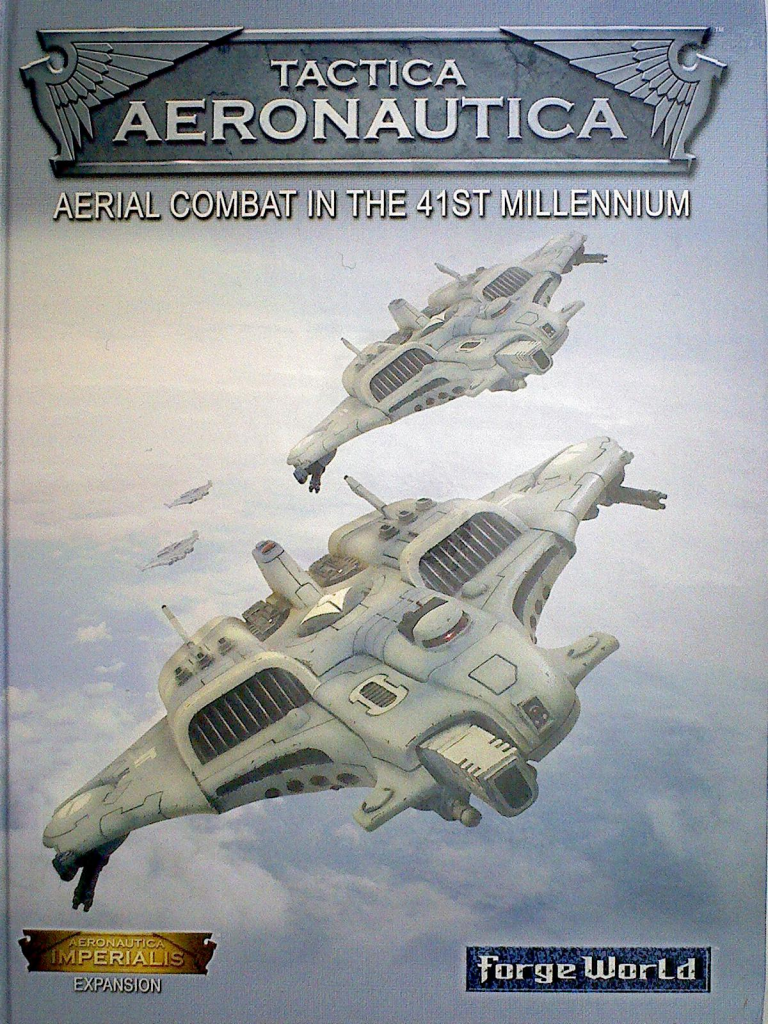
TACTICA AERONAUTICA

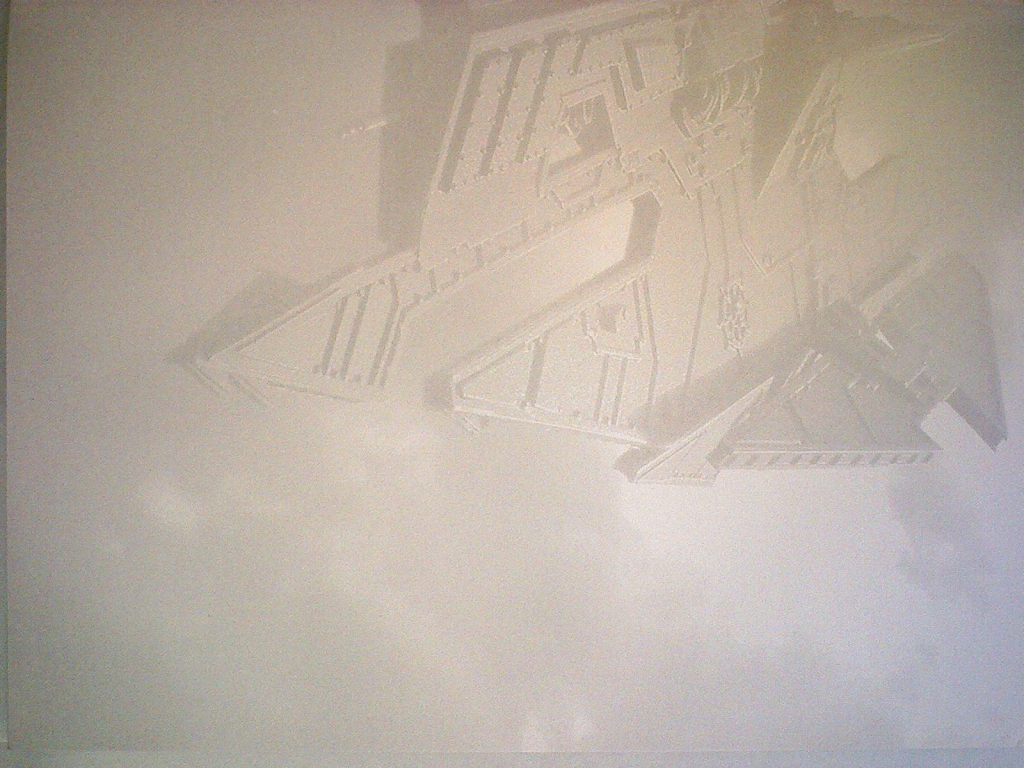
AERIAL COMBAT IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM



AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS

EXPANSION

Forge World



TACTICA AERONAUTICA™

A SUPPLEMENT FOR AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS

GAMES WORKSHOP®

Forge World™

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Tactica Aeronautica, the first supplement to Forge World's Aeronautica Imperialis game.

This supplement contains a collection of articles for players who are already familiar with the main game, and will expand the game with new aircraft, new rules and (hopefully) useful and exciting hobby articles.

Aeronautica Imperialis has been a great success, and we felt that it was only fair to its enthusiastic players that the game received on-going support in the form of new rules, and most importantly, new models. Lots of the major aircraft have now been covered with models and rules, but as we go forward we still hope to add a few more here and there.

Hopefully, this will avoid the game becoming so weighed down with new rules and extra rules as to be unplayable by all but the most veteran of players. From its inception, Aeronautica has always had the motto of 'keep it simple', and so it shall remain. Less is more, and we hope going forward that it remains a fun, pick-up and play game that provides an evening's entertainment, and that players can return to it time and again without feeling the game rules have moved on too far and left them behind.

Players should not worry though, as there are many ways to maintain interest in the hobby. 'The hobby' being all the various ways of involving yourself, from collecting and painting squadrons, to collecting, building and painting terrain, to actually playing games and joining in (or even running) campaigns, tournaments and other gaming events.

This supplement does contain some important errata from the main rulebook. Where possible we have not altered rules – the game remains the same. The new squadron lists included within, as well as including the new aircraft, are the same as those in the main rulebook, just with expanded rules for buying ace pilots and aircraft upgrades. After much feedback from players, the only points change is that of the Eldar Vampire. Where in the main rulebook it was listed as 22 points, it is now 32 points. All the other aircraft retain their original points values, and forces selected with the rulebook squadron lists are still valid.

That said, we hope you enjoy Tactica Aeronautica, and that it provides inspiration and adds more enjoyment to your games.

Always watch your six!

Warwick Kinrade, 2007

PRODUCED BY FORGE WORLD

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NEW AIRCRAFT

MARAUDER VARIANTS

BACKGROUND

The Marauder bomber is the Imperial Navy's standard medium bomber, operated in large numbers by Bomber squadrons across the Imperium. As well as a bomber, the Marauder's fuselage is used in a variety of roles, with many variants designed for specialised use. Two of these are the Marauder Colossus and Marauder Vigilant.

The Colossus is still a bomber, but is modified to carry a single huge 'Colossus' bomb, whilst the Vigilant is a variant used for long-range aerial reconnaissance and surveillance, containing many advanced augurs and tracking systems to assist other aircraft, enabling it to fulfill a command and control role as well.

To save weight and space the dorsal turret has been removed, and whilst this reduces the Marauder's defences, the specialised roles of the aircraft mean it is less likely to encounter enemy fighters in great numbers. The nose turret also replaces the standard lascannons with heavy bolters. Each aircraft has a crew of five; the pilot (also the commander), navigator, bombardier and nose and tail gunners.

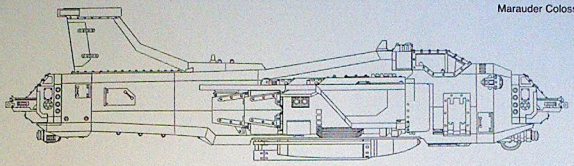
The Colossus has an adapted bomb bay in order to carry a single 'Colossus' bomb. This huge bomb is used to attack large hardened targets and underground facilities. The Colossus bomb is a huge guided weapon, containing sophisticated guidance systems controlled by the bombardier. It has a diamantine armour-penetrating tip, mass reactive fuse and a melta warhead, backed-up with 10,000 kg of high explosive. This means the bomb will penetrate deep inside a target before exploding with devastating force. In order to give the bombardier time to guide the weapon onto the target, and to allow the warhead to arm, the Colossus must be dropped from a higher altitude than conventional bombs. This high altitude restricts the bomb's usefulness, and bomber crews know that the longer they have to get into position and aim the weapon, the more effective it will be, but this generally means a slow approach to the target.

The Vigilant's advanced augur systems mean it can track enemy targets and relay that information to other aircraft in the area. The aircraft's main role is to fly high-altitude, long-range reconnaissance and surveillance missions, both before an attack to identify enemy targets and defences, and after an attack to assess the damage inflicted. Most bomber squadrons contain at least one Vigilant as a useful support to the attack bombers. Internally, the aircraft's bomb bay is replaced by banks of scanners, multi-spectrum surveyors and high-powered communications equipment. In a Marauder Vigilant's crew, the bombardier is replaced by the scanner operator.

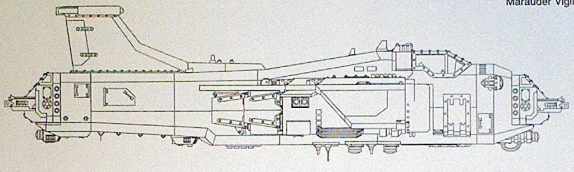
SPECIFICATIONS

Colossus
Type: Tactical bomber
Powerplant: Four J79-CS afterburning ramjets
Performance: maximum speed 1800 kph (1125 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1200 kph (750 mph); range 15,000 km approx.
Weight: 38 tonnes (empty)
Dimensions: Wingspan 24.6m; length 19.3m; height 4.8m (landing gear down)
Armament: Two nose turret heavy bolters, two rear turret heavy bolters, 1 Colossus bomb.

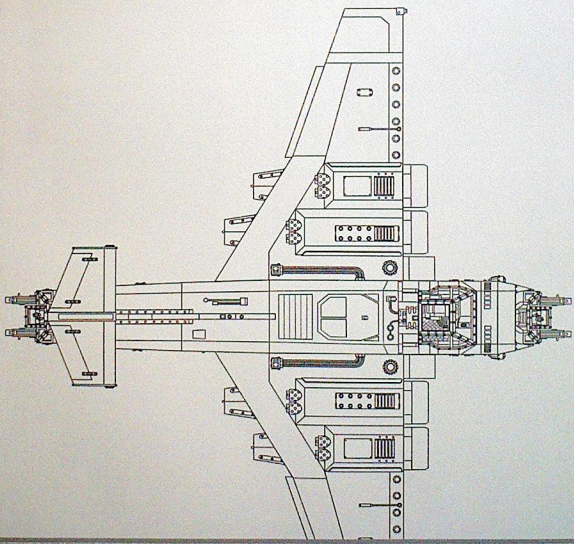
Vigilant
Type: Tactical support
Powerplant: Four J79-CS afterburning ramjets
Performance: maximum speed 1800 kph (1125 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1200 kph (750 mph); range 15,000km approx.
Weight: 43 tonnes (empty)
Dimensions: Wingspan 24.6m; length 19.3m; height 4.8m (landing gear down)
Armament: Two nose turret heavy bolters, two rear turret heavy bolters.

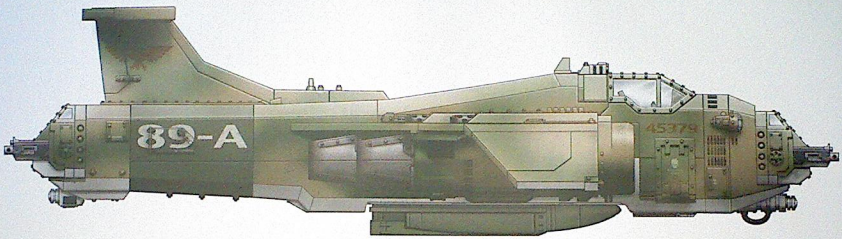


Marauder Colossus

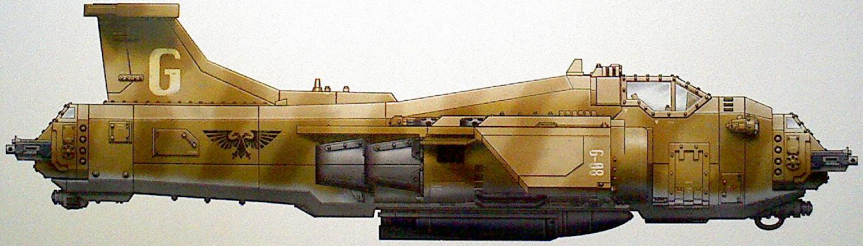


Marauder Vigilant

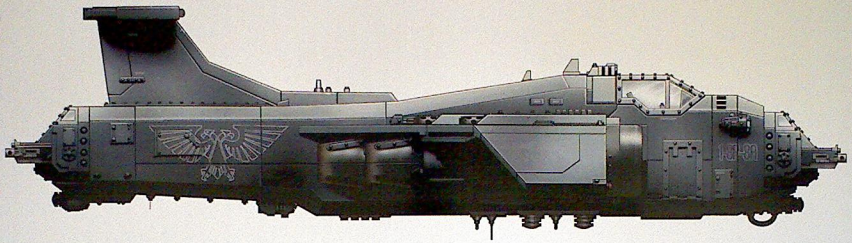




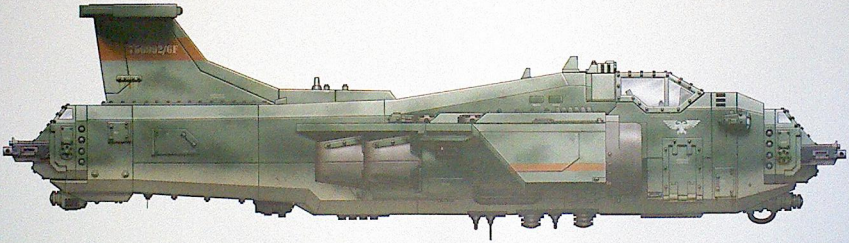
Marauder Colossus of the 89th Bomber Wing, A squadron, still bearing the aircraft's transportation number.



Marauder Colossus of the 688th Bomber Wing, part of the Galan V retribution force.



Marauder Vigilant of the 1402nd Bomber squadron, a unit specialising in night flying.
This aircraft flew night surveillance missions during the first Savanen Crusade.



Marauder Vigilant of the 23rd Bomber Wing, 'Sabre' squadron. Denkari-Prime deathworld.

ORK BOMMER

BACKGROUND

Ork aircraft are the ultimate expression of a particular mania that can seize an Ork's mind. The afflicted Ork seeks ever greater thrills from speed and danger, driving or, in extreme cases, flying faster and faster. Those afflicted are called Speed Freaks, and regardless of their original clan, invariably belong to the Kult of Speed. The majority of Speed Kultists come from the Evil Sunz clan, but not all, and the mania can seize any Ork. Few 'victims' actually become pilots, because most Orks have a natural distrust of flying, and much prefer to remain with their feet solidly upon the ground, where the 'proper' fighting is done.

But there are other instincts at work within an Ork's psyche, and one is a desire for size. To most Orks, bigger is better – whether it is bigger, louder guns, thicker armour or bigger, faster vehicles. It was from this driving desire for size that the Bommer was borne, along with the Ork Meks' tendency to borrow (ie. steal) ideas for new creations from the fighting machines of the Imperium they encountered on the battlefield. Orks are easily impressed by shows of great firepower and mass destruction, and witnessing the devastation caused by a Marauder bomber strike pleases an Ork Warlord greatly (even if half his boyz have been blown to bits).

It is only natural that powerful Ork Warlords would want their own 'bommers', and Meks are happy to oblige (and if they aren't they can expect a visit from the Warlord's 'ardboyz!).

Bommers fulfil many of the Ork's inner desires. They are big, loud, fast and cause large amounts of random mass-destruction. The main problem is that there aren't many Orks willing to go up in them, so they usually require a crew of two or three Ork pilots and crew, and the rest of the crew are Gretchin (who get no choice whether they want to fly or not). Whilst the Orks fly the aircraft, the Gretchin often crew the bommer's many guns and turrets, and help push the bombs off the rear ramp.

Of course pushing bombs through an open door is dangerous work, and many Gretchin have followed their bombs out of the ramp and down to earth, but it was just such an unfortunate accident that inspired another adaptation. If Gretchin could fall out, then why not Orks? To avoid the inevitable messy consequences of impacting with the ground (and it probably took the Orks quite a few tries to work it out), they use Stormboyz on rokkit packs. These are crowded into the hold and released over a battlefield, directly into the action. For the Stormboyz the quicker they can get into a fight the better!

The Blasta bommer variant was an invention of the infamous Ork Mek, Orkimedes, who probably witnessed Marauder Destroyer attacks during the Third Armageddon War, and used his 'genius' to copy the idea. The aircraft's nose cone was filled with as many weapons as Orkimedes could find; big shootas, rokkits, Zzap guns were all packed in and the pilots told to 'stay low' whilst the Gretchin cut loose with everything they had.

SPECIFICATIONS

Type: Tactical Bomber.

Powerplant: Multiple – unknown.

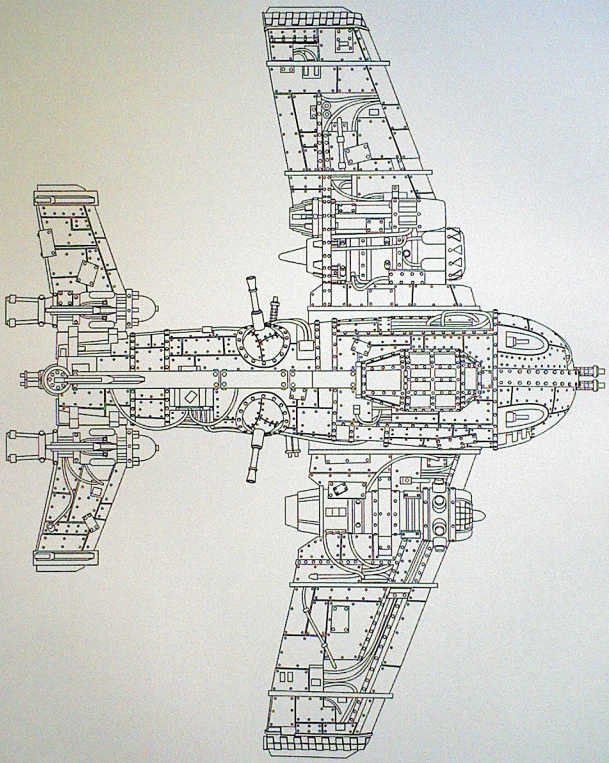
Performance: Maximum speed 1600 kph (1000 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1000 kph (625 mph); range 10,000 km approx.

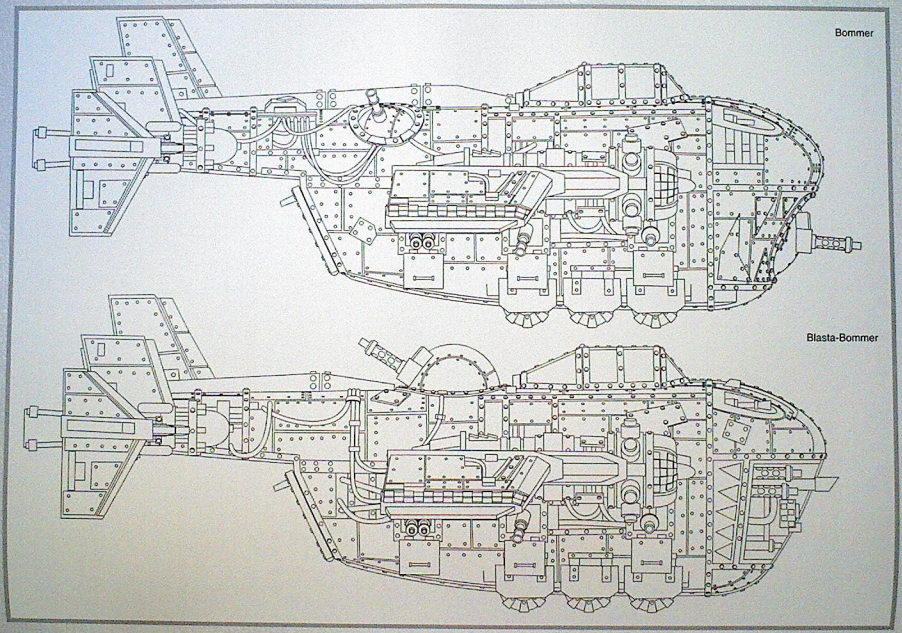
Weight: 51 tonnes (empty).

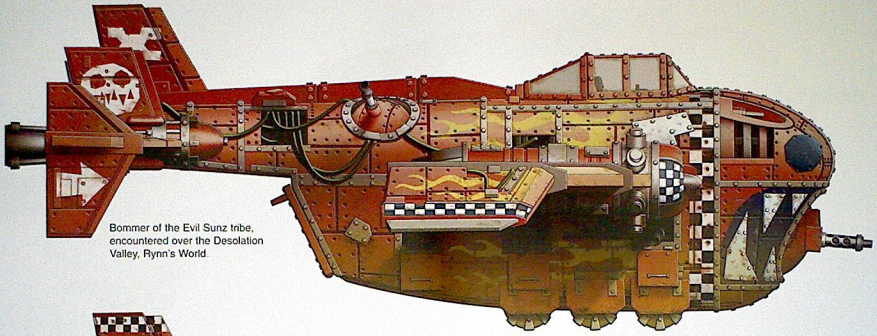
Dimensions: Wingspan 24m; length 15.75m; height 7.7m.

Armament: Varies widely. Multiple ball turret mounted heavy shootas and up to twelve big bombs.

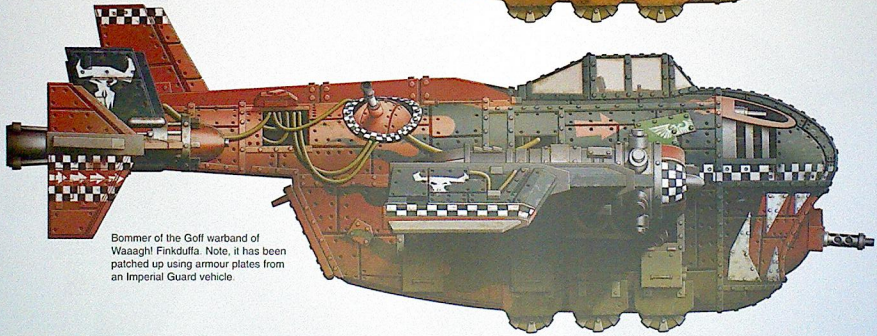
Bommer



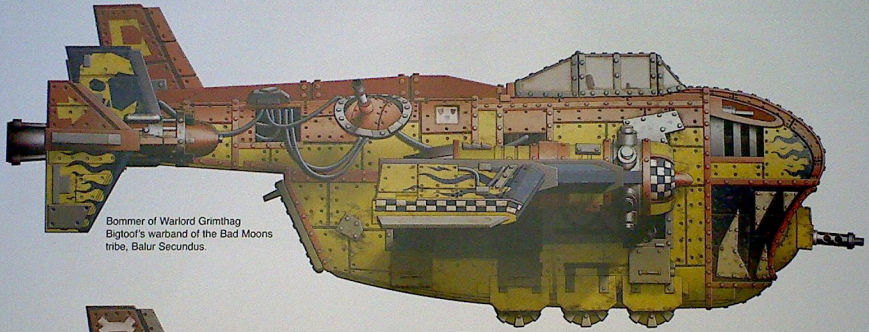

Bommer
Blasta-Bommer



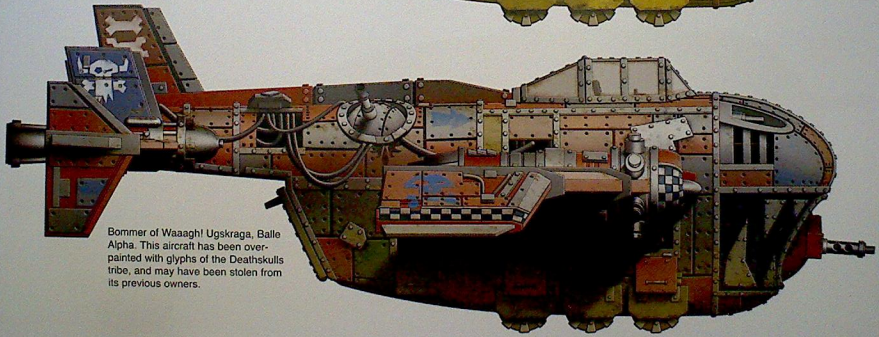
Bommer of the Evil Sunz tribe, encountered over the Desolation Valley, Rynn's World.



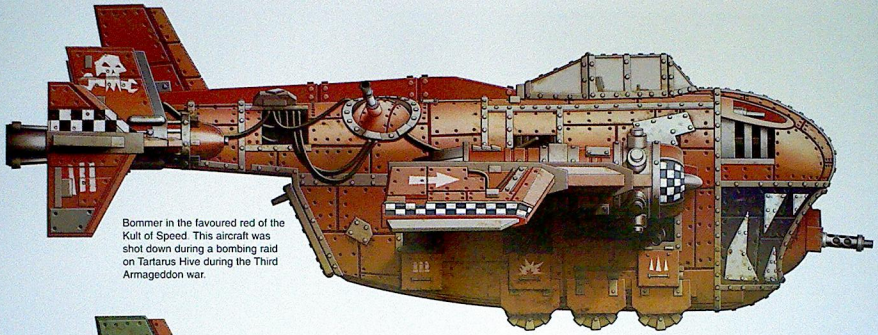
Bommer of the Goff warband of Waaagh! Finkdulfa. Note, it has been patched up using armour plates from an Imperial Guard vehicle.



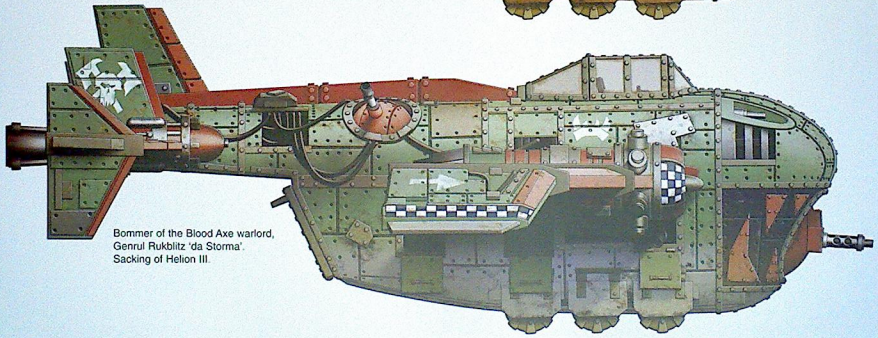
Bommer of Warlord Grimthag Bigtoof's warband of the Bad Moons tribe, Balur Secundus.



Bommer of Waaagh! Ugskraga, Balle Alpha. This aircraft has been over-painted with glyphs of the Deathskulls tribe, and may have been stolen from its previous owners.

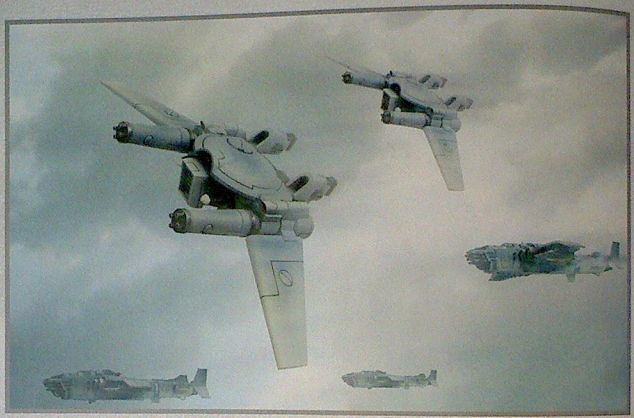


Bommer in the favoured red of the Kult of Speed. This aircraft was shot down during a bombing raid on Tartarus Hive during the Third Armageddon war.



Bommer of the Blood Axe warlord, Genrul Rukblitz 'da Storma'. Sacking of Helion III.

REMORA DRONE FIGHTER & TIGER SHARK AX-2-2



BACKGROUND

Since the initiation of the Tau Empire's third sphere expansion, the Imperium of Man and the Tau Empire have been involved in an ever-increasing number of conflicts. During the renewed hostilities, the Tau have introduced many new innovations to their increasingly potent military strength, including new aircraft operated by the Air Caste.

The Tiger Shark AX 2-2 and TX-6 drone-fighter were both first encountered on the promethium rich penal colony of Typha IV, during the Tau raid to destroy the Imperium's extraction and refining operation.

The TX-6, codenamed 'Remora', is a new concept in Tau aircraft. It is a light, unmanned drone fighter, armed with twin burst cannons and two seeker missiles and utilises an advanced stealth field generator. The Remora's main feature is its stealth field, which masks the aircraft to enemy detection systems, allowing it to launch surprise attacks in support of stealth suit and pathfinder units on the ground.

As well as its drone processor and weapons, the aircraft features a networked markerlight and collapsible wings for ease of transportation. Several fighters can easily fit into the hold of a Manta, or two can be carried by a Tiger Shark AX-2-2. As a drone fighter the Tau are willing to deploy it into situations where they would not risk valuable Air Caste crew, such as hazardous environments. The limitations of its basic drone intelligence are compensated for by the Tiger Shark AX 2-2.

The AX-2-2 is a carrier and command & control variant of the standard Tiger Shark, fitted with sophisticated tracking and communications equipment. This is similar to that used to direct sniper drones and allows it to control the actions of two drone fighters. The AX-2-2 carries the drone fighters underslung, attached by gravitic hooks, and can launch them in mid-air.

Should the mothership be destroyed then its drones become significantly less effective, having to rely on their own limited initiative. Mantas are also capable of controlling drone fighters from their command bridge.

Two other variants of the Tiger Shark have also been reported, both carrying new payloads. The first replaces its usual drones with aerial mines. Used as part of the Tau's defence against air attack, drone mines incorporate detection systems to locate and then target enemy aircraft. The second is an attack variant carrying a payload of seeker missiles under the control of ground forces equipped with markerlights.

SPECIFICATIONS

TX-6 Remora

Type: Drone fighter.

