

VASSAL KNIGHT HOUSES

With the Adeptus Titanicus range of models steadily expanding, *Principes Seniores* now have a variety of weapons and tactics at their disposal. In this article, we present a new way of fielding your Knights and Titans as a single, integrated maniple.



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Andy Hoare is the manager of the Specialist Games team. It's under his watchful eye that such games as *Necromunda*, *Blood Bowl* and *Adeptus Titanicus* are brought to life. He even does a bit of writing for them when he's got a few spare minutes. Like now!

Andy: When *Adeptus Titanicus* came out last year, the big focus for us was, of course, the Warlord Titans around which the game revolves. We put you in the command throne, leading maniples of Titans into battle against each other amidst the strife of the Horus Heresy. Unsurprisingly, it was a big hit.

Curiously, though, when we showed hobbyists the Imperial Knights to go alongside the Titans, they went all goobery (a technical term for geeking out on a grand scale). Everyone loved the Knights, and we had loads of people asking for more information and rules for them. Well, here you go!

Something we've wanted to do for a while, both in *Adeptus Titanicus* and the *Horus Heresy*, was introduce Vassal Houses – Knight Households that are entirely subservient to a Titan Legion. Where other Knight Households normally send

banners of Knights to fight alongside the Titan Legions, Vassal Houses are directly commanded by them. Here in the Specialist Games team, we often liken Titan maniples to naval battle groups, with the player acting as the admiral in command of them. If you think of Titans as your battleships and cruisers, Imperial Knights are your destroyers. They're fast and deadly, able to interfere with the enemy's battle plans and – most importantly in the case of the Vassal Knights – protect your more valuable Titan-shaped war assets.

Over the next few pages, you'll find new background on *Titanicus* Vassal Houses, along with notes on the heraldry and iconography of House Coldshroud. Owen Barnes, one of our writers, even created a new maniple – the *Dominus Battleforce* – that enables you to field your Vassal Scions as part of a Titan maniple, providing benefits to all the units in it. Enjoy!

ADEPTUS TITANICUS VASSAL KNIGHT HOUSES

'Vassals are our loyal hounds, and though dogs they might be, I would not hunt without them.'

Blood Princeps Nistru, Legio Fureans

The majority of Knights march for one of the so-called 'Imperial' Knight Houses – ones granted autonomy over their own domains and the right to broker such alliances with other Imperial factions according to their own wishes. Other Knight Houses are subject to the Sidon Protocols, bearing the red and black of the Mechanicum and uniquely possessed of the right to bear the skull and cog device of the Machine Cult – the Opus Machina. These Oath-bound Mechanicum Houses serve in the Taghmata of the Forge Worlds, marching alongside the serried ranks of Skitarii, tech-thralls, war-automata and the numerous other warriors and machines that serve the Machine God.

There also exists a third class of House quite apart from these – the Titanicus Vassal Houses. These might have their own

traditions and may recruit from a particular world, but each is entirely subservient to one of the Legios of the Adeptus Titanicus. So integrated are the Titanicus Vassal Houses that they often bear the livery and devices of the parent Legio, and it is extremely rare for them to fight apart from it.

The Knights of the Titanicus Vassal Houses serve as scouts and skirmishers in close cooperation with Titan formations. They are expected to outflank and harass enemy forces occupying the Legio's objectives and to protect the Titans from hidden threats that might lurk unseen in cover, literally offering their own lives in the protection of the god-engines. In the full-scale engine wars that so characterised the Horus Heresy, in particular those fought at Paramar, Beta-Garmon, Kado, Ryza and Terra herself, Titanicus Vassal Knights served to screen the valuable Titans from enemy fire, fouling target locks and drawing fire in the ultimate sacrifice to their masters.

Vassal Scions are quite different in nature from Scions in the service of Imperial or Mechanicum Oath-bound Houses. They have none of the sense of individualism

which the Imperial Scions in particular are so well known for, their fierce sense of duty instead sublimated into utter dedication for their Legio masters. Theirs is not a blind, unquestioning obedience, however, for Vassal Scions know that their Legio masters rely upon them, and this endows great honour upon them. The life of a Vassal Scion is invariably shorter than other types, but in their comparatively short service they see war on a scale that many other Scions never will. They serve in the shadows and at the feet of the mightiest of god-engines, they bestride burning worlds and they give their lives without complaint. Most Scions are accustomed to being the largest combatant on the battlefield and are possessed of a certain arrogance as a result – Vassal Scions are used to being amongst the smallest of their kind, and as a result they are possessed of a unique perspective on war.

Not all Legios are attended by a Vassal House, although most have been at some point in their history. In a small number of cases, a Vassal House has served as such for a discrete period, perhaps taking on the role as penance and having it discharged after performing some great duty or deed.



