a thousand years after betraying their oaths of loyalty to the Imperium, the traitor Knights of House Drakon re-emerge at the head of a twisted host of Daemon machines created by the Dark Mechanicum. The warp-forged monstrosities are finally defeated amid the desecrated ruins of the forge world, Solemnium, after the Iron Hands Space Marine Chapter brings them to battle. However, it is the actions of a single Freeblade Knight that travels with the Space Marines that determine the course of the war. Known only as Justice, the Freeblade displays an incredible aptitude for destroying the traitor Knights, earning seven confirmed kills during the course of the war. Rumours abound in the wake of the conflict of quite how the lone Knight achieved such a mastery of combat against others of his kind. Of their enigmatic ally's past, however, the Iron Hands would not speak. Despite some of House Drakon's Knights escaping Imperial reprisal, their strength is now greatly diminished.

888.M39 The Red Harvest of Dalanthe

When a harvest moon hangs in the skies above Dalanthe, the agri-workers put the children's stories of the Gorehaunter to the back of their minds. Though many citizens deride him for it, the Freeblade known as Vigilantus stands on silent guard at Dalanthe's High Templus for three long months. When a Warp breach opens during a riot in Executioner's Square, a goliath of brass and bone rampages out through the populace. It is met in battle by Vigilantus. Though the Knight is torn limb from limb, his last act is to decapitate the raging Lord of Skulls with a blast from his thermal cannon, banishing it back to the Warp for another thousand years.

853-999.M40 The Many Quests of Theodric the Wanderer

854.M40 Not Even in Death...

A trio of Knights from House Krast join Space Marines from the Ultramarines Chapter to defend the mining world of Gorvax against a host of Eldar ghost warriors from Iyanden Craftworld. A Knight suit's Throne Mechanicum takes control after its pilot is slain by a xenos sniper, the echoes of spirits long dead guiding the unmanned Knight into battle once more. The Knight curves its way through countless wraithbone constructs before two Wrathknights, the largest and mightiest of the xenos walkers, finally bring it down in an epic duel of giant war machines. Though the Eldar are eventually defeated, victory on Gorvax does not belong to the living.

THE TIME OF ENDING

112.M41 First Contact

The Imperium makes first contact with the Knight world of Kragh after a localised Warp storm, which has been raging for over twenty millennia, finally abates. Though much of the planet's surviving technology is revealed to be incredibly archaic, the Knight suits remain in remarkable condition thanks to a long-lost piece of STC technology. Initial attempts to integrate Kragh into the Imperial fold are met with open hostility as the planet's two knightly houses react to the perceived threat with deadly force. Peace is finally brokered by Baron Jakobus, a venerable Knight Seneschal greatly respected by both houses – but the fragile ceasefire is jeopardised almost immediately as a trio of Tech Adepts attempt to recover the priceless STC archeotech and return it to Mars.

154.M41 Sport for Commorragh

A Dark Eldar raid captures a House Cadmus Knight for bloody sport in the arenas of Commorragh. He bravely duels the creations of the Haemonculi for thirty days before eventually being rendered down by three Engines of Pain.

246.M41 Slaughter on the Fireplains

Knights of House Raven crush Waaagh! Smogbelcha on Voht amid geysers of geothermal flame, despite suffering heavy losses of their own.

632.M41 Disaster on Nalibraxis II

During the Yoladrian Crusade, detachments from House Cadmus land upon the swamp world of Nalibraxis II. Marching in support of Catachan infantry regiments, the Knights are caught in a sorcerous ambush by forces of the Thousand Sons Traitor Legion. With the Catachans dead or devolved into mindless spawn, the remaining handful of Knights resolve to fight their way back to their extraction point. Power armoured automata and scuttling Daemon Engines surround them, yet the surviving Nobles fight their way to freedom. After the battle, House Cadmus vows revenge upon the forces of the Thousand Sons, determined to expunge this stain upon their honour.

M41

125.M41

250.M41

375.M41

500.M41

178.M41 The Duels of the Crimson Glaives

Eldar assault the agri-moon of Tarvel III, destroying hab-complexes in the search for ancient artefacts. Three Freeblades band together to defend the beleaguered citizens and become known as the Crimson Glaives. As soon as the last Eldar raider is driven from the moon, the Knights vanish without trace.

784.M41 Shadows Over Icnarus

An ancient evil awakens on the frontier world of Icnarus, human settlements vanishing one after another. Panic-stricken, its citizens retreat to the coastal city of Immoran and a riot erupts around the planet's only spaceport. Rising from the sea, rusted metal warriors march into Immoran killing all in their path, a blazing god of light at their fore. Just as all seems lost, a lone Imperial Knight appears. In a titanic struggle, the unknown Knight drives the invaders back into the sea and shatters the bindings of their god, sending it screaming into the ether.

230.M41 The Tarsok Incursion

Knights of House Taranis battle a daemonic incursion on the world of Tarsok V, taking the fight to the towering Great Unclean One that leads the daemonic horde. Wading through a tide of Plaguebearers, Seneschal Halver's Knights advance on the corpulent horror while billowing clouds of flies sizzle against their ion shields and form drifts about their feet. The daemonic lord drowns one Knight in a tide of bile, and crushes two more beneath its weeping bulk. Yet the Knights' reaper chainswords carve through its rancid flesh and with a final, gurgling roar the Great Unclean One is banished. The remaining Daemons fade slowly from view, leaving the planet's surviving defenders to count the cost.

