



Vessels of Mars: Ships of the Adeptus Mechanicus

Knowledge is power

By Nate Montes, Robert Henderson and Ray Bell

The Cult Mechanicus believes knowledge to be the manifestation of divinity, and holds that anything embodying or containing knowledge is holy because of it. The vast foundries of the Adeptus Mechanicus are solely responsible for providing to the Imperium of Man all technical devices and machinery from mundane farm equipment to vast interstellar warships. It is ordered in a strong hierarchy, but details on what form this takes are not made widely available to those who have not been so indoctrinated. Generally, more highly positioned techpriests are expected to have more seniority and knowledge than lower ones, and are consequently more important as greater repositories of knowledge. After many decades of service, techpriests may be elevated to the rank of Magos, from where they may begin service in one of the many sub-sect Divisios within the Cult. Held in highest regard are the Magos Explorator. Obsessed with the quest for knowledge, they search high and low across the known galaxy for lost Standard Template Constructs and ancient knowledge. A breed apart from regular techpriests, any Explorator or member of his team will willingly walk into forgotten catacombs, even at risk of death, for snippets of long-forgotten knowledge.

Toward this end the Adeptus Mechanicus have at their disposal a large fleet of starships. Because the Quest for Knowledge can involve long, arduous forays into unexplored space, it is important that they be heavily armed and armored. This is not only for their own protection from those who covet their technology but to engage in combat when necessary to secure vital data or artefacts that may prove crucial to the Quest. Though the total number of ships the Adeptus Mechanicus has at its disposal dispersed among its many forge worlds is far outnumbered by that of the Imperial Navy, it goes without saying that those responsible for all starship construction reserve for themselves among the most powerful and best-equipped warships encountered anywhere in the Imperium.

SPECIAL RULES

While Mechanicus vessels have companies of Skitarii Troopers embarked aboard in place of Naval armsmen, the vast majority of their crews will be made up of tech-priests with little combat experience and servitors hardwired to their posts. Though they may conduct hit and run raids normally, boarding actions as well as Hit and Run attacks against Mechanicus vessels may re-roll the dice if desired, but the second roll stands. Mechanicus vessels (including battleships) do not normally utilize assault boats or boarding torpedoes.

Every attempt will be made to recover a Mechanicus vessel that is lost. However, they will not allow their holy technology and precious knowledge fall into enemy hands. Unlike other fleets, Mechanicus vessels can take a leadership check to fire upon their own vessels that have been hulked to deny them to the enemy.

Gifts of the Omnissiah. Adeptus Mechanicus vessels represent the very apex of Mankind's technical prowess, and they have access to resources and technology unavailable to the vast majority of the Imperium. All Mechanicus vessels add +1 to a given vessel's original turret value. Mechanicus vessels must also roll a D6 once against the Mechanicus Gifts table. These improvements are already included in the point cost assigned in the Adeptus Mechanicus Fleet List. Re-roll any refit that is not applicable to the vessel.

D6 Mechanicus Gift

- 1 Emergency Energy Reserves: When crippled, the ship only reduces turrets, shielding and weapons by 25% rather than 50%. The vessel still counts as crippled in every other respect.
- 2 Advanced Engines: The ship gains +5cm speed, as well as +1D6 when on All Ahead Full special orders.
- 3 Repulsor Shielding: Ignore all negative effects of having a blast marker or gas clouds in contact with the ship's base as it applies to leadership, movement and repairing critical damage. This effect goes away if the ship suffers "Shields Collapsed" critical damage.
- 4 Fleet Defense Turrets: Up to two turrets on the ship are exchanged for fleet defense turrets capable of protecting itself or any one other vessel within 15cm each ordnance phase, adding +2 to the turret strength of the ship it is defending (this does not alter bomber attack rolls when used to defend another vessel). These otherwise work exactly as normal turrets do in all other respects.
- 5 Gyro-stabilized Targeting Matrix: Ship weapons are reduced to 75% instead of 50% when on All Ahead Full, Come To New Heading or Burn Retros special orders. Nova Cannon still cannot fire.
- 6 Augmented Weapon Relays: Weapon batteries shift left on the gunnery table before all other modifiers are applied. Lance hits count double on rolls of a 6.

USING ADEPTUS MECHANICUS MODELS

Adeptus Mechanicus models can be used as normal Imperial Navy vessels and be fully integrated into an Imperial navy fleet with no restrictions. If used in this manner, they do not have access to any of the Adeptus Mechanicus refits or special rules. However, they also use all normal point values and do not have any of the restrictions concerning boarding actions, critical damage and assault boats Mechanicus vessels do.