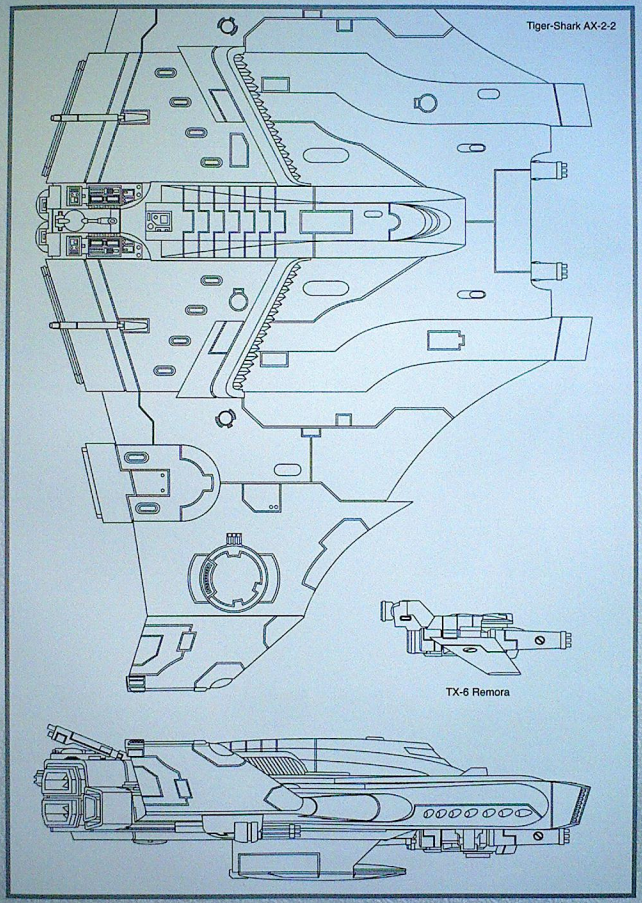
Powerplant: Unknown.

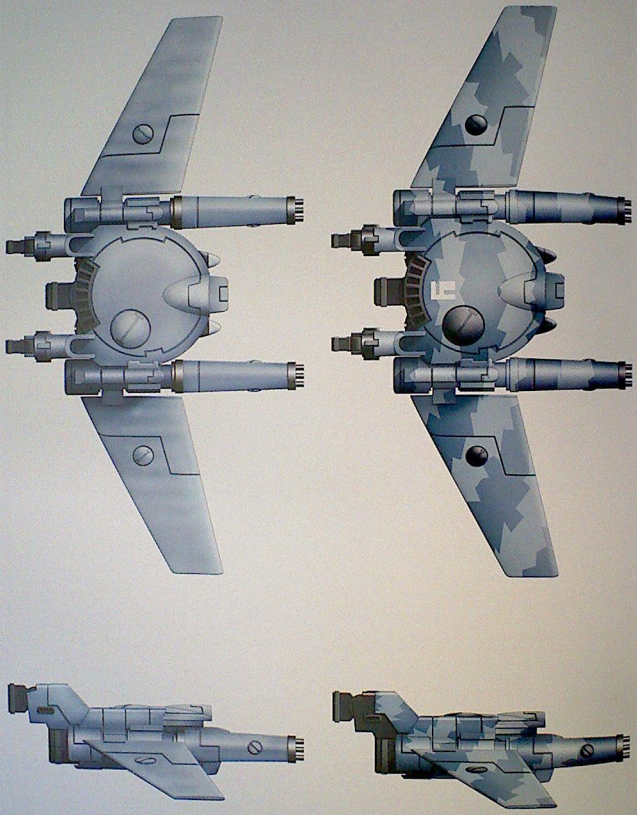
Performance: Maximum speed 2000 kph (1250 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1300 kph (800 mph); range unknown.

Weight: 3 tonnes (empty).

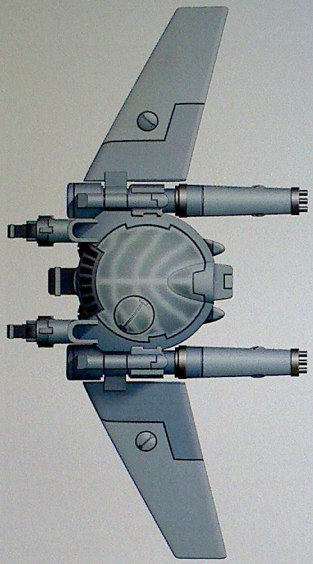
Dimensions: Wingspan 7.9m; length 4.2m; height 1.2m.

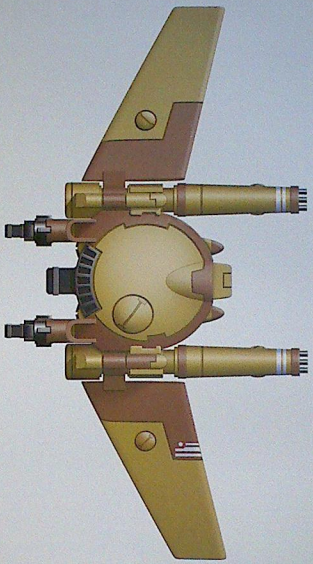
Armament: Two long-barrelled burst cannons, two seeker missiles.

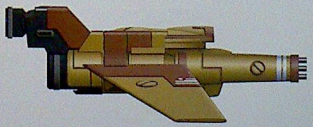

Tiger-Shark AX-2-2
TX-6 Remora



TX-6 Remora drone fighters, Typha-IV campaign.







TX-6 Remora drone fighter, Dal'yth Prime defence force.

TX-6 Remora drone fighter, T'ros garrison force.

AERIAL MINE DX-13

BACKGROUND

Another of the Tau Air Caste's latest innovations is the drone aerial mine. Utilising the Tau's advanced and heretical artificial intelligence technology, a drone mine has a limited capacity for self-initiative. The drone hovers in the air, scanning the surrounding sky and receiving tracking information from Tau commanders on the ground. It has limited manoeuvrability and can change its altitude to meet an incoming enemy aircraft, before detonating with devastating force.

The mines are carried and deployed as minefields by Tiger Sharks. The drones are then networked together so they can work as a team to best guard their designated zones. They are an area denial weapon, used for additional security around Tau bases or to shield Tau strike forces as they make an attack.

SPECIFICATIONS

Type: Drone mine.

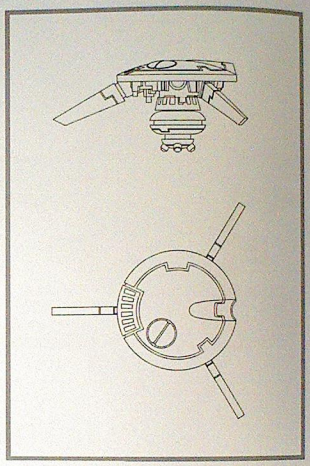
Powerplant: Unknown.

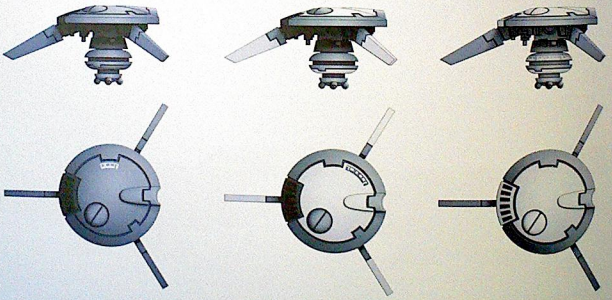
Performance: Maximum speed unknown.

Weight: 1 tonne.

Dimensions: 0.9 m diameter.

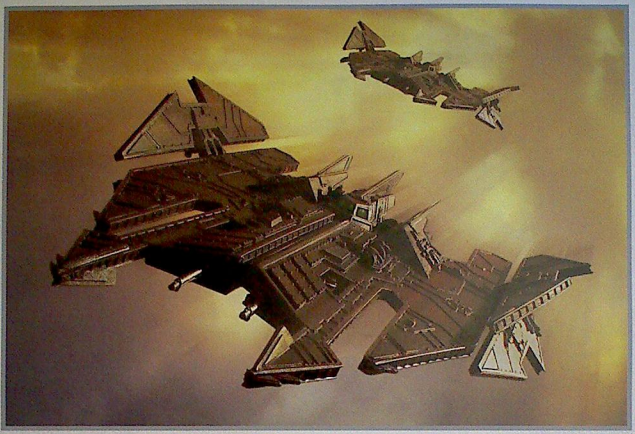
Armament: 1 x explosive charge.





DX-13 Aerial drone mines from the Typha-IV campaign.

HARBINGER



BACKGROUND

The gods of Chaos have unleashed many potent and diabolical war machines in their ever-lasting war to destroy the Imperium and enslave Mankind to their will. The Harbinger is amongst the largest. It is a weapon designed to bring destruction and despair to the worlds of the Emperor.

The Harbinger is an enormous heavy bomber employed by the forces of the Dark Gods. Once considered little more than a rumour, in recent times, as the forces pouring forth from the Eye of Terror have grown bolder and more numerous, encounters with the dreaded Harbinger have grown more frequent.

Seen in support of Chaos incursions and heavy raids, and flown from heavily defended spearhead bases or deployed from spacecraft in low orbit, they carry massive and destructive payloads of bombs and incendiaries, and a flight of Harbingers darkening the skies is a sight that has spelt doom to entire cities in the past. The appearance of such weapons in a warzone is enough to make it a priority target for Imperial Navy pilots.

The largest number ever recorded in battle was during the 13th Black Crusade when up to a hundred aircraft were identified as part of Abaddon's forces that launched an all out assault upon the Cadian Gate. Cast from the warp like great black shadows of despair, the Harbingers powered through the skies, accompanied by flights of smaller Hell Blades and Hell Talons, before unleashing indescriminate destruction with their massive payloads of incendiary bombs, or the hideous virus weaponry known as blight bombs. Harbingers were used as Abaddon's terror weapons, attacking anywhere without warning and targeting civilian population centres as well as military targets.

During the assault on Doas, Harbingers added their firebombs to the incessant air raids that started multiple firestorms, razing the planet's major cities to the ground and leaving dead world shrouded in choking black smoke from the fires which still smoulder to this day.

SPECIFICATION

Type: Heavy Bomber.

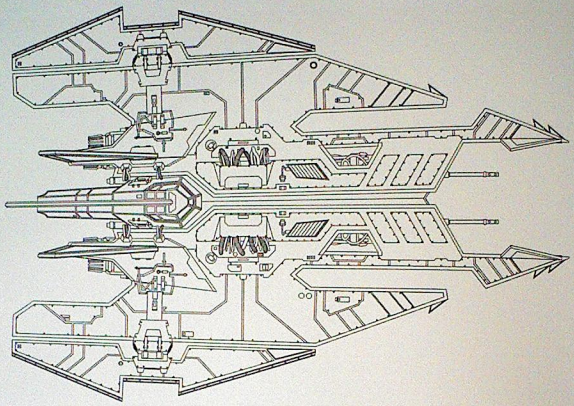
Powerplant: Unknown.

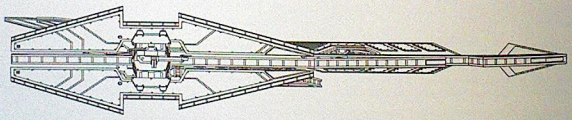
Performance: Maximum speed 1800 kph (1125 mph) at 5,000 feet, cruising speed 1000 kph (625 mph); range 30,000 km approx.

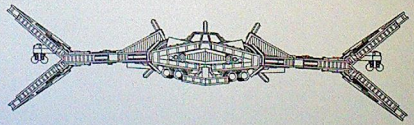
Weight: 285 tonnes (empty).

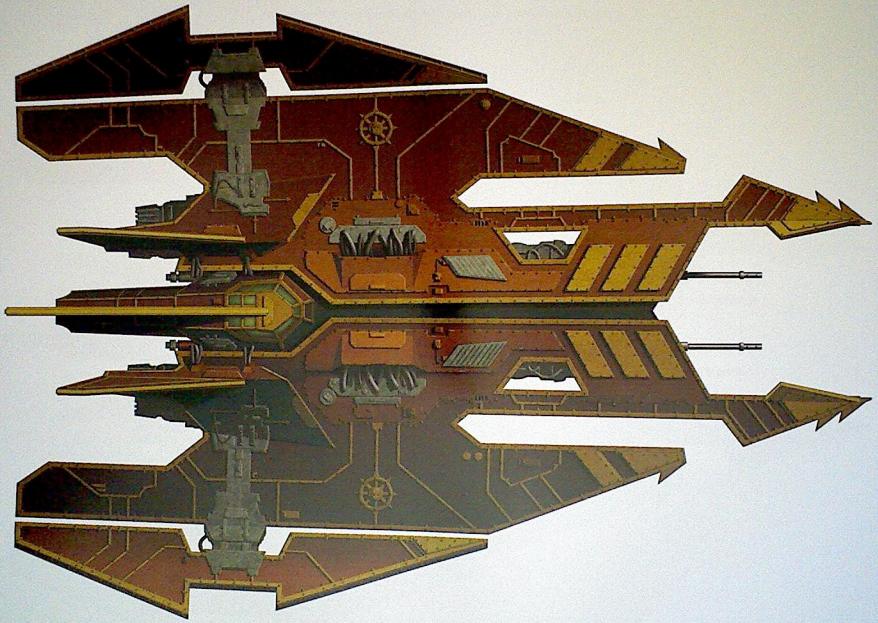
Dimensions: Wingspan 33.3m; length 47.4m, height 8.6m

Armament: Two nose mounted autocannons, two port turret mounted autocannons, two starboard turret mounted autocannons, 20,000lbs bomb payload.

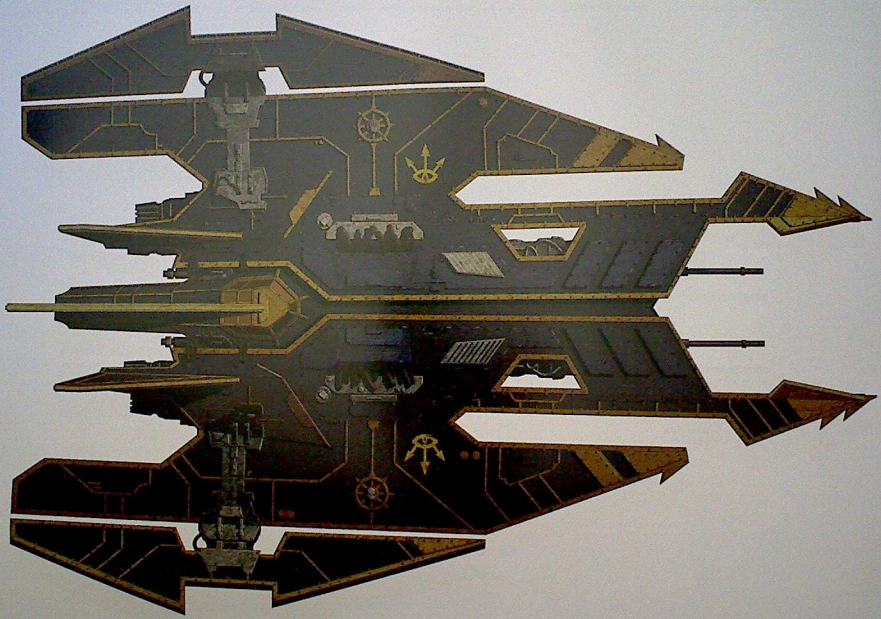




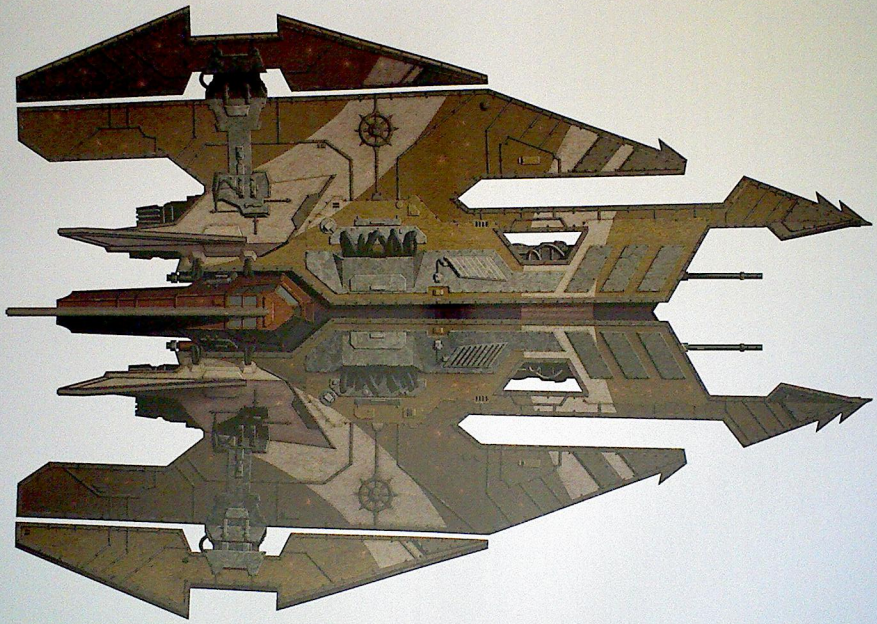




Harbinger heavy bomber, shot down over Cadia, 13th Black Crusade.



Harbinger heavy bomber supporting the Black Legion, Coriolanthe Incursion.



Harbinger heavy bomber, dedicated to the Chaos God Nurgle, Belis Corona invasion.

AIRCRAFT UPGRADES

Aircraft upgrades are special equipment or unique modifications made to individual aircraft. Each race has its own selection of upgrades and these are included in the squadron lists under each aircraft. No aircraft may take more than two upgrades. Each upgrade costs additional points, as listed in the squadron lists.

IMPERIAL NAVY UPGRADES

Ejector Seats

The aircraft has improved escape mechanisms, explosive bolts, etc, allowing for a quick get-away in an emergency. Should the aircraft be shot down then the crew successfully eject on a 2+ regardless of Pilot skill. Obviously, the ejector seat may only be used once!

Flares or Chaff Launchers

The aircraft is equipped with decoy flares or chaff which is launched to confuse incoming missile attacks.

If the aircraft is hit by an enemy missile or rocket then roll to see if the chaff or flares save the aircraft. On a 6+ the missile or rocket hit becomes a miss. On any other result roll for damage as normal.

Infra-Red Targeting

The aircraft's targeters and sensors are improved for operating in darkness. At night or in poor visibility the aircraft may fire at medium range using its full firepower. It may fire at long range with 50% firepower.

Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals

This marks the aircraft as a renowned ace. Only an aircraft with an Ace pilot may take a distinctive colour scheme or decals upgrade. Kills by this aircraft are worth extra 50% VPs, but if the aircraft is shot down it is worth 200% of its normal Victory points.

Example: If a Thunderbolt with a distinctive paint scheme shoots down an enemy aircraft worth 20 points, then it is worth 30 Victory points instead. Should the Thunderbolt be shot down it would be worth 40 points instead of the normal 20 points.

Armoured Cockpit

The aircraft has increased armour protection for the crew. The aircraft gains a 6+ Durable save, just like the Thunderbolt fighter but its top speed is reduced by -1. This upgrade cannot be used by an aircraft that already has a Durable save.

ORK UPGRADES

Extra Armour

Extra armour plates have been welded on. The aircraft gains a Durable 6+ save against its final hit, but loses a point from its maximum speed.

Kustom Big Shootas

Instead of carrying bombs or rokkits, the aircraft has more big shootas bolted on under the wings, making the aircraft super-shooty. An aircraft with kustom big shootas may not take an additional weapons load. After firing the kustom shootas immediately reduce the aircraft's current speed by 1 due to the recoil. This may cause the aircraft to stall.

	Arc	Firepower	Damage	Ammo	Special
Kustom Shootas	Front	8-4-0	5+	2	-

Rokkit-Boosta

The aircraft's engines have an over-powered booster mode, allowing it a sudden burst of speed that pushes the engines beyond their normal limits. For one turn per game the aircraft may exceed its normal maximum speed by up to 2 points, to maximum 9. The rokkit-boosta can only be used once per game.

Wazmek's Kustom Engine

Wazmek is reputedly the greatest Ork aircraft Mek alive, and his kustom engine jobs are revered by Ork pilots as the best available. When combined with a red paint job, nothing flies faster than a Wazmek kustom engine. Add 1 to the aircraft's minimum speed and maximum speed. Your aircraft must be painted red to take advantage of the kustom engine, otherwise it doesn't work! Wazmek's engines aren't common so you may only take a maximum of one per Air Waaagh!

TAU EMPIRE UPGRADES

Blacksun Filter

The aircraft is fitted with optical filters for combat in darkness and poor visibility. It may ignore the Night Fighting rules and fight in darkness exactly as if it were daylight.

Disruption Pod

The disruption pod interferes with an anti-aircraft weapon's targeters and tracking sensors, making the aircraft hard to hit. The aircraft gains a 6+ save against all hits from enemy ground fire.

Decoy Launcher

Tiny emitter drones confuse an incoming missile's tracking systems. Hits against an aircraft with decoy launchers from enemy missiles or rockets are saved on a roll of 5+, roll after being hit but before rolling for damage. Decoy launchers can only be used once per game.

Escape Pod

The aircraft is fitted with an improved escape mechanism. Usually this is a small, self-contained escape pod that detaches from the aircraft and has limited manoeuvrability to get the crew safely back to the ground. The crew eject on a roll of 2+ regardless of Pilot skill.

Target Lock

The target lock identifies enemy ground targets and plots fire plans. It can only be used against ground targets. On a roll of 4+ the aircraft 'locks-on' to a ground target. Its chance of hitting with one weapons systems against the locked target is increased to a 4+ instead of the normal 5+.

Advanced Stabilisation Systems

Improved vector thrusting and drone-controlled stabilisation allows the aircraft to manoeuvre more effectively. Only aircraft rated as Manoeuvre Low can use this upgrade. Advance stabilisation allows an aircraft to use card number 5 as well as cards 1-4, even though it is a high rated manoeuvre.

ELDAR UPGRADES

Star Engines

Sophisticated engine design and streamlining allow the aircraft to pull off seemingly impossible manoeuvres. Once per game an aircraft can attempt an extreme manoeuvre, even if the pilot isn't an Ace. If the pilot is already an Ace, then he may attempt an additional extreme manoeuvre.

Spirit Stones

The pilot is aided by the spirits of former pilots. Once per game, when it becomes the aircraft's turn to move, it may change its Manoeuvre card before moving.

Webway Portal

The Eldar have access to an extensive system of portals known as the webway. These allow them to move swiftly between planets and systems and their scattered craftworlds and bases.

An Eldar Sky Host may contain a single webway portal. The portal is activated in the End phase of the turn. Replace the aircraft that activated the portal with a webway portal model. The activating aircraft counts as having disengaged. The portal is placed at the same height level as the activating aircraft, and speed 0. It does not move for the rest of the game. Other Eldar aircraft can now use the portal to access and exit the table.

Once the portal is in play, any Eldar aircraft that arrive from reserve may be placed on the table within 3" of the portal model, facing any direction and entering at the same height level as the portal, at any permitted speed. Reserves do not have to enter via the portal, they may enter from a table edge as normal.

Any Eldar aircraft that ends its move within 3" of the portal may be removed from the table and counts as having disengaged.

Enemy aircraft cannot use the portal. It cannot be attacked and, like other aircraft, cannot be collided with.

CHAOS UPGRADES

Daemonic Possession

The aircraft has no crew but is possessed by a daemon. The aircraft is part in the 'real' world, and part in the warp. A possessed aircraft gains a 6+ save against each hit it takes.

Warp Rift

The aircraft's presence is an affront to nature, causing clouds to blacken and storms to gather in its wake. Enemy aircraft caught in the warp rift caused by the Chaos aircraft experience fierce lightning strikes and extreme turbulence. This is treated as an attack against every enemy aircraft in the aircraft's rear arc and is made in addition to all the Chaos aircraft's other firing.

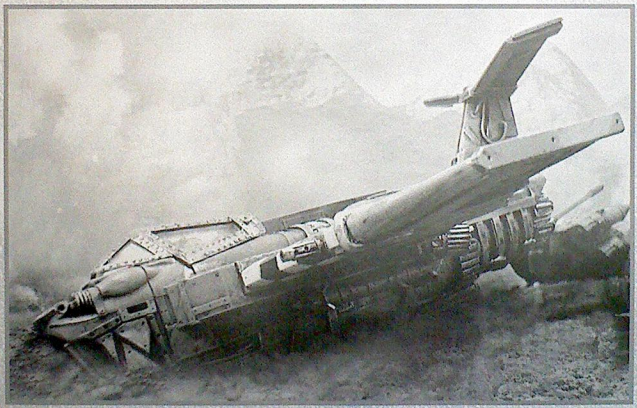
	Arc	Firepower	Damage	Ammo	Special
Warp Rift	Rear	2-1-0	5+	ul	aerial attack

Blight Bombs

This is a highly toxic biological weapon carried by aircraft favoured by the Chaos God Nurgle. Only Bombers may take Blight bombs.

	Arc	Firepower	Damage	Ammo	Special
Blight Bomb	Rear	2-0-0	*	1	ground attack

*Blight Bombs destroy a target (or render it unusable due to biological contamination), regardless of the number of hits, on a roll of 5+. Roll once per hit.



SQUADRON LISTS

These are complete squadron lists that replace those on page 19 of the rulebook. They contain additional information and options for each aircraft. Players can still select forces from the rulebook lists, they just won't have access to the new options, but a squadron selected from the rulebook is still valid.

In some places there are several weapon variants of an aircraft. These are the same aircraft with different weapons, and they cost the same points. So, whether your Valkyrie has a multi-laser hull weapon, or a lascannon does not affect its points value. You should note down which weapon variant of an aircraft you are using to avoid confusion.

IMPERIAL NAVY SQUADRON

FIGHTERS	Points
Thunderbolt	20 pts
With an additional weapons load	*+4 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+8 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+3 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+6 pts*
Lightning	16 pts
With additional weapons load	*+4 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+5 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+10 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+3 pts*
Lightning Strike	16 pts
With additional weapons load	*+4 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+5 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+10 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+3 pts*
Vulture	8 pts
With additional weapons load	*+12 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+9 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+2 pts*
Valkyrie (all weapon variants)	10 pts
With additional weapons load	*+2 pts*
Upgrade Transport to Jump Troops	*+5 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+4 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+6 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+2 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+3 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+2 pts*
Aquila Lander	8 pts
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+3 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+5 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+1 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+1 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+2 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+1 pts*
Arvus Lighter	4 pts
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+1 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+2 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+1 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+1 pts*

BOMBERS	Points
Marauder Bomber	16 pts
With additional weapons load	*+12 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+3 pts*
Marauder Destroyer	22 pts
With additional weapons load	*+8 pts*
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+3 pts*
Marauder Vigilant	12 pts
Pilot Rating	
Average pilot (skill 4+)	*free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+)	*+4 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+)	*+6 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)	
Ejector Seat	*+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher	*+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting	*+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals	*+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit	*+3 pts*

Marauder Colossus ..... 16 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+4 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+6 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Ejector Seat — *+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher — *+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting — *+4 pts*
Distinctive Paint Scheme or Decals — *+4 pts*
Armoured Cockpit — *+3 pts*

GROUND DEFENCES	Points
Sabre AA platform	4 pts
Hydra Flak platform/tank	12 pts
Manticore AA missiles platform/tank	16 pts
Heavy Flak gun	12 pts

SPACE MARINE CHAPTER

BOMBERS — **Points**

Thunderhawk Gunship ..... 24 pts
With additional weapons load — *+6 pts*
Upgrade transport to jump troops — *+15 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average Pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+8 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Ejector seats — *+2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher — *+2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting — *+4 pts*

Thunderhawk Transporter ..... 18 pts
With additional weapons load — *+ 6 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average Pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+8 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Ejector seats — *+ 2 pts*
Flares or Chaff Launcher — *+ 2 pts*
Infra-red Targeting — *+ 4 pts*

GROUND DEFENCES	Points
Hyperios	8 pts

CHAOS RAIDERS

FIGHTERS — **Points**

Hell Blade ..... 12 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+4 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+6 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Daemonic Possession — *+3 pts*
Warp Rift — *+5 pts*

BOMBERS — **Points**

Hell Talon ..... 24 pts
With additional weapons load — *+4 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+8 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Daemonic Possession — *+6 pts*
Warp Rift — *+5 pts*
Blight Bombs — *+6 pts*

Harbinger ..... 64 pts
With additional weapons load — *+14 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+16 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+24 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blight Bombs — *+ 6 pts*
Daemonic Possession — *+15 pts*
Warp Rift — *+5 pts*

TAU EMPIRE AIR CADRE

FIGHTERS — **Points**

Barracuda ..... 18 pts
With an additional weapons load — *+6 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+8 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+3 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+2 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+2 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*

Remora ..... 12 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+2 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+1 pt*
Decoy Launcher — *+1 pt*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*

BOMBERS — **Points**

Orca ..... 16 pts
With additional weapons load — *+6 pts*
Upgrade Transport to Jump Troops — *+10 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+9 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+3 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+2 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+2 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*
Advanced Stabilisation system — *+5 pts*

Manta (all weapon variants) ..... 96 pts
With additional weapons load — *+14 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+20 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+30 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+15 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+9 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+9 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+9 pts*
Advanced Stabilisation system — *+26 pts*

Tiger Shark (all weapon variants) ..... 20 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+9 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+3 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+2 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+2 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*
Advanced Stabilisation system — *+5 pts*

Tiger Shark AX-1-0 ..... 16 pts
With additional weapons load — *+6 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+9 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+3 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+2 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+2 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*
Advanced Stabilisation system — *+5 pts*

Tiger Shark AX-2-2 ..... 12 pts
(Remoras bought separately)
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 4+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+3 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+5 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Blacksun Filter — *+3 pts*
Disruption Pod — *+2 pts*
Decoy Launcher — *+2 pts*
Escape Pod — *+2 pts*
Target Lock — *+2 pts*
Advanced Stabilisation system — *+5 pts*

GROUND DEFENCES — **Points**
Sky Ray ..... 12 pts
Drone Aerial Minefield ..... 16 pts

ELDAR SKY HOST

FIGHTERS — **Points**

Nightwing ..... 28 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+10 pts*
Upgrades (1 maximum)
Star Engines — *+6 pts*
Spirit Stones — *+5 pts*
Webway Portal — *+6 pts*

Phoenix (all weapon variants) ..... 30 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+10 pts*
Upgrades (1 maximum)
Star Engines — *+6 pts*
Spirit Stones — *+5 pts*
Webway Portal — *+6 pts*

BOMBERS — **Points**

Vampire Hunter ..... 32 pts
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+11 pts*
Upgrades (1 maximum)
Star Engines — *+8 pts*
Spirit Stones — *+6 pts*
Webway Portal — *+6 pts*

Vampire Raider *(all weapon variants)* ..... 34 pts
Upgrade Transport to Jump Troops — *+15 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 3+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 2+) — *+11 pts*
Upgrades (1 maximum)
Star Engines — *+8 pts*
Spirit Stones — *+6 pts*
Webway Portal — *+6 pts*

GROUND DEFENCES — **Points**
Firestorm ..... 9 pts

ORK AIR WAAAGH!