VASSAL HOUSE NAMING CONVENTIONS

It is comparatively rare for the armours of a Vassal House to be named in the same manner as a god-engine of the Titanicus. Many Titans are centuries, even millennia, old and have earned themselves names of great distinction. Newly wrought engines are expected to bestride the fields of battle for many years to come, and throughout the Horus Heresy many were given powerful names in anticipation of the deeds it was hoped they would go on to perform.

Vassal Knight armours, however, are not expected to survive so long, and as such many Vassal Houses invest their machines with a different manner of title. House Coldshroud, for example, names each of its armours for a class of ancient bladed weapon, with an attached numeral to indicate the number of times that name has been used. House Perdaxia, vassal to the Legio Fureans, uses the names of deities from the pre-histories of Terra's Indic regions, prefixed with an impenetrable code consisting of numbers, letters and more obscure runic symbols.

There exist at least two ways the status of Titanicus Vassal House can be conferred. Many Houses became vassal to a Legio during the Great Crusade, when upon discovery by the Expeditionary fleets they existed in such a parlous state they could not stand on their own – the few Knights were offered service as a Titanicus Vassal House on the proviso that if they survived, grew and served well, they would one day be released from service to become an Imperial House. In other cases, a Knight World was discovered but resisted the Imperium – in such a case it could have been conquered, possibly by a Titan Legion, and once brought to heel forced to serve as Vassals, possibly in perpetuity. Lastly, some Vassal Houses may actually have been created wholesale by a Forge World – Titan Legions never include Knight armours in their ranks but they are of such use in battle that such a body might be created at the express order of the forge lords.

Fighting as they do at the feet of the mightiest of war machines ever wrought by Mankind, Titanicus Vassal Houses often develop a fierce hatred of their opposite numbers in Vassal Houses serving enemy Titan Legions. These epic battles are all the more bitter and personal for the fact that the Vassals may have but a brief moment to account for themselves before death comes. When the Knights of House Coldshroud encountered those of House Perdaxia, for example, the most bitter of clashes is sure to have ensued, even as the Titanicus masters of both Vassal Houses clashed above.

HOME WORLDS

While some Vassal Houses have recruitment rights on specific worlds (in particular, Houses which had a home world before becoming Vassal to the Titanicus), most see their home only rarely, serving exclusively alongside the Titan Legion to which they

are Vassal and calling its Forge World their home. Many know of no other home world than the domain called home by its parent Legio, especially those created expressly to serve as Vassals.

Most Vassal Houses have their own sense of internal tradition, ritual and dogma, and the Knights are counted as a class apart from the crews of the Titans, there being little interaction between them. In matters of internal discipline, the assignment of rank, etc., the House's Grand Master has authority, although when it comes to the appointment of a new Grand Master, the parent Legio is able to overrule a choice they do not hold with.

MATERIEL STRENGTH

Most Titanicus Vassal Houses can muster between 200 and 300 armours. In an Imperial or Oath-bound Mechanicum House, such strength would be accounted a good number, but Titanicus Vassal Houses must endure a far higher rate of attrition given their role, and so it is only the high production capacity of their Legio's home Forge World that allows them to maintain this strength.

Vassal Houses are invariably very well equipped indeed, as they are able to draw upon the resources not only of their parent Legio but the Forge World itself. They utilise the entire range of classes of Knight armours, from the standard Questoris and Cerastus to the more unusual Mechanicum patterns, including ones that utilise weaponry and systems unattainable to Knight Houses that lack such close ties to a given Forge World.

NOTABLE VASSAL HOUSES OF THE AGE OF DARKNESS

HOUSE COLDSHROUD

The Scions of House Coldshroud are drawn from the Octad, the region around Gryphon IV ruled over by the Forge World. As long as Gryphon IV has existed, favoured families have given up their sons and daughters to the ranks of House Coldshroud, there being few higher honours.

House Coldshroud is relentless in its service to the War Griffons and have fought at their side throughout the Great Crusade and into the Horus Heresy. On Paramar V, they faced overwhelming Traitor forces, ultimately covering the Legio's retreat and paving the way for the retaking of the planet with the lives of their Scions.

HOUSE MORBIDIA

For centuries, those of House Morbidia were little more than slaves in the service of Mars. What dark deed caused them to be stripped of their place among the Mechanicum Houses is a closely guarded secret, though it was terrible enough for the entire House and its descendants to be condemned to servitude.

When the Mechanicum was divided by the Warmaster's betrayal and Mars became a battleground, Legio Mortis offered House Morbidia their 'freedom', if they would swear an oath to Horus. Embittered by their centuries of enslavement, the Knight House was swift to accept. Since then, they have marched with the Death's Heads and shared in their crimes against the Imperium.

HOUSE PERDAXIA

The history of the once-Imperial House of Perdaxia has all but been scoured from existence – not by the agents of the Emperor, but by His enemies. Their Knights march to war with their old heraldry scratched off and covered by the colours of the Legio Fureans, leaving only speculation as to who they once served.

