



THE MECHANICUM TAGHMATA OF THE CALTH MUSTER

Primary: Taghmata Barbarel

Title: The Taghmata Omnisiah of Archmagos Cronn Barbarel

Militaris Grade: Hekta class Battlegroup (over 35,000 alpha through gamma grade combatants)

Magos Primus: Cronn Barbarel, Archmagos Macrotechnika

Primary Sub-taghma: Barbarel Taghma (Gantz), Usolkan Myrmidex Taghma (Veridia Forge), Kemekkan Lacyraemarta Taghma (Konor), Vekrit Autokrator Taghma (Anuaris)

Allied Cohorts: The Warbound Household of Nahrin, Legio Cybernetica Magenim Cohort

Secondary/Allied Taghmata: Taghmata Xerxes –Third Quintermary Division (Accatran)

Allegiance: Fidelitas Constantus

After having received the order from the Warmaster to muster his Legion for war, Guilliman called on not only the many contingents of the Ultramarines scattered across the galaxy, but also those fiefdoms of the enigmatic Martian priesthood that dwelt within the expanding borders of his own domain, the Five Hundred Worlds of Ultramar. Such a realm, dependant as it was on the technological gifts of the Mechanicum to both provide for its people and to protect its borders, was home to a number of significant Machine Cult enclaves as well as several fully fledged Forge Worlds, and when the Lord of Ultramar called, they were bound to supply warriors for his cause.

Unlike the Imperial Army and Legiones Astartes, whose regiments and companies form a permanent professional military force for the imposition of the Emperor's will, the Mechanicum does not maintain a standing military force intended for offensive actions. Instead, when a call to war is received and approved by the holy synod of a given enclave, a force of warriors and war machines is raised from the retinue of those magos of the enclave most suited to the task at hand. On the larger Forge Worlds of the Imperium these forces, the Taghmata Omnisiah, can rival Legiones Astartes chapters in size. One such force was the Taghmata Xerxes, the battlegroup dispatched from the Forge World of Accatran to join the gathering force at Calth whose Third Quintermary Division comprised nearly 15,000 combatants alone, being an approximate one fourth of Xerxes' full strength.

Within the fledgling realm of Ultramar there were as yet no Forge Worlds of the magnitude of ancient Accatran, with only the newly established Forges of Anuaris, still tied both in tribute and loyalty to distant Accatran as much as Macragge, and the reclusive magos of the iron-bound moon of Gantz ranked as true Forge Worlds within the boundaries of Guilliman's fiefdom. However, there did exist a large number of Mechanicum enclaves scattered throughout the Five Hundred Worlds of Ultramar.

These enclaves ranged from tiny collectives such as the Cult Logis enclave on Sotha which numbered less than a dozen adepts, to the sprawling Mechanicum cantons of Konor, a world denied the status of a true Forge World only due to its extensive connections to the political hierarchy of Ultramar, which were considered unseemly by the envoys of Mars. At Calth, the amassed gathering of smaller individual taghma from around Ultramar, which as a whole numbered near 35,000 Mechanicum combatants of varying grades, were under the command of Archmagos Cronn Barbarel, and as appointed Magister Mechanicum for the campaign, Barbarel was also given overall lordship of all the taghmata bound for the proposed war against the Orks under the seal and aegis of Roboute Guilliman, with only the Titan Legions assigned to the muster as well as the notoriously independent Ordo Reductor, represented by the Covenant of Mormoth-Null, remaining outside this chain of command.

The Warmaster's Poison

Konor, one of the founding worlds of the realm of Ultramar, had long played host to a large population of the adepts of the Machine Cult. By the 31st Millennium, the Mechanicum cantons covered nearly three quarters of that world and its industrial output far exceeded that of the nearby moon of Gantz—which held the title of Forge World by ancient treaty with Mars and its allies on the Forge World of Tigrus. Yet Konor was not to gain the full freedom of the status of Forge World until the Age of the Scouring for reasons of Imperial politics. The Archmandriture Council of Magos on Konor had placed before the Synods of Mars a petition to grant Konor an official charter as a Forge World, with all rights and privileges attendant to that position, on several occasions in the waning years of the 30th Millennium. On each occasion the appeal was denied by the express order of the Fabricator-general Kelbor Hal, citing the ties held by the world of Konor to the ruling hierarchy of the realm of Ultramar.