As the ability to efficiently produce long-range lance weaponry by Mars was perfected in late M37, the need to reserve these complex and expensive weapons for only a relatively small number of their own hulls no longer existed. To avoid raising the concern of the Imperial Navy, Mars does not utilize any battlecruisers in their own fleets, though they still produce a small number of them for the Imperial Navy as required. Instead, every Mechanicus cruiser (not light cruiser) is also equipped with a single 60cm range dorsal lance turret firing left/front/right. These improvements are already included in the point cost assigned in the Adeptus Mechanicus Fleet List. Adeptus Mechanicus Endeavor and Endurance light cruisers may replace their prow torpedoes with a single 30cm range dorsal lance turret firing left/front/right for no cost.

All Adeptus Mechanicus cruisers (not light cruisers) with armor 6+ prows can replace their prow torpedoes with a Nova Cannon for +20 points, even if this option is not normally provided for a given cruiser class (such as the Gothic). A Mechanicus Retribution battleship can make this trade for +10 points. Adeptus Mechanicus cruisers that would normally be equipped with 30cm Weapon Batteries can incorporate plasma-boosted batteries that increase their range to 45cm for +10 points. All Adeptus Mechanicus capital ships that utilize torpedoes can be equipped with refitted torpedoes as described on p. 156 of ARMADA for +20 points (+30 points for the Retribution, +10 points for the Endeavor and Endurance). Mechanicus vessels can take any combination, all or none of these improvements as desired.

Quest For Knowledge. The Cult Mechanicus follow Sixteen Universal Laws, which define their existence. Possibly the most revealing is the Eight Universal Law: The Omnissiah knows all, comprehends all, the Omnissiah is the Supreme Being, the entity able to comprehend all knowledge in the universe. To fully understand the Machine God is the ultimate, overarching goal of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and so they strive to attain enlightenment through their studies and biological/mechanical symbiosis. They are constantly driven by a communal and personal attempt to achieve this, known as the Quest for Knowledge. They view this endeavour as paramount and more important than any other concern, and is considered by them to be among the most vital missions of its space fleet. The Cult believes that all knowledge already exists, and it is primarily a matter of time before it can be gathered together to complete the Quest. Much of this lost knowledge is widely believed to reside in the form of the now-lost Standard Template Constructs, and no effort will be spared to pursue any lead that may reveal the existence of an even partially-functioning STC system.

Quick to incorporate recently-rediscovered technology before it is approved for widespread use, Adeptus Mechanicus vessels place great reliance on archaeotech that have much higher power requirements and correspondingly smaller overload tolerances and redundancy than those equipping comparable Imperial Navy vessels. Their ships are crewed with a very high proportion of repair servitors and tech adepts intimately familiar with the workings of their vessel. Mechanicus vessels always add +1D6 to their rolls when attempting to repair critical damage. However, because these ships are commonly relied upon to test untried and sometimes Xenos technology for extended periods of time, Mechanicus vessels will on occasion suffer adverse, unanticipated consequences that in some cases may endanger the entire ship and its crew. In addition to any subplots that may be taken normally as desired, a fleet including Adeptus Mechanicus ships must roll a single D6 against the following subplot table:

D6

1

Quest For Knowledge Table

Extended Duty: The Quest for Knowledge can be long and arduous, sometimes seeing the fleet deep in unexplored space far away from logistical support for exceedingly long periods. Roll a D6 for each Mechanicus capital ship. On a 1 it takes D3 damage, on a 2 it suffers -1 Ld to take Lock-on or Reload special orders. Rolls of 3+ have no effect. You must destroy or cripple more enemy ships than you lose. (+1/0 renown)

2

Xenos Logic: Due to unforeseen phenomena, the complex workings within the capital ships of the Adeptus Mechanicus have become unreliable at best and catastrophic at worst. Roll a D6 for each Mechanicus capital ship in the fleet. On a 1, 2 or 3, roll against the critical damage table. (+2/-1 renown)

3

Mimic Drive: The Adeptus Mechanicus encounter partial STC plans for a drive capable of imitating the signature of a capital ship. Add a cruiser to the fleet, keeping its identity a secret. This vessel actually has all the characteristics of a transport ship and is worth zero victory points. If it is fired upon by the enemy, then the mimic drive is proven to be effective. (+1/-1)

4

Sacred Vessel: The ship is an example of or contains much valued archaeotech and must be protected at any cost. Choose one Mechanicus capital ship in your fleet. This vessel cannot be crippled or destroyed. (+1/-1)