FIGHTERS — **Points**

Fighta ..... 14 pts
With additional weapons load — *+2 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+4 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+6 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Rokkit-Boosta — *+4 pts*
Extra Armour — *+2 pts*
Kustom Big Shootas — *+5 pts*
Wazmek's Kustom Engine — *+4 pts*

Fighta-Bommer ..... 16 pts
With additional weapons load — *+6 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+6 pts*
Double ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+9 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Rokkit-Boosta — *+4 pts*
Extra Armour — *+3 pts*
Kustom Big Shootas — *+5 pts*
Wazmek's Kustom Engine — *+3 pts*

BOMBERS — **Points**

Bommer ..... 28 pts
With additional weapons load — *+ 8 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+ 8 pts*
Double Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+ 12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Rokkit-Boosta — *+8 pts*
Extra Armour — *+4 pts*
Kustom Big Shootas — *+10 pts*
Wazmek's Kustom Engine — *+8 pts*

Blasta-Bommer ..... 32 pts
With additional weapons load — *+8 pts*
Pilot Rating
Average pilot (skill 5+) — *free*
Ace pilot (skill 4+) — *+8 pts*
Double Ace pilot (skill 3+) — *+12 pts*
Upgrades (2 maximum)
Rokkit-Boosta — *+8 pts*
Extra Armour — *+4 pts*
Kustom Big Shootas — *+10 pts*
Wazmek's Kustom Engine — *+8 pts*

GROUND DEFENCES — **Points**
Flak wagon ..... 8 pts
Heavy flak kannon ..... 10 pts

DATASHEETS
IMPERIAL NAVY

MARAUDER VIGILANT

TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 4
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 5
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

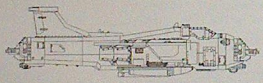
WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Nose Turret	Front	3-2-0	5+	ul	–
Rear Turret	Rear	3-2-0	5+	ul	–

Special Rules: Bomber. The Marauder may not make Strafing Runs.

Support Aircraft. The Vigilant is not a combat aircraft but supports other aircraft. It contains surveillance and detection systems and advanced communication and control systems. Whilst a Vigilant is on the table, the Imperial Navy player may re-roll any failed Reserve rolls. The Imperial player may also re-roll his Initiative dice roll.

In a Target Recon scenario, a Vigilant only needs to spend six turns on the table to gain the bonus 50 Victory points.

MARAUDER COLOSSUS



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 4
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 5
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Nose Turret	Front	3-2-0	5+	ul	
Rear Turret	Rear	3-2-0	5+	ul	
1. Colossus Bomb	Rear	1-0-0*	*	1	ground attack

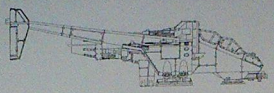
Special Rules: Bomber. The Marauder may not make Strafing Runs.

***Colossus Bomb.** The Colossus bomb is single huge guided bomb. Containing sophisticated guidance systems controlled from the bomber, it has an armour penetrating tip, mass reactive fuse and a melta warhead backed up with 10,000 kg of high explosive. The Colossus is used to destroy heavily armoured targets and underground bases.

The Colossus must be dropped from altitude 5. To hit you must roll equal to or higher than the bomber's current speed, ie, at speed 3 you need a 3+ to hit.

If the target is hit do not roll for damage, instead roll 2D3, this is the amount of damage inflicted on the target. The Colossus still causes bomb creep, and any other targets within 3" are hit as normal on a 2+, also taking 2D3 Damage points.

VULTURE



TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 2
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Very High
MAX SPEED: 3
MIN SPEED: 0
MAX ALTITUDE: 7
THRUST: 1

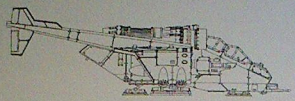
WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Heavy Bolter	Front	3-2-0	6+	3	ground attack

ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

A Vulture may be armed with an additional weapons load. (Weapon load options 2 to 6 can be found in the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook, page 22).

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 7					
2. Autocannons	Front	2-2-2	3+	4	
3. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 8					
2. Autocannons	Front	2-2-2	3+	4	
3. Rocket Pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack
Weapons Load 9					
2. Lascannons	Front	0-1-1	2+	3	ground attack, extra damage 6
3. Hunter Killer missiles	Front	2-2-2	4+	3	ground attack
Weapons Load 10					
2. Lascannons	Front	0-1-1	2+	3	ground attack, extra damage 6
3. Hellstrike missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	ground attack, extra damage 6
Weapons Load 11					
2. Lascannons	Front	0-1-1	2+	3	ground attack, extra damage 6
3. Rocket Pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack
Weapons Load 12					
2. Missile Launcher	Front	2-2-2	3+	4	ground attack
3. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 13					
2. Missile Launcher	Front	2-2-2	3+	4	ground attack
3. Hellstrike missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	ground attack, extra damage 6
Weapons Load 14					
2. Multi-laser	Front	3-2-0	4+	5	
3. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 15					
2. Multi-laser	Front	3-2-0	4+	5	
3. Hunter Killer missiles	Front	2-2-2	4+	3	ground attack
Weapons Load 16					
2. Multi-laser	Front	3-2-0	4+	5	
3. Hellstrike missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	ground attack, extra damage 6
Weapons Load 17					
2. Rocket Pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack
3. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 18					
2. Rocket Pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack
3. Rocket Pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack



VALKYRIE
(weapons variant)

TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 2
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Very High
MAX SPEED: 3
MIN SPEED: 0
MAX ALTITUDE: 7
THRUST: 1

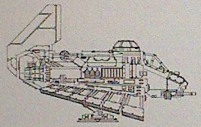
WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Lascannon	Front	0-1-1	3+	3	extra damage 6
2. Heavy Bolters	Front	3-2-0	6+	5	ground attack

ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

A Valkyrie may be armed with an additional weapons load.

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 1					
3. Hellstrike missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	ground attack, extra damage 6
Weapons Load 2					
3. Rocket pods	Front	6-4-0	6+	2	ground attack



AQUILA
(weapons variant)

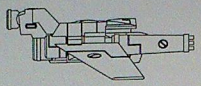
TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 2
TRANSPORT: 1
MANOEUVRE: High
MAX SPEED: 5
MIN SPEED: 1
MAX ALTITUDE: 9 (rocket booster)
THRUST: 2

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Autocannon	Front	2-1-0	5+	3	–

TAU

REMORA DRONE FIGHTER



TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 1
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Very High
MAX SPEED: 6
MIN SPEED: 1
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 2

WEAPONRY

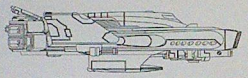
WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Burst cannons	Front	4-2-0	6+	3	
2. Seeker missile	All round	1-1-1	3+	2*	extra damage 6

Special Rules: Drone. If the Remora's control aircraft is destroyed or disengages then the drone fighter is reduced to Manoeuvre: Low.

Stealth Fighter: The drone is surrounded by a stealth field. When firing at the drone fighter it always counts as a nightfight, so it cannot be targeted at long range, and halves firepower at medium range.

Mid-air launch: Remoras are launched from their mothership in the Firing phase using the same rules as for launching Grot bombs (see page 27 in the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook). Once launched they continue to move as normal.

TIGER SHARK AX-2-2



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 4
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 6
MIN SPEED: 1
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 1

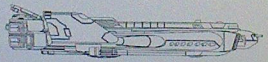
WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Missile pods	Front	2-2-0	3+	3	–
2. Burst cannon	all round, down	4-0-0	6+	4	–
3. Drone Fighters	front	-	-	2	see drone fighter

Special Rules: Drone Mothership: The AX-2-2 is a Tiger Shark variant designed to carry two drone fighters. It also controls and co-ordinates their actions, and whilst the drones are artificially intelligent and have some degree of self-initiatitive, they still rely on their mothership's data. Should the AX-2-2 disengage or be destroyed then its drone becomes Manoeuvre: Low.

Command and Control: Whilst an AX-2-2 is on the table the Tau player may re-roll his Initiative dice if he wishes.

TIGER SHARK
(weapons variant)



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 4
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 6
MIN SPEED: 1
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Ion Cannon	Front	3-2-1	3+	5	–
2. Missile pods	Front	2-2-0	3+	3	–
3. Drone burst cannons	all round, down	4-0-0	6+	4	–
4. Seeker missiles	Front	1-1-1	3+	6*	ground attack, extra damage 6

MANTA
(weapons variant)

TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 14
TRANSPORT: 5
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 7
MIN SPEED: 0
MAX ALTITUDE: 9 (rocket boosters)
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Burst cannons	all round, up	16-8-0	6+	6	–
2. Burst cannons	all round, low	16-8-0	6+	6	–
3. Missile pods	Front	2-2-0	3+	6	–
4. Ion cannon	Front	6-3-1	3+	6	–
5. Ion cannon	Front	6-3-1	3+	6	–
6. Railguns	Front	2-2-2	2+	6	ground attack, extra damage 4+
Drone fighters	Rear	-	-	8	see drone fighter

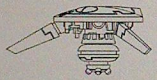
ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

A Manta may be armed with an additional weapons load.

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 1					
7. Seeker missiles	Front	1-1-1	3+	10*	extra damage 6

Special Rules: Drone Mothership: The Manta controls and co-ordinates the actions of up to eight drone fighters, and whilst the drones are artificially intelligent and have some degree of self-initiatitive, they still rely on their mothership's data. Should the Manta disengage or be destroyed then its drone becomes Manoeuvre: Low. Up to eight Drone fighters can be launched from a Manta, at a maximum of two drones per turn.

DRONE AERIAL MINEFIELD



TYPE: Ground Defence
HITS: 1
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: n/a
MAX SPEED: 0
MIN SPEED: 0
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 0

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Mine	-	1	2+	1	aerial attack, extra damage 5+

Special Rules: The minefield should be deployed as a ground defence. Place a single drone on an Aeronautica Imperialis base, at any altitude and speed 0 (hovering). This is the centre of the minefield. Place 5 other drones within 6" of the centre drone. These are all at the same altitude as the centre drone.

Any enemy aircraft that moves within 3" of a mine will be attacked, this takes place as soon as the aircraft moves into range. Roll to hit and damage as normal. A mine may still attack an aircraft that is 1 altitude level above or below it. After rolling to hit and damage remove the mine from play. In the movement phase a drone minefield may change its altitude by 1 level up or down. Mines may be attacked by enemy aircraft as normal.

ELDAR

PHOENIX
(weapons variant)

TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 2
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Very High
MAX SPEED: 7
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 2

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Shuriken Cannons	Front	6-3-0	5+	5	–
2. Pulse Laser	Front	1-1-1	3+	4	ground attack, extra damage 5+
3. Missile launcher	Front	4-3-0	3+	4	ground attack

Special Rules: Eldar Field. The Phoenix's protective holo-field gives it a 5+ save against all damage it receives.

PHOENIX
(weapons variant)

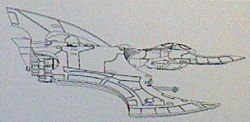
TYPE: Fighter
HITS: 2
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Very High
MAX SPEED: 7
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 9
THRUST: 2

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Shuriken Cannons	Front	6-3-0	5+	5	–
2. Star cannons	Front	4-2-0	4+	3	–
3. Missile launcher	Front	4-3-0	3+	4	ground attack

Special Rules: Eldar Field. The Phoenix's protective holo-field gives it a 5+ save against all damage it receives.

VAMPIRE RAIDER
(weapons variant)



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 4
TRANSPORT: 4
MANOEUVRE: High
MAX SPEED: 7
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 9 (rocket booster)
THRUST: 2

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Scatter laser	Front	6-3-0	6+	5	–
2. Pulse lasers	Front	2-2-2	2+	4	extra damage 5+
3. Pulsar	Front	3-2-1	3+	3	ground attack, extra damage 5+

Special Rules: Eldar Field. The Vampire's protective holo-field gives it a 5+ save against all damage it receives.

CHAOS

HARBINGER SUPER-HEAVY BOMBER

TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 12
TRANSPORT: 0
MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 5
MIN SPEED: 1
MAX ALTITUDE: 9 (rocket boosters)
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Autocannons	Front	2-3-2	4+	ul	–
Autocannons	Left	2-3-2	4+	ul	–
Autocannons	Right	2-3-2	4+	ul	–
1. Bomb bay	Rear	13-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
2. Bombs	Rear	13-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+

ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

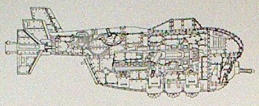
A Harbinger may be armed with an additional weapons load.

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 1					
3. Bomb bay	Rear	13-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 2					
3. Bombs	Rear	4-2-0	*	1	ground attack,

* *Any target hit is destroyed on a dice roll of 4+, regardless of hits.*

ORKS

BOMMER



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 5
TRANSPORT: 0/4*

MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 4
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 8
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Nose Turret	Front	4-2-0	5+	ul	–
Port turret	Left side, up	2-1-0	5+	ul	–
Starboard turret	Right side, up	2-1-0	5+	ul	–
Port big shootas	Left side, down	6-3-0	5+	ul	–
Starboard big shootas	Right side, down	6-3-0	5+	ul	–
Rear Turret	Rear	2-1-0	5+	ul	–
*1. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	2	ground attack, extra damage 5+

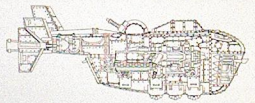
ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

An Ork Bommer may be armed with an additional weapons load.

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 1					
2. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 2					
2. Bombs	Rear	4-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
3. Grot Bombs	Front	-	-	2	see Grot Bombs

Special Rules: *Bommer or Landa: The Bommer may forego its main Bombs and replace them with a Transport rating of 4. If the Bommer carries its main bombs then its Transport rating is 0. This costs no additional points. For +20pts the transport may be upgraded to drop troops.

BLASTA-BOMMER



TYPE: Bomber
HITS: 5
TRANSPORT: 0/4*

MANOEUVRE: Low
MAX SPEED: 4
MIN SPEED: 2
MAX ALTITUDE: 8
THRUST: 1

WEAPONRY

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
1. Nose Blasta	Front	2D6-1D6-1D3	5+	4	extra damage 6
Turret big shootas	Rear, up	4-2-0	5+	ul	–
Port big shootas	Left side, down	6-3-0	5+	ul	–
Starboard big shootas	Right side, down	6-3-0	5+	ul	–
Rear Turret	Rear	2-1-0	5+	ul	–
*2. Bombs	Rear	6-0-0	2+	2	ground attack, extra damage 5+

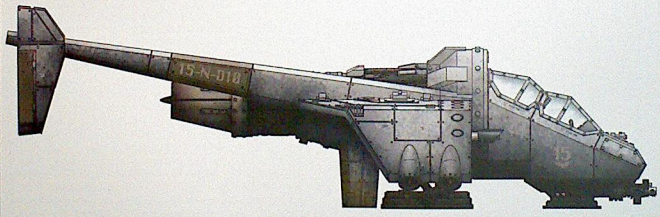
ADDITIONAL WEAPONS

A Blasta-Bommer may be armed with an additional weapons load.

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FIREPOWER	DAMAGE	AMMO	SPECIAL
Weapons Load 1					
3. Bombs	Rear	8-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
Weapons Load 2					
3. Bombs	Rear	4-0-0	2+	1	ground attack, extra damage 5+
4. Grot Bombs	Front	-	-	2	see Grot Bombs

Special Rules: Nose Blasta: The collection of weaponry bolted into the nose produces a random amount of firepower, roll the indicated dice for the total firepower each time the nose blasta fires.
***Bommer or Landa:** The Blasta-bommer may forego its main Bombs and replace them with a Transport rating of 4. If it carries its main bombs then its Transport rating is 0. This costs no additional points. For +20pts the transport may be upgraded to drop troops.

TYPHA-IV CAMPAIGN



Vulture gunship, attached to the 111th Fighter Wing, but still bearing the markings of its former deployment.

TYPHA-IV CAMPAIGN

"Now we come to the battle at Typha-IV. A highly unusual incident – rarely in recent times has the fate of one of the Emperor's worlds, and arguably the strategic balance of a sector rested on such a bloody and abrupt conflict. That the surprise attack of the xenos Tau should result in such an engagement was unforeseen and highly unusual in itself, but that the deciding action was fought almost entirely in the air makes the Typha campaign almost unique."

Air-Marshal Halsal
Lectures to the Naval Collegium on Kar Duniash

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT

The Typhan Conflict was a brief but bloody war fought on the border of Imperial space and the growing Tau Empire on the icy and storm-wracked mining world of Typha-IV. The planet, a barely habitable penal colony administered by the Departmento Munitorium, was largely regarded by the Imperial authorities as a backwater, sufficiently removed from the frontlines to be spared immediate threat. To the Aun'va, the far-sighted Ethereal Caste that ruled T'au however, Typha-IV was identified as a weak link in the chain of the Imperium's defences, and a world whose importance to future battles with Mankind might be vital.

As part of a wider series of operations launched to keep the Imperium's forces occupied during the so-called 'Third-Sphere Expansion', and give the Tau Empire breathing space to fortify and fully absorb the new territories it was capturing, a plan was formulated by O'Shaserra to launch a sneak attack on Typha-IV. The plan was highly unusual in its inception and represented a departure from the Tau's usual strategic doctrines (which accepted battle only in defence or as part of territorial expansion), in that the plan was to destroy in detail the Imperial presence and economic structures on Typha-IV and withdraw quickly before serious retaliation could be mounted. This 'hit-and-run' attack would also serve to directly match various new developments in Tau tactics and technology against that of the Imperium. Moreover, the attack would serve a wider purpose; by proving the Tau's ability to conduct operations deeper into the Imperium, it would force the Imperium's commanders in the border sectors further into a defensive stance, making the feared prospect of a second 'Damocles Gulf Crusade' less likely in the short term and allow time for sufficient defences to be put in place.

On Typha-IV, a world of vast storm-wracked seas, unpredictable ice flows and scant usable land, it was decided that air power would prove the deciding factor. Barring a single city-sized industrial facility and starport, Typha's scores of off-shore promethium rigs, mine works and refineries were scattered across its surface, and a protracted land war or even a systematic 'island hopping' campaign was impossible given the environmental conditions and time frame involved. For the Tau, the solution was a series of overwhelming aerial strikes and rapid insertion raids which would then shatter Imperial resolve and its ability to resist. This initial attack would then leave the way open for lightning fast waves of attacks on secondary targets and targets of opportunity. This strategy would also play to the Tau's own military strengths and preference for highly mobile warfare and flexible deployment, as well as make good use of their advanced and deadly technologies.

Unfortunately for the Tau and despite their audacious plan, much of the intelligence they had founded their planning on was in fact flawed, and Typha-IV was better defended both in terms of material and manpower than they had anticipated. They also saw the Imperium's forces as fundamentally disunited, the planet was, after all, a penal colony, and the Tau planners fully expected mass-uprisings and revolts as a by-product of their attacks, further destroying the Imperium's capacity to resist. But they had dangerously underestimated the iron-fist of control that Planetary-Governor Brantus Hurst held over his domain. The Tau attack force on Typha-IV would find itself in a desperate fight, far behind enemy lines.

BEYOND THE THIRD SPHERE EXPANSION

Emboldened by their success on Nimbossa and T'ros, and a widespread reduction in the Imperium's defences along their border in order to face other more immediate threats to its security, the ruling Ethereals declared what was to be the 'Third Phase' of their Empire's expansion. Led by their new figurehead, O'Shaserra, codenamed Commander Shadowsun, a massive Tau invasion force swept into the sparsely defended region to the galactic north of the Damocles Gulf region, seizing several border worlds and cutting deep into Imperial space. Carried forth by its own momentum of success, the Tau soon found resistance increasing and their own supply lines stretching thin as they forged deeper into the Imperium. Seeing the wisdom in consolidating their gains, the Tau used a series of costly but effective hit and run raids to keep the Imperium's forces on the back foot while they executed a final drive to isolate and seize a cluster of habitable planets to use as their new protective border. Since then the Imperium has fallen into a reflexive defence against future possible raids, but the Aun'va know that this will not last, and that further time must be bought to integrate these new Septs into the Empire proper and encircle them with defences in depth. Some voices in the Tau Empire, most notably Shadowsun and her Fire Caste leaders have advocated a continued campaign of conquest, but the Aun'va have begun to come to an understanding of the sheer size and brute power the Imperium possesses, as well as some inkling of the previously unguessed at forces at work beyond, and it is the Aun'va that the Tau follow. However, the Ethereals are mindful that the Imperium's seeming inertia cannot last forever and so, to buy the Third Sphere worlds more time to prepare, plans have been laid to keep the Imperium on the defensive through guile and carefully applied force, and one such plan will bring war to Typha-IV.

TYPHA-IV – PLANETARY SURVEY

Typhan System: 10 planetary bodies [nomenclature Typha I-X], of these one is categorised as being currently habitable [Typha-IV].

Size: Equatorial distance 37,125 km.

Gravity: 0.98G

Satellites: 2 moons, 1 permanent Orbital Asteroid Facility [Bastion-Alpha].

Population: 880,000 approx (human, abhuman and servitor-helot, approx. 90% of which are Indentured Prisoners).

Planetary Governor: Quastor-General Brantus Hurst; Departmento Munitorium Chief Overseer of Production.

Climate Classification: Terran/sub-arctic (tempestuous).

Terrain Classification/Terra-Forming: The planet is covered by a global ocean with advancing polar caps dominating roughly 40% of its surface. The area free of icecap and pack ice, forming a wide belt centred on its equator is composed of saltwater ocean containing numerous rocky archipelagos, atolls and islands (solid land amounting to roughly 20% of the remaining surface area). It is thought likely that at some point in ancient times the planet was terraformed by Mankind to provide a suitable habitation for human colonisation, and that an ancient and highly developed ecosystem was destroyed and replaced to do so. But for unknown reasons once terraformed the world remained unsettled. This is a pattern of events that would conform with several other worlds in the surrounding Sheering Reach sub-sector of the Ultima Segmentum (ref: Onocrys, Savatine Secundus, Valkante, etc) Within the last few thousand years the planet has entered an ongoing ice age whose adverse conditions have been exacerbated by excessive industrial pollution caused by Imperial resource exploitation. These factors are predicted to render Typha-IV functionally unsuitable for organic life without full artificial maintenance within the next two centuries.

Prevailing Climate/Habitability: Arctic/Sub-Arctic: Typha-IV is currently in the grip of an advancing climatic ice age, which exacerbated by excessive industrial pollution has made conditions increasingly unsuitable for human life. Sudden violent hurricanes and ice storms are frequent, along with heavy precipitation in the equatorial zones; this grows worse during the 'darktides'; the twice-yearly period (approximately two standard months in length) when Typha-IV passes closest to the erratic orbit of its neighbour Typha-III, an event which triggers massive climatic and oceanic upheavals. Sea travel is likewise extremely hazardous on the planet owing to adverse and unpredictable conditions, making air travel the preferred and swiftest medium of transport regardless of the harsh weather. Additionally, in the areas around the planet's promethium fields and mineheads, air and ground contamination has reached lethal levels of toxicity, and cannot be tolerated without protective gear.

Flora and Fauna: Planetary ecology has been categorised as Devonian by the Magos Biologis, with basic seed-bearing plants, grasses, mosses, lower order sea-life (plankton and krill analogues) and primitive land vertebrates once common, however a combination of the worsening climatic conditions and the environmental damage of rapid industrialisation and ongoing pollution has rendered approximately 40% of previously recorded biological life on Typha-IV extinct. It is predicted that within a century Typha-IV will suffer full effective extinction of its natural ecosystem.

Economy: The planetary economy is centred purely on the mining and processing of Typha's natural resources and their export off-world; no economic structures other than those merited for support of these industries exist.

Society: No indigenous society exists on Typha-IV. The majority of the population are prisoners and augmetically converted self-aware labour-helots indentured to the Departmento Munitorium. The remainder of the population are support, administration and enforcement personnel, with a Naval garrison on rotating tours of duty to the planet, incorporating a strike aircraft training facility (see Military Data).

Principle Exports: Promethium (processed & derivatives), various mineral ores including Corundum (diverse crystal deposits), Uraninite (metallic Uranium) and Cinnabar (Mercury and rare trace elements).

Principle Imports: Finished goods, industrial spares and mining/refining equipment, rations and prisoners.

Food Supply: Formerly abundant food sources were harvested and processed from oceanic krill-analogues and indigenous fauna, however mass-poisoning of the seas with mercury runoff and other chemical wastes has seriously depleted these resources, and the majority of food must now be imported from off-world as ration concentrates.

Settlement/Infrastructure: The planet possesses a single major settlement [Argent Landing], not a city in a true sense, this conglomeration of storage depots, pipe farms, prison barracks and refineries is clustered around the colonial control facility and a series of transhipping orbital port stations. The world also has some thirty major promethium extraction fields and numerous open cast and deep core mines dotted around the island archipelagos that make up Typha's usable land mass. The vast majority of Typha's surface area remains unsettled and uninhabited, comprising either deep oceans or treacherous ice-fields.

Known History: Although the Typhan system has been within the domain of Man for several millennia, it is only in recent centuries that the Departmento Munitorium founded a colony to exploit Typha-IV's abundant resources. From its inception the Munitorium authorities classified the world as a penal colony and invested it with indentured labour brought in from rebellious worlds and tithed criminals from across the sub-sector. In recent decades, thanks to the growing threat from the expansionist Tau Empire in the Damocles gulf region, the need for Typha's economic output has increased and its strategic importance with it. As a result production has been stepped up and newer facilities built to increase capacity, along with a commensurate increase in the planet's assigned military garrison and system defences.

Military Data: The defence of Typha-IV is left largely to the Provost Regiments of the Imperial Guard, who are also tasked with the controlling of the planet's indentured workforce. As the strategic situation in the sub sector has grown more dangerous, they have been further re-enforced with additional air-defence assets and a rotating deployment of naval squadrons to bolster the planet's defences. These deployments also serve a duel purpose for the Imperial Navy as Typha's largely uninhabited surface and fractious and unpredictable weather systems make it a perfect location for training exercises to help newly founded squadrons develop their skills for live-fire ground assault, dog-fighting and hazardous conditions flying.

Barracudas move in for the kill against Marauder Destroyers.

"Too cold a place to call hell"

The Typhan system lies on the edge of the Sheering Reach sub-sector of the Segmentum Ultima, close to the Tau Empire's recent gains at the northern extreme of the Damocles Gulf. In the words of one outgoing garrison commander, the system's only inhabited world, Typha-IV, was "too cold a place to call hell." An oceanic world locked in the grip of a permanent climatic ice age, Typha-IV is further lashed by frequent and unpredictable storms of extraordinary strength, as well as seismic disturbances and dangerous tidal forces caused by the planet's high axial tilt. An old world in geological terms, it possesses massive natural resources in the form of promethium, minerals and crystalline deposits. Until relatively recently all had gone unexploited by the Administratum. Granted to the direct governorship of the Departmento Munitorum to fuel the needs of the Imperium's war machine, the islands and archipelagos of Typha-IV's relatively stable equatorial belt have become studded with refineries, mines, drilling and processing plants, all feeding to a central exporting point; the city-sized industrial complex of Argent Landing and the massive asteroid transhipping and storage base of Bastion-Alpha in geo-synchronous orbit above. In addition to its punishing cold and the violent and unpredictable weather, centuries of rapid exploitation have left Typha-IV poisoned. Every day the Promethium refineries pump thousands of tons of harmful gasses into the atmosphere, while highly toxic runoff from mineral processing has left vast swathes of the planet lifeless. The whole biosphere is suffering a lingering death thanks to the remorseless stripping of the planet's resources.

Typha's relatively small population (a little under one million at any time) is almost entirely composed of indentured workers and convicts, as the planet is a Munitorum penal colony and maintained purely to service its resource extraction industries. These workers are housed in habitation bunkers and warren tunnels maintained near each industrial site and ferried between them as needed, while the planet is controlled, organised and administered by their Department Munitorum gaolers. Life for these workers is utterly harsh and unforgiving, the mortality rate is high. Escape is all but impossible as the planet's climate alone is enough to kill, and most prisoners assigned to Typha IV will end their days there. Nor is the world a particularly favoured posting for its defending garrison or administrators, and although in the past a posting to Typha-IV was largely reserved as a backhanded punishment for military units, recent events in the conflicts with the Tau Empire have both increased the need for Typha's output and its strategic importance, and the garrison and defences have been increased accordingly. Ultima Segmentum operational command were not blind to the importance of air power in the defence of Typha-IV and as a result trebled the naval presence on the world in response to the unstable situation on the border. The Imperial Navy for their part chose to use this deployment as an opportunity rather than a curse, constructing extensive new facilities in order to take advantage of the planet's turbulent climate to train its combat squadrons in the planet's hazardous atmospheric conditions. Additionally the world's numerous small uninhabited islands, vast ice fields and even disused rigs and played-out mine heads make excellent areas for live-fire exercises, so, rather than just assign forces in single long-term postings in the defensive garrison, the Imperial Navy also began to rotate squadrons through short deployments at the new training facilities greatly improving the calibre and resources of the planet's garrison.

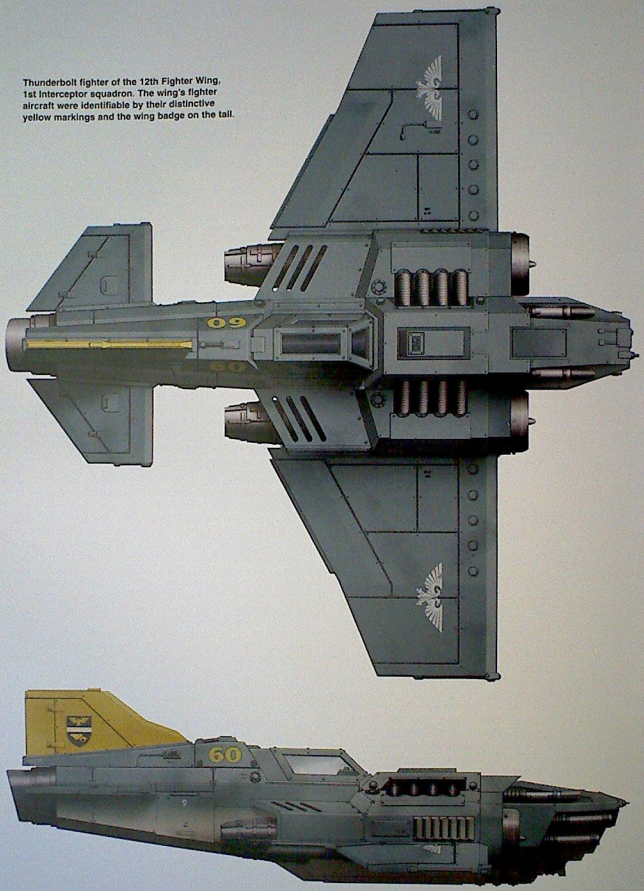
M'Yen'Ral: "The Unseen Blade"

The decision to attack Typha-IV was planned and executed by the Tau of the Sept world of Ksi'm'yen, one of the newest Septs of the Tau Empire and founded on a world gained from the Imperium during the Third Sphere expansion. Despite its relatively short history, the warriors of Ksi'm'yen had already developed a reputation for favouring subterfuge and cunning in their tactics, and the attack plan that was formulated by the Fire Caste leaders, at the behest of the Aun'va, was both audacious and indeed entailed a greater degree of risk than many Tau would have found acceptable.

Despite the inherent risks, it was felt that if Typha-IV was to be attacked as the Ethereals had decreed, it would have to be by subterfuge as any direct planetary assault of sufficient strength to cause enough damage would entail a size of force easily detectable and at risk of being intercepted and suffering unacceptable losses completing its mission. By the same token a small strike force of no more than a Hunter Cadre or two, small enough to slip into Imperial space undetected, of the kind that had been used in the past for long range hit and run raids simply wouldn't be powerful enough to achieve the desired goal. Displaying the remarkable unity of purpose and endeavour that is one of the Tau's greatest strengths, all of the castes of Ksi'm'yen bent their thoughts and labours to the formulation of a workable plan and the materials to put it into action. The strategy which resulted they named M'yen'ral (broadly translating as the 'unseen' or 'unexpected blade'). It entailed a large-scale covert penetration of the Imperium's space that would culminate in a secret deployment by a special task force on Typha-IV. The force, having established itself, would launch a series of rapid and powerful raids to destroy the Imperial facilities. The plan, which circumvented the need to fight a way through to the Typha system or, indeed, to overcome dangerous orbital defences, also had the advantage of attacking without warning with the precision the Tau would need.