883.M41 On the Trail of Traitors

Three entire knightly houses join forces with the renowned tank ace, Commander Pask, and his Cathian 423rd to exterminate a renegade Titan Legion. All of the Knights at Pask's disposal are deployed in one of the largest armoured conflicts in the Imperium's history. Knight Anthons, of House Cadmus, wins much honour during the final battle, preventing Pask's Leman Russ from being crushed beneath the mighty tread of the traitor Warlord Titan, *Endless Hate*, by blasting apart the war engine's descending leg scant moments before impact. Pask survives to lead his force to a great Imperial victory.

975.M41 Reawakening

In the Vidar Sector, the Knight world of Avaris is almost overrun by Necrons from the Sautekh dynasty. Reawakening from their long slumber deep below the planet's surface, the Necron legions emerge and immediately begin a campaign of mass genocide against the planet's human population. It is only the skill of the knights, and the effectiveness of their ion shields at repelling the deadly firepower of the advanced Necron weaponry, that brings the massacres to a halt. Though many are slain in the fighting, Avaris' three knightly houses slowly gain the upper hand in the conflict. As the latter fighting grinds on, embattled household detachments of Imperial Knights gradually begin to drive the Necron forces back to their tomb complexes, and set about destroying them in their lairs.

985.M41 The Long Year of Solitude

The Knight world of Solitude is dragged into the Immaterium by a Warp anomaly. Solitude re-emerges into realspace a year later, revealing its populace to be old and withered in appearance.

443998.M41 The Red Waagh!

Warlord Gruk of the Red Waagh! plunges into the densely populated Sanctus Reach, his crusade's juggernaut momentum smashing past the Space Marine homeworld of Obstiria to plunder the planets beyond. The Imperium prepares to make a stand upon Alaric Prime, a feudal world of linked archipelagos and crumbling gables. When a flotilla of Orkust rustships make planetfall, the knightly houses of Alaric lead their Cadian allies in a worldwide counter-attack. Warlord Gruk's bullish tactics take a heavy toll on the human defenders before the legendary Freeblade known as Gerantius joins the conflict, tipping the war into a new phase of desperate battle.

512999.M41 A Blade in the Void

A Chaos wolf pack attacks the Imperial heavy transport *Penitent Blade* while en route to the war zones of Heloeum. When the vessel is boarded, the Nobles of House Krast mount their Knight suits and prepare to repel the Traitor Space Marines. In the vast vaulted cargo halls of the ship, the Knights crush the traitors underfoot and blast apart their vanguard of Terminators and Helbrutes. When a fresh wave of boarders are sent against the *Penitent Blade*, the Nobles order the cargo hall doors opened, so they might engage the incoming assault boats. Their craft scattered and destroyed, the traitors retreat into the void.

625.M41

750.M41

875.M41

999.M41

M42

993.M41 The Dragon Slain

Segmentum Command dispatches a relief force to evacuate Yornith before it can be overrun by Hive Fleet Kraken. At their head ride a lance of Knights Errant from House Griffith, whose thunderous charge scatters the xenos swarms around Solarius spaceport. As battle rages and refugees flood aboard the evacuation ships, a Trygon erupts from the ground and winds itself around Sir Brannach's knight. The noble Knight wrestles with the mighty bio-horror amid showers of sparks, before jamming his thermal cannon between its jaws and vapourising its skull in a spray of ichor. The evacuation craft take to the skies just minutes later, Griffith's Knights limping aboard the last ship moments before its ramp slams shut.

998.M41 The Battle of Burning Skies

A tendril of Hive Fleet Leviathan falls upon the agri-world of Eircius, xenos bio-horrors rampaging across its floating jungles and vapour islands. A detachment of House Raven Knights are the first Imperial reinforcements to reach the planet, rallying the beleaguered defenders around the towering Eircian spire-cities. In the micro-gravity of Eircius the Knights leap hundreds of metres from one spire to the next, their guns hammering Harpies and Hive Crones from the sky. Even the might of the Imperial Knights cannot save the planet, although their bravery buys time for its population to escape into the void.

757999.M41 The Fall of Agrellan

The Tau Empire's Third Sphere Expansion surges through the Damocles Gulf before striking hard and fast upon the hive world of Agrellan. Though the Imperial forces are hard pressed to counter the brilliant tactics employed by Commander Shadousun, the timely arrival of several household detachments of Knights from House Terryn soon stems the tide. Time and again, the Knights rally forth from the hive city of Agrellan Prime, breaking through the xenos lines to take a heavy toll on formations of Broadside battlesuits and Hammerhead Gunships, using their ion shields to counter the devastating impacts of the Tau's rail weaponry. Only the mass deployment of prototype Riptide battlesuits forces the Knights to cease these attacks, a course of action that ultimately changes the course of the war.