5

The Prize: Reliable sources have confirmed that an enemy ship contains an extremely valuable example of archaeotech, or possibly remnants of a working STC system! Even if the ship is only crippled, it will grant an easier venture to capture it. Nominate one enemy capital ship. You must cripple or destroy it. If the ship explodes, no renown is gained or lost. (+1/-2)

6

Experimental Ship: Recovered ancient technology or alien artefacts are sometimes retrofitted to a ship to change its performance in one way or another. Sometimes the results are significant, but very rarely can such devices be accommodated without significant cost or sacrifice to the vessel. Pick one cruiser in the fleet. This vessel has been recently fitted with an experimental system that has not yet been tested operationally. These modifications are in addition to any refits taken normally by a Mechanicus vessel. Roll a D6 on the following two tables to see how the ship has been altered (Re-roll any result that cannot be applied). This ship must not be crippled or destroyed so that it can be examined to review its performance. (+1/-1)

D6

1

Improvement

All weapons (except ordnance) increase maximum range by +15cm.

2

The ship gains +1 Shield.

3

All turrets re-roll misses when defending against ordnance.

4

The ship can turn an additional +45 degrees.

5

All friendly vessels within 15cm gain an additional +1 leadership when the enemy is on special orders (max 10).

6

Dorsal or prow lances ignore shields on a roll of 6.

D6

1

Side Effect

Weapons battery firepower and lance strength reduced by 50% (rounding up).

2

The ship loses 2 hit points.

3

The ship loses 2 turrets (this is after adding the +1 turret all Mechanicus vessels are equipped with).

4

The ship must move an additional 5cm before it can turn.

5

The ship loses 5cm speed.

6

Dorsal or prow lances can only hit targets on a roll of 6.

Leadership. While the Adeptus Mechanicus have dedicated starship crews, they are led by senior Tech Magi of their order rather than the nobility of the Imperial Navy. They follow a hierarchy as completely different from the Navy as is the Adeptus Astartes. Consequently, they use a leadership table different from other fleets. To determine base leadership for a given vessel, roll a D6 against the following table:

1= Ld 7. 2-3= Ld 8. 4-6= Ld 9.

Any vessel that rolls a 6 when determining base leadership may select any one desired refit from the Mechanicus Gifts table instead of rolling for it randomly. This option cannot be used if the vessel embarks an Archmagos Veneratus.

Attack Rating. The Adeptus Mechanicus have a starting attack rating of 2.

FLEET COMMANDER
0-1 Mechanicus Archmagos

You may include 1 Mechanicus Archmagos in your fleet, which must be assigned to a ship and replaces its Leadership with the

value shown. If the fleet is worth 1,000 points or more, a Mechanicus Archmagos must be included to lead it.

Archmagos Explorator (Ld 8) 50 pts

Archmagos Veneratus (Ld 9) 100 pts

A Mechanicus Archmagos can elect up to any one desired item from the Adeptus Mechanicus refit table for their own ship as part of their point cost, in addition to (and before) the refit the ship rolls for normally. If the second refit rolled is identical to the one selected, the commander can select the second refit as well! The benefit a Mechanicus Archmagos brings with it cannot be combined with a refit selected because the ship rolled a 6 when determining base leadership, meaning a ship will never have more than two refits from the Mechanicus Gifts table. If you wish to give a Mechanicus Archmagos any fleet commander re-rolls, you'll have to pay for them.