That Konor played host to one of the five Tetrarchs of Ultramar, as well as a sizable garrison of the XIIIth Legion, and ceded some part of its own authority to that of Guilliman on Macragge were reasons enough in the eyes of many within the byzantine and dogmatic structure of the Cult Mechanicus to disregard the request. Yet in the years which followed the great wars of the Horus Heresy and those of the Scouring, this and many other decisions made by Kelbor Hal were re-examined and found to carry hidden within them the Warmaster's poison.

Located at the heart of Ultramar and one of the principal suppliers of munitions and war machines, to both the XIIIth Legion and the various regiments of the Imperial Army raised within the borders of Ultramar, Konor was perfectly placed to serve the Warmaster as a cancer in the breast of that realm. If it could be turned to his purpose, either knowingly or not, it could become a weapon that would cripple his brother's armies without disturbing any of the other forces that had pledged their loyalty to him. While all attempts to overtly gain the loyalty of the magos of Konor proved to be a failure, it was far easier to spread the twin curses of jealousy and mistrust amongst their ranks.

With the Fabricator-general's continued denial of their petitions and Guilliman's reluctance to relinquish any authority over the world of Konor, vital to his realm as it was, the magos of Konor succumbed to the Warmaster's plans, unwittingly contributing to his cause. The paltry contributions made to the forces sent to Calth, their divisive meddling in politics beforehand and belated response to the Traitors' incursion into Ultramar were all symptoms of this infamy.

The Fanes of Ultramar

Though individually there was no comparison between these separate Mechanicum enclaves of Ultramar and any of the great Forge Worlds, taken as a whole they were a mighty force of technological might, possessed of much esoteric lore and efficacious machineries of war. Where the great Forge Worlds were often dogmatically tied to a single overarching doctrine, even amongst the varied magos and cults which composed their synods, the lesser enclaves encompassed many fields of esoteric technological endeavour unknown to their brethren, some of which verged on tech-heresy. Such dangerous experimentation was common at the very fringes of the Emperor's vast domain, but was tolerated in those turbulent times where it could be turned to greater purpose.

When the call to arms for the Ghaslakh campaign reached these enclaves, the various magos were quick to see the logical advantage of combining their forces. Alone they would be subsumed into one or other of the Imperium's other formations and likely employed with minimal efficiency; together, acting as one body, they would operate at optimum efficiency and prove a valuable military tool for the coming crusade and the advancement of their own enclaves.

Amongst the ranks of the Imperial Army or certain of the Legiones Astartes, such a decision would have prompted many months of posturing and political conflict as the various leaders sought one amongst them to lead, not so among the warriors of the Mechanicum. While the various magos were no less vehement in their arguments, no less proud of their own abilities, records

held on Macragge state that the resulting debate lasted for exactly fourteen seconds. Conducted entirely in the binary cant of the Machine Cult, the fraught negotiations granted primacy within the taghmata to Archmagos Cronn Barbarel, due both to his eminent seniority and fealty to the lords of Gantz who remained neutral in the ancient feud between Konor and Anuaris. Only by deft compromise were the contingents of both Konor and Anuaris kept within the ranks of the taghmata and even so, the magos of Konor were to delay their arrival at Calth by several weeks over supposed disagreements that the muster order favoured the taghma of Anuaris over their own. Indeed, the forces of the taghmata assembled from the various enclaves was amongst the last of the formations to arrive at Calth, with detachments from over a dozen individual worlds, moons and Monolith class factory hulks from across Ultramar. When arrive they did, each was assigned a muster site as space became available amongst the teeming horde of military might assembled upon the surface of Calth, with taghma from the greater taghmata scattered across the planet's surface.