To this end, two new Custodian class carriers, still undergoing construction, were appropriated to the plan. Using the very best systems the Earth Caste of Ksi'm'yen could devise, the ships were converted for use as stealth ships. This operation stripped the carriers of most of their extensive armaments and replaced the Warden class gunships, usually held in tow, with cargo and life support pods thus extending the ship's range and transport capacity even further. The modified Custodians' payload would contain the task force itself and their equipment; Barracuda fighter squadrons, Tiger Shark bombers, Manta and Orca dropships as well as several flights of the new, and as yet untried, Remora drone fighters. Some of the aircraft were embarked stripped down and partly disassembled to increase the numbers that could be carried, while the munitions supplies allocated would be sufficient for each craft to engage in dozens of sorties if need be. Two specialised Hunter Cadres were also included whose mission would be to supplement the Tau air power by conducting surgical strikes in their wake, and defend the landing grounds from counter-attack. The fire warriors, pilots and other caste members chosen for the mission were the very best that Ksi'm'yen had to offer, They were hand picked by Shas'O'Iunsu, the mission's Fire Caste leader and one of the principle architects of the battle plan itself who was given command on O'Shaserra's orders. In preparation for the attack, the entire force was put through an intensive regime of specialised training, simulations and practise missions for what was to lie ahead. With typical Tau precision nothing was left to chance, M'yen'ral would succeed, the very honour of the Sept rested upon it.

Thunderbolt fighter of the 12th Fighter Wing, 1st Interceptor squadron. The wing's fighter aircraft were identifiable by their distinctive yellow markings and the wing badge on the tail.



THE OPPOSING FORCES

The Imperial Garrison

The Imperium's military commitment to Typha-IV at the start of the conflict was as follows:

Aerospace & Sub-Orbital Forces

Typha Group – 12th and 111th Fighter Wings

These two wings each comprised five full strength squadrons. Their support units and ancillary aircraft formed the majority of the naval garrison forces on Typha-IV. These wings were multi-purpose tactical units, each composed of two interceptor squadrons, one strike and two tactical squadrons, operating a wide variety of different assets, in particular Valkyries and Vultures, which were well suited to operations on Typha-IV. The pilots were all recruited from Achaean, which has a reputation in the Ultima Segmentum for martial skill and pride, with their home system (part of the Ultramar domain) famed as one of the Navy's longest-standing recruiting grounds in the region. Typha-IV was the fourth and sixth deployments for this incarnation of the 12th and 111th wings respectively. They contained pilots with widely varied levels of experience, although neither unit had seen full-scale wartime operations in recent years having been limited to skirmishes, policing actions and garrison postings. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities, the wings were dispersed to provide standing defensive air cover for the major mining bases and Promethium fields, with their heavier elements marshaled in protection of the starport area of Argent Landing. The commanding officer of the Typha Group, Air Marshall Ursa Caleb, had overall operational command of air assets on Typha-IV, as the senior officer of the Naval garrison forces.

The 1019th and 1110th Fighter Squadrons, and the 35th Bomber Squadron of the 5th Sheering Reach Group (Imperial Navy Training and Reserve).

At the time of the outbreak of the conflict, these squadrons had been deployed to Typha-IV for less than three standard months, and had spent much of that time confined to the ground owing to the storms of the planet's 'darktide' season. These three squadrons had recently been brought back up to full strength following heavy losses taken in action against the Ork forces of Joruk the Terrible after his abortive attempt to invade the Hive Worlds of the Kasu Cluster the previous year.

Deployed to the Typha-IV garrison to complete re-integration and combat-readiness training, these squadrons, although untried in battle, were formed around a solid core of veteran combat pilots who had survived a baptism of fire at the hands of the Orks, and several of whom were already rated as aces in their own right. Both the 1019th and 1110th were equipped almost exclusively with Thunderbolt fighters (and their variants), although many of their individual craft had already seen service in numerous war zones in the past, and many contained repaired or cannibalized components.

The 35th Bomber Squadron, known colloquially by their peers as the 'graveyard shift' had suffered heavy losses in the Kasu campaign, and was now made up of a mixture of new recruits and transferred crews from squadrons that had been amalgamated into the 35th having been disbanded due to untenable losses in the field. Likewise, its remaining Marauder bombers and Destroyers were a mixture of battle-repaired (and often failure prone) aircraft and new and untried machines. As a result, morale in the 35th was not considered to be high, and its combat readiness rated the lowest of the aerial forces on Typha.

At the outbreak of the conflict all three of these training squadrons were deployed to the northern island's Naval Climate/Hazard Tactical Training Facilities, or 'Black Rock' to give the peninsula's nickname among the naval pilots stationed there.

The Typha Orbital Interface Detachment

Although not an actual combat unit, the unit was nevertheless of vital importance to Typha-IV. It was composed of hundreds of different transport, support and orbital aircraft, including Arvus lighters, Valkyries, Vulcan mass-haulers and Aquila landers. Without this Departmento Munitorum unit the colony of Typha-IV would not be viable, and despite its lack of combat training it contained many first rate pilots adept at flying in the world's often deadly, and always unpredictable, weather conditions. Typha-IV proved a very harsh school-room, and those pilots that couldn't handle landing a heavily loaded Arvus on a Promethium rig's small landing platform, in a gale driven ice-storm, rarely got a second chance to try. At the start of the conflict, this unit was engaged conducting regular transport operations all across Typha-IV.

Ground Forces

The 17th, 88th and 120th Provost-Ultima Regiments of the Imperial Guard (including elements drawn from the central sub-sector airborne transport reserve).

Comprising nearly 80% of the Imperial troop strength on the planet, these regiments were both the bulk of Typha-IV's defenders and its population's gaolers. Like most Provost-regiments they were only configured as light infantry, with a core of specialist units such as tactical enforcement storm troopers and punishment detachments, many of which operated alongside the planet's small but heavily equipped Adeptus Arbites Precinct. These forces were directly under the command of the Quastor-General Brantus Hurst. The guardsmen were deployed in dispersed garrisons, principally to defend and regulate Typha-IV's various industrial facilities and enforce order planet-wide, with a strong reserve of troops headquartered at Argent Landing.

The 16th Brimlock Air Defence Regiment

The most recent addition to the Typhan garrison forces, (and one that the Tau had not known of), the Brimlockians were a freshly raised regiment sent to Typha-IV to complete their battle readiness training as well as bolster its defences. Though inexperienced they were well supplied with a variety of highly mobile air defence assets ranging from Hydras and Manticores to Sabre defence batteries geared for rapid deployment by Valkyrie transports.

The Cadian 212th Regiment

Recently redeployed after the infamous Yosarian Bay Mutiny during the pacification of the Death World of Eihelort Majoris, events during their last deployment had left the Cadians under a pall of suspicion and distrust, based purely on their presence in the same theatre of war as the mutiny. Their assignment to Typha-IV for 'harsh weather environment training' under direct Commissariat scrutiny was an undisguised move designed to punish the unit, test their loyalty and weed out any recidivist elements. The presence of this veteran, frontline Imperial Guard regiment on Typha-IV at the outbreak of hostilities, eager to prove itself loyal, can only be regarded as extremely fortunate.

Special Deployment Taskforce: Typhan (Imperial Guard Commissariat).

Although by far the smallest independent force (less than two hundred strong including several detachments of Commissar-Cadets) the additional Commissar presence on Typha-IV, largely tasked with the oversight of military prisoners under special orders and overseeing of the provost regiments proved particularly instrumental in the maintenance of discipline and morale in the face of the surprise xenos attack.

IMPERIAL NAVY ORGANISATION

TYPHA GROUP

12th Fighter Wing

1st Interceptor Squadron

10 x Thunderbolts

2nd Interceptor Squadron

10 x Thunderbolts

3rd Strike Squadron

10 x Lightnings

4th Tactical Squadron

10 x Valkyries

5th Tactical Squadron

6 x Valkyries

4 x Vultures

111th Fighter Wing

1st Interceptor Squadron

10 x Thunderbolts

2nd Interceptor Squadron

10 x Thunderbolts

3rd Strike Squadron

8 x Lightnings

4th Tactical Squadron

6 x Valkyries

4 x Vultures

5th Tactical Squadron

6 x Valkyries

4 x Vultures

5th SHEERING REACH GROUP

1019th Fighter Squadron

11 x Thunderbolts

1110th Fighter Squadron

9 x Thunderbolts

35th Bomber Squadron

8 x Marauders

1 x Marauder Colossus

2 x Marauder Destroyers

2 x Marauder Vigilants

Typhan Orbital Interface Detachment

82 x Valkyries

260 x Arvus

22 x Aquila

TAU EMPIRE AIR CADRE ORGANISATION

AIR CADRE KOR'EL AO'RATA

22 x Barracudas

8 x Tiger Sharks

2 x Orcas

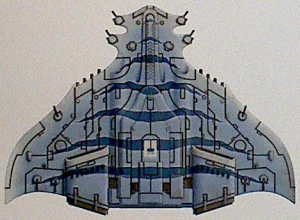
AIR CADRE KOR'EL KAIA

22 x Barracudas

8 x Tiger Sharks

2 x Orcas

AIR CADRE KOR'EL EL'TIA



5 x Mantas

14 x Orcas

AIR CADRE KOR'EL ACUVAH

8 x AX-1-0

8 x AX-2-2

64 x Drone aerial mines

10 x Barracudas

30 x Remora

The Tau Invasion Force: The M'yen'ral Tio've

The specially chosen force contingent (or "Tio've") was composed of three distinct but interlocking elements:

Fleet Assets

The principle components of this force were the two new specially modified Custodian class carriers *V'os U'kysa* (Trans/alit. Spear of Unity) and *Rysm'Ca'Vas* (Trans/alit. Shield of Purpose), whose task was to approach Typha-IV undetected and land the Tau strike force, but also had attached six smaller Castellan class escorts. These smaller warships were outfitted as raiders. Their purpose was to conduct a series of small-scale hit-and-run attacks on the Imperium's commerce traffic in the weeks leading up to the insertion, drawing off any Imperial Navy warships in the area and delaying the response time of any relief force for Typha-IV once the attack began.

Air Cadres

The principle striking power of the Tau force were the four potent Air Cadres to be landed on Typha-IV. It was these forces that were to deliver the Mont'ka, 'the killing blow', upon which much of Tau tactical doctrine is based. The first and second cadres formed the principle aerial strike force and were composed of a mixture of Barracuda superiority fighters and Tiger Shark bombers. The Third cadre was formed around a core of five Manta super-heavy dropships carrying the hunter cadres, with an ancillary force of the smaller non-combat Orca dropships that would transport munitions and supplies needed for the operation. The smaller Fourth air cadre was designated as a special operations unit and contained two formations of the Tiger Shark AX-1-0 rail cannon ground attack craft as well as the new Remora drone fighters, aerial drone mines and several specialised variant aircraft including Barracuda fighters refitted for a stealth reconnaissance role.

Hunter Cadres

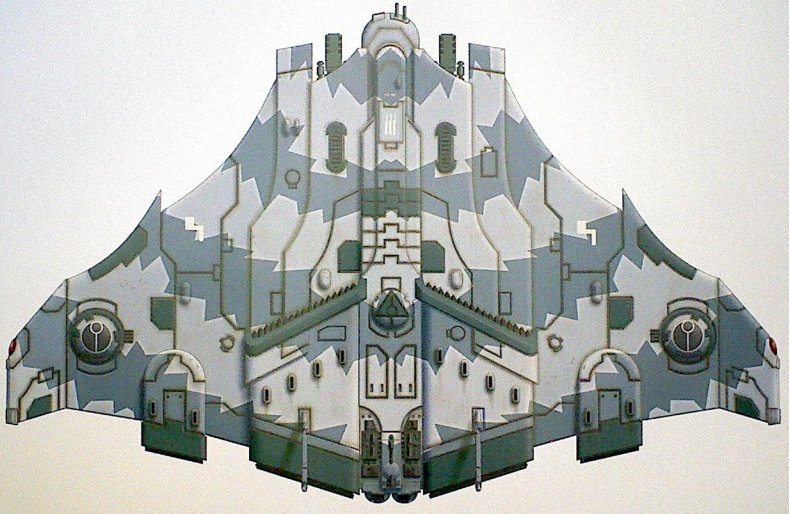
Two Hunter cadres, identified as El'Courra and El'Surassir were included in the Tau force. The first, El'Courra, was a fire warrior elite strike force equipped with an unusually high proportion of crisis and stealth type battle suits, backed by drone units and pathfinders. The task of this force was to conduct surgical strikes and raids in the wake of the main air assault. The second, El'Surassir, was a defensive formation intended to guard the Tau strike bases from attack, it was more conventionally mixed in its make-up and featured multiple Sky Ray missile tanks for air defence.

THE BATTLE FOR TYPHA-IV

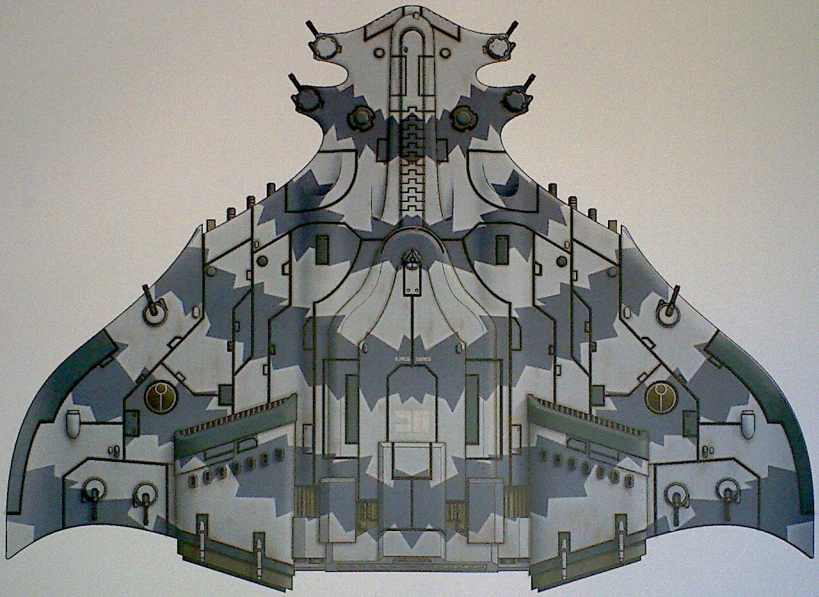
The Silent Travellers

Guided by extensive secret intelligence, much of which was gleaned from easily bribed and corrupt human traders with whom the Water caste of Ksi'm'yen had links, the Tau executed their intricate plan. Taking a long and convoluted route of short jumps in order to bypass known Imperial Navy patrol patterns and deep-space auger arrays, the Tau raiding force slipped deep into the Imperium undetected. Once beyond their own empire, the raiding Castellans dispersed to their own pre-selected targets, while the attack force proceeded to their target; the limitations of the Tau's etherdrive and the risk of detection forced a slow pace and most of the warriors onboard spent the journey in the oblivion of cryo-sleep to conserve resources. Some sixty standard days later the two Tau vessels cut their etherdrives on the very fringes of the Typhan system, its star nothing but a hazy, distant point of light glimmering in the void. This was their mission's point of greatest risk. Their etherdrives exhausted from the long journey and the two carriers themselves all but stripped of their armaments, the ships would prove easy prey to any Imperial Navy piquet ships that discovered them.

Barracuda fighter of Air Cadre El Ao'rata. These aircraft were the backbone of the Tau's strike force, providing interceptor, escort and extra ground attack capability.



Tiger Shark of Air Cadre El Kala. This aircraft was identified carrying a payload of seeker missiles instead of the more common drones.



Manta of Air Cadre El Tia. This aircraft, one of five, was destroyed whilst evacuating ground troops from Argent Landing.

Tense hours ticked passed as the Air Caste crews watched for any sign that they had been detected. But they remained unseen – the first stage of the M'yen'ral was a success.

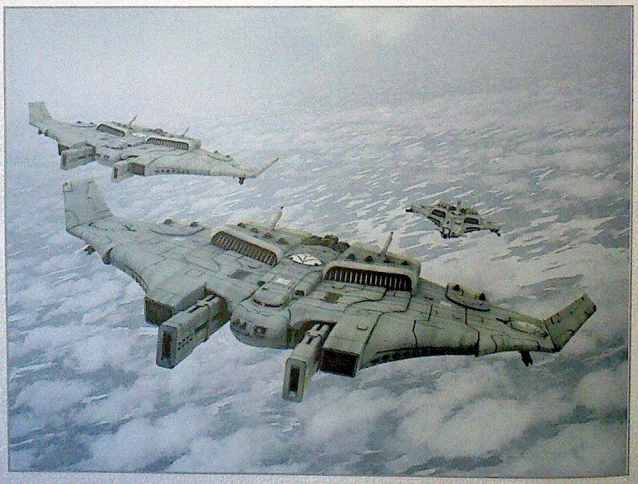
In the days that followed the two carriers closed with inexorable patience on their prey, masking their boosts and course corrections, trusting to the works of the Earth Caste to conceal them from detection as they slipped passed the systems outer ring of sensora. Slowing as they approached, the silent ships' timing was precise as they blindsided Typha-IV, arriving at the calculated time to their best advantage; darktide - when much of the planet was mired in powerful storms and battened down against the worst of the planet's elemental fury. With planetary transhipping suspended and its defensive patrols grounded whilst the population, prisoner and warden alike, hunkered down in their ferrorcrete blockhouses to sit out the worst of the storms, the Tau approached unlooked for and unnoticed.

The Eye of the Storm

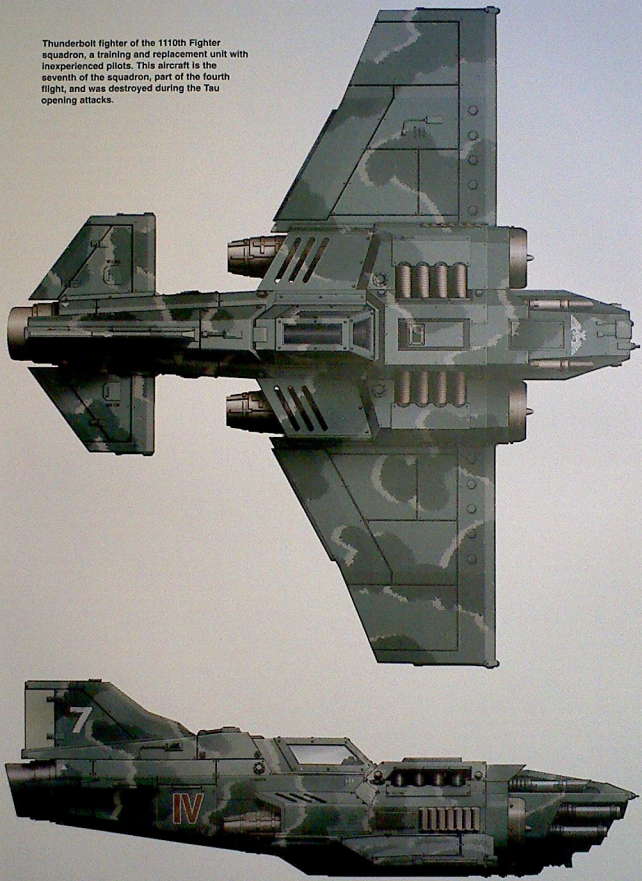
After all their long preparations and cautious approach, now came the time for speed and daring action. The Custodians approached as close as they dared to the planet's uninhabited southern polar region, careful to keep the planet's bulk between them and the centre of Imperium's operations at Argent Landing and its geo-stationary space station above. As the stealth-ships closed they showered the lower atmosphere with sensor drones and remotes, frenetically searching for their best landing and trusting as much to luck as their stealth systems to hide them. Soon a suitable location was identified amist a fierce storm, but without pause the landing operation commenced as the carrier's great bays opened and, led by the brutally powerful Mantas, almost a hundred Tau craft fell from the black cold of space into the ferocious white blizzards of Typha-IV's atmosphere, like shards of silver-grey glass. Spiralling down through the dead-calm eye of the great storm, the Tau air fleet tracked the path of the treacherous vortex down to an ice-plain, partly shield by a vast and ancient caldera of rock where they made landfall. The perilous decent was not without its price, as one Barracuda was caught by a rogue eddy at the edge of the vortex, sucked in and quickly torn apart. While in the final approach a transport Orca suffered a critical failure of its over-stressed thrusters and plummeted like a stone, clipping a Tiger Shark in its wild dive and sending the bomber careering off into the all-consuming storm before smashing into the ice and exploding. The majority of the force made it through the stratospheric tempest intact, travelling down to effect a landing and then rally together. Earth Caste teams in survival gear swiftly set to work digging storage trenches, erecting prefabricated shelters and even entire hanger units. There, protected by the caldera wall, the fire warriors and pilots of the M'yen'ral settled into their new homes, as far above their carriers slowly retreated from orbit into space, hiding themselves once more in the system's dim outer reaches. All that could be done now was to await the end of darktide, and prepare for the war to come.

The Eve of Destruction

As the darktide season passed and the great hurricanes and ice storms blew themselves out, Typha-IV entered a brief season of relative calm, when production could return to normal. As the activity resumed at the Imperial facilities, operations continued as they had done for years previously and no one suspected the surprise attack that was soon to come. During the fury of the darktide storms the Tau had not been idle, hangers and support structures were hastily assembled and camouflaged with snow,



Thunderbolt fighter of the 1110th Fighter squadron, a training and replacement unit with inexperienced pilots. This aircraft is the seventh of the squadron, part of the fourth flight, and was destroyed during the Tau opening attacks.



and landing grounds were cleared and reinforced with fused carbon fibres. Equipment and aircraft were re-assembled and as the preparations progressed, covert pathfinder teams ventured into forward positions to establish listening posts and resupply dumps on the pack ice and a few outlaying islands in preparation for the attack. Even now discovery might well spell disaster for the Tau force, rigorous stealth discipline was enforced, and even though the warriors and pilots were impatient to begin the attack, they knew that to mistime their strike or proceed without the best possible data might destroy all they had worked for.

The final, dangerous pre-attack phase commenced with reconnaissance flights by specially upgraded Barracudas. Signal and tracking data picked up by the listening posts was compared to the Tau's intelligence, and almost immediately several serious discrepancies were discovered. To begin with, there was far more military transmissions and flight traffic than expected, even worse the code-ciphers and maps that the Water Caste spies had purchased proved worthless, and many of the detected 'active' locations simply didn't match those upon which the plan had been based. A heated debate broke out among the Tau commanders, with some speaking out that the Gue'la had betrayed them and the mission should be immediately aborted, while others advocated immediate commencement of the attack as planned regardless of the risk. Shas'O'lunsu silenced argument by pronouncing that the Greater Good demanded that Typha-IV be effectively destroyed as a military resource for the Gue'la. The attack would commence as planned, focused primarily on Argent Landing to cut down the risk of unknown variables and focus the Tau's strength where it would do most damage. The countdown to the attack began and the die was cast, strategic analysis had estimated that once hostilities commenced the Tau forces had between ten and thirty planetary days before reinforcements could reach Typha-IV from outside, perhaps just ten days to ravage a world!

An Unexpected Encounter

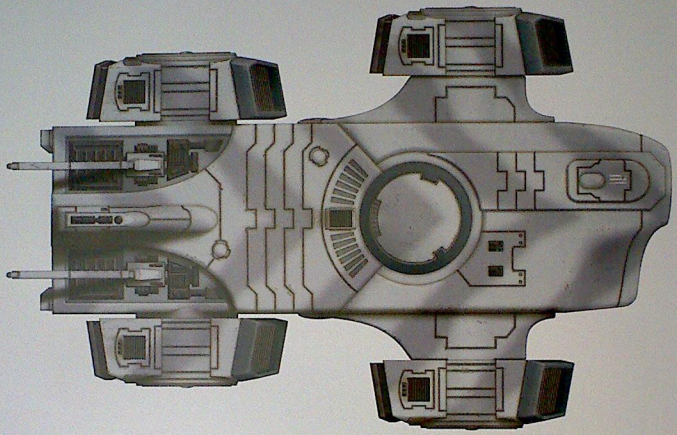
.543-Approximately 0700 hours local time, three Thunderbolts of No III Squadron of the 12th Tactical air wing were undertaking endurance flight exercises over the southern island clusters when they picked up an intermittent target signal registering on their auger arrays. Far beyond the range of any Imperial facility or regular flight path, the signal was immediately designated as a potential hostile. Wing-Sergeant Eldhor and his wingmen, pilot officers Arbor and Septimus immediately initiated combat protocols and diverted to intercept. Eldhor's attempts to report the contact with his commanders were met by static; this was hardly unexpected given Typha-IVs atmospheric conditions and their distance from any base. Eldhor exercised caution and ordered Septimus, a rookie member of his flight, to stand-off while he and Arbor closed with and identified the target, (which still might turn out to be no more than an auger-ghost created by Typha's adverse conditions).

Flying low over a chain of unsettled islands and now within engagement range, even with the Thunderbolts co-ordinating their tracking systems on full active mode, the target refused to fully resolve on their auger screens as they closed, Eldhor's suspicions were that this was no ghost, but a hostile target designed to evade detection and signalled Septimus to that effect. It was then, just as they were closing into visual range that the mysterious craft put on a massive surge of acceleration, and the Imperial pilots activated their own afterburners in pursuit of its engine-flare. Squaring the fleeing craft within his crosshairs Eldhor's panel suddenly lit up with signals and his cockpit alarms screamed warnings of target locks. Responding reflexively he immediately jettisoned his extra fuel tanks, and threw his Thunderbolt into a desperate series of evasive manoeuvres as proximity-fused missiles detonated in his wake and bolts of searing energy howled around him. He pulled clear of the fire storm. As Eldhor climbed away at speed he registered Arbor had not made it out of the trap, and his other wingman, Septimus, also failed to respond. Eldhor realised he was alone as his auger array registered multiple hostiles launching from the islands in pursuit, hostiles his onboard cogitator quickly identified as Tau Barracudas. Eldhor's plane had taken several hits, his life support and weapon systems were damaged and his handling was badly impaired - in fact he only survived due to the legendary robustness of the Thunderbolt's airframe. He knew he was no match for the outnumbering machines and while he might outrun his pursuers for a time, other aircraft might even now be closing on intercept vectors.

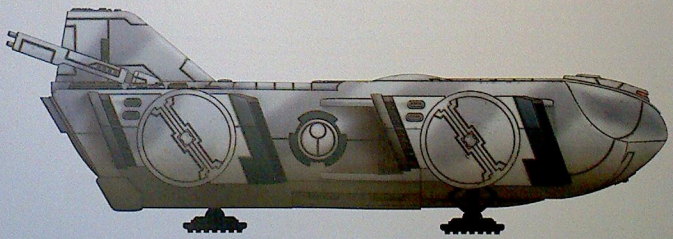
Realising that raising the alarm and alerting his comrades to the Tau presence clearly took precedence over his own life, he quickly undertook a desperate plan. Recording all that occurred into his cockpit data-engine he triggered his afterburners and climbed on an almost ballistic trajectory into Typha's upper atmosphere to the very edge of space. It was an action he knew to be a death sentence, given the damaged state of his aircraft. Once he had gained altitude he diverted the last of his system power to his vox-set, broadcasting on the Imperial Navy distress frequency in the hope that above the storm layer somebody might hear his transmission. Eldhor flew his wounded aircraft higher and higher to the edge of the dark, until his life support system finally failed and his body froze before his engines eventually sputtered and died.

Eldhor's remains were never recovered, and it is likely his Thunderbolt disintegrated on its uncontrolled descent after it exhausted its fuel. His last broadcast, garbled and indistinct,

Barracuda fighter of Air Cadre El Acuvah. Ten Barracudas were specially configured for reconnaissance and night-fighting, and used for special operations.



Orca of Air Cadre El Ao'rata. This aircraft was one of the Cadre's dedicated logistical support aircraft.



was received by a fuel tender flying in a holding pattern in high orbit, and by the time the signal was cleaned up and processed the Tau had already launched their great attack ahead of schedule, their hand forced by Eldhor's escape. The emergency planetary invasion alert was only sounded when the Tau attack squadrons were only minutes from their primary targets, but those minutes would prove vital.

Wing-Sergeant Sabine Eldhor was posthumously awarded the Naval Aquila 2nd class for his heroic sacrifice, and his name entered into the *Book of Martyrs* at Kar Duniash.

Onslaught: The Tau Plan of Attack

As Eldhor's warning message was being deciphered, the Tau air fleet was already assembling in the skies over the southern pack ice for the attack. The timing was far from perfect, the initial plan to launch an escalating series of attacks commencing with a dawn raid to catch many of their targets during the shift change and before many facilities went into full time activity was no longer possible. Thanks to the turn of events they would now attack during local mid-morning and potentially be flying into the teeth of active and forewarned defences. In order to minimise potential losses and ensure as much of the advantage of the initial surprise was maintained as possible, Shas'O'unsu committed his entire force to the first attacks, including as much of his reserve that was fuelled and ready to fly. A full two thirds of his available strength he dispatched to strike directly at Argent Landing and in particular at its spaceport complexes, hoping to inflict as much damage as possible and cut Typha off from ready access to space. The remaining forces he split into strike groups and attacked the closest major economic targets on the grounds, hoping that these would receive the least warning of the impending attack and the least time to prepare. The Typhan raid had begun.

The Burning of the Geo-Fault-M-5 Fields

The first Imperial ground targets to feel the force of the Tau onslaught were the rigs and refinery complexes of the Geo-Fault-M-5 extraction fields. Furthest south of the Tau's chosen major targets, the fields were a hundred-kilometre long stretch of Promethium rigs, tanker silos, hab-stations and refineries irregularly spaced along the length of a vast natural fissure on the ocean floor. These rig complexes situated in the open sea of the western oceanic zone received no warning of the oncoming Tau attack and were caught completely unprepared.

The attack began when two AX-1-0 Tiger Sharks with Barracuda escorts screamed in low over the waves to avoid detection and achieved total surprise, attacking from the southernmost tip of the field. The M-5 control platform was thrown into sudden and complete panic as first one drill-head and then another and another exploded into mountainous sheets of flame as their containment vessels were breached. The rigs' reinforced plasteel shells were proof against Typha-IV's harsh elements but offered little defence against the destructive power of the Tau bomber's heavy rail guns. With alarms howling and a great dark pall of burning fuel already starting to shadow the skies, the Imperium's defences rallied; sabre platforms were manned and a defensive squadron of Vulture gunships launched but it was too little, too late. The Tau heavy firepower systematically destroyed one rig and refinery after the other, while swift-striking Barracudas struck down the outnumbered and overmatched defenders. Within minutes of the initial attack, the M-5 fields were transformed into a burning sea of flame, cremating thousands of penal workers in their fires.