995999.M41 The 13th Black Crusade

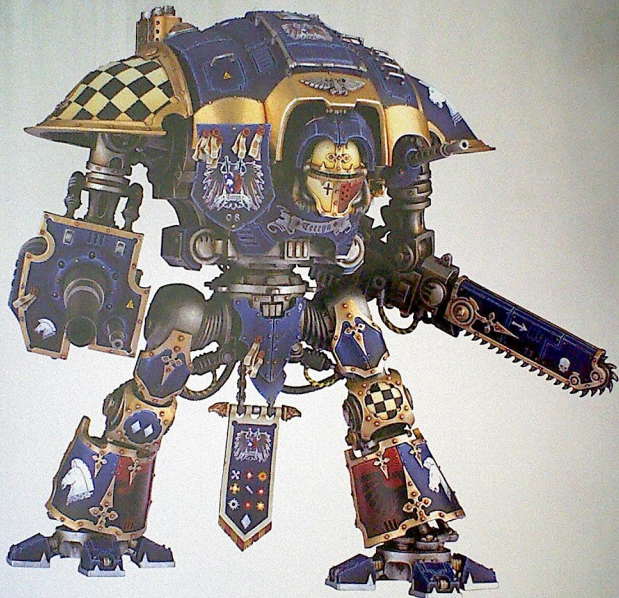
Houses Krast and Arkon join the Imperial forces rushing to reinforce the Cadian Gate against the Chaos hordes spewing forth from the Eye of Terror. The inbound Knights of House Arkon are feared lost amid the fierce etheric tides of Warp storm Baphomet. However, news soon filters back to the Imperium that four household detachments of Knights bearing Arkon's colours have been seen taking the fight to the forces of Chaos, shattering two large formations of Iron Warriors siege tanks with righteous fury.



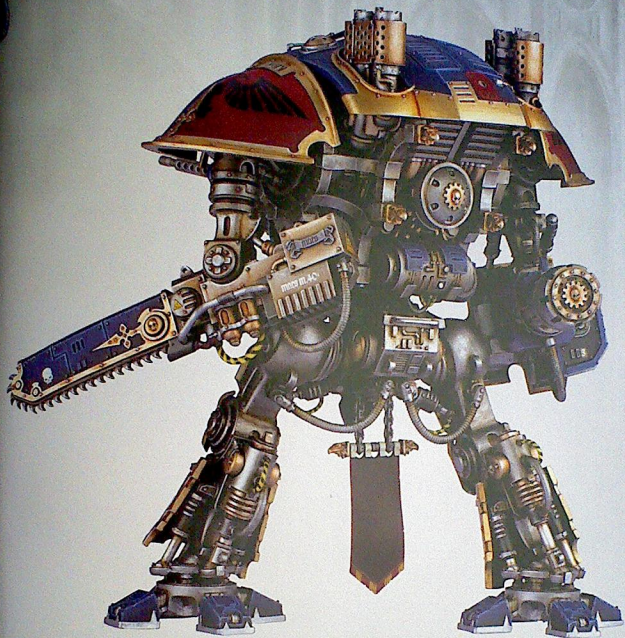


IMPERIAL KNIGHT PAGEANTRY

Some Imperial Knights are adorned with complex heraldry to proudly denote their house, while others are painted in a single, striking colour. On the following pages you will find many examples and ideas to help inspire your own collection.



Knight Paladin of House Terryn



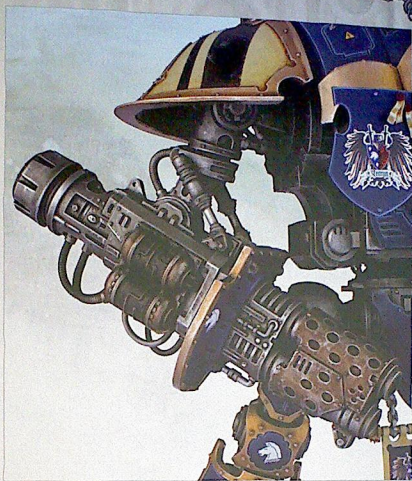
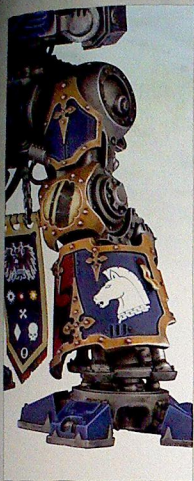
Shoulder-mounted heavy stubber



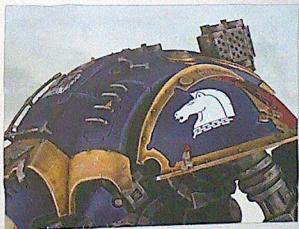
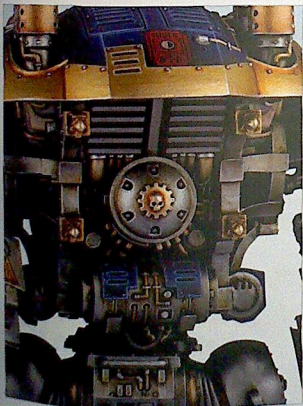
Reaper chainsword