One re-roll 50 pts

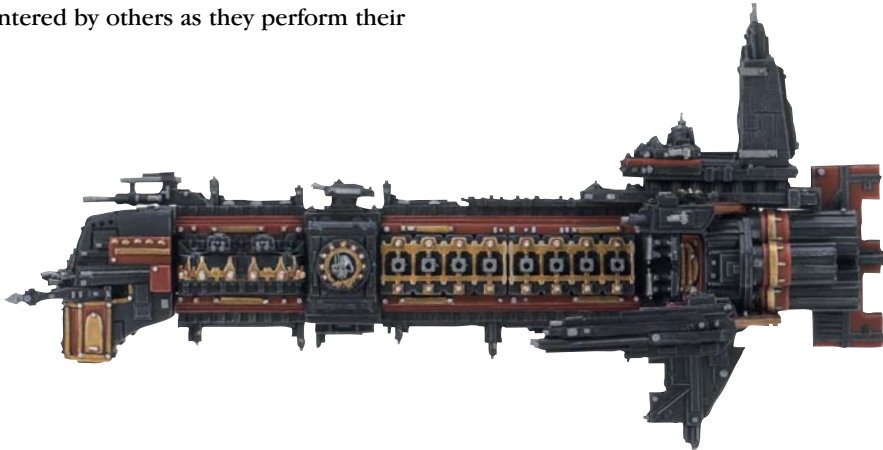
Two re-rolls 125 pts

ARK MECHANICUS OMNISSIAH’S VICTORY 415 points

Over many millennia, a large number of starships of various sizes, fitting no specific classification, have been seen bearing the insignia of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Many of these ships are incredibly ancient vessels, possibly recovered space hulks, re-commissioned so as to examine their characteristics under normal operation.

A notable few of these are the unimaginably vast, almost mythical Ark Mechanicus vessels, said to endlessly ply the stellar maine in the Quest for Knowledge. Led by a Venerated Archmagos Explorator, they will follow up any lead that may result in discovering a working Standard Template Construct, the revered holy grail of the Cult Mechanicus. These vessels are rarely encountered by others as they perform their

missions in the service of those who give life to these behemoths of the stars. One such vessel is the Omnisiah’s Victory, said to predate even the Great Crusade. While this cannot be proven, it is known to have taken part in the Noloptis Crusade as far back as M33. Some have suggested that aspects of its design were lent to both the Retribution battleship as well as the Victory battleship most commonly encountered in Segmentum Tempestus. While the Adeptus Mechanicus have not been forthcoming regarding the veracity of this information, records exist of the Omnisiah’s Victory spending a considerable amount of time in the vicinity of Bakka and its surrounding forge worlds.



TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/12	20cm	45°	4	5+ (Prow 6+)	5
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Port weapons battery		60cm	10		Left
Starboard weapons battery		60cm	10		Right
Port lance battery		60cm	2		Left
Starboard lance battery		60cm	2		Right
Dorsal lance battery		60cm	2		Left/Right/Front
Prow nova cannon		30–150cm	1		Front

Notes: Cannot use “Come To New Heading” special orders. The profile for the Omnisiah’s Victory already reflects the rules for Adeptus Mechanicus vessels. It is equipped with Repulsor Shields and Augmented Weapon Relays as part of its point cost, and can take no other refits from the Mechanicus Gifts table.

You may include the Omnisiah’s Victory in place of one battleship in the Adeptus Mechanicus fleet if it totals 1000 points or greater. If

used, it must be the flagship and embark a Venerated Archmagos for the cost listed in the fleet list.

The Omnisiah’s Victory cannot take any other refits except those described in the notes for this vessel, though it can earn others normally in a campaign. Only one Omnisiah’s Victory may ever be used in a fleet that includes Adeptus Mechanicus vessels.

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS FLEET LIST

The Adeptus Mechanicus will only use warships from the following classes, applying all the rules described beforehand. The cost listed below replaces the original cost for these vessels found in the rulebook or ARMADA.

Battleships

You may include 1 battleship for every three cruisers in the fleet.

Mechanicus Ark (max 1)	415 pts
Emperor Battleship	400 pts
Retribution Battleship	380 pts
Oberon Battleship	370 pts

Cruisers

You may have up to fifteen cruisers in the fleet.

Dictator Cruiser	255 pts
Tyrant Cruiser	220 pts
Lunar Cruiser	215 pts
Gothic Cruiser	215 pts
Defiant Light Cruiser	140 pts
Endeavor Light Cruiser	135 pts
Endurance Light Cruiser	135 pts

Escorts

You may have any number of Adeptus Mechanicus escorts in the fleet, taken from both the Imperial Navy and Space Marines fleet lists for the point costs listed below but otherwise unmodified from their normal profiles. These vessels count as Adeptus Mechanicus vessels and use all rules that Mechanicus vessels do, but do not have access to the Mechanicus Gifts table, they cannot repair critical damage, nor do they get any boarding action bonuses Space Marine escorts may have. They must be painted to match the Mechanicus fleet to be designated Mechanicus vessels; you cannot take Imperial Navy or Space Marine vessels painted for another fleet and call them Mechanicus vessels!

Nova Frigate	45 pts
Firestorm Frigate	40 pts
Gladius Frigate	40 pts
Sword Frigate	35 pts
Falchion Frigate	35 pts
Hunter Destroyer	35 pts
Cobra Destroyer	30 pts

RESERVES AND ALLIES

Adeptus Mechanicus vessels can be used as reserves in any Imperial Navy or Space Marine fleet list. Contrariwise, Imperial Navy vessels from any fleet list can be used as reserves in a Mechanicus fleet, following all normal rules for these vessels.