Dogfight Over Minehead 4-42#

All along the southern portion of the equatorial belt individual rigs and mine works suffered, many were attacked without warning and destroyed or damaged without any defensive force brought to bear against them. But as the Tau forces progressed

northward and alarms spread they began to meet resistance; one of the first major air combat engagements occurred in the skies of Minehead 4-42#. A Tau attacking force composed of four Tiger Shark bombers and an equal number of Barracuda fighters were intercepted during their attack run by a hastily assembled Imperial force. The Imperial Navy group was made up of two patrolling Thunderbolts of the 1019th accompanied by a training flight of eight hastily re-fuelled and re-armed Lightnings of the 12th that had been on live-fire exercises in a nearby island chain. The Imperial fighters executed a textbook downward sweeping attack on the Tau bombers as they came in for their own attack runs on the minehead and succeeded in shooting down two Tiger Sharks and badly damaging a third on their initial pass. The Tau formation broke apart and the manoeuvrable Barracudas quickly proved their worth against the inexperienced Imperial Lightning pilots. After a fierce dogfight the combatants broke off having all but exhausted their fuel and munitions against each other, the final tally of kills was six to the Imperials and five to the Tau, with three of the Imperial kills claimed by a young pilot officer in his first hostile engagement, named Ixan Muro, a pilot who would go on to become regarded as one of the heroes of the conflict.

The Battle of Argent Landing

The attack alarms were sounded and defences scrambled at Argent Landing only fourteen minutes before the leading edge of the Tau attack wave became visible of the Imperial auger arrays, coming in low and fast over the seas to avoid detection until the last moment. In those fourteen minutes Brantus Hurst, Quastor General and Imperial Governor of Typha-IV took swift and decisive action. No mere prison warden or Administratum pen-pusher, Hurst had been posted to Typha IV to finish off a long and distinguished career and he had seen war and sudden calamity before and knew too well the bloody price of vacillation. His first action was to trigger a remote emergency lockdown of all prisoners, from this point any infraction would be met with death and armoured blast doors rolled closed and cages locked shut across Typha-IV. He immediately recognised that Argent Landing would take the brunt of any attack and ordered a full scramble of all available forces, and squadrons of Thunderbolts and Vultures took to the skies as fast as they could be armed and readied. At the spaceport an emergency launch order was issued so that any vessels that could be launched were hurried into the air and away - better for them to be destroyed clear of the port than blasted apart on the runways scattering wreckage and debris. It was just as the first of the Brimlock Guardsman

TAU EMPIRE AIR CASTE PILOT

1. UNIFORM

This pilot wears the standard issue flight suit and armoured vest of all Air Caste pilots.

The flight suit is a single piece coverall. It has a closed cell, foam-lined, synthetic layer, containing millions of microscopic bubbles which provide thermal insulation and react to increases in gravitational pressure by expanding, helping restrict the blood flow away from internal organs. The suit is an air-tight sealed unit with integral boots and separate gloves (not shown) which seal to the suit's cuffs. The collar can also be sealed. Despite this, the flight suit is not an environment suit, as the Barracuda's cockpit is a sealed pressurized unit and provides full environment support.

To provide the pilot with an added degree of protection, his armoured vest is made of a hard, ultra dense, nano-crystalline metal and internally it has a second impact absorbent layer to reduce blunt trauma from high velocity impacts, providing protection to the pilot's vital organs. It bears the symbol of his home sept, Ksi'm'yen, whilst the uniform carries the symbol of the Tau homeworld, which is also adopted for use across the Empire. The markings on his sleeve may be some form of rank insignia or unit insignia, but this cannot be confirmed.

The flight suit is designed as a good fit over the Air Caste pilot's unique physique. Whilst superficially similar to that of other Tau castes, officially authorised Ordo Xenos autopsies on captured Air Caste members have revealed that their physiognomy is well adapted to the rigours of aerial combat.

The Air Castes' ectomorphic physique is a result of evolutionary adaptation and of being raised in low-gravity environments. Air Caste members spend much of their lives outside of gravity wells, living in orbital habitats or onboard Tau spacecraft. Their skeletal structure is lightweight and highly elastic compared to members of the Fire Caste. It supports far less body mass, and a corresponding reduction in muscle mass. To a standard human an Air Caste member would not seem very strong. This is compensated for by their low-body mass' advantages in low-gravity environments and when under high-Gs. For a Tau pilot high-Gs do not have the same drastic effect as they do on the human body. Tau pilots are capable of withstanding greater gravitational effects than human norms.

The Air Caste's brains are also better adapted for flying, with superior three dimensional awareness, making them naturally gifted pilots.

2. PISTOL

The pilot's sidearm is a pulse pistol. These weapons are not commonly issued, and are not considered a battlefield weapon by the Tau, due to their general dislike of close-combat. It is a weapon of last resort, sometimes carried by Tau officers. Air Caste pilots only carry sidearms in case they are forced to eject over enemy territory, and many prefer not to carry them at all.

The weapon itself utilises the same technology as the common pulse rifle and carbine, firing a pulse particle created and propelled by an induction field. The pistol has limited range and its powercell only provides enough power for fifteen shots. The pistol's grip is designed for the Tau's three fingered hand, and as such would be very awkward for a non-Tau user to fire accurately.

The pistol is locked to the thigh straps via magnetic clamps.

3. HELMET

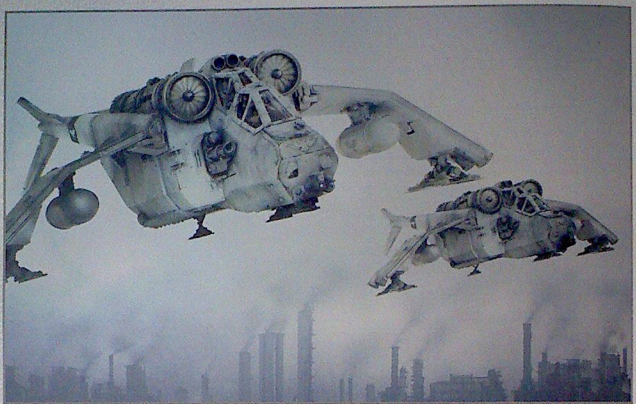
The pilot carries his flight helmet. This is actually a half-helmet, consisting of a face mask and dome, with the rear plugging into the pilot's hard-wired data-unit, which is grafted to the rear of his head, including implants that read information directly from the pilot's neural pathways. The helmet and data-unit provide the pilot with a mass of technical, tactical and navigational information, including accessing his communications equipment, active and passive sensor arrays, targeting equipment and night fighting filters, drone relays and any technical information from the aircraft's processor core.

The helmet is not worn as protection, and as such is generally discarded whilst the pilot is on the ground. It communicates with the aircraft's systems, and without them is useless.

4. DRONE

The CL-31 technical drone is part of this pilot's ground crew. It provides technical support in preparing the aircraft for a mission and in analysing post-mission data. This is just one of many similar technical drones that support Tau units in a wide variety of roles. Although it is superficially similar to the Tau's gun drones, it is unarmed and unarmoured and lacks many of the combat drone's higher brain functions.

This is a Barracuda pilot of the Ksi'm'yen Sept, seen here during the Typha-IV campaign.



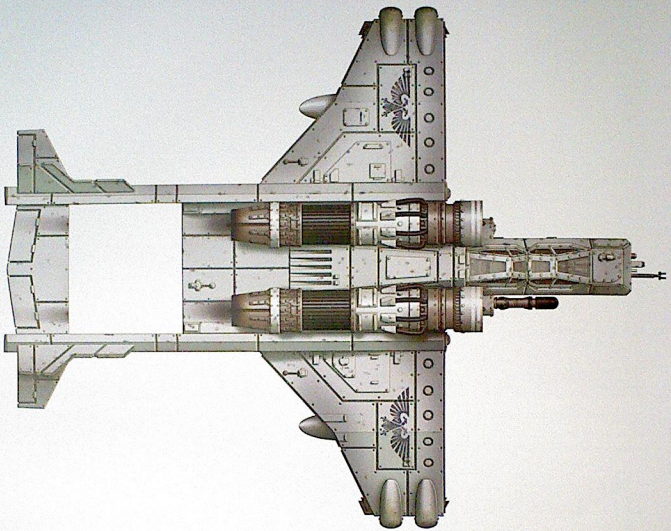
were mounting their batteries and their Hydra tanks were rolling from their armoured depots to their emplacements that the huge dark shapes of Tau Mantas rose up across the bay and unleashed storms of seeker missiles and bolts of ionic energy into the pipe farms and landing piers blasting them apart in sheets of flame. The battle was joined in earnest, and Imperial Navy fighters slammed into the alien attackers with fury, but they were simply too few to check, let alone stop the onslaught, and death rained down on the vast industrial complex.

Despite being outnumbered and outgunned, the Imperial Navy pilots dived their machines headlong at the attackers heedless of the risk and many made heroic sacrifices that day. Flight Commander Nikolai Stone, a veteran Thunderbolt pilot with the 111th wing, was particularly notable, rallying the scattered defenders and cutting through the blasts of static and frantic comms chatter with clear and concise instructions. Seeing that his forces were completely outnumbered and that flying high into the storm of Tau fire would simply see them swept from the skies, he ordered the Imperials to engage as closely as they could, taking advantage of Argent Landing's towering vapour stacks and cooling towers to offset the enemy's numbers. Leading his wing down between the towers he pounced on a flight of Tiger Sharks strafing the Arbites precinct house, the Thunderbolts ripping two apart with concentrated bursts of autocannon fire and driving a third to collide with a hab block as it was trying to evade the vengeful defenders. But no sooner had this small victory been achieved than a dazzling blast of fire sent Stone's wingman tumbling away in flames as a disk-like shape screamed past - a Remora drone fighter. The Remora, one of the latest weapons in the Tau arsenal, was a small, highly manoeuvrable fighter controlled by one of the Tau's blasphemous artificial intelligence systems and capable of sustaining manoeuvres that most living pilots were incapable of matching. As Stone's flight broke apart and scattered, his pilots were forced into a murderous game of cat and mouse with the Remoras and Barracudas protecting the Tau strike waves. Ground fire raked the air and friend and foe alike were buffeted by walls of rising hot air from the exploding promethium tanks below.

Across the stardocks, Tiger Sharks swept low unleashing storms of fire and seeding clouds of gun drones in their wake, while nimble and deadly Barracudas swarmed and stabbed with murderous bolts of energy at the lumbering spacecraft trying to flee. Struggling to escape, cargo lifters and tanker shuttles exploded in midair with pyrotechnic thunderclaps that shattered armoured glass windows kilometres distant, or tumbled slowly into the surging seas, already wreathed in flame. Rail shells tore through ferrocrete and steel, making a mockery of armoured bunkers and defence towers, and bursting storms of cluster munitions laid waste to habitation blocks and vast tracks of warehousing. Combat drones and crisis suited fire-warriors dropped onto defensive positions and ripped into the scrambling guardsmen, while their transporting Mantas hovered overhead and tore the city apart with close range fire. Outmatched in firepower and outnumbered, the Achaean pilots fought with suicidal bravery, chasing down the attackers and dogfighting between the skyscraping grey canyons of cooling towers and refinery stacks, braving the fusillade of their own ground fire as well as that of their enemies.

The Tau had broken through the outer defences and into the inner city although they had taken severe losses in doing so. Behind them the cargo depots and refineries were ablaze. The survivors on the ground fought a desperate struggle against the legion of drones they had dropped in their wake. Ahead lay the city's core and the heart of the Imperium's power and control on the planet. Screened by the gigantic Mantas, the remaining Tau bombers formed an attack wedge and plunged in like a spearhead, smashing through the last lines of defence. The great dark shape of the lead Manta swung in to attack the jutting armoured tower of colonial control, shrugging off volleys of tracer fire and exploding flak shells only to be caught at point blank range by a battery of Manticore missile tanks, well hidden between the thermal-vent stacks of a reactor-fortress.

Lightning fighter of the 12th Fighter Wing's 3rd strike squadron. Strike squadrons generally specialise in ground attack and close support missions and can be equipped with Thunderbolts, Lightnings, Lightning Strikes or Vulture gunships. On Typha-IV they were required to carry out standard intercept and patrol missions.



Valkyrie airborne assault carrier. On Typha-IV, many Valkyries were used for transporting penal workers and guards to off-shore rigs. This aircraft is part of the Typhan Orbital Interface Detachment, and as such was not part of the Imperial Navy's strength, although they were later requisitioned and equipped for combat duties.

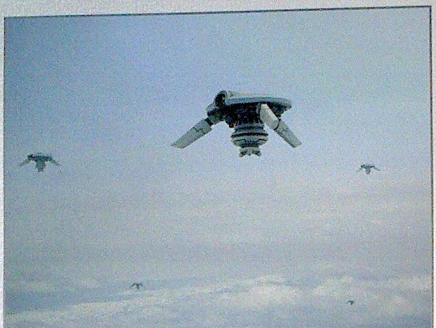
Under repeated missile impacts the huge machine crashed down, its hull split in two by the Manticore's heavy explosions to end as a flaming wreck at the base of the great tower. The Manticores, now reloading, were destroyed seconds later as a flight of Barracudas screamed in to avenge the fallen giant. With this last gasp of defiance the defenders seemed spent; the flak guns had all but fallen silent and the Navy pilots had been killed or scattered, despite their valiant efforts. The city was burning and the starport lay in ruins, although the Tau themselves had paid dearly for their triumph. All that was left to complete the victory now was the destruction of colony control and the reactor-fortress, a death blow to finish the wounded beast off.

Salvation came as unexpectedly to the defenders as it did to the attacking Tau. Masked by the firestorm and chaos of battle, the Sheering Reach reserve squadrons had come in like the attackers, flying low to the sea and erupted now like pale grey spectres through the choking thick pall of burning fuel smoke and fell upon the Tau aircraft. Speeding in came fresh waves of Thunderbolts, their autocannons hammering and skystrike missiles roaring forth, it was elements from the 1019th and 1110th's fighter squadrons, all that could be armed and launched in time. They were followed swiftly by a Marauder flight from the 35th, with dummy practice bombs still loaded in the weapons bays of some. Caught by the sudden fury of a counter-attack of unknown size, and already running low on fuel and ammunition the Tau commander gave the order for a general withdrawl from the city, pausing only long enough to recover drop troops. For some the order to withdraw came too late and a second Manta was caught stationary, hovering at low altitude above the ruined starport, re-embarking its Fire Warrior complement who had just succeeding in liquidating the last defenders. Attacked at its most vulnerable, a Marauder Destroyer and Light Strike Fighters mercilessly raked fire into the Tau super-heavy transport which detonated, killing all on board, and scattering flaming wreckage about the starport.

As the surviving Tau aircraft broke off from the city, the aircraft harried the Tau out to sea, managing to pick off and damage more Tau aircraft, before turning back, their own limits of fuel and firepower reached.

With the Tau onslaught driven off, the Imperial Navy was in no shape to offer any means of serious pursuit – Argent Landing was a burning ruin and fires raged out of control in many parts of the city, their toxic smog filling the air. Uncounted thousands lay dead and the surviving emergency support services were hopelessly overwhelmed.

Again, General Hurst acted resolutely and mercilessly. He set the Commissariat to evacuate the military personal back to the city core and cut the rest off. He quickly ordered the demolishing of great swathes of infrastructure to create firebreaks and let the rest, including a great many prison habitation blocks with their inmates still confined within, burn to the ground. Aerial command was transferred to the untouched northern island training facilities and continuous combat patrols mounted against future threat from the treacherous xenos. Far above in orbit, the men of the asteroid station Bastion Alpha could do nothing but look down in horror, as the blot of darkness in the planet's atmosphere over Argent Landing spread, and damage reports and calls for assistance began to come in from a dozen locations on the surface. For all its power the station was impotent to intervene in the conflict, its weapons and sensors geared to operate against space-born threats, not against the planet below. So it did the only thing it could; send an emergency planetary distress call via its own Astropaths to Battlefleet Ultima command and waited for reinforcements. For the Tau, the clock was now ticking.



Attrition and Destruction

In the aftermath of the first Tau onslaught both sides retreated to regroup and re-arm. The defenders of Typha had suffered a terrible blow, the planetary command infrastructure was in tatters and only brutal martial control prevented revolt and rioting. Food and clean water were rationed and in dangerously short supply, while many of those that had not suffered direct injury or death in Argent Landing were now falling prey to exposure and toxic contamination. The Imperium's military strength had fared little better. Between the losses in the air and the dead on the ground from the attack, over 70% of their manpower was now counted as causalities and over a half of their machines were destroyed or lost. The training squadrons had suffered relatively light losses, but were stretched thin, operating a continuous rolling defence of the city, their own base, and longer range combat patrols.

The Tau also had problems of their own; they had taken much more severe losses in their initial attack than their worst predictions had estimated, and in particular the loss of two Mantas had been a particularly bitter blow. The intelligence their plans had been based on was clearly critically flawed as to the size and disposition of the defending forces, which called into question their entire position. Despite this they knew they had achieved many of their initial objectives, Argent Landing had been rendered useless as an economic unit if not totally destroyed, and the majority of the secondary targets had been eliminated without any loss at all. Shas'O'lunsu retreated to meditate on the matter, and when he later emerged, he decreed the attack would continue for nine more days before they retreated, hopefully before the Imperium's reinforcements could arrive. Tactics would shift, now their attacks would be cautious and careful, and they would retreat in the face of superior numbers and attack again elsewhere. If Typha-IV refused to die by a single great blow, then the wounded beast would be bled slowly and brought down by a hundred lesser cuts instead.

What followed became known to the exhausted Imperial Navy pilots as 'Black Week', as fighters were scrambled time and again to combat Tau attacks that came seemingly erratically and without pattern. The Tau struck against individual bases and refineries, launching diversionary attacks that were followed by heaver raids against exposed facilities and even the Black Rock base itself. They intercepted patrols in the air and sought to destroy aerial transport convoys of food and supplies vital to the very survival of many far-flung bases and mining camps, and the Imperials were left running their machines and pilots ragged, chasing hit and run raids that were over by the time that help could arrive. Over sixty individual engagements were recorded in the seven days that followed and in the desperate struggle both men and machines began to fail under the intense pressure of combat. As 'Black Week' progressed, the beleaguered naval pilots were supplemented with Munitorum flyers who took to the skies in refitted training planes and hastily repaired machines salvaged from wrecks; few survived but the increase in numbers proved vital to holding the line against the xenos attackers. The Imperials continued to steadily lose men and aircraft to attrition against the Tau who always kept the initiative deciding when and where battles would be fought. But the Tau's own loses began to mount, and for increasingly diminishing gains.

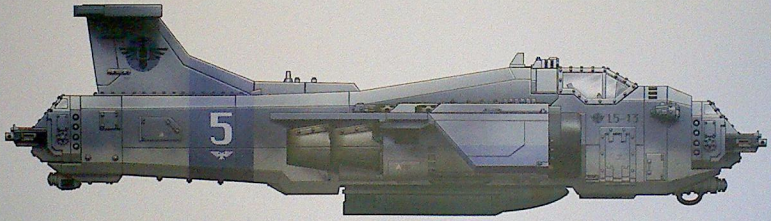
Caleb's Dilemma

Since the surprise attack, Air-Marshall Ursa Caleb, commanding officer of the Imperial Navy squadrons, had been a bitter and obsessed man. He slept little, standing sentinel day and night in the jury-rigged command and control centre at the northern training base, staring silently for hours on end into the baleful green glow of the auger screens and waiting for reports of fresh contacts to appear. Apart from the immediate defence of what facilities remained undamaged, his greatest concern was to find the origin of the Tau attacks. He had no doubt they were laired underneath the concealment of the dense storm layer somewhere on the southern polar regions, but where exactly? Having witnessed the destruction of most of his squadrons, he hungered for vengeance, but beyond that he knew the precarious nature of the Imperium's own position. He was running increasingly low on men and materials, especially pilots, and he had received news that help would not arrive perhaps for another fifteen days at least. The disaster at Argent Landing had destroyed or contaminated much of the colony's off-world supplies, not least among them its reserve food stocks. Those supplies that remained were scattered between dozens of bases and supply points across the equatorial belt. But without better knowledge of the Tau's remaining strength or response times, to send out his remaining transports to acquire them might prove disasterous. The only alternative, as he saw it, was to concentrate his remaining strength and use it aggressively before it was bled away to impotence. A plan of counter-attack was formed by Caleb, General Hurst and their advisors. It was dubbed Operation 'Defiant Hate'. It called for great improvisation, and if it failed the Imperium would have squandered its last defenders in vain.

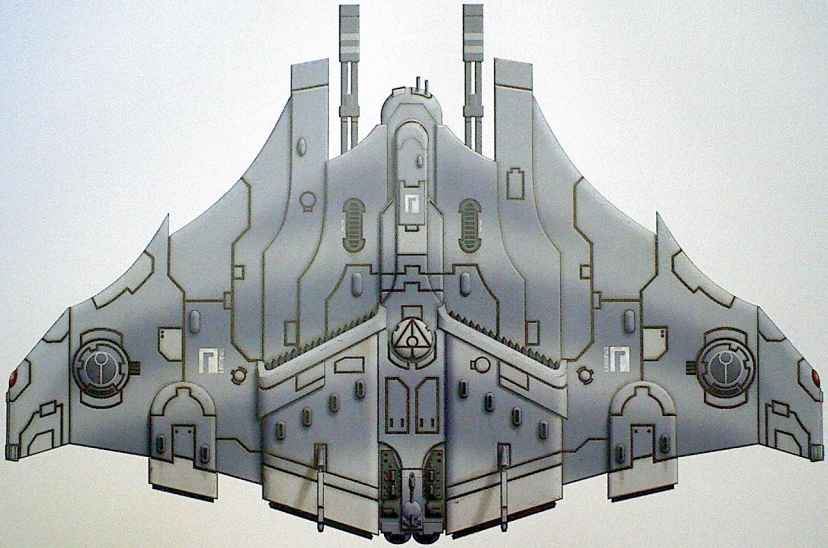
The Tau at Bay

The Tau did not realise just how close to complete collapse the Imperium's forces were. But the true condition of the remaining M'yen'ral strike force was also far graver than Caleb suspected. Despite the valiant efforts and guile of the Tau pilots, the Imperial Navy had held the line through seven days of ambushes and surprise strikes, and now the Tau were all but spent. The cost for the Tau was high, with over half of their command lost or combat-ineffective, and fuel, ammunition and spares running in

Marauder Bomber of the 35th Bomber squadron, another training unit forced into action by the Tau attack. This is the seventh aircraft of the squadron.

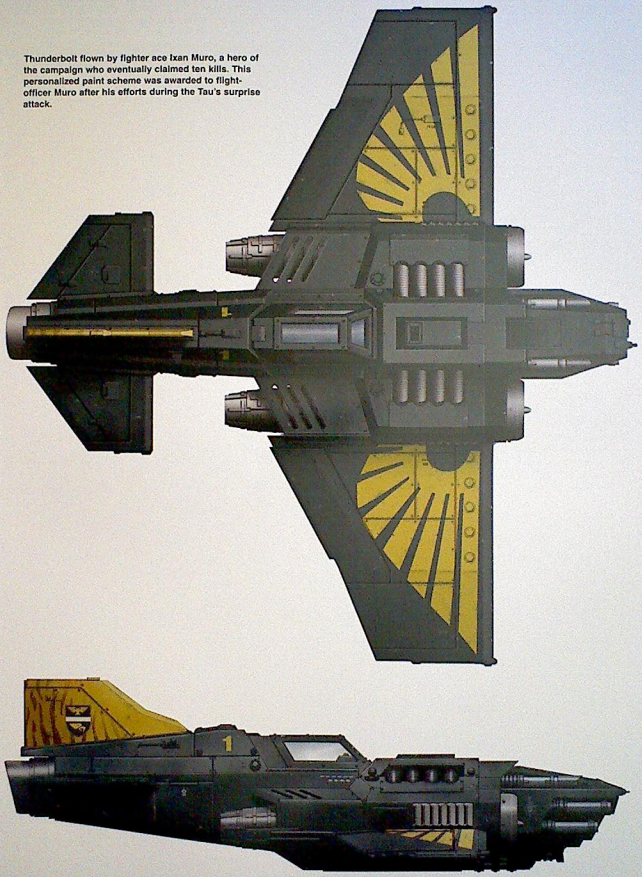


Marauder Bomber of the 35th Bomber squadron. This is the fifth aircraft of the squadron, the only aircraft of the squadron converted to carry the Colossus bomb.



Tiger Shark AX-1-0 of Air Cadre El Acuvah. These aircraft provided the task force's cutting edge for ground attack missions, utilising their heavy firepower to destroy promethium rigs and refineries with ease.

Thunderbolt flown by fighter ace Ixan Muro, a hero of the campaign who eventually claimed ten kills. This personalized paint scheme was awarded to flight-officer Muro after his efforts during the Tau's surprise attack.



Pilot Officer Ixan Muro scores another kill.

critically short supply. Shas'O'Lunsu sent out a coded transmission for the carriers to begin their approach and retrieve his exhausted cadres. Aside from defensive patrols and a few feints designed to keep the enemy from suspecting their retreat, the Tau pulled back to their landing point as the weather closed in over the polar region. They waited for extraction, perhaps two days away, as the stealthy carriers slowly returned to Typha-IV.

But undetected above them a Marauder Vigilant, flying high and braving the perils of the worsening storm, located an enemy aircraft and tracked the path of the retreating Orca to the Tau base. It transmitted the data back to Caleb, before turning for home at the edge of its fuel range. Unbeknown to the Tau, time had just run out.

Operation Defiant Hate

The location of the Tau base seemingly confirmed, Caleb and Hurst decided that they could not afford to delay, particularly if, as they suspected, the fall off in Tau attacks indicated that they were massing for a fresh offensive. Operation Defiant Hate called for the use of the bulk of his surviving planes: repaired and rearmed Thunderbolts, Lightnings and the precious remaining Marauder Bombers and Destroyers all configured for ground attack. His forces were supplemented by Valkyrie transports and many requisitioned Arvus lighters packed with troops of the Cadian regiment who had until now been forced to man air defences while the war raged above. The attack order was given, and the great mass of Imperial aircraft lifted off and formed up. Riding the gathering storm-front and heading inexorably southwards, the air-column made no attempt at stealth, and the Tau early warning remotes soon detected the ramshackle air-fleet's approach. As the Imperium's aircraft began to close with their target, flying in over the ice-flows they were buffeted by the storm's winds.

The Tau scrambled to get airborne, whilst patroling Tau aircraft began to make hit-and-run attacks on the column, harassing the fleet and attempting to break up its formation, targeting the vulnerable transport craft trailing behind. But Caleb himself, flying aboard a Marauder Vigilant was with the attackers, and under his command he would not allow his pilots to be diverted or their strength scattered. On they flew.

The Killing Skies

The storm's gathering might finally broke as the remaining combat-capable Tau aircraft rose up to engage the vengeful enemy now descending upon them. Lightning flashed and thunder rolled but could not hope to complete with the murderous display of the warplanes, and the skies were pierced at once by blasts of killing energy and shrieking shells, missile trails dissected the air and warplanes exploded in blossoms of fire as the two air fleets clashed head on. The aerial battle quickly became an anarchic free for all as the fleets broke apart into a score of individual dogfights and desperate escapes, where planes and missiles swarmed like angry insects in the storm-lashed sky. Targets were acquired, lost and fresh targets acquired moments later in the hellish maelstrom. On the ground below the trailing force of ad-hoc troop transports dropped the Cadians into a raging blizzard on the edge of the Tau landing fields, and the Cadian infantry ran screaming through the snows heedless of the shots poured into them from the Fire Warrior's prepared positions. Believing that they were about to be overwhelmed and were mere minutes from total rout, Shas'O'Lunsu issued the emergency order for the evacuation, and he directed the Fire Warriors and Air Caste fighter pilots to attempt to hold the attackers off long enough for the transports to escape. Bombs and wreckage fell from the skies on friend and foe alike. No quarter was asked or given, and although the Tau fought with unity and skill they found themselves losing to the vengeful hatred of their human enemies. Mantas and Orca dropships struggled up through the storm and the relentless strafing of their attackers, hoping to reach orbit and the Custodian carriers that had now thrown stealth aside in order to speed to their comrades' rescue. For each aircraft that made its way to the edge of space, another fell in flames or spun away to its death in the turbulent atmosphere. Far below it was the power of the growing storm that finally forced an end to the battle, and the Tau M'yen'ral, swamping the landing fields with a crushing fist of snow and ice.

Imperial Navy Aces of the Typhan Conflict

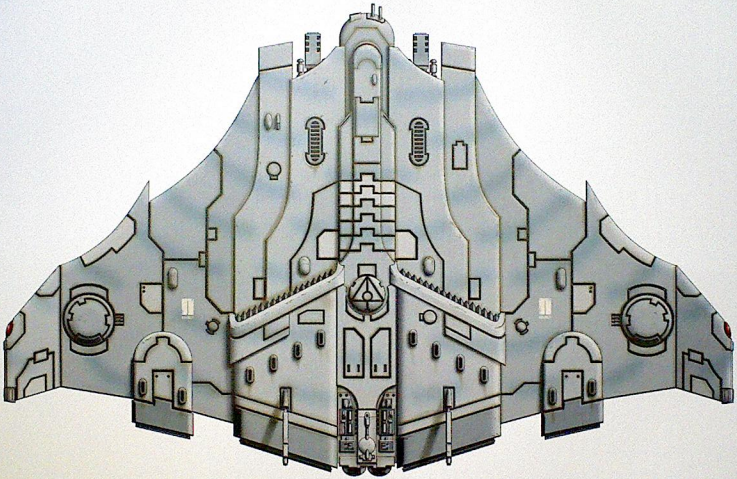
Despite its brevity, the Typhan conflict's intense series of engagements created several ace pilots, who seemed to thrive on the harsh conditions and unrelenting pace of the ongoing battle. Most renown was given to two pilots in particular.

Flight Commander Nikolai Stone

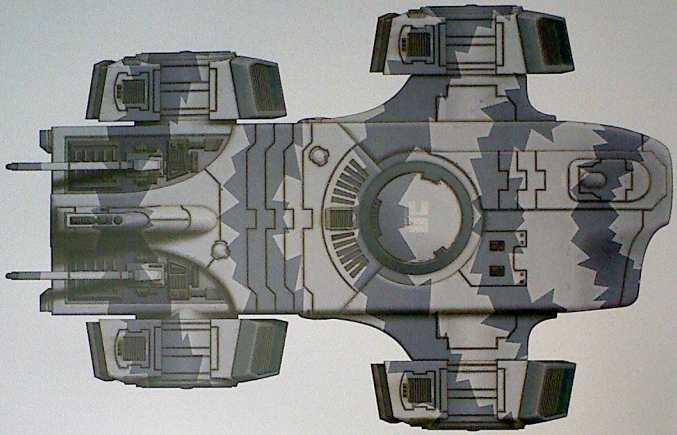
Stone was a veteran Thunderbolt pilot with the 111th wing, who had a proficient if undistinguished record up to the outbreak of the conflict but his hour of glory came during the Tau onslaught against Argent Landing at the start of the war. Tasked with defending the refinery area he successfully led a hastily assembled flight of aircraft in a close quarter action in and around the giant cooling stacks and thermal vents. Showing great presence of mind and clarity of vision despite the chaos and confusion caused by the Tau's sudden attack, he is accredited with managing to take tactical command in the skies above the refinery zone, as well as personally claiming five confirmed kills and numerous contributing attacks during the engagement, including a Tiger Shark bomber and the first confirmed kill of one of the previously unencountered Remora drone fighters. Stone's Thunderbolt was also damaged numerous times during the battle and he was wounded. Although he survived the battle, he later succumbed to a mixture of blood loss and toxic shock from exposure to the polluted atmosphere. In the immediate aftermath of the Tau attack, Stone was held up by the authorities and the Commissariat as a hero of the Imperium, an example of what the Emperor expected from his soldiers, greatly adding to his fame.