Knight Errant of House Teryn



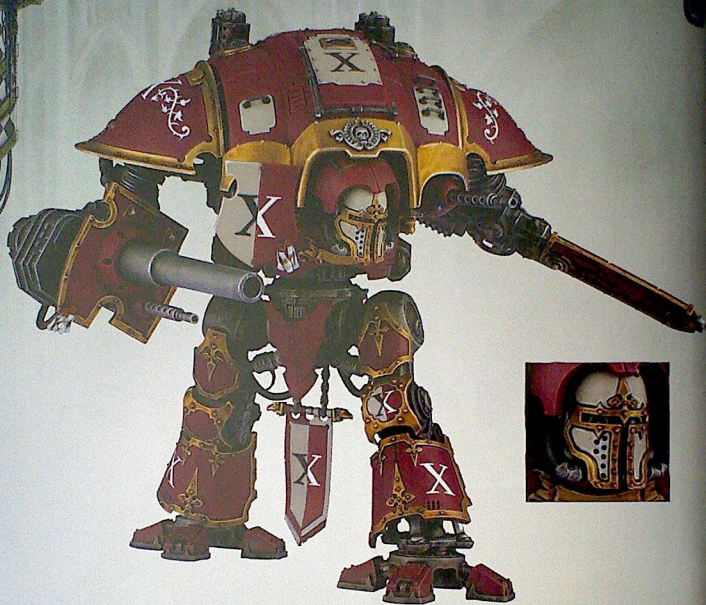
Thermal cannon



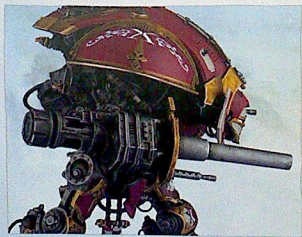
The emblem of House Terryn is a white stallion's head.



All Knight suits bear the cog symbol of the Adeptus Mechanicus.



Amaranthine, Freeblade Knight and famed veteran of the Tiberius Wars



Weapon arm with rapid-fire battle cannon and heavy stubber



Armoured shoulders and carapace



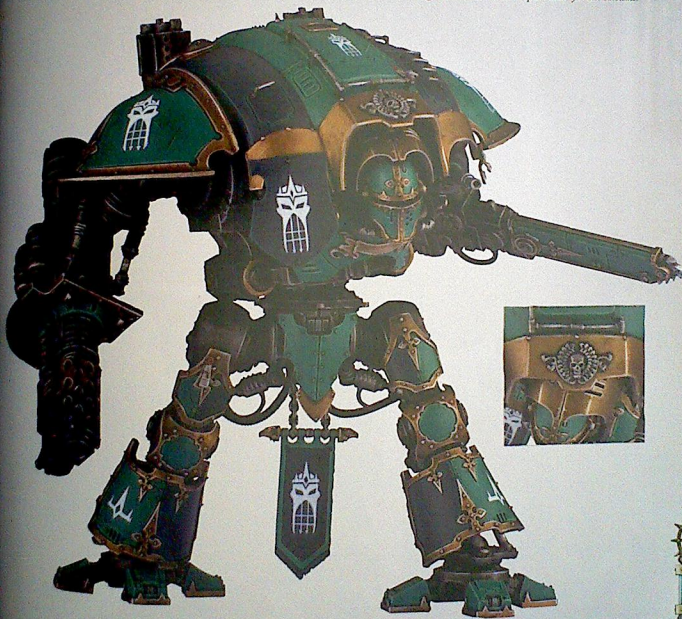




Many Freeblade Knights adopt a single icon as their personal crest.



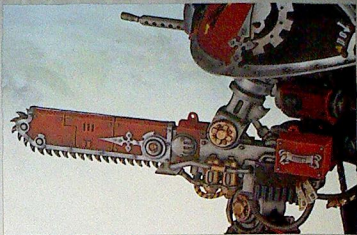
Knights suits bear tabards replete with symbolic emblems.



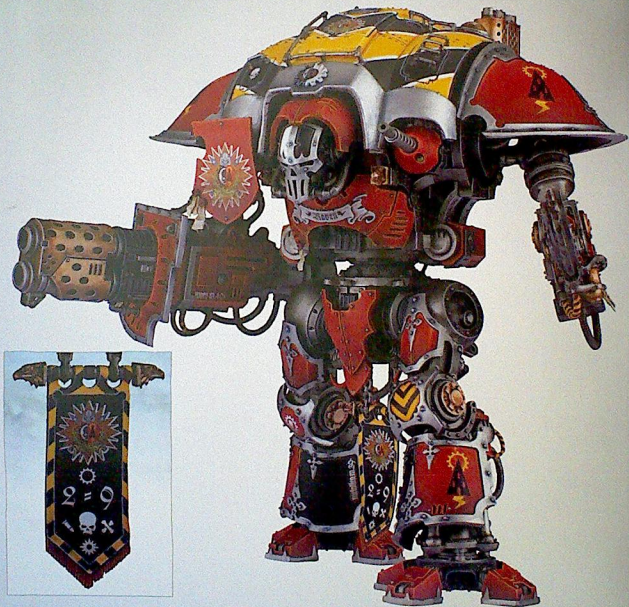
Gerantius, the mysterious Forgotten Knight, watches over Sacred Mountain on Alaric Prime.



Knights display their house's heraldry on tilting plates.



The roaring teeth of a reaper chainsword can carve through a battle tank with ease.