Fanatically loyal to the Tiger Eyes, House Perdaxia heeded the summons of Archmagos Inar Satarel alongside their Legio when the Traitors invaded Paramar V. During the fighting, the Perdaxia Scions sacrificed themselves in their hundreds to defend the Tiger Eyes Titans, taking dozens of Loyalist Titans down with them.

HOUSE VI

The Knight House Vi is unusual in that it maintains both an independent presence on the world of Procon and a large Vassal contingent in the service of the Legio Solaria. This is because large numbers of House Vi Scions were seconded to Tigris to serve as Titan crews for the Imperial Hunters, and their loyal brothers and sisters came to fight at their side.

The almost entirely female Legio Solaria has a close relationship with its Vassal Knight House, many of the Princeps and Moderati sharing blood links with the Scions. These bonds would prove their worth on the brutal battlefields of Beta-Garmon, where the Loyalists faced war and destruction on an unimaginable scale.

DOMINUS BATTLEFORCE MANIPLE

Many Legios with large Vassal Houses create special formations within their battlegroups by merging Knight Banners and Titan maniples. Known as a Dominus Battleforce maniple, it allows the Vassal Knights to offer close support to the Titans, often shielding them with their hulls from incoming fire.



Aeterno Rex



Argent Monarch



Fidelis Natus



Venator Lux



Pilum-VII



Falx-XXIII



Falchion-LVI



Xyston-XXVIII



Sarisa-XXI



Falx-XLV



Sarisa-XXII



Halbard-XXXIX



Xyston-XXVII



Xyston-XXIX

Mandatory Components

- One Warlord Battle Titan
- Two Reaver Battle Titans
- One Questoris or Cerastus Knight Banner

Optional Components

- Two Warhound Scout Titan
- One Questoris or Cerastus Knight Banner

Maniple Trait

Auspex Bafflers: Knight armours tasked with the close support of Titans configure their vox arrays to foil the targeting auspexes of their enemies with an impenetrable wall of merged signals. This has the result of protecting the Titans but unfortunately broadcasts the Knights' position. Knight Banners included in a Dominus Battleforce maniple cannot benefit from obscuring cover (see page 33 of the *Adeptus Titanicus* rulebook). If a Titan in a Dominus Battleforce maniple is within 6" of a Knight Banner from the same maniple, and both the Titan and Knight are visible to the attacker, attacks made from more than 2" away from the Titan suffer a -1 modifier to the Hit roll.

Noble Sacrifice: When a Titan in a Dominus Battleforce maniple takes a hit from a ranged attack, it may transfer this hit to any Knight Banner from the same maniple within 6", as long as at least one Knight in the Knight Banner is visible to the attacker. The chosen Knight Banner now suffers the full effects of the hit just as if it had been the original target. If the hit was from a weapon with the Blast trait, the Blast marker is centred on the Knight Banner. Hits from weapons with the Firestorm trait may not be transferred in this way.



CERASTUS KNIGHT LANCER FALCHION-LVI

TITANICUS VASSAL HOUSE COLDSHROUD

The Cerastus Knight Lancer *Falchion-LVI* was manufactured on Gryphon IV at the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, as a part of that Forge World's efforts to bolster the Imperium's defence against the inexorable advance of the Warmaster's hosts. *Falchion-LVI* was first deployed to Paramar, where it stood firm against the furious charge of the massed Knights of Perdaxia, and later served on Tallarn alongside the famous Legio Gryphonicus Warlord Titan *Iron Regent*.

HERALDRY

The heraldry and iconography worn by the Knight armours of a Titanicus Vassal House often closely follow those of the Titan Legion under which they are bonded to serve. Most Vassal Houses are granted their own icon, but the colours most bear are invariably derived from those of the parent Legio, as can be seen here in the case of a House Coldshroud Cerastus Knight, which bears the distinctive golden-yellow and mottled grey of the War Griffons. Some Vassal Houses, notably Morbidia and Perdaxia, wear the colours of their parent Legio inverted, while a small number have earned themselves the right to bear their own colours. Almost exclusively, Vassal House armours are much more uniform in their heraldry than their Imperial House counterparts, bearing little or none of the individual iconography, motifs and devices that describe the Scion's many noble deeds. Bonded as they are to the service of their Titanicus masters, Vassal House Scions live and die by the orders of their masters.

KILL MARKINGS

Vassal Knights exist solely to serve their Titanicus masters and only make account of their own kills if they are especially significant. However, many are granted the right to share the glories of their overlords and so bear a range of kill markings. *Falchion-LVI* bears a number of the distinctive chess piece icons used by the War Griffons to represent various classes of Titan – five skulls and a king for multiple heavy Battle Titan kills (the majority most likely Warlords) and a single Knight piece representing a Scout Titan kill (most likely a Warhound). The fact that the latter is borne upon *Falchion-LVI*'s own banner suggests that the Knight may have had a direct hand in the kill, rather than it being a vicarious honour.



The crest of House Coldshroud, symbolising the unbreakable bond between Legio Gryphonicus and the Knight Scions of the Vassal House.