Pilot Officer Ixan Muro

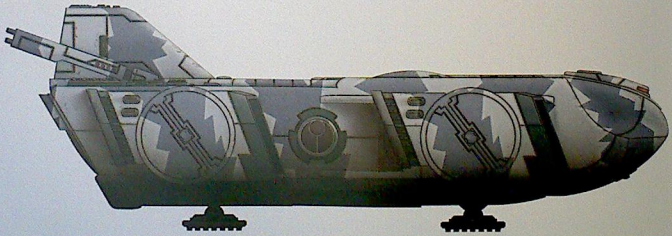
Muro was a relatively recent recruit to the 1019th. He was one of a number of previously unblooded pilots that rose to ace status during the conflict. Claiming three kills in his very first combat engagement over the mining sites of the M-4 sector, Muro went on to score another seven confirmed kills during the patrols and sorties of 'Black Week', making him something of a living legend and good luck charm to his fellow flyers. Prior to the final preparations before the start of Operation Defiant Hate, Muro's skill was recognised with a brevet promotion to flight officer and he was granted the honour of painting personal livery on his Thunderbolt for the upcoming battle. Muro's final tally of kills in the savage battle over the Tau base remains unconfirmed, but it is thought that he shot down at least a further four Tau aircraft, before he was forced to eject from his fatally damaged plane. Unlike many other combat pilots that fought as part of Operation Defiant Hate, Muro survived both the battle and the climate, although injuries sustained from his landing and from subsequent frostbite forced him into months of recuperation and augmetic surgery. Muro was decorated for his part in the conflict, and returned to action with the 1019th on their subsequent deployment to Battlegroup Tantalus.



Tiger Shark of Air Cadre El Ao'rata, shot down during the attack on Minehead FM-4.



Orca of Air Cadre El Kaia. A logistical support aircraft, deployed in a non-combat role.



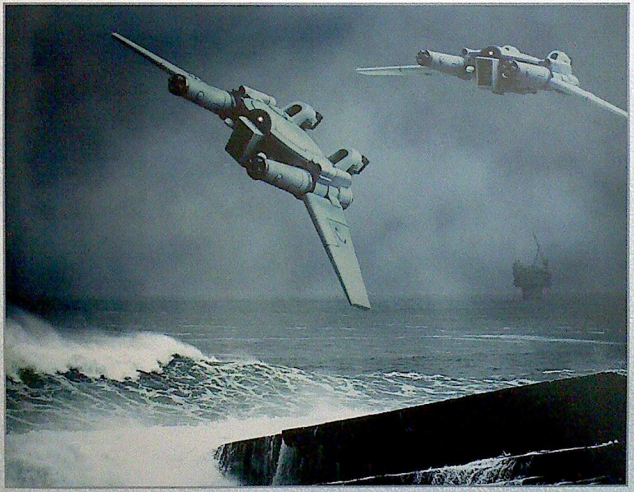
Escape & Aftermath

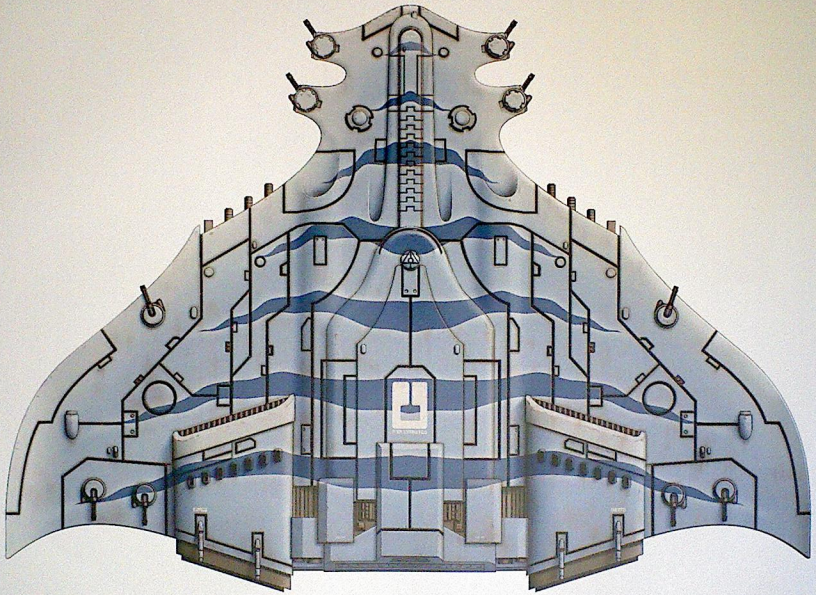
Of the remains of the M'yen'ral Tio've it is not known how many Tau escaped to the two waiting Carriers in orbit, but is estimated that no more than a third of the Tau force survived the final retreat from the surface of Typha-IV, based on recovered pict-footage from combat aircraft and orbital observation stations. Of the two modified Custodian carriers, one identified as the *Spear of Unity* struck a fusion mine and was further damaged by fire from an orbital defence stations while effecting the Tau's escape. Unable to maintain speed with the Shield of Purpose ahead of pursuit, long ranged sensora record a transfer of crew and personnel to her sister ship before she was scuttled and self-destructed to avoid capture. The *Shield of Purpose*, suffering damage from the pursing Imperial fleet ships successfully engaged etherdrives and escaped.

The Imperium's losses on Typha-IV were proportionally as high as that of the Tau and perhaps greater. Many Imperial Navy aircraft that survived the final battle proved too heavily damaged or low on fuel to successfully escape the enveloping storm, and either died as a consequence or were later forced to ditch into the polar seas - most pilots perishing before any recovery could be attempted. Among the casualties was Group Commander Ursa Caleb whose body was recovered from his Marauder Vigilant, still at the controls of his augur station, apparently making no attempt to bail out of the damaged craft and issuing attack orders even as the aircraft crash-landed on the ice. A body later identified as that of Shas'O'Lunsu by Tau captives was also discovered. Fighting to the end among his Fire Warriors, the Shas'o's critically damaged crisis suit was dispatched by Cadian fire.

The Typhan raid proved to be a short but extremely bloody affair, and although it can be claimed as a victory for the Imperium, it must be regarded as a pyrrhic one at best. Although the Tau forces had been met head-on and defeated; a fact that would feature significantly in Imperium propaganda for years to come, the losses in men and materiel it had suffered were severe. The Imperium's greatest gains were arguably in the wrecked xenos equipment and the scores of captives, (including precious technologists of the Earth Caste) taken in the final battle, indeed Typha-IV was soon swarming with agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the Ordos Xenos and the Imperial Navy command in the aftermath of the conflict, and it is from their findings this abridged account has been taken. The Imperium's greatest loss was Typha-IV's industrial output, which was effectively crippled in the wake of the conflict. It would take decades before the planet could regain its former levels of production and the catastrophic environmental cost of the war to Typha-IV was incalculable. Perhaps more importantly, in strategic terms the Tau had proved that they could strike deep into Imperium's territory without warning. As a consequence of this raid, a great deal of materiel and resources that might have gone to an invasion build-up to retake worlds lost earlier to the expanding Tau Empire was now diverted to fortifying the Imperium's defence in depth across this, and neighbouring, sectors.

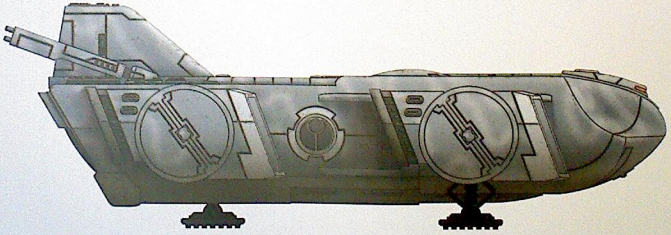
In the final analysis it is thought probable that the Tau Aun'va judged the losses of M'yen'ral a price not too high in service of the Greater Good.

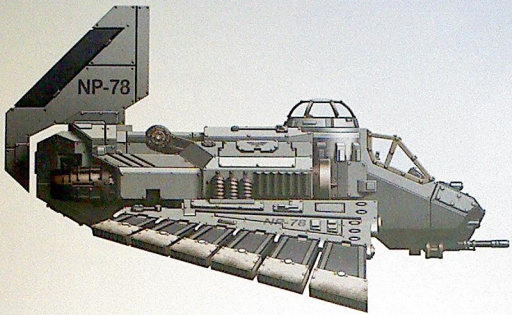




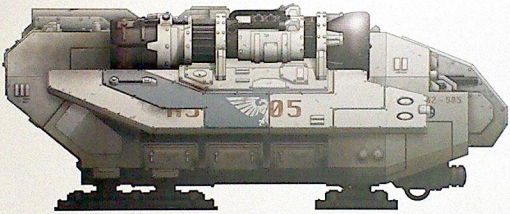
Manta of Air Cadre El Tia. This aircraft bears a very distinctive colour scheme, it may be the task force's overall command vehicle, although this is unconfirmed.

Orca of Air Cadre El'Tia. This Cadre provided the task force with the majority of its air transport capability.

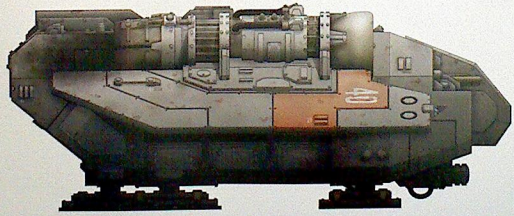




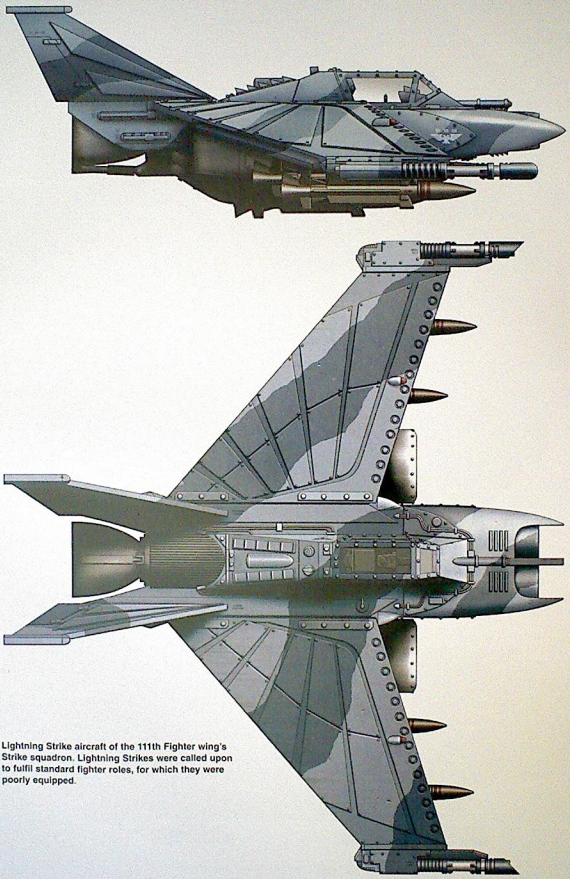
Aquila Lander of the Orbital Interface Detachment.



Arvus Lighter. Non-military aircraft use a wide variety of colour schemes and markings.

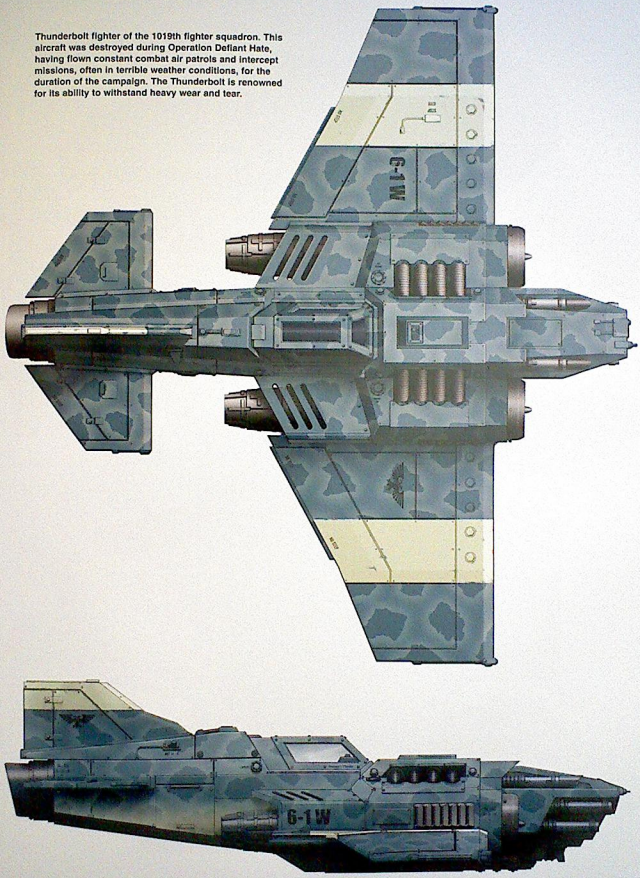


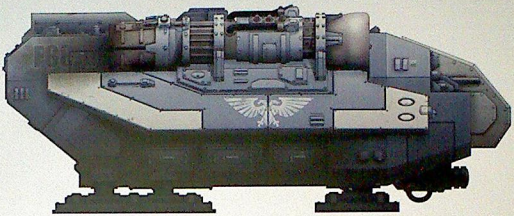
Arvus Lighter of the Typhan Orbital Interface Detachment.



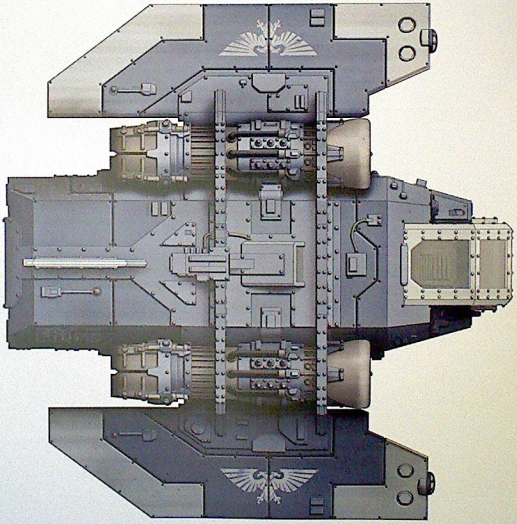
Lightning Strike aircraft of the 111th Fighter wing's Strike squadron. Lightning Strikes were called upon to fulfill standard fighter roles, for which they were poorly equipped.

Thunderbolt fighter of the 1019th fighter squadron. This aircraft was destroyed during Operation Defiant Hate, having flown constant combat air patrols and intercept missions, often in terrible weather conditions, for the duration of the campaign. The Thunderbolt is renowned for its ability to withstand heavy wear and tear.

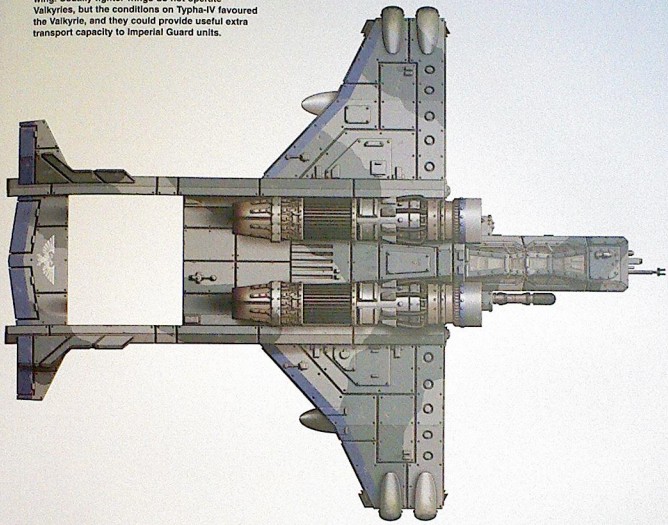


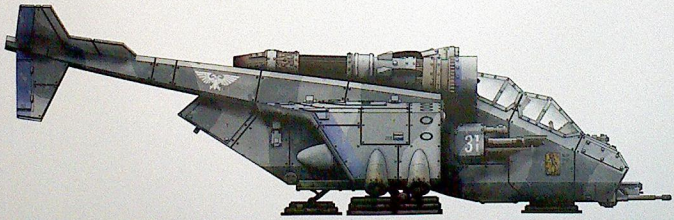


Arvus Lighter of the Orbital Interface Detachment. Although not a combat aircraft, many were used as stand-in troop transports, and performed a valuable role in supply convoys.

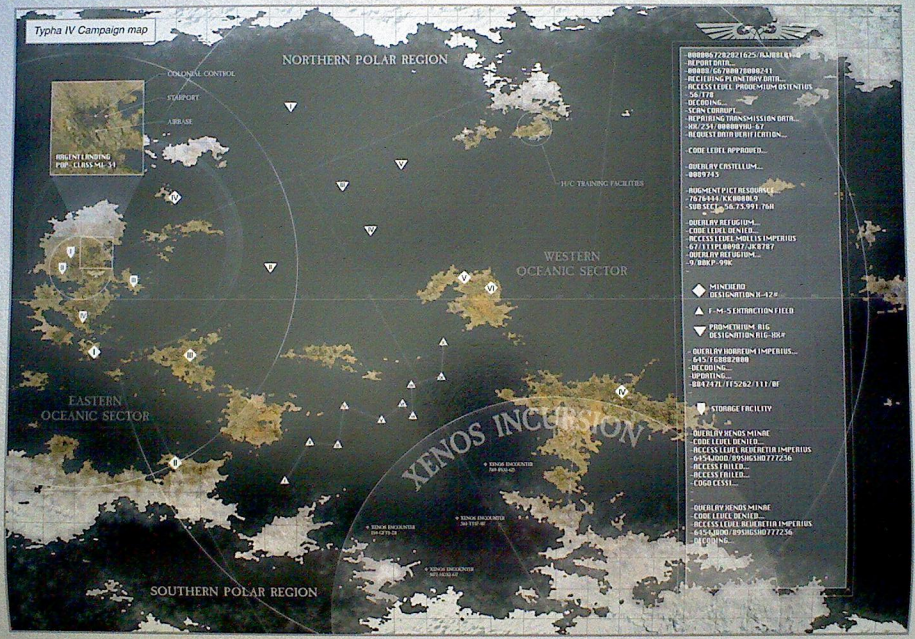


Valkyrie airborne assault carrier of the 12th Fighter wing. Usually fighter wings do not operate Valkyries, but the conditions on Typha-IV favoured the Valkyrie, and they could provide useful extra transport capacity to Imperial Guard units.





Typha IV Campaign map



STRATEGIC TARGET

An Aeronautica Imperialis campaign system for Typha-IV

Campaign Play

Campaigns are a great way to play and link your games together in an exciting contest of skill and luck with your fellow players. In the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook we presented a simple system that allowed you to fight an Air Superiority campaign. But not all battles are fought purely in order to destroy the enemy's military forces, and as an alternative, the variant campaign system presented here pits two opposing sides against each other, not only with the goal of destroying the other's forces, but by striking against a series of vital enemy strategic targets whose destruction will help turn the course of a wider war.

This campaign system is an expansion of the basic Air Superiority campaign and uses many of the same features, but has new rules added specifically to represent the fighting on Typha IV.

Re-fighting the Battle for Typha-IV

The following chapter allows you and your friends to fight your own battle to decide the fate of Typha-IV, taking the part of either the Imperial Naval defenders or the Tau of the M'yen'ral.

The goal of the Tau attack on Typha-IV is to destroy the Imperium's resources and industrial facilities on the planet rather than to conquer land or attain control of the skies, and to this end the Tau player will be attacking a series of strategic targets. The Imperial player's goal, naturally enough, is to prevent this from happening, and if they are able, to turn the tables on the Tau and destroy their base.

Rather than a 'balanced' campaign set-up, the campaign rules reflect the story of the conflict itself and initially begins with a bias favouring the Tau as the surprise aggressor. However, as the campaign progresses, this advantage will rapidly tail-off as the Imperium rallies to the defence, with a timed cut-off point for the campaign when massive re-enforcements arrive on the worlds, which will overwhelm the Tau, thus ending the campaign.

Although these rules are geared to fight the Typhan conflict, with a little modification you could easily re-fight the campaign with different forces (such as Orks or Chaos) or use the campaign system presented here as a system for a campaign of your own.

When playing this campaign, the Tau side will have to decide whether or not to go hell-for-leather on the initial attack and risk collapsing later as their supplies run low, or alternately the Tau side can be more cautious and try to husband their forces. On the other hand, the Imperial Navy will start with a smaller pool of defenders and are outnumbered by the Tau aggressors. The wise Imperial commander must parcel out their forces carefully to begin with or risk losing too much trying to 'save' everything. As the campaign progresses (assuming they haven't lost all their forces already) things will ease for the Imperium as they will find it much easier to get re-inforcements and can acquire new aircraft more readily than their Tau enemies, but can they fight back from initial losses fast enough to defeat the Tau!

The Strategic Target Campaign System

The campaign for Typha-IV takes the shape of a Strategic Target campaign which offers a variation on the Air Superiority campaign system found in the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook, and you should familiarise yourself with those rules before playing this campaign.

This campaign is map-based. The map represents a series of strategic targets of varying importance (promethium fields, mining stations, airbases, the starport complex, etc), which the Tau players must destroy, and the Imperial Navy defend.

Each strategic target marked on the map has a numeric value, indicating how vital it is to the Imperium. The total adds up to the Imperium's Strategic Point Total (SPT) at the start of the campaign. The Tau begin the game with a single airbase strategic target, and can only increase their SPT by destroying Imperial facilities.

The Typhan-IV campaign has an absolute time limit of ten campaign turns. At the end of ten turns both sides SPTs are totalled up, adding any Campaign points each side has (see page 163 of the AI rulebook, for more details on this).

After 10 turns, the side with the highest total has won.

Campaign Size

The Typha-IV campaign is a sizable battle but the forces involved are initially strongly imbalanced in favour of the Tau.

The Imperial side starts with 600 points to spend on their forces (which can be Imperial Navy only), at least 25% of which (and no more than 50%) must be spent on ground defences.

The Tau side starts the game with 800 points to spend on their forces, no more than 10% of which may be spent on ground defences.

If you wish to fight smaller or larger campaigns you may do so by varying the points values available to the two forces, but the attacking force must always have a third more points to spend on their forces than the defender.

Picking a Campaign Squadron List

Historical squadron lists for the campaign are included, alternatively, you may replace these with squadrons based on the models you own or your personal preferences, but remember you will be called upon to undertake numerous missions not simply to attack or defend, so choose your forces accordingly! Imperial Navy players will need at least one Marauder Vigilant to undertake Deep Recon missions.

When you pick your forces number the individual planes and defences you have so you can identify them from turn to turn and easily track their survival and progress.

The Campaign Turn

The campaign runs for ten turns. Each turn is broken up into a number of phases. During each turn one mission (game) should be played per player (so if you have one player per side, two missions are played).

Phase 1: Determine Strategic Advantage

In each campaign turn it is important to know which side has the strategic advantage. The side with the advantage has the power to choose where battles will be fought and is termed the Aggressor, while the other side is termed the Defender.

On the first turn of the campaign, the Tau launch their surprise attack, and so the Tau forces are automatically the Aggressors. Additionally they will automatically win the Initiative in the first turn of any games played in this turn.

TYPHA-IV CAMPAIGN SQUADRON LISTS

IMPERIAL NAVY SQUADRON

Fighters

1 x Thunderbolt with ace pilot and distinctive paint scheme	38 pts
7 x Thunderbolts	24 pts each
2 x Lightnings	20 pts each
2 x Lightning Strikes	20 pts each
4 x Valkyries	12 pts each
2 x Vultures	20 pts each

Bombers

2 x Marauder Bombers	28 pts each
1 x Marauder Vigilant	12 pts
1 x Marauder Destroyer	30 pts

Ground Defences

8 x Sabre Platforms	4 pts each
4 x Hydra Platforms	12 pts each
3 x Manticores	16 pts each

All aircraft have additional weapon loads.

TAU EMPIRE AIR CADRE

Fighters

1 x Barracuda with ace pilot, target lock and black sun filter	37 pts
2 x Barracudas with disruption pod	26 pts each
10 x Barracudas	24 pts each
6 x Remoras	12 pts each

Bombers

2 x Tiger Sharks	20 pts each
3 x Tiger Shark AX-1-0 with target lock	31 pts each
2 x Tiger Shark AX-2-2	12 pts each
2 x Orcas with jump troops	26 pts each
1 x Manta	110 pts

Ground Defences

4 x Sky Rays	12 pts each
4 x Aerial Mine	8 pts each

All aircraft have additional weapon loads.

On subsequent campaign turns the side that won the majority of the games played in the previous turn may choose to act as either an Aggressor or Defender for this turn. The side that lost the most games is always the Defender.

If there has been a draw in the number of games won and lost, then the strategic advantage remains unchanged from the turn previously.

If the side with the strategic advantage chooses to act as a Defender, then both sides take a defensive stance, creating a 'Lull in the Hostilities'.

Phase 2: Assign Ground Defences

Before the games for the turn are played, the Imperial player must decide where to focus their defences. They do this by assigning all their ground defences to specific Strategic Targets on the map. These systems are just too static to move around readily, and must be assigned to a location at the start of the turn.

The Tau's ground defences are all located at their single airbase which begins the game hidden in the Southern Polar Regions.

Phase 3: Select Strategic Targets to Be Attacked

The side which is the aggressor picks one or more strategic targets to attack this turn, by choosing from those on the map.

Selecting a target means that your forces are actively seeking to attack that target this campaign turn, and have a chance of successfully assaulting and destroying it. However, war is fickle and the attacking forces may be diverted, intercepted or attacked before they can reach the target. This random element is represented by rolling to discover which mission you will fight on the Missions tables.

In the case of the Tau, this means they can pick any of the Imperium's strategic targets from the start.

As the Typhan conflict breaks out, the Imperium is unaware of the location of the Tau forces, and must locate them before attacking the Tau base. By default all the Imperium's Aggressor attacks are focused in the Xenos Incursion zone in the Southern Polar Regions on the map. In order to find the Tau base, the Imperial player must first succeed at a Deep Recon mission in order to identify the Tau airbase. Once the Tau base has been identified, the Imperial side may attack it with either Air Raids or Troop Insertions in subsequent campaign turns.

You can select as many different strategic targets as are available, (up to the limit of the number of games you can play in this campaign turn). An Aggressor has the option of sending in everything they have against a single target in the hopes of ensuring its destruction, or spread their attacks out, hoping that they can destroy more than one target in a single campaign turn.

Phase 4: Determine Missions

Missions within the campaigns are the actual games of Aeronautica Imperialis you will play (which you should imagine as particularly important or influential encounters taking place as part of a much wider war), and it is your successes or failures in these games that will determine the conflict's eventual outcome!

Before each game, roll on the following Mission tables to determine which mission will be played. The table used will depend on which side is counted as the aggressor this campaign turn (see above).

Mission tables

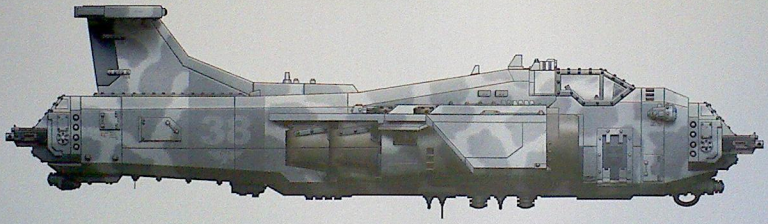
Tau Aggressor Missions

D6	Mission	Attacker
1	Combat Air Patrol	n/a
2	Ambush	Imperial
3	Troop Insertion	Tau
4	Air Raid	Tau
5	Air Raid	Tau
6	Ambush	Tau

Imperial Aggressor Missions

D6	Mission	Attacker
1	Combat Air Patrol	n/a
2	Ambush	Tau
3	Bomber Intercept	Imperial
4	Bomber Intercept	Imperial
5	Ambush	Imperial
6	*Deep Recon/Air Raid /Troop Insertion	Tau/Imperial

Marauder Destroyer of the 35th Bomber squadron. Both of the squadron's Destroyers were ageing aircraft.
De-commissioned from a front line bomber squadron, they were being used for crew training, until forced back into active service.



Marauder Vigilant of the 35th Bomber squadron, camouflaged for long ranged reconnaissance over the southern polar region.

A Lull in Hostilities (Both Defender)

D6	Mission	Attacker
1	Target Recon	Random
2	Target Recon	Random
3	Combat Air Patrol	n/a
4	Combat Air Patrol	n/a
5	Bomber Intercept	Random
6	Ambush	Random

The rules for these missions are presented in the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook on pages 163 and 164 and are used exactly as shown there, with the following exceptions:

Air Raid & Troop Insertion: The targets, terrain and Victory points for these are based on the Strategic Target involved rather than those shown in the *Aeronautica Imperialis* rulebook. Details of these can be found in their strategic target descriptions later. Ground defences assigned to the target at the start of the campaign turn are used in the mission at no points cost, but extra ground defences may not be bought from the defender's points allowance for the game.

Deep Recon: This is a new mission and details of which can be found at the end of this chapter.

Certain Strategic Targets also have their own special rules that might affect the mission you will play. If so, this is listed as part of their description later.

Phase 5: Determine Mission Sizes

Now you know what mission is to be played, the attacker chooses the game size. The game size sets the points value of forces to be used; Small (up to 100 pts), Medium (up to 200 points) or Large (up to 300 points).

Target Recon, Deep Recon and Combat Air Patrols are always small games, while Air Raids and Troop Insertions against Colony Control, the Starport, Air Bases and the Tau base are always Large games.

In this campaign the location of ground defences is pre-determined, and so ground defences are not included in the above points totals.

A player or side can always opt to use less than their maximum allowed points for the game, (shepherding their forces for more important battles still to come, or because they are running out of planes!).

Phase 6: Pick Mission Forces

Mission forces must be picked from those available to fight. A single aircraft cannot fight in more than a single engagement during a single campaign turn, (hence the importance of numbering your aircraft!), as the battles are happening at the same time.

Phase 7: Play Missions

Now the fun part, use relevant mission profiles to set up the table then play your games!

Phase 8: Determine Results

Once a game has been completed, remove destroyed aircraft and ground defences from your squadron roster.

The winner gains Strategic Target points and Campaign points; if the margin of victory was 50% or greater, they gain 1 Campaign point, for a superior victory they gain 2 campaign points and for a massacre 3 Campaign points.

Spending Campaign Points

Spending Campaign points can be done in one of two ways, requesting reinforcements or a special mission.

Requesting Re-enforcements: At the end of the campaign turn, you can request re-enforcements and re-supply. This can be done by spending 1 Campaign point per side per turn (see page 163 of the ***Aeronautica Imperialis*** rulebook for the Imperials and the special rule Infiltrating Task Force for the Tau).

Special Missions: You can also use your Campaign points to request a special mission if you have the Strategic Advantage at the start of the next turn. This also costs 1 point and allows your side to choose, rather than randomly roll, a single mission from those available that turn.

Unspent campaign points are added to your side's STP total at the end of the campaign.