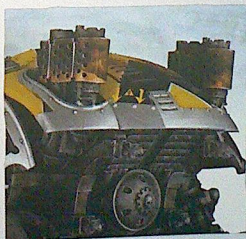
Knight Errant of House Raven



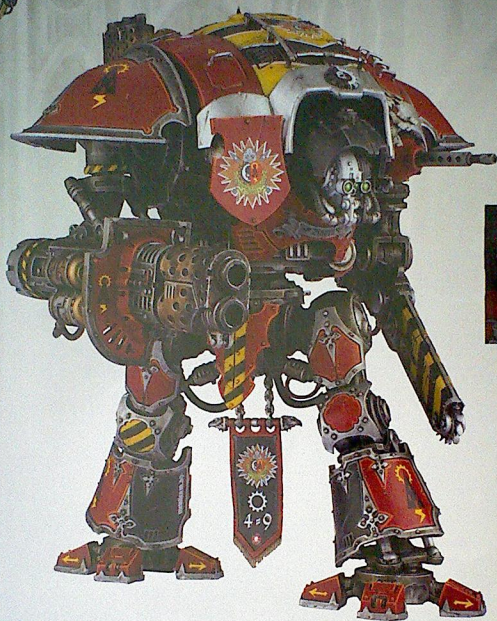
Knight Paladin of House Raven



Proper chainsword



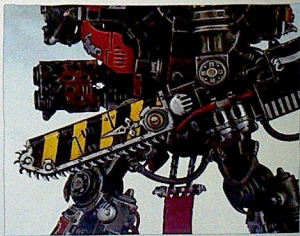
Mighty exhausts protrude from the Knight's carapace.



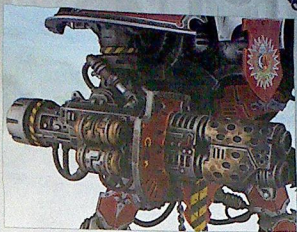
Knight Errant of House Raven



Chevrons of yellow and black are a common decoration on Knight suits.



Reaper chainsword



Knight suits incorporate ancient and archaic technologies in their design.



Towering over their Cadian allies, a household detachment of House Raven marches to war.





THE KNIGHTLY HOST

This section details the special rules you will need to use Imperial Knights in your games, and also includes the information required to fight battles with them using the missions included in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

SUPER-HEAVY WALKER

An Imperial Knight is a type of vehicle known as a Super-heavy Walker. Super-heavy Walkers follow all of the rules for Walkers as defined in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, with the additional rules and exceptions given below.

MOVEMENT

Super-heavy Walkers can move 12" in the Movement phase unless specified otherwise. Apart from this, they obey the movement rules for Walkers.

SHOOTING

When a Super-heavy Walker makes a shooting attack, it may fire each of its weapons at different targets if desired. In addition, firing Ordnance weapons has no effect on a Super-heavy Walker's base to fire other weapons. Note, however, that Super-heavy Walkers may not fire Overwatch.

VEHICLE DAMAGE

A Super-heavy Walker is so large, and has such formidable damage-control systems, that the effects of Crew Shaken, Crew Stunned, Immobilised or Weapon Destroyed results are ignored. In addition, each time a Super-heavy Walker suffers an Explodes! result on the Vehicle Damage table, it loses D3 additional Hull Points instead of suffering the effects listed. Note that Super-heavy Walkers still lose a Hull Point for each glancing or penetrating hit; it is just the results on the Vehicle Damage Table that are modified (see the Super-heavy Walker Vehicle Damage table below).

SUPER-HEAVY WALKER VEHICLE DAMAGE TABLE

RESULT	EFFECT
Explodes!	Lose D3 Hull Points.
Other result	No additional effect.

CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE

Immediately after a Super-heavy Walker loses its last Hull Point, it suffers Catastrophic Damage and explodes. Instead of the usual procedure for exploding vehicles, remove the model and place a large blast marker over the location the destroyed model occupied; then roll for scatter (this represents the walker's last stumbling steps before it collapses and explodes). Units suffer one hit for each model fully or partially under the blast marker. Roll once on the Catastrophic Damage table to see what Strength and AP values apply to all hits caused by the explosion.

CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE TABLE

D6	RESULT	S**	AP**
1	Explosion	D*/4/2	2/4/6
2-3	Devastating Explosion	D*/8/4	2/3/5
4-6	Titanic Explosion!	D*/10/5	2/3/4

* This is a Destroyer weapon attack (see opposite).

** The first value applies to models under the large blast marker, the second to models 2.5"-5" from the centre of the blast marker, and the third value to models 5"-7.5" from the centre of the blast marker (players with an apocalyptic mega-blast marker can use this instead of measuring the distances). Always use the best Strength and AP if a model straddles two or more zones. For example, a model partially in the inner zone and partially in the middle zone of a Titanic Explosion! suffers a Strength D AP2 hit. If a unit has models in several zones, work out the hits inflicted for each zone separately. Continuing our example of a Titanic Explosion!, if the unlucky unit under the marker had three models in the inner zone and five models in the middle zone, it would suffer three Strength D AP2 hits, and five Strength 10 AP3 hits. To determine whether a unit wounded by an exploding Super-heavy Walker is allowed a cover save, and when determining Wound allocation, always assume the shot is coming from the centre of the blast marker. Against vehicles, these hits are always resolved against their side armour.

STOMP

Super-heavy Walkers engaged in combat may make a special type of attack called a Stomp attack. The Stomp attack is made in addition to the Super-heavy Walker's normal attacks. Stomp attacks are resolved during the Fight sub-phase at the Initiative 1 step. This does not grant the model an additional Pile In move at the Initiative 1 step.

A Stomp attack consists of D3 Stomps. To make the first Stomp, place a blast marker so that it is touching, but not over, the Super-heavy Walker model (or the Super-heavy Walker model's base, if it has one). Each unit that has at least one model even partially under the marker is stomped. For each unit that is stomped, roll on the Stomp table (see opposite) to determine what happens to it.