The vast flesh-thrall hordes of Konor's lacyraemarta adepts were assembled on the rolling plains of Barrtor alongside the Ultramarines 2nd and 16th Chapters and the armoured autokrator squadrons of the Anuaris taghma, the magos at the head of those taghma being at pains to ensure that their old rivals would not seem more efficient than their own vassals as they stood in flawless ranks alongside the cobalt blue files of the Ultramarines. The spindle-legged walkers and ornately augmented magos of the taghma assembled in the deep

space drift-refineries of Zeta-Orizus IX were deployed among the desert spires of northern Erud and a regiment of the newly raised 43rd and 44th Erud Infantry regiments. The commanders of those regiments had placed several requests to be moved to other muster zones within hours of the arrival of the skeletal magos, despite the Mechanicum troops' repeated attempts to appropriately interface with the Imperial Army regiment's command structure.

Other taghma were placed across the provinces of Calth's greater continent, from Sylator to Thrascias, in preparation for the crusade into Ghaslakh, with the overall command under Magos Prime Barbarel raising its flag in the sealed bunkers of Sylator Province. With so many units, each from vastly different worlds and using their own unique communication protocols, Taghmata Barbarel was not completely integrated with the planetary communication grid, itself a sovereign Mechanicum domain under Uhl Kehal Hesst, Calth's Server of Instrumentation, but instead routed much of its command traffic through secondary encrypted vox nets. Thus, when the *Campanile* ploughed through the crowded orbital space above Calth, destroying critical orbital stations and relays, and bringing the grid down in a debilitating screech of neural feedback and static that laid many other Mechanicum units low, the magos of Taghmata Barbarel were only briefly incapacitated. Where the various Ultramarines commands were paralysed by the sudden loss of their chapter masters and the unthinkable nature of their foe, Magos Barbarel, whose calculations were predicated solely on logic, could make only one assumption—that the Word Bearers and

forces allied to them meant to destroy both the Ultramarines and those units pledged to their service.

Barbarel's immediate orders, relayed on the heavily encrypted vox network used by the Thallaxii cohorts and skitarii units attached to the various taghma, were simple but direct: inflict maximum damage upon all hostile units, regardless of heraldry or losses. It was imperative that the Mechanicum units buy time for the Legiones Astartes and Imperial Army units to rally, as alone they had no chance of defeating the Word Bearers forces.

On the plains of Barrtor, unnoticed by the beleaguered Ultramarines, it was the sacrifice of Anuaris armoured units engaging the onrushing Word Bearers units that allowed the remnants of the Ultramarines 2nd and 16th Chapters to pull back without being annihilated. In the deserts of Erud, the Mechanicum troops waged a war of hit and fade attacks which drew Gal Vorbak assault units into the maze of rock spires at the desert's edge, away from the Imperial Army units that were desperately trying to arm

and assemble. All across Calth the separated parts of Taghmata Barbarel engaged the Word Bearers in holding actions, trading their lives for precious time as the Loyalists struggled to regroup. In Sylator, the automata of the Magenim Cybernetica cohort were unleashed to hold back the Word Bearers forces attempting to capture the bunker complex that lay under the cliffs of that province. Deep within the bunkers, Magos Prime Barbarel and his acolytes struggled to regain control of the communications grid, unaware of the scrapcode infection that rendered any such attempt impossible.

In the chaotic aftermath of the Word Bearers' retreat, less than a tenth part of the taghmata remained to take refuge in the arcologies beneath Calth. Many of the individual taghma had fought to the last to aid the efforts of the wider war on Calth, their deaths a calculated and measured choice to gain the greatest advantage. Those who still retained combat effectiveness, especially those units whose level of augmentation afforded them some protection from the worsening solar radiation, were ordered to cover the retreat of

those units less able to endure. Though none of the taghmata are known to have survived the Underworld War, it is through their sacrifice that so many others did so.

MATERIAL STRENGTH

Taken as a whole, the amalgamated Taghmata Barbarel was classified as a hekta class battlegroup by the standards of the Mechanicum, composed of over 35,000 combat personnel and independent automata. Fewer than 2,000 were to survive the initial battle, and none are thought to have survived the Underworld War that was to follow. In addition to its ground assets, the taghmata also included 14 warp caravels or other small warp-capable transport craft and two barb-snouted destroyers of arcane design—all of these craft were destroyed in the orbital battle above Calth.