Destroying Strategic Targets

Regardless of the Campaign point score, if the attacker is victorious in an Air Raid or a Troop Insertion mission on a Strategic Target, that target is counted as being knocked-out or destroyed for the rest of the campaign and its STP value is transferred from the looser to the mission's wining side.

When a strategic target is destroyed remove it from the map. It cannot be attacked again.

Strategic Targets & How they Work

Each strategic target is shown on the map, (which you have permission to photocopy for personal use), and an STP value that you can find on the table below.

To destroy a Strategic Target either a successful Air Raid or Troop Insertion mission must be carried out against it. Certain Strategic Targets of particular importance have special rules associated with them.

Strategic Targets On Typha IV

Name	STP	Name	STP
Colonial Control	50	FM-5 Fields	25
The Starport	25	Promethium Rig (x5)	5
Imperial Airbase (x2)	25	Minehead (x6)	5
Storage Facility (x4)	5	Tau Base	100

At the start of the campaign, the Imperium's STP Total is 225 points and the Tau have 100 points.

Strategic Target Descriptions

Colonial Control

To set up the board for the Colonial Control centre, place a large single building at the centre of the map (height 3), and lay out other buildings of various heights around the table. However, these other buildings provide terrain only and the control centre itself is the target of the raid.

The Control Centre is an armoured structure that has 10 hits and a 5+ save against any hit it takes. As part of it's structure it also mounts two Hydra platforms on its roof, with a 360° arc of fire around the building.

Air Raid Notes: If the Colonial Control building is seriously damaged during an Air Raid scenario, or destroyed, each hit it has taken adds 5 additional Victory points to the attacking player's total.

Only if the Colonial Control Centre is seriously damaged or destroyed is the mission a Victory to the attacker regardless of other factors.

Troop Insertion Notes: The landing zone for the Troop Insertion is within 12" of the base of the Control Centre.

Each troop point successfully landed is worth 1 additional Victory point. Regardless of other factors, in order to win this scenario the Tau player must successfully land 20 troop points within range of the Colonial Control Building.

Campaign Effects: If the Colonial Control ST is destroyed, the Imperial player cannot spend Campaign points on reinforcements for the next D6 Campaign turns.

The Starport
Place a single large Sensorium building with 8 hits and six landed star craft with 4 hits each within 12" of each other surrounded by suitable terrain.

In Air Raids seriously damaged or destroyed star craft are worth an additional 10 Victory points each, while the Sensorium if seriously damaged or destroyed is worth 20 Victory points

In troop insertions, for each troop point successfully landed within 12" of the Sensorium is worth 5 victory points.

Campaign Effects: If the starport is lost then all attempts to receive reInforcements will be at -2 to the roll for the rest of the campaign.

Airbases/Tau Base
Place four bunkers/hangers with 4 hits each and six grounded aircraft with 2 hits each as targets. All must be placed within 12" of each other.

In Air Raids seriously damaged or destroyed targets are worth 5 victory points per hit (bunkers) and 1 per hit (aircraft).

In Troop Insertions, the attacker gains 2 Victory points for each point of troops successfully landed within 6" of a hanger/bunker.

Campaign Effects: If a side loses all its airfields, aircraft that survive a mission but are damaged are destroyed at the end of each subsequent campaign turn on a D6 roll of 5+

The FM-5 Extraction Fields
If Troop Insertion is rolled as a mission against this strategic target, play Air Raid instead.

Place four Promethium rigs (4 hits each) and one control platform (6 hits) on a flat ocean surface. All rigs must be within 12" of the control platform.

Any ground defences must be placed on top of a rig or platform, if the platform or rig is destroyed, so is the defence model.

The volatile nature of promethium means that weapons that have a chance of causing extra damage, automatically do so against promethium rigs.

Seriously damaged or destroyed promethium rigs are worth 5 victory points per hit in this mission and the control platform is worth 10 Victory points per hit.

Storage Facility
If Troop Insertion is rolled as a mission against this strategic target, play Air Raid instead.

Place three large storage buildings (6 hits each) within 12" of each other, surrounded with such terrain as is appropriate.

Seriously damaged or destroyed storage buildings are worth 10 Victory points per hit each in this mission.

Promethium Rig
Place three promethium rigs with 4 hits each within 12" of each other on an ocean terrain board

If Troop Insertion is rolled as a mission against this strategic target, play Air Raid instead.

The volatile nature of promethium means that weapons that have a chance of causing extra damage, automatically do so against promethium rigs.

Seriously damaging or destroying each promethium rig is worth 10 Victory points per hit.

Any ground defences must be placed on top of a rig but if the rig is destroyed, so is the defence model.

Minehead
Place a single large building with 8 hits surrounded by four smaller buildings/workings with 2 hits each within 6" of each other.

In Air Raids, severely damaging or destroying the buildings is worth 20 Victory points per hit for the large building, and 2 Victory points each for the smaller ones.

In Troop Insertions each troop point successfully landed within 12" of the buildings is worth 5 Victory points.

The Degree of Campaign Victory
If one side or player during the campaign has every ST they possess destroyed, their opponent scores a Crushing Victory and the campaign ends.

If play continues to the predetermined final campaign turn (see the Campaign Timer), each player or side should add together the unspent total of the Campaign points they have gained during play and their total STP value score. The side with the highest total wins a Strategic Victory.

Typhan Campaign Special Rules

Storm Warning
Typha-IV is a place of massive climatic disturbance and frequent icy storms. On any mission played roll a D6 at the start of the game, if the result is 4-5 the battle occurs in bad weather. Roll a D6, this represents the cloud level – For any combat fought at this altitude or above the Night Fighting rules apply. On a roll of a 6, a full scale storm rages and the Night Fighting rules apply at all levels and pilots cannot safely eject.

The Hidden Tau Base
The exact location of the Tau base is hidden at the start of the campaign as their attack is being launched by surprise. They may only be subsequently found and targeted by the Imperial Navy player if he can successfully carry out a Deep Recon mission, which will then reveal the Tau airbase.

DEEP RECON

Long range recon aircraft are sent out to scour the southern Polar Regions for signs of Tau presence.

Set-Up
Arrange the table in any mutually agreeable manner. Both sides deploy at opposite edges of the table in base-to-base contact with their board edge. Players take it in turns to deploy one aircraft at a time. Aircraft may start at any permissible altitude and speed.

Attacking Forces: Tau
The attacker has two Barracuda Fighters.

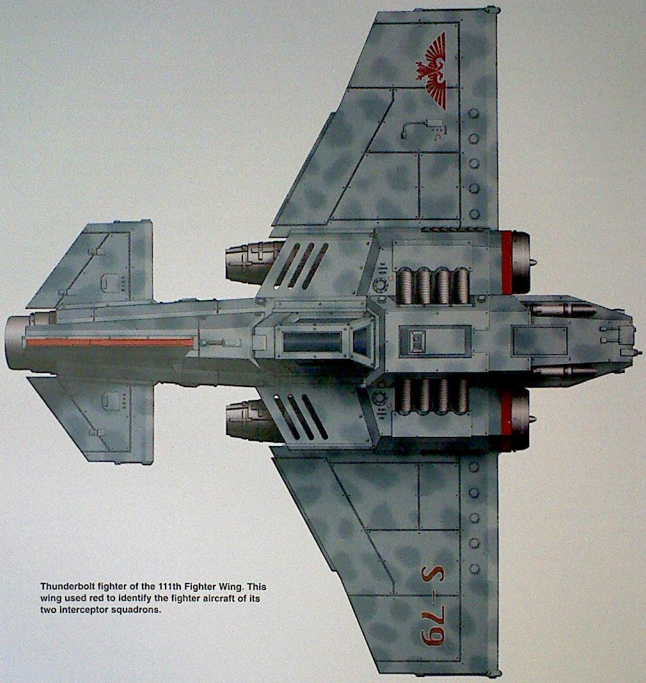
Defending Forces: Imperium
The defender has a single Recon Marauder.

Special Rules
The mission takes place under the Night Fighting rules (see page 18 of *Aeronautica Imperialis*).

Victory
If the Imperial player can disengage by leaving via the Tau player's board edge, they are victorious.

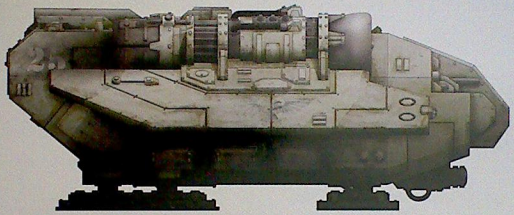
Infiltrating Task Force
The Tau force has been forced to bring only a limited supply of spares, munitions and replacements with it. As a result they cannot easily replace losses. They must roll on the following Reinforcement table.

D6	Forces Available
1	None available
2	None available
3	25 points of any forces
4	25 points of fighters only
5	25 points of bombers only
6	50 points of any forces

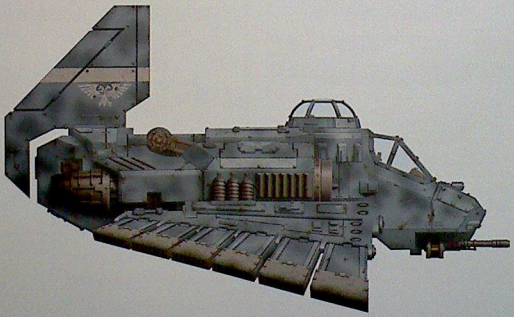


Thunderbolt fighter of the 111th Fighter Wing. This wing used red to identify the fighter aircraft of its two interceptor squadrons.

Vulture gunship of the 12th fighter wing. Vultures were also forced to fight outside of their normal ground attack roles – with limited success.



Arvus Lighter. This aircraft has had a rapid over-paint in white in an attempt to camouflage it for combat service.



Aquila Lander of the orbital interface detachment. This aircraft was requisitioned for patrol duties defending 'Black Rock' airbase, attached to the 1019th fighter squadron.

TYPHA-IV SCENARIOS

DOG-FIGHT OVER MINE HEAD 4-42

Background
One of the Tau's first targets for their surprise attack was the 4-42 mine head, the largest and most productive of Typha-IV mining operations. As the attack force approached, scrambled Imperial Navy fighters of the 1019th and 12th wings were already airborne and on their way to intercept. The attacking Tiger Sharks found themselves in the sights of Thunderbolts racing to the defence.

Alternative Forces
To play this game with other forces, the attacker can spend 150 pts. The defender can spend 120 pts. The attacker can take fighters or bombers, but must include at least one bomber, no ground defences can be used. The defender may include fighters and ground defences.

Special Rules

Reserve Aircraft
The defender's aircraft are racing to the battlefield as fast as they can. The defender can choose to place up to half his aircraft in reserve. If he does so, roll for each individual aircraft arriving. When an aircraft arrives he may choose which long table edge it enters from, at any permissible speed and altitude.

Set-up
Play the game along the length of a 6' x 4' table. The mine head should be placed in the centre of the table. It is a single building with 8 hits. Within 6" of this building, place four other smaller buildings with 2 hits each. The defender may set up his ground defences within 12" of any of the mine head buildings.

The defender deploys his forces first, placing them against his short board edge at any permissible speed and altitude. The attacker then positions any of his aircraft not in reserve.

Victory Conditions
The Tau must destroy the mine head to win the game. The attacker gains Victory points for seriously damaging the mine head buildings, for damaging enemy aircraft and for each point of transport landed within 6" of the mine head buildings (they will attack the facility from the ground).

ATTACKERS

Tiger Shark
with seeker missles

Tiger Shark
with seeker missles

Tiger Shark

Tiger Shark

Barracuda

Barracuda

Barracuda

Barracuda

DEFENDERS

Thunderbolt
with ace pilot and additional weapons load 4

Thunderbolt
with additional weapons load 4

Lightning

Lightning

Lightning

Lightning

BATTLE OF ARGENT'S LANDING

Background
The Tau's main assault was directed at Argent's Landing, with massive force they smashed into the defences, unleashing their air cadres and hunter cadres to reap destruction. The beleaguered defenders put up a heroic struggle, in the air and on the ground.

Alternative Forces
To play this game with other forces, the attacking force can spend 300 pts. The attacker can take fighters and bombers. The defender can spend up to 200 pts. The defender can take fighters, bombers and ground defences.

Special Rules

Chimney Stacks
The chimney stacks of the refineries are incredibly tall, and count as height level 2. If an aircraft's base comes into contact with the chimney stack at level 2 or less, then it collides with the stack, and the aircraft instantly takes D6 hits. The stack is destroyed.

Evacuation
The Arvus Lighters are attempting to escape into orbit. Each Arvus that manages to exit the table is worth 10 Victory points to the defenders. If the Arvus exits into orbit using its rocket boosters then it is worth 20 Victory points.

Set-up
Play this game on a 6'x4' table. The terrain is part of Argent's Landing, and should include at least three refinery works (6 hits), six storage tanks (4 hits each), six chimney stacks (2 hits each), six other small buildings (2 hits each) and landing pads for up to 10 aircraft. It can include more. The Tau's landing zone for troops is a 12" square in the centre of the table.

The defender deploys his ground defences and the Arvus Lighters first. Placing the Arvus Lighters on the landing pads, and the ground defences anywhere on the table. Next, the attacker deploys the aircraft in his first wave against a short table edge at any permissible speed and altitude. The defender then deploys his aircraft on the opposite short table edge at any permissible speed and altitude.

The Arvus Lighters can take off from turn 1. All reserves arrive from their player's table edge.

Victory Conditions
The Tau must do as much damage to Argent's Landing and its defenders as they can. They score Victory points for damaging and destroying The ground installations, damaging enemy aircraft and ground defences and landing troops in the landing zones.

If the Tau can score 100 Victory points more than the Imperial player then they win, otherwise they lose.

ATTACKERS

FIRST WAVE

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

Tiger Shark
with seeker missles

Tiger Shark
with seeker missles

Tiger Shark

Tiger Shark

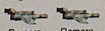
SECOND WAVE

Manta
with additional weapon load 1

Tiger Shark AX-2-2

Tiger Shark AX-2-2

Remora Remora


Remora Remora

RESERVES

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

Barracuda
with weapon load 1

DEFENDERS

Thunderbolt
with ace pilot and weapon load 4

Thunderbolt
with additional weapon load 4

Thunderbolt
with additional weapon load 4

Thunderbolt
with additional weapon load 4

3 x Vulture with additional weapons load 6

8 x Arvus Lighter

Hydra Hydra Hydra
Hydra Hydra Manticore

RESERVES

Marauder Destroyer
with additional weapon load 2

Thunderbolt
with additional weapon load 4

Thunderbolt
with additional weapon load 4

OPERATION DEFIANT HATE

Background
The Imperial Navy's operation to destroy the Tau airbase on Typha-IV was code named 'Defiant Hate'. After a week of non-stop battles both sides were feeling the strain, on both pilots and machines. In a last gasp effort to evict the alien invaders, Air Marshall Caleb gathered his remaining aircraft and launched an all out assault.

Alternative Forces
To play this game with other forces, the attacking force can spend 250 pts. The attacker can take fighters and bombers. The defender can spend up to 200 pts. The defender can take fighters, bombers and ground defences.

Special Rules

Gathering Storm
The battle begins in a storm. Roll a D6, at this altitude level or above the Night Fight rules apply. Roll a D6 and add 6, after this turn (should the game last that long) the storm hits and the entire battlefield counts as a night fight.

Evacuation
The Tau may attempt to evacuate the planet. Any aircraft that exits the table using its rocket boosters gain the Tau player extra Victory points.

Set-up
Play the game on a 6'x4' table. The Tau's airbase consists of at least five large landing pads (6 hits each), each with a hanger (4 hits each) and five small buildings (2 hits each), all are hidden in the snow. They should be placed anywhere on the table, but not within 6" of a table edge.

Victory Conditions
Add up Victory points. The attacker gains Victory points for damaging the ground installations, damaging enemy aircraft and landing troops within 6" of any landing pad. The defender gains Victory points for damaging enemy aircraft and evacuating aircraft via their rocket boosters. Any aircraft that escape are worth their Victory points to the defender.

ATTACKERS

Valkyrie
Valkyrie
Thunderbolt
with ace pilot and weapons load 4
Thunderbolt
with additional weapons load 4
Thunderbolt
with additional weapons load 4
Marauder Vigilant
Marauder Destroyer

RESERVES

Marauder Bomber
Arvus Lighter
Marauder Bomber
Arvus Lighter
Valkyrie
Valkyrie
Vulture

DEFENDERS

LANDED

Manta
Orca
Barracuda
Orca
Barracuda
Tiger Shark AX-2-2
Remora
Remora
Sky Ray
Sky Ray
Sky Ray
Sky Ray
Sky Ray

AIRBORNE

Barracuda
Barracuda
Barracuda
Drone Mine
Drone Mine

SCENARIOS

Aquila Lander of Inquisitor Galleus requisitioned for the Zarona Intervention.
The location of the Inquisitor and his retinue is currently unknown.

TOURNAMENT SCENARIO

The Aeronautica Imperialis tournament scenario is designed to be used in a tournament environment. Ideally, it will provide an evenly balanced contest between two players in a tournament. This is not to say that other scenarios cannot be used during tournaments, but this scenario has been designed specifically with tournament play in mind, and requires players to take a balanced force, capable of fulfilling a variety of missions.

TOURNAMENT SQUADRON LISTS

For a Tournament game both players need to select a 200 point squadron. They may select forces from the fighters, bombers and ground defences and both squadrons must also include a single ground installation. The ground installation can be no larger than Very Large, and the players must have an appropriate model. The ground installation costs no extra points and will include its own ground defences in addition to any purchased from the squadron lists. When it comes to playing the game neither side will use all 200 points of their squadron list and only the defender will use his ground installation during a game.

PRE-GAME PREPARATIONS

Before playing the game you will need to determine a few important things.

1. Determine Attackers and Defenders

One side will be the attacker, whilst one side will be the defender. Roll a D6. The player that rolls highest may choose whether he wishes to attack or defend in this game.

2. Select Forces

Both the attacker and defender must now select the forces they will use in this game. The attacker may select up to 150 points of fighters and bombers chosen from his 200 point squadron list. He may not select any ground defences, and may not include his ground installation.

The defender may select up to 150 points. These may be chosen from fighters, bomber and ground defences, and his force must include his ground installation.

RESERVES

Not all a player's aircraft will be available at the start of the game. Both sides may have some aircraft in Reserve.

3. Determine Attacker's Reserves

The attacker rolls 3D6. For each 6, rolled an aircraft must start the game in Reserve. The attacker may choose which aircraft will start in Reserve. At least one aircraft must start the game deployed on the table regardless of how many 6s are rolled.

4. Determine Defender's Reserves

The defender rolls 6D6. For each 6 rolled, an aircraft must start the game in Reserve. The defender may chose which aircraft is in Reserve. At least one aircraft must start the game deployed on the table regardless of how many 6s are rolled.

TABLE EDGE

5. Determine Table edge

Both players roll a D6. The player that rolls highest may choose which short table edge he will deploy on.

6. Position Landing Zone

The attacker positions his landing zone. This is a 9" square area positioned in the centre of the table, two thirds of the length of the table from the attacker's board edge.

DEPLOYMENT

7. Defender's ground deployment

Deploy the defender's ground installation and all his ground defences. These must be placed in the defender's half of the table, and at least 12" from any table edge. They may be placed in the attacker's landing zone.

8. Attacker's deployment

The attacker deploys all his available aircraft against his table edge, at any permissible speed and altitude.

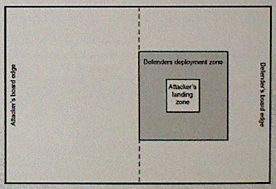
9. Defender's aircraft deployment

The defender now deploys all his available aircraft against his table edge, at any permissible speed and altitude.

If the defender's ground installation includes any landing pads then his aircraft may start the game deployed on the landing pad instead of deployed on the table edge. Any aircraft that are starting the game in Reserve may deploy on the landing pad instead of starting in Reserve.

10. Begin the game

DEPLOYMENT MAP



VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, either when one side has been forced to disengage or 12 turns have been played, both players earn Victory points as detailed in the main rules.

The attacker gains Victory points for damaging and destroying enemy aircraft, ground defences and the ground installation, and for landing troops in the landing zone.

The defender gains Victory points for destroying enemy aircraft and bonus Victory points for any undamaged parts of his ground installation.

PHOENIX GROUP

Background
During Ghazghkull Thraka's second attack on Armageddon, his massive Ork invasion fleet included many 'Roks'. These huge fortresses were converted asteroids, fitted with engines and bristling with weapons. As part of the invasion, Roks were landed on the surface, forming instant bastions. The Orks crash-landed one Rok close to the important industrial facilities of Phoenix Island.

Upon landing, the Ork warbands carried within poured forth. The Armageddon Steel Legion regiment fighting to defend Phoenix Island was hard pressed, and it seemed the island and its important industries must fall to the Orks. That was until the intervention of the Black Dragons Space Marine Chapter, who halted the Ork advance, but could not evict the Orks completely.

To help stem the tide of greenskins at source, a special mission was organised to attack and destroy the Rok. Being so large it would be almost impervious to conventional bombs, so it was to be targeted by the largest bombs available, the Colossus, supported by heavily armed Destroyers. A special team of bombers, codenamed 'Phoenix Group' was assembled, and a night attack planned.

Alternative Forces
To play this game with other forces, the attacking force can spend up to 100 pts. The defender can spend up to 75 pts. The attacking force may only choose from Bombers, whilst the defender may choose from fighters and ground defences.

Set-up
Place the Rok in the centre of the table. It is a large asteroid with engines, half buried in the ground. On it are mounted the Ork's ground defences, various 'eavy flak guns and flak guns.

The Rok has a random number of hits. Before the first turn the Ork player secretly rolls 3D6 and leaves them aside, hidden under a cup. This is the total hits for the Rok for the game (remember it has already crashed into the planet). Keep track of how much damage is inflicted by the attackers, when the total is reached the game ends.

This game takes place at night, use the Night Fighting advanced rules.

Victory Conditions
Play until either the Rok is destroyed, the attackers are forced to disengage, or 12 turns have passed. The defenders will not disengage in this scenario, they fight on regardless of losses. Do not add up Victory points, if the Rok is destroyed the attackers win. If it survives, the defenders win.

ATTACKERS

Marauder Colossus
With infra-red targeting

Marauder Colossus
With infra-red targeting

Marauder Destroyer
With additional weapons load 2, infra-red targeting

Marauder Destroyer
With additional weapons load 2, infra-red targeting

DEFENDERS

Fighta-Bommer

Fighta-Bommer

Fighta

3 x Eavy flak guns (mounted on Rook)

3 x Flak guns (mounted on Rook)

CANYON RUN

Background
Following the Sherilax Uprising, the planet had been overrun by daemon-worshipping cultists and their decadent renegade allies. With the Imperium garrison defeated or captured and the planet governor corrupted to the Chaos cause, the Eldar of Saim-Hann craftworld launched a surprise attack to kill the uprising's leaders.

The Eldar's warp gate access to Sherilax was hidden amongst the planet's deep canyons but, after their raid was defeated, Eldar prisoners were subjected to horrible tortures to reveal its location. Lord Vexcarnel, commanding the traitorous forces, attacked sending his Hell Blades and Hell Talons as a first wave, clearing the way for a Harbinger bomber to destroy the canyon, warp gate and all, and seal off his new world from future Eldar interference.

Alternative Force
The attacker may choose up 150 pts of fighters and bombers. The defender may choose up to 150 points of fighters only.

Set-up
This table represents the canyons of Sherilax. The base of the canyons is altitude level 0, with the canyon walls rising to altitude level 3. Above level 3 is clear skies. Canyons should be between 4" and 6" wide.

Place as many canyons as you like on the table, the more the better. The defender then chooses where to place his warp gate. This can be anywhere on the table but must be inside a canyon and not within 12" of a table edge.

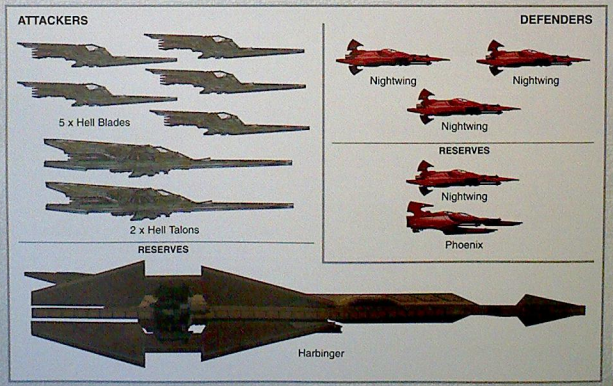
The attacker then chooses a short table edge, and deploys his first wave aircraft against this edge at any permissible altitude and speed. Remember that aircraft must be at level 4 or above to be above 'normal' ground level, or at level 3 or below to be inside a canyon.

The defender then deploys his aircraft on the opposite table edge, at any permissible speed and altitude.

Special Rules
Canyon Run
In order to attack the warp gate an aircraft must be inside the canyon, and at short range only. Weapons cannot engage the gate at anything beyond short range. The warp gate can only be hit on the roll of a 6, and has 4 hits.

Warp Gate
Eldar reserves enter the table via the warp gate, starting at altitude 1 and any permissible speed.

Victory Conditions
The attacker must destroy the warp gate to win the game. If it survives the game then the Eldar win. If it is destroyed, the Chaos forces win.



GROUND INSTALLATIONS

Ground installations is a term that covers all forms of hard ground targets, be they buildings, airfields, military bases, strong points and trench lines, factories, warehouses and any other form of building that constitutes a viable target for attacking aircraft.

The main rulebook covers buildings as ground targets and gives a basic list of hits for different sizes of buildings. This chapter expands upon those rules and, as well as providing more examples of building targets, allows players to design their own ground installations.

DESIGNING GROUND INSTALLATIONS

Players will generally have an idea of the type of ground installation they want to design, be it a base, airfield, industrial facility or whatever. These rules provide a general framework for designing any ground installation – what that installation then looks like is up to the designer and model he makes. These rules act as a guide to how to assign hits to a model.

Forge World's range of epic-scale terrain already includes several buildings which would make suitable ground targets, and these are given as examples later.

OTHER RACES

In terminology these rules assume that ground facilities are Imperial, or at least were Imperial until captured by the enemy. These rules can be used to construct ground facilities for any of the alien races present in Aeronautica Imperialis. If you are a Tau or Ork player and want to make a ground installation then simply follow the rules below. All that will change is the look of the model, the rules are not affected by the race. This applies to all the other races in *Aeronautica Imperialis* with the exception of Chaos forces, who are likely to be occupying a captured Imperial installation.

BUILD POINTS

To create a ground installation use Build points. Spending Build points allows a player to buy buildings of various sizes, modify their construction type then add extra features like landing pads and anti-aircraft defences. To design your ground installation follow the step-by-step process below.

STEP ONE: CHOOSE INSTALLATION'S SIZE

First you need to decide how large you want your ground installation to be. The size will determine the minimum and maximum number of Build points you can spend on the installation, and how many defensive weapons the installation can have.

Installation Size	Build Points		Defences
	Min	Max	
Small	4	8	0
Medium	9	16	1
Large	17	24	2
Very Large	25	32	3
Huge	33	any	4

A small installation might be a single building, bunker or front line command post.

A medium installation might be a single larger building, a collection of small buildings, a small supply base or a small strongpoint.

A large target might be a collection of larger buildings, a single large building, a small airbase or a factory.

A very large installation might be an airbase, a barracks, a factory complex or a fortress.

A huge installation might be a starport or a large factory complex.

Example: Designing my ground installation I decide it will be a large installation, actually a forward command base. I therefore have between 17 and 24 Build points to spend and can have up to two defences for the installation.

STEP TWO: CHOOSE BUILDINGS

Your ground installation must include at least one building, but can include as many buildings as you like. Each building costs a basic number of Build points, which can then be modified by the construction type.

	Build Points	Hits
Small building	1	1
Medium building	2	2
Large building	4	4
Very large building	6	6
Huge building	special*	as above

* Huge buildings: These are too large to be dealt with as a single building. Huge buildings should be constructed as several smaller buildings. A huge building may contain as many smaller buildings as you like, and each part is assigned its own hits and is attacked as a separate target.

Example: My command base will contain three buildings. Two small buildings and one medium building. These cost me 4 Build points.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE CONSTRUCTION TYPE

Each building should be assigned a construction type, which can be either standard, reinforced or hardened.

Standard construction – This is well-made, but not designed to resist attacks. Buildings of standard construction have their standard number of hits and cost no extra Build points.

Reinforced construction – As above, but the building has been reinforced to resist attack with blast shutters, interior bracing etc. A reinforced building gains +1 hit and costs +1 Build point.

Hardened construction – These buildings are specifically designed to resist attacks. They are made of rockcrete, reinforced ferrocrete, plasteel and flakboard, etc. Usually used on military buildings like bunkers and pillboxes. A hardened building gains +2 hits and costs an extra 2 Build points.

Example: Of my three buildings, one small building will be of reinforced construction, for +1 Build point. Both the other buildings will be bunkers, ie, hardened construct for +4 Build

points total. This gives me one reinforced small building with 2 hits, one hardened small building with 3 hits, and one hardened medium building with 4 hits.

STEP FOUR: CHOOSE DEFENCES

Most ground installations have some form of defence against attack. For Aeronautica Imperialis we are only concerned with anti-aircraft defences. The number of defences is determined by the size of the installation. For each defence you may choose one anti-aircraft weapon for free. These weapons are taken in addition to any ground defences bought from the squadron lists. Each weapon included costs 1 Build point.

Anti-aircraft weapons

Choose from either:

Imperial
Sabre Weapons platform, Hydra or Heavy Flak gun

Tau
Sky Ray

Orks
Flak Wagon or 'Eavy Flak kannon

Eldar
Fire Storm

Chaos
Captured Sabre Weapons platform, Hydra or Heavy Flak gun

Example: As a large installation I can take two defences for my command base. I will include two Hydra platforms, costing me 2 Build points. So far I have spent 11 Build points in total.

STEP FIVE: LANDING PADS

Your ground installation can also include landing pads. You cannot spend more than half your total Build points on landing pads.

If your installation has a landing pad then aircraft in your force may be allowed to start a game on the landing pad. The scenario should detail this special rule.

	Build Points	Hits
Small landing pad	2	2
Medium landing pad	4	4
Large landing pad	6	8

A small landing pad is large enough for one fighter sized aircraft. A medium landing pad is large enough for two fighter sized aircraft or one bomber, and a large landing pad is large enough for four fighters sized aircraft or two bombers.

Example: My supply base will have a medium landing pad for 4 build points. I have now spent 15 Build points. I must still spend another 2 Build points to equal the minimum required for a large installation.

STEP SIX: OTHER FEATURES

Other features are other items that you might wish to include in your ground installation.

These items add character to a ground installation, and in certain scenarios can be assigned extra Victory points or other victory conditions. So a attacker might get a bonus 20 Victory points for destroying a shield generator, whilst the defenderwould get the bonus if it survived intact.

	Build Points	Hits
Small supply dump	1	1
Power generator	1	1
Shield generator	2	2
Underground bunker entrance*	5	4
Vehicles		
Light vehicle	1	1
Armoured vehicle	2	2
Super heavy vehicle	4	4

* Once an underground bunker entrance is destroyed, any additional damage has a chance of destroying the bunker below. Roll a dice for each additional point of damage, on a 6 the bunker is destroyed. A destroyed underground bunker is worth 20 Victory points. The entrance is worth 0 Victory points unless the bunker below is destroyed.