Each subsequent Stomp is made in the same manner as the first, except that the blast marker does not have to be placed touching the Super-heavy Walker. Instead, it must be placed so that it is at least partially within 3" of where the last blast marker was placed, and not over the Super-heavy Walker. This allows you to 'Stomp forward' into the enemy! Note that the Super-heavy Walker is not moved – we assume it stomps about but ends up more or less where it started.

Buildings, Flyers, Swooping Flying Monstrous Creatures, Gargantuan Creatures, Flying Gargantuan Creatures, Super-heavy vehicles, Super-heavy Walkers, and Super-heavy Flyers cannot be stomped; do not roll on the Stomp table for them if they fall under the blast marker. Any other units with models under the blast marker are stomped as normal.

STOMP TABLE

D6	NON-VEHICLE	VEHICLE
1	No Effect: The unit being stomped gets out of the way of its lumbering attacker. The attack has no effect.	No Effect: The unit being stomped gets out of the way of its lumbering attacker. The attack has no effect.
2-5	Kerr-runch: Each model from the unit being stomped that is even partially under the blast marker suffers a Strength 6 AP4 hit.	Kerr-smash: The vehicle being stomped suffers a penetrating hit.
6	Overrun: Each model from the target unit that is even partially under the blast marker is removed from play.	Flipped: The vehicle being stomped scatters D6" and then suffers an Explodes! result from the Vehicle Damage table.



An Imperial Knight rampages through the Orks with its Stomp attack.

SPECIAL RULES

All Super-heavy Walkers have the following special rules:

Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash, Strikedown.

Invincible Behemoth: A Super-heavy Walker is so large and strongly built that weapons which degrade the armour of smaller vehicles will not affect it. Because of this, any attack that says that the target model is destroyed, wrecked, Explodes! or is otherwise removed from play inflicts D3 Hull Points of damage on a Super-heavy Walker instead. In addition, any attacks or special abilities that permanently lower the Armour Values of a target vehicle do not affect a Super-heavy Walker. Note that attacks or abilities that count the Armour Value as being lower, but do not actually change it, work normally.

DESTROYER

Imperial Knights are armed with large and extremely destructive weapons, which means the new weapon rule below is required to represent the havoc they can wreak.

DESTROYER WEAPONS

Also known as Titan-killers, Destroyer weapons are capable of delivering an immense amount of damage to any target that they hit. Only a Destroyer weapon is capable of devastating a Knight, a Super-heavy Tank or even a Titan with a single blow.

If a weapon has a D instead of a Strength value in its profile, it means it is a Destroyer weapon. To resolve a Destroyer weapon's attack, roll To Hit as you would for a standard attack. If the attack hits, roll on the table below instead of rolling To Wound or for armour penetration. No saving throws of any kind are allowed against damage from a Destroyer weapon, including special rolls such as Feel No Pain or Necron Reanimation Protocols.

DESTROYER WEAPON ATTACK TABLE

D6	VEHICLE OR BUILDING	NON-VEHICLE
1	Clipped: The target suffers a penetrating hit.	Lucky Escape: The model is unharmed.
2-5	Solid Hit: A Super-heavy vehicle loses D3+1 Hull Points. Other vehicles suffer an Explodes! result from the Vehicle Damage table. Buildings suffer a Detonation! result from the Building Damage table.	Seriously Wounded: The model loses D3+1 Wounds.
6	Devastating Hit: As for Solid Hit, above, except a Super-heavy vehicle loses D6+6 Hull Points instead.	Deathblow: The model loses D6+6 Wounds.

HOUSEHOLD DETACHMENTS

Knights fight in household detachments of between one and three machines. Usually, all of the Knights in a detachment come from a single knightly house. It is not uncommon, however, for a detachment to be made up of Knights drawn from several houses, especially in a long campaign where losses force commanders to group Knights from different worlds together.

IMPERIAL KNIGHT DETACHMENTS

You can use the rules for Imperial Knight detachments presented here in order to include Imperial Knights when using the rules for Choosing Your Army in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Doing so allows you to recreate any of the battles where Imperial Knights travel away from their home world and fight alongside an allied force, or those occasions when their allies battle with them to defend the vital Knight worlds against aggressors.

There are a number of other ways you can use Imperial Knights in your games. You can recreate a raid on a Knight world by pitting an army made up of several Imperial Knights on one side against an army that doesn't include any Imperial Knights on the other. Alternatively, you can recreate a battle between two knightly houses by simply taking two armies that only include Imperial Knights.

Rules for fielding Imperial Knights as a primary detachment can be found on page 64.

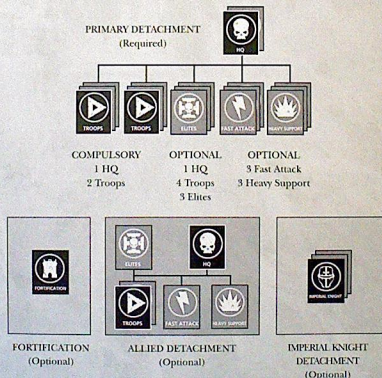
INCLUDING KNIGHTS IN YOUR ARMY

When you choose an army, Knights may be taken as a special form of allied detachment known as an Imperial Knight detachment, as shown on the Imperial Knight Force Organisation chart below. Each box in the Imperial Knight detachment section of the Force Organisation chart represents a single Imperial Knight (of any type), which means that you can include up to three Knights for each primary detachment in your army. Just as with other allied detachments, you can include one Imperial Knight detachment for each primary detachment in your army.