No more than one reserve vessel can be taken for every three capital ships in the fleet. For every three cruisers, one reserve cruiser-class, battlecruiser or grand cruiser may be taken. For every three battleships, one battleship-class vessel may be taken. Vessels taken as reserves count respectively toward the total number of cruisers and battleships allowed in a Mechanicus fleet.

Space Marines can also be used as reserves in a Mechanicus fleet that does not include regular Imperial Navy capital ships or alien vessels of any type. They can be taken in the ratio of one strike cruiser for every three Mechanicus capital ships, and one battle barge for every three strike cruisers.

Ships that can be allied with Imperial Navy vessels, such as the Deimurg and Rogue Traders can also ally themselves with Mechanicus vessels normally, even if reserves are also used.

Mechanicus vessels cannot be placed in squadrons with Rogue Trader, regular Imperial Navy or Adeptus Astartes vessels. Mechanicus re-rolls cannot be used on these vessels, and other fleet commander re-rolls cannot be used on Mechanicus vessels. An Adeptus Mechanicus fleet commander can only be embarked on a Mechanicus ship.

Mechanicus starships are rare and precious vessels, and they will not be expended lightly regardless of the circumstances. Mechanicus vessels that are crippled when used as reserves in other fleets will attempt to disengage whenever possible, otherwise they will move toward the closest table edge. Those in capital ship squadrons will disengage when half or more of the vessels in the squadron are crippled.

There are no restrictions on how many reserve Imperial Navy, Space Marine or Rogue Trader escorts are included in an Adeptus Mechanicus fleet, as long as Xenos vessels and reserve Space Marine escorts are not included in the same fleet. Escorts taken in this manner must be available in the same fleet list reserve capital ships are being drawn from.

CAMPAIGNS

The Mechanicus refit that ships earn at the start of a campaign are the ones they keep until they are destroyed. In the course of a campaign, Mechanicus vessels can only earn additional refits from the standard Imperial Navy refit table or the Space Marines reinforcement table. They cannot continue to gain refits from the Mechanicus Gifts table. Adeptus Mechanicus vessels are far too rare and precious to be carelessly expended in the fires of war. However, those vessels so engaged will always receive priority when requiring repair or rework at shipyards throughout the Imperium. When calculating repair points at the end of a battle, the Adeptus Mechanicus fleet will always have +1 Repair point for every 10 renown or portion thereof the fleet commander has earned. When rolling appeals, Adeptus Mechanicus vessels get a +1 roll modifier to earn refits but a -1 roll modifier to earn reinforcements or Space Marines. Space Marines can be earned in this manner in a fleet that contains regular Imperial Navy vessels, but not one that contains alien vessels of any type.

Even the most junior tech-adepts are typically far more familiar with the workings of their vessel and the capabilities of its weapon and defensive systems than comparable Imperial Navy officers and ratings, though this does not necessarily correlate to how well their vessels are utilized in combat. Because even senior Mechanicus techpriests tend to approach challenges in terms of engineers rather than tacticians, it is sometimes difficult for them to appreciate the finer aspects of tactical discipline in the heat of battle. However, the resources they are able to call upon when repairing and refitting their vessels are the envy of even the most senior Imperial Navy commanders.

Additional refits earned by renown in the course of a campaign as listed on the following table are at no cost to the vessel they are applied to, and they are separate from refits earned by appeal, which must be paid for normally. Unlike normal refits, these free refits may be taken from the Mechanicus Gifts table if desired. However, they can only be applied to the fleet commander's flagship, they must be rolled randomly, and no refit can be used more than once. Should that vessel be lost, those refits are lost as well and do not follow the fleet commander to his new flagship. However, Mechanicus fleet commanders still have access to the refits they earned, and can roll randomly against the Mechanicus Gifts table the number of refits they are entitled to apply to their new flagship.

Mechanicus Promotion Table

<i>Renown</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Re-rolls</i>
1-5	Explorator Techpriest	7	1
6-10	Magos Errant	8	1+1 refit
11-20	Magos Explorator	8	2+1 refit
21-30	Aspiring Archmagos	9	2+1 refit
31-50	Archmagos Explorator	9	3+1 refit
51+	Archmagos Veneratus	10	3+2 refits

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ray, Nate and Bob are the current keepers of the Battlefleet Gothic rules, being the members of the BFG Rules Committee.