As with its brethren, Taghmata Barbarel was not a single unified command as were the regiments of the Imperial Army, but a chimeric creation of varied taghma from across Ultramar. Each of these separate taghma had its own specialities and tactical

preferences, as well as the individual magos who led it. Where in other branches of the Imperial military this diversity would have quickly become a hindrance, the long established protocols of the taghmata called for each of these masters of the Cult Mechanicus to allow their wills to be bent to the control of the magos prime for the duration of the conflict. Such an act of submission was no simple sacrifice for men who had mastered the most terrible secrets of the technological arts, but were they to function efficiently on the field of battle, it was a necessity. In total there were 34 taghma of various types within the taghmata, ranging from lumbering automata to hordes of flesh-worked tech-thralls. The vast majority were gamma or delta grade combatants, combat servitors of near endless variety and thallaxii cohorts. Though fewer in number, the alpha and beta class units were more fearsome for the rare nature of their construction. Battle-automata of the most ancient patterns and war machines conceived of by magos of rare talent, these were the primary battle units of the taghmata, to be preserved with the lives of the lesser warriors.

The Scions of Accatran

Alongside the Taghmata Barbarel, the Third Quinternary Division of the Taghmata Xerxes was a separate, subordinate battlegroup of the Mechanicum. Part of the sizable and long established armed forces of the Forge World of Accatran, the Taghmata Xerxes, alongside Accatran's principal Titan Legion, took its name from Xerxes Importalus, the legendary warrior-magos whose thousand-year reign had preserved Accatran through the terrors of the Age of Strife. Politically long aligned directly to Terra rather than Mars, Accatran's warriors figured in no part of the Warmaster's plans of rebellion other than as enemies to be destroyed, and the taghmata division sent to bolster the muster at Calth was no exception to this. The Third Quinternary Division was a long-standing veteran formation which had over the years served many masters during the Great Crusade on a score of battlefields, and thus warranted a specific assignment within the Traitors' ranks as their nemesis when battle was joined. This nemesis was to be the Ordo Reductor Covenant of Mormoth-Null, who remained in orbit before the attack and were also given the task of destroying a number of strategic targets in the void-dock city of Ithra where the bulk of the Taghmata Xerxes were based.





COHORT MAGENIM CASTELLAX CLASS BATTLE-AUTOMATA

MANIPLE Σ 957/8
CYBERNETICA DETACHMENT
SYLATOR PROVINCE, CALTH

One of several maniples of battle-automata deployed to Sylator Province, Maniple Epsilon-957 was key to repulsing the Traitor assault on Sylator Province's extensive system of bunker-catacombs. When the loss of the planetary vox grid violently sundered communications, the various battle-automata of Cohort Magenim defaulted to the instructions sealed in the logic-engrams of their cybernetica cortex, eliminating all targets of hostile intent regardless of affiliation. Unrestrained by shock or doubt, Maniple Epsilon-957 butchered three companies of Word Bearers auxiliaries attempting to force entry to the complex, as well as several tercio of Loyalist troops that had opened fire upon them in the confusion of the battle's opening moments.

Castellax Delta-9 is shown in an inventory pict, taken prior to offloading for the grand muster on Calth, in full Magenim regalia. The sigil of the Magenim sect of the Legio Cybernetica can be clearly seen on the battle-automata's right pauldron plate, while on the opposite plate is an example of the unique unit identification system in use amongst the secretive adepts of the Magenim. Long isolation has seen a notable divergence of Magenim iconography from the Martian baseline, of particular note is the alternative Opus Machina displayed on this unit.



TAGHMATA XERXES CASTELLAX CLASS BATTLE-AUTOMATA

UNIT 10, SECOND TAGHMA, 43RD MANIPLE
VOID-DOCK CITY OF ITHRACA, CALTH

One of several hundred Castellax class automata included within the ranks of the Third Quinternary Division of the Taghmata Xerxes, a force sent from distant Accatran to join the muster at Calth as a mark of respect for the Primarch Guilliman. These formidable battle-automata formed the principal fighting strength of the Third Quinternary Division and were at the forefront of the fighting at Ithraca.

This particular unit is shown in the drab mustard-yellow favoured by the Taghmata for field operations. Note that although the Third Quinternary Division has fought alongside countless storied units, including Accatran's own Legio Destructor, it has adopted none of the honour markings of those formations – retaining a stark utilitarian heraldry.