An army may include an allied detachment of Imperial Knights in addition to a standard allied detachment. So, for example, you could field an Imperial Guard army with an allied detachment of Space Marines and an allied detachment of Imperial Knights.

Other detachments, such as additional primary detachments and fortifications, can be taken normally.

IMPERIAL KNIGHTS FORCE ORGANISATION CHART



KNIGHTLY ALLIES

The Imperial Knights Allies Matrix below lists the relationship between Imperial Knights and the forces they may fight alongside. Imperial Knights readily march to war alongside the Titan Legions of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes, the Ecclesiarchy's Sisters of Battle and the tanks and infantry formations of the Imperial Guard, but at times in their storied history they have fought with certain xenos forces in the course of fulfilling their ancient duty.

Imperial Knights hold honour above all else, and will willingly sacrifice their own lives to aid an ally if they feel it is their duty to do so. They have long memories, and will never forget a favour or forgive an insult. Because of this, they make redoubtable allies and deadly foes.

Note that the Imperial Knights may have a different relationship to the models from an army's primary detachment, and the models that make up that army's 'regular' allied detachment (assuming there are any). For example, if an Imperial Knight was part of an army where the primary detachment were Imperial Guard and the allied detachment were from the Tau Empire, then the Knight would treat the Guardsmen as Battle Brothers, and the Tau as Desperate Allies.

DATASHEETS

Imperial Knights have datasheets that contain all the information you will need to use them in your games. Each datasheet contains the following information:

Points Value. This is the points value of the Imperial Knight, including its weapons and wargear.

Unit Type. This refers to the Super-heavy Walker unit type, described on pages 58 and 59.

Wargear. This section details the weapons and equipment the Imperial Knight is armed with.

Weapon Profiles. Here you will find the profiles for the Imperial Knight's weapons.

Special Rules. All the Imperial Knight special rules are repeated here for convenience.



IMPERIAL KNIGHTS ALLIES MATRIX

	Battle Brothers	Allies of Convenience	Desperate Allies	Come the Apocalypse											
	Blood Angels														
	Chaos Daemons														
	Chaos Space Marines														
	Dark Angels														
	Dark Eldar														
	Grey Knights														
	Imperial Guard														
	Necrons														
	Orks														
	Sisters of Battle														
	Space Marines														
	Space Wolves														
	Tau Empire														
	Tyranids														

This is an additional row for the Allies chart in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook. Find the column for the codex of your potential allies at the top of the matrix. You'll see the level of alliance at the intersection of the row and the column.



KNIGHT PALADIN

375
POINTS

A Knight Paladin is a truly fearsome opponent. Striding swiftly across the battlefield, the Paladin's weapons lay down a withering hail of fire, after which it can deliver a devastating charge. Once amongst the foe, the Paladin strikes left and right with its reaper chainsword and crushes the enemy underfoot. Few opponents survive such a deadly series of attacks.

The Knight Paladin can undertake a wide variety of roles in battle. Its long ranged battle cannon gives it the capacity to provide fire support when needed, delivering volley after volley of massive shells onto the foe. However, while a Paladin excels in this role, it is even more suited to close assault. The Paladin's bipedal design, agility and speed allow it to quickly engage the foe, often by moving through terrain that would slow down more conventional land vehicles.

These qualities also make Paladins superb monster-killers, perfectly capable of taking on and destroying almost any super-heavy vehicle or gargantuan creature an enemy army can field. Very few of these large targets can move and fight with the grace, speed or fluidity of a Knight Paladin. Imperial Knights consider it a great honour to be sent on such a mission; the bigger the target, the better.



┌Armour┐

	WS	BS	S	F	S	R	I	A	HP
Knight Paladin	4	4	10	13	12	12	4	3	6

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker).

WARGEAR: Two heavy stubbers, rapid-fire battle cannon, reaper chainsword, ion shield.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Heavy stubber	36"	4	6	Heavy 3
Rapid-fire battle cannon	72"	8	3	Ordinance 2, Large Blast
Reaper chainsword	-	D	2	Melee

Ion Shield: When an Imperial Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases before any attacks are carried out, the Imperial Knight player must declare which facing each Imperial Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear. The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of your opponent's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase. Ion shields may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

SPECIAL RULES: Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash, Strikedown.

KNIGHT ERRANT

370
POINTS

Knight Errant are the mailed fist of the knightly houses. When a house marches to war, it is the Knight Errant who will lead the charge. These aggressive Knights prefer to fight at the forefront of battle, hunting enemy tanks and war engines or charging into the fray to carve through the foe with consummate skill. Where a Knight Paladin is equipped for a flexible battlefield role, a Knight Errant specialises in close range actions in which it can use its formidable thermal cannon to devastating effect. Countless times have heretics, believing themselves safe within their fortified strongholds, watched in horror as the walls around them have melted and sloughed away to reveal a Knight Errant ready to butcher them in their own sanctuary.

In the heat of battle, where a normal warrior tires as the exertions of combat take their inevitable toll, a Knight is as relentless as the tide – an unstoppable engine of death. When deployed as a household detachment, however, the Knight Errant are capable of overcoming the mightiest of foes, no matter how large or heavily armoured they may be. Indeed, so effective are the Knights in this capacity that Imperial officers will do everything in their power to requisition the services of such a valuable military asset – never more so than when they are expecting to face a super-heavy or Titan-class threat.



Armour

	WS	BS	S	F	S	R	I	A	HP
Knight Errant	4	4	10	13	12	12	4	3	6

UNITTYPE: Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker).

WARGEAR: Heavy stubber, thermal cannon, reaper chainsword, ion shield.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Heavy stubber	36"	4	6	Heavy 3
Thermal cannon	36"	9	1	Heavy 1, Large Blast, Melta
Reaper chainsword		D	2	Melee

Ion Shield: When an Imperial Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases before any attacks are carried out, the Imperial Knight player must declare which facing each Imperial Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear. The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of your opponent's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase. Ion shields may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

SPECIAL RULES: Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash, Strikedown.

IMPERIAL KNIGHT ARMIES

The following rules can be used to field armies where the primary detachment is made up of Imperial Knights. They are especially useful for players who want to fight battles set on a Knight world but can be used in any game if the players wish to use them, as bands of Knights have fought alone against enemy armies since their inception.

KNIGHT ARMIES

You may take an army where the primary detachment is made up of three to six Imperial Knights. If you do so, then the detachment must include a Knight Warlord (see below). No other restrictions apply. Other detachments, such as additional primary detachments, allied detachments or fortifications, can be taken normally. In an Imperial Knight army, all Imperial Knights are scoring units.



KNIGHTLY RANKS

After undergoing the Ritual of Becoming, a Knight begins his career as a Knight Apparent. He retains this title until he has been blooded in his first full-scale battle, after which the supplemental title is dropped and he is accepted by his peers as a full-fledged Imperial Knight. These warriors form the bulk of each knightly house's household detachments, and proudly represent them at war. Some veteran Knights who prove themselves worthy in the fires of battle, either through countless martial triumphs or by one truly heroic act, are awarded the rank of Seneschal, and are paragons of their house.

Players that want to include Knights Apparent or Seneschals in their games must roll a dice for each of their Knights Errant or Knights Paladin (other than their Warlord) at the same time as they determine Warlord Traits, and refer to the Knightly Rank table below to see what rank that Knight has.

KNIGHTLY RANK TABLE

D6 Rank

- 1 Knight Apparent:** Subtract 1 from the Knight's Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill. In addition, A Knight Apparent's ion shield confers a 5+ invulnerable save instead of the normal 4+.
- 2-5 Knight:** The standard game rules apply.
- 6 Seneschal:** Add 1 to the Knight's Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill. In addition, A Knight Seneschal's ion shield confers a 3+ invulnerable save instead of the normal 4+.

KNIGHT WARLORDS

If you are fielding an army where the primary detachment is made up of Imperial Knights, one Knight must be nominated as the Knight Warlord for the army. A Knight Warlord always has the rank of Seneschal (see the Knightly Rank table above). In addition, they receive a Warlord Trait rolled for on the table below.

WARLORD TRAITS TABLE

D6 Result

- 1 Master of the Hunt:** *This Knight has fought across a hundred battlefields, and has always been the first into the fray.*
The Knight Warlord, and all friendly Imperial Knights within 12" of him, add 1 to the result when rolling the distance they Run or their charge range.
- 2 Fearsome Reputation:** *The deeds of this Knight are known across the galaxy, and all know that to confront him is to face certain death.*
Enemy units within 12" of the Knight Warlord must use their lowest Leadership value, not the highest.
- 3 Master of the Joust:** *This Knight can land a precise blow against his target even when charging at full tilt.*
The Knight Warlord re-rolls failed To Hit rolls in any Assault phase in which he successfully charges into close combat.
- 4 Master of the Field:** *This Knight is a master tactician, knowing how best to use the landscape to shield his advance and attack the enemy where he is weakest.*
The Knight Warlord and up to D3 friendly Imperial Knights have the Outflank special rule.
- 5 Master of Siege:** *Though the foe may seek shelter behind armoured walls, no fortress can stand before the fury of this Knight.*
The Knight Warlord, and all friendly Imperial Knights within 12" of him, add 1 to rolls they make on the Building Damage table.
- 6 Indomitable:** *This Knight has sworn a solemn vow never to yield whilst even a single enemy still lives.*
The Knight Warlord has the It Will Not Die special rule.







WARHAMMER 40,000



FEALTY, HONOUR AND DUTY

The Imperial Knights are towering war engines that fight as part of the Titan Legions of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and as allies of Space Marine Chapters and Imperial Guard regiments on battlefields all across the galaxy. Piloting each of these mighty machines is a chivalrous Noble from one of the Imperium's Knight worlds. Each of these valiant warriors exemplifies thousands of years of his knightly house's traditions and displays an expert mastery of his Knight suit's weapon systems. The actions of a single Knight can turn the tide of battle; a force of Knights can change the course of a war. Honour-bound by ancient oaths, the Imperial Knights fight Mankind's foes wherever they may be found.

Inside you will find:

THE IMPERIAL KNIGHTS: The origins of the Imperial Knights and the tale of their ancient oaths to protect the worlds of the Imperium.

HERALDIC SYMBOLISM: Detailed background and heraldry for some of the most renowned knightly houses of the Imperium.

IMPERIAL KNIGHT PAGEANTRY: A stunning showcase of Imperial Knight miniatures, presenting the colour schemes of the knightly houses.

THE KNIGHTLY HOST: Full rules for forging your Imperial Knights collection into a household detachment on the Warhammer 40,000 battlefield.

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