Example: My base will include a single armoured vehicle (a Chimera) for 2 Build points. I have now spent the minimum required 17 Build points, but could spend up to another 7 if I wished.

In the end my forward command base contains the following:

Small building - 2 hits
Small building - 3 hits
Medium building - 4 hits
2 x Hydra platforms - 2 hits each
A Landing Pad - 4 hits
A Chimera - 2 hits

GROUND INSTALLATIONS & VICTORY POINTS

Ground installations can be attacked by enemy aircraft, and the attacker will score Victory points for each part of the installation he causes serious damage to (ie, inflicts at least half damage or more), as described in the main rulebook.

Ground defences which are part of the ground installation are worth their standard points cost in Victory points, so even though a Hydra platform is free, it will still be worth 12 Victory points if destroyed and 6 points if serious damaged.

Any parts of the installation which are undamaged (ie, have received no hits at all), will give the defender bonus Victory points equal to their total hits multiplied by 3. So, if a building with 4 hits is undamaged, it is worth 12 bonus Victory points at the end of the game.

USING GROUND INSTALLATIONS

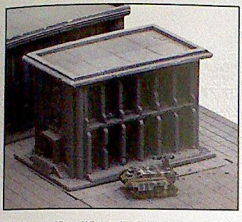
Not every game is suited to using ground installations, and in most games only the defending side will have a ground installation. It makes little sense for both sides to have ground installations on the table, although players can probably imagine some situations where this might happen. Where ground installations are situated on the tabletop will be dictated by the scenario you are playing.

The rules for ground installations are really for use when creating your own scenarios or campaigns. The bonus Victory points and access to free ground defences do make them worth considering in one-off or tournament games, as they cost no points, but this should be pre-arranged so that both players are aware that one side will be attacking the other's ground installation. This gives the attacker a chance to tailor his squadron selection appropriately.

For example, when playing an Air Supremacy campaign and the mission is an Air Raid, you could use the ground installation rules to create a target for the air raid.

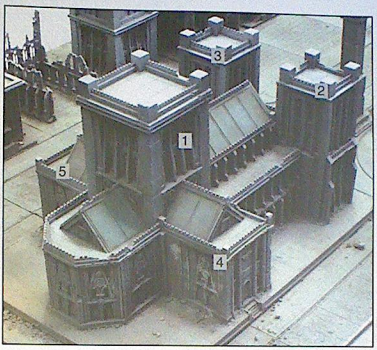
SAMPLE BUILDINGS

Here are few examples of buildings from Forge World's Epic buildings range. If you use these buildings as targets then use the rules below. If you are making your own buildings then these act as a guide as to how large your build should be, and how many hits to give it.



Librarum (Small installation)

Medium building, Standard construction, 2 hits.



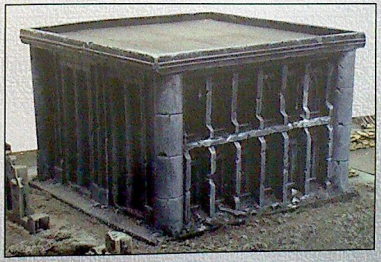
Cathedral Building (Large installation)

Huge building (5 buildings)

1. Main Tower and Nave	Very large building, Reinforced construction	7 hits
2. East Tower	Large building, Reinforced construction	5 hits
3. West Tower	Large building, Reinforced construction	5 hits
4. East Transept	Small building, Reinforced construction	2 hits
5. West Transept	Small building, Reinforced construction	2 hits

Censorium Tower (Small installation)

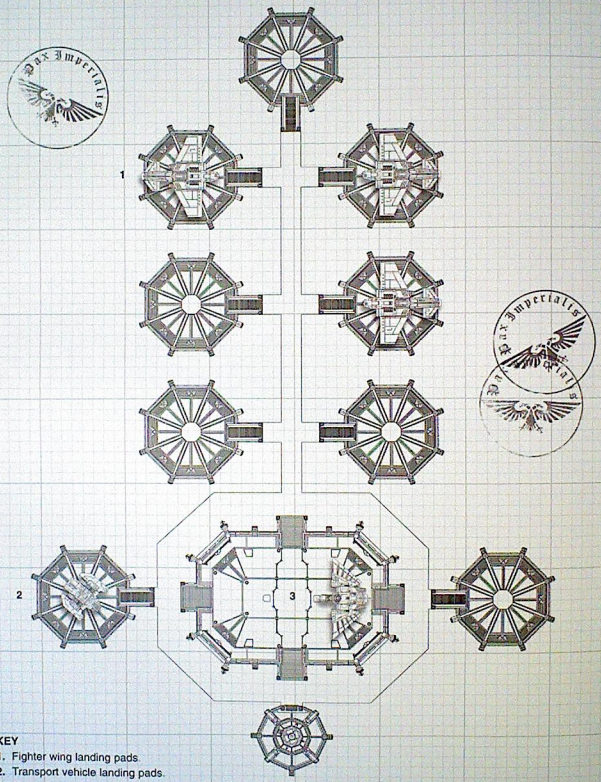
Large Building, Reinforced construct, 5 Hits.



Administratum Building (Small Installation)

Large building. Standard construction, 4 Hits.

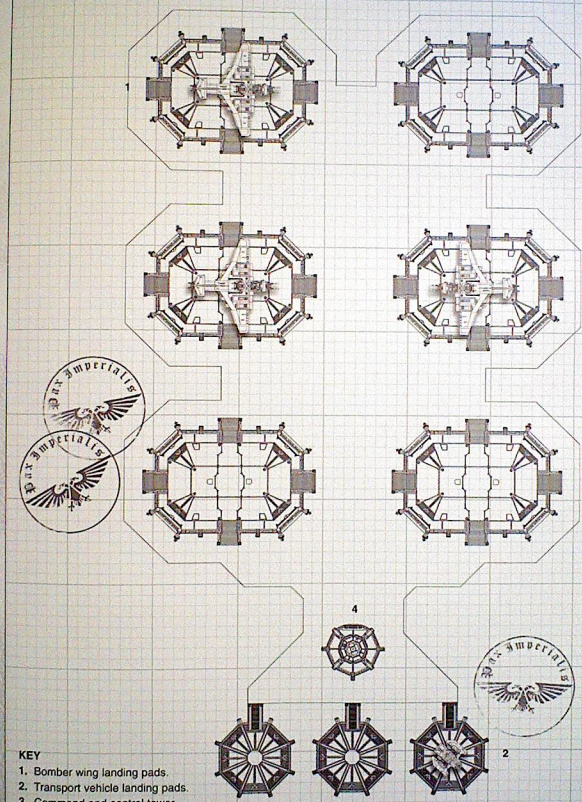
IMPERIAL FIGHTER BASE



KEY

1. Fighter wing landing pads.
2. Transport vehicle landing pads.
3. Heavy transport landing pad.
4. Command and control tower.

TYPHA-IV BOMBER BASE



KEY

1. Bomber wing landing pads.
2. Transport vehicle landing pads.
3. Command and control tower.

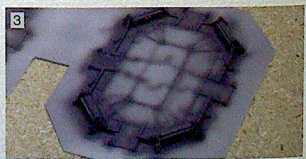
BUILDING AN IMPERIAL AIRBASE

Phil Stutcinskas explains how he used Forge World's range of airbase models to create an Imperial Navy airbase on Typha-IV, complete with Marauder Bombers, air defences and re-supply Trojans – a fantastic target for Tau attacks.

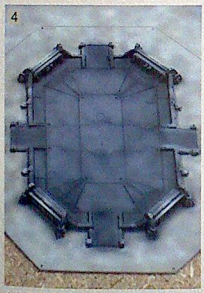
The finished imperial airbase.

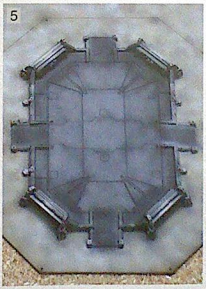
1.The plan of an Imperial bomber air base has been used to help create the outline of the base onto a piece of plasti-card. This has been done with simple tools such as scissors, a steel ruler and scalpel.

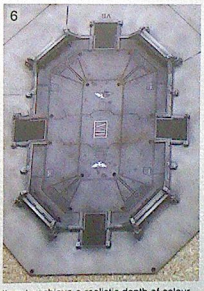
2. Here we can see the plastic card base with the Forge World landing platforms in place. This is done to finalise the layout before gluing them in place.



3. The airbase was undercoated with a grey primer. Using a much darker grey basic shadows were airbrushed to all panel lines and recesses.







4. & 5. Using an airbrush several layers of lighter greys were applied in a random mottled pattern to achieve a realistic depth of colour and textured look to the concrete surface. Additional shadows were then carefully airbrushed to redefine areas of detail and shadow.

6. Using washes and a detail brush the final stage was to pick out the details such as stairways and access doors, weather the airbase with dirt, rust, fuel and oil. Landing pad numbers were added from a brass etched sheet and a transfer sheet provided the Imperial Eagles.

7. The painted airbase, additional bunkers and gun pits were then glued to a base. The earth was made from a mixture of sand, ready mixed filler, watered down PVA and Graveyard Earth paint. This was then applied using a large brush.

8. Coarse flock and gravel were added to enhance the texture and detail of the groundwork around the airbase.

9. Narrow paths through the earth were added linking the outer defences to the main airbase.

10. Using a selection of brown paints and an airbrush, the earth was randomly shaded.

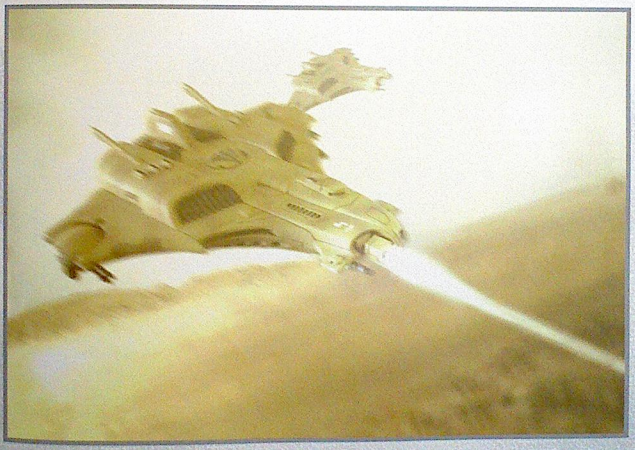
11. A thin layer of Scenic Snow was sprinkled over the entire board.

12. An empty airbrush was used to blow the excess scenic snow from the table. The airbrush was also used to move the snow into areas where it would naturally gather.

13. In some areas the scenic snow was only lightly removed exposing only small amounts of the earth below, creating a very realistic appearance.

14. The scenic snow was fixed in place by simply spraying the table with a layer of hairspray. This acts an an adhesive without affecting the paintwork.

BATTLE REPORT



BATTLE REPORT
RAID ON SUPPLY BASE THETA-NINE-FOUR

The planetary governor of Taros has treacherously rebelled and thrown in his lot with the expanding Tau Empire. Tau Hunter Cadres have arrived in force, ousted the governor, and taken over control of the planet's valuable heavy mineral mines. Responding to the governor's treachery, Imperial Guard forces have landed in the deserts and are now seeking to engage and destroy the Tau Hunter Cadres.

Theta-Nine-Four is the code name of an Imperial Guard forward supply base, used to stockpile munitions on their way to the front line units. The base has been located by a Tau Pathfinder reconnaissance team which has been searching the area. Acting on their report, an Air Cadre has been launched on a mission to destroy Theta-Nine-Four.

As the Tau attack aircraft race across the desert, the base's air defences have spotted the incoming enemy and requested urgent aid. Patrolling Imperial Navy fighters have been vectored to intercept the Tau forces.

TAU BRIEFING

Your Air Cadre has received an important report from a Pathfinder reconnaissance team on the ground. One of the gue'la's forward supply bases has been located, and you must destroy it. As well as destroying the base you must also recover the Pathfinder team who are awaiting extraction nearby.

PRIMARY MISSION: Destroy the supply bases. You will gain Victory points for inflicting damage on the supply base, as well as for shooting down enemy aircraft.

SECONDARY MISSION: Extract the Pathfinder team. You gain a bonus 20 Victory points for picking up the Pathfinder team and getting them off the table.

TAU FORCES

You have 160 points to spend on your attack force. You may take fighters and bombers, but may not take ground defences.

IMPERIAL NAVY BRIEF

Tau aircraft have been detected approaching supply base Theta-Nine-Four. Your patrols have been vectored to intercept the attackers and destroy them. Meanwhile, an unfortunate Arvus supply shuttle is inbound towards the base, and must attempt to land its cargo at the supply base.

PRIMARY MISSION: Destroy the Tau aircraft.

SECONDARY MISSION: Land the Arvus lighter at the supply base.

IMPERIAL NAVY FORCES

You have 120 points to spend on your forces. You may take fighters, bombers and ground defences. Your force must include at least 1 Arvus lighter.

SUPPLY BASE THETA-NINE-FOUR

The supply base is a medium sized ground installation made up of the following:

1 small command bunker (3 hits)

1 small building (2 hits)

1 medium bunker (4 hits)

1 small landing pad (2 hits)

2 Trojan towing vehicles (2 hits each)

1 Hydra flak gun (2 hits)

SET-UP AND DEPLOYMENT

The supply base should be set-up close to the centre of the table. The attacker then chooses a short table edge, and the defender gets the opposite table edge.

The defender then places the Tau Pathfinder team within 12" of his table edge. The Pathfinder team cannot be attacked – the Imperial Navy do not know they are there!

Aircraft are then deployed with each player taking it in turns to place an aircraft at any permissible speed and altitude. The defender may place his ground defences anywhere within 12" of the base. The attacker deploys the first aircraft. Once all the aircraft and ground defences are deployed the game may begin.

A Lightning swings in behind the Tau's primary ground attack aircraft, the AX-1-0

SQUADRON SELECTION: TAU AIR CADRE

by Paul Mooney

When picking my Air Cadre I really had to keep the mission objectives foremost in my mind. First, I had to inflict damage on the ground, with that in mind my first choice was a Tiger Shark AX-1-0. I really was keen to find out what it could do. Those Railguns are very hard-hitting but with only three shots I had to make them count so I bought the Target Lock upgrade, improving my chance of hitting those ground targets. I also went for the Seeker missiles not only would these give me extra hitting power, but they can also provide the AX-1-0 with some long-range air defence. Factor in the drone-controlled burst cannons and it is possible for the AX-1-0 to engage three different targets! However the main drawback of the Tiger Shark type aircraft is its low manoeuvrability, so for my last upgrade I went for the advanced stabilisation system to enable the AX-1-0 to perform the High-G turn.

To support the AX-1-0 in its ground attack role, I went for two Barracudas armed with extra seeker missiles. Both these aircraft would primarily be used to assist in hitting the ground targets, but could be used to engage any enemy aircraft that threatened the AX-1-0.

With regards to picking up the Pathfinder team I only had one option, an Orca. Using its Thrust 2 rating I figured I could stay at maximum speed for longer before having to decelerate for a landing. Also, the all round firepower of the Orca might prove useful if the enemy tried to stop me – if it only detered attackers from engaging at the same altitude band then that was something.

The rest of my points I spent on another three Barracudas, which are the workhorses of any Tau Air Cadre. They are fairly cheap (costing less than a Thunderbolt) and with their decent firepower they can hold their own against any fighter the Imperial Navy can throw at them. I upgraded my flight commander to a Double Ace. Aces are great for throwing in that bit of uncertainty for your opponent, with the ability to make an extreme manoeuvre once per game making them very unpredictable. While stretching to a Double Ace may seem a bit extravagant, the 2+ Pilot skill can make a big difference and I was still confident I would outnumber the Imperial aircraft anyway. More planes in the air would give me the flexibility to gang-up on Imperial fighters, or deny them Victory points by chasing down the Arvus, and give me an edge when it came to rolling initiative.

I had a total of seven aircraft meaning I would have to lose four before I would be forced to disengage. At 159 points in total, I figured I could afford to sacrifice the last point for the greater good.

TAU AIR CADRE

Barracuda 1 – Flight Commander 30 pts
Double Ace

Barracuda 2 – 18 pts

Barracuda 3 – 18 pts

Orca – 16 pts

Barracuda 4 – 24 pts
With additional weapons load

Barracuda 5 – 24 pts
With additional weapons load

Tiger Shark AX-1-0 – 29 pts
With additional weapons load
Advanced stabilisation system
Target Lock

SQUADRON SELECTION: IMPERIAL NAVY

by Warwick Kinrade

Ok, I'll get my excuses in early. Throughout playtesting for Aeronautica I took command of the Ork forces. We had other players who used the Imperial Navy, but my specialist knowledge is greenskins, so I'm most at home getting up close with massed firepower.

So, playing an Imperial Navy squadron will be a bit different. I'll be looking to engage at medium or long range, which is a radical change in tactics. I have seen it done, and played against players trying to do it to me, so I'm not a total novice.

Before collecting my forces, I had a look at the Tau list (not that I didn't already know it, as I wrote it!), and given I know the scenario objectives, I think I have a good guess at what my opponent will be taking (because that's what I'd take). I'm expecting at least 1 AX-1-0, and Barracudas as fighter cover. If he's going to go for his secondary mission then an Orca as well, as it's his only real option, but he might choose to ignore that part of the mission in favour of more firepower. So I'm going to have to dogfight with his fighter cover, and shoot down his AX-1-0 before it inflicts too much damage.

With that in mind, I moved to actually choosing my squadron. Initially I was torn between using Thunderbolts, Lightnings or a combination of both. The Lightning's extra manoeuvrability might be useful as the Tau can't match it, but it goes hard to lose the Thunderbolt's ferocious firepower, even if the Thunderbolt is more expensive. I also really wanted the long range firepower of Skystrike missiles, to make sure I got the first shots in. In the end I split my squadron between both types of fighter, with Thunderbolts and Lightnings operating in tandem. The Tau have many missile pods and seeker missiles, so each aircraft got a flare launcher as a little bit of extra protection, it might just make a diference.

Given my mission objectives I can pretty much disregard the rest of the squadron lists. Bombers will serve no purpose, and Valkyries aren't really made to dogfight with. I did toy with the idea of taking a Vulture to lurk around the supply base, and using its manoeuvrability to dodge in behind Tau aircraft on strafing runs, to get tailing shots. It might work, but then again a Barracuda would probably make short work of a Vulture, and they don't have good weapons options for air to air combat. In the end the Vulture idea was dropped, it is an aircraft best left to its ground attack role (if I was attacking in this mission I'd take them), but it would be a fish out of water in a dogfight. I saved the points and bought a second Hydra to augment the base's defences.

The basic plan is to meet the Tau at long range with a wave of Skystrike missiles, followed by the Thunderbolts defending the supply base, and trying to get in behind any Tau aircraft looking to make strafing runs. As the Thunderbolts close in, the Lightnings will hold back, using long range firepower to snipe at the Tau. I don't want to get entangled at close range with these, and should the Barracudas come looking for the Lightnings, then I'll have to use my extra manoeuvrability to escape and keep my distance (Running away? Never!).

I have little hope for the Arvus' survival. My main hope is that the Tau ignore it in favour of pursuing their own objectives. If it gets lucky and gets through then so be it, but I'm not making any special plans.

IMPERIAL NAVY SQUADRON
Blue Squadron, 2774th Fighter Wing

Blue Leader – Thunderbolt 34 pts
With additional weapon load 4
Ace pilot, Flares

Blue 2 – Thunderbolt 26 pts
With additional weapon load 4
Flares

Hydra platform 12 pts

Blue 3 – Lightning 22 pts
With additional weapon load 4
Flares

Blue 4 – Lightning 22 pts
With additional weapon load 4
Flares

Arvus Lighter 4 pts

DEPLOYMENT

IMPERIAL NAVY DEPLOYMENT

Warwick: I deployed my fighters in two pairs. Each pairing has a leader and a wingman, with the wingman starting one altitude higher and one speed point slower than the leader. The Thunderbolts start travelling low (altitude 3), from this height they can easily drop down to level 1 to meet strafing runs, but have not surrendered all their height too soon, so if they need to climb they can. Being low I don't want to start too slow either, otherwise I can never get up any speed if I need to.

The Lightnings started higher, but not so high that they won't be able to drop down again. I think most of this engagement is likely to take place at low level.

The Thunderbolts will directly defend the base, with the Lightnings further out, looking to use their long range firepower. The Arvus starts furthest out, but travelling fast and low. It can't turn tightly so I don't want it too close to the landing pad.

Leaving options open based on what the Tau did in turn 1, in turn two I stood the best chance of getting my long range shots off.

TAU DEPLOYMENT

Paul: I split my forces into three parts. The first was the ground attack forces, with the AX-1-0 and the seeker missile armed Barracudas. They started opposite the supply base, and obviously started the game low, ready for strafing runs. If they travelled fast enough they might be in range from turn 1.

The second group was the Orca and a single escorting Barracuda. They started opposite the waiting Pathfinder team, and also started low (but enough to clear the level 1 hills). That way the Orca wouldn't need to descend to land, with the resulting speed gain which it would need to compensate for.

In the centre was my third group, two Barracudas, including my Double Ace. That would be my main interceptors, deployed centrally so they could quickly respond to meet the Imperium's incoming fighters. The board was set, now it was time to get the pieces moving...

TURN ONE

MOVEMENT

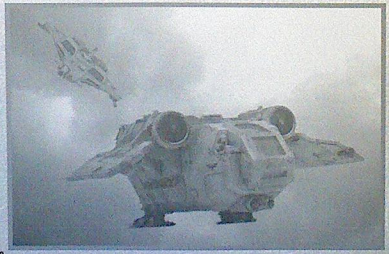
With everything deployed we were ready to begin. The Imperial Navy won the initiative, and started by moving the Arvus Lighter on its run towards the landing pad. The Tau responded by racing the Orca low over the level 1 hill. All the other aircraft sped forwards, and with little immediate danger both players were content to manoeuvre for the shots that would surely come next turn. The Tau's Double Ace and his wingman turned to the left, ready to support the Orca against the Lightnings and attack the Arvus, whilst the AX-1-0 slowed to speed 3 as it closed with the target. Its supporting Barracudas pulled ahead of the AX-1-0 and number 5 turned to the left ready to attack the base. Both Barracudas found themselves within long range of the command bunker.

For the Imperial Navy this turn's movement was about trying to get their aircraft's speeds and altitudes right so that the distance between the two forces would be between 12" and 18", where they would have their greatest advantage as battle was joined next turn.

SHOOTING

The only Imperial weapon in range was the Hydra platform, which took aim at the main threat – the AX-1-0, and opened fire at long range, missing. Oops! The response from the Tau bomber was devastating. It locked onto the Hydra with its rail guns, scored two hits and a maximum 4 damage. The Hydra vanished as the rail guns unleashed their power, leaving a big smoking crater and clearing the defences for the approaching strafing runs.

Both the ground attack Barracudas also opened fire at long range. Paul wanted to use up their seeker missiles as fast as he could, freeing them to engage the approaching Thunderbolts. Barracuda 4 used its ion cannon for a sustained burst at the command bunker and unleashed two seeker missiles, to score 1 Damage point. Barracuda 5 cut loose with all four of its seeker missiles and inflicted another point of damage, enough to seriously damage the bunker, but not to destroy it. The Tau's rain of destruction had begun!



** Air Combat record sheets for the battle can be found at the end of the battle report.*

TURNS 1 & 2

TURN TWO

MOVEMENT

With the Imperial Navy winning the initiative, the Arvus led the way, turning on its approach run, not too fast, to give it the best chance of judging the landing correctly. Again the Orca headed straight ahead, having cleared the low hill, it dropped to altitude 1, skimming the desert floor.

Lightning Blue 4, staying at top speed, burnt off some speed with a yoyo, dropping down to bring the Orca into its sights. That manoeuvre kept him safe from Barracuda 3 as it dropped down after him, but couldn't dive fast enough. But it did leave him faced with Barracudas 1 and 2 dead ahead and at his altitude level. Still it was long range, and the Skystrike missiles were ready for launch.

Meanwhile, over the supply base, Paul slowed the AX-1-0 down further still, he wanted to give it as much time over the target area as he could. It could now bring its guns to bear on the largest bunker within the Imperial ground installation. Barracudas 4 and 5 crossed each other bringing them within short range of the damaged command bunker and the landing pad.

Both the intercepting Thunderbolts slowed down, not wanting to overshoot the base in turn 3 and miss out on their best chance to engage. With the base in front of them, they had a clear view of the two Barracudas attack run.

SHOOTING

Tricky choices now – who to fire first? The Imperial Navy opted for Lightning Blue 4, because it was most likely to get hit by Tau fire. The Orca was a tempting target, but the Barracudas were the main threat, and on the same altitude level, so an easier shot. The Lightning opened fire with a sustained burst from its autocannon, plus lascannons and skystrike missiles. All to no avail, 2 hits from the autocannon, but no damage was inflicted.

With Blue 4 having fired, the Tau turned their attention to the remaining Hydra threatening their strafing runs. Barracuda 4 opened fire with its ion cannon, missile pod and remaining two seeker missiles, all at the Hydra, all causing no damage. Then unleashing a short range sustained burst of burst cannons on the command bunker, which proved tough enough to resist all six shots and also survived.

Blue 3 was next to shoot, and all its long range fire missed Barracuda 3.

The bullets are really flying now, with Barracuda 5 continuing the ground attack, engaging the Hydra with ion cannon and missile pods, and the command bunker with its drone burst cannons. Again, hits were inflicted, but no damage.

The Hydra has been lucky to survive, and now opened fire at Barracuda 4, at medium range, missing!

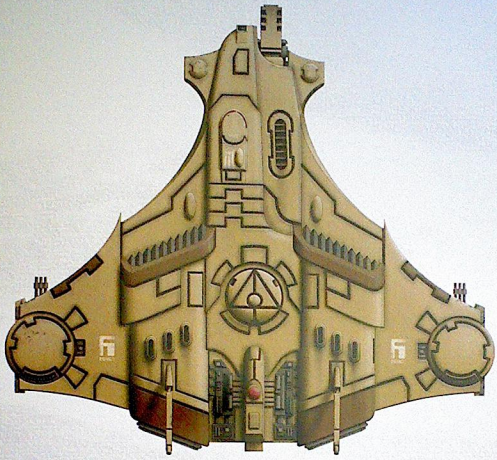
The AX-1-0 locked onto the bunker with its mighty rail guns, again scoring 2 hits, and inflicting 3 damage. Two seeker missiles also find the target, and the bunker is destroyed in a single turn of devastating fire. The rail gun's potent attacks were blasting the base to smithereens!

Blue Leader targeted Barracuda 4, and held his target in his sights long enough to fire a sustained burst from his lascannons, scoring 1 hit. His skystrikes also streak to the target and hit. Both caused damage and the Barracuda vapourised in an expanding fireball, with the pilot failing to eject. Scratch one Barracuda!

The Tau's Double Ace in Barracuda 1 danced through a hail laser beams, missiles and bullets and emerged unscathed. However having to take evasive action must have thrown his aim off as his return fire also missed his target.

The rest of the long ranged fire was ineffective, with no damage inflicted by Barracudas 2 or 3, and Thunderbolt Blue 2 finding no enemy aircraft in his fire arc. Even the Orca fired at Lightning Blue 4 but found that the range was just too great and the shots fell short.

Barracuda of an unidentified Tau Air Cadre.



TURN THREE

MOVEMENT

Both players knew that this turn would be an important one because the air was already thick with fire and both sides were fully committed to battle. Every aircraft was now engaged. Manoeuvring would now be critical. First and foremost for the Imperial Navy was the destruction of the AX-1-0 that was causing havoc on the ground and wracking up Victory points with alarming speed. It had to die! Fortunately, it was travelling slowly, and would have to remain at altitude 1 to continue its attacks, so its position this turn was predictable.

The Imperial fighters manoeuvred to bring maximum firepower to bear at the spot where the AX-1-0 would be. It was a risky move, because it gave the Barracudas a free run without too much danger, but the Tau player didn't know that when he picked their manoeuvres. It would be next turn before he could reap the benefits.

For the Tau things were getting serious, the fight was truly joined. They'd lost a plane but had started to inflict serious damage on the ground, although the pesky command bunker remained standing. Paul decided to attempt an extreme manoeuvre with his Double Ace, knowing he'd overshoot the Lightning so he decided to do a half loop followed by a straight manoeuvre, that way he could cover a lot of altitude levels and keep the speed at maximum if necessary. Barracuda 2 would do a wing over, forcing it to drop altitude to the deck, matching the altitude level of the Orca in case any Lightnings should move to threaten it. The Orca itself continued straight ahead. Paul figured he could get one more turn at full speed before needing to slow to land. He selected a Rolling High-G turn for Barracuda 3 hoping to bring it in behind the Arvus and down it!

He also had a bold plan for the AX-1-0 that would mean it would engage three targets simultaneously, if he had judged the approach correctly. He made use of its advanced stabilisation system and selected a High-G turn. Ready to move across the base, his plan was to finish its attack run and power off the far long table edge to disengage.

It was time for Barracuda 5 to break off from attacking the base and move to engage the Thunderbolts in earnest. So it selected another High-G turn.

For the first time in the game the Tau got the initiative, very handy when they had a numerical advantage. It meant they could move the more predictable aircraft first such as the Orca and AX-1-0 and then respond to his fighter's manoeuvres and still fire first.

First of all, the Orca flew on towards its pick up point. The Arvus gradually turned in towards the landing pad, and slowed for a landing, but was now right in the danger zone, and wasn't likely to make it through unscathed.

The AX-1-0 swung into position as predicted, and Blue Leader decelerated as hard as he could, yoyo'd and side slipped, meaning he had all his weapons trained again. Blue 4 broke off from its head-to-head run in on the right and raced at top speed for the supply base, lining up the AX-1-0 at long range.

Barracuda 1 attempted to pull off its extreme manoeuvre, but the Tau Double Ace failed his skill test and found himself out of position with no shot possible at any enemy aircraft.

Barracuda 5, lacking seeker missiles broke off its strafing run and swung hard right, bring Blue Leader square into his sights at short range – a long Tau finger itched over the fire button in anticipation of an enemy ace to kill.

After all the manoeuvring the AX-1-0 was in the sights of three enemy fighters, but the Imperium's squadron leader was also in grave danger.

SHOOTING

Seeing the situation the Tau opened the Shooting phase with the AX-1-0, getting those shots off before the Imperial Navy's fighters got their chance. It again locked-on with its rail guns, this time onto the Hydra, and again blasted it apart, with one hit scoring 2 Damage points. It also launched three seeker missiles at Thunderbolt Blue 2 (seekers can engage different targets even in the same fire arc), and scored a damage point, the Thunderbolt's flares failing to help it. The AX-1-0s burst cannons targeted the command bunker to its left side, and again hit, but scored no damage – still the command bunker survived.

The Tau's choice to fire the AX-1-0 meant that Blue Leader had a chance to save himself. Foregoing the AX-1-0, Blue Leader unleashed a sustained burst with his autocannons, at short range, at Barracuda 5. Six dice scored 0 hits! That could be a costly miss!

Barracuda 5 immediately returned fire, and also passed a skill test for a sustained burst from its ion cannon. In a blaze of fire from all the Tau fighter's weapons it scored only 1 damage point from an ion cannon hit, and, by great fortune Blue Leader was somehow still in the skies.

Blue 2 fired next, at the AX-1-0, inflicting a single point of damage with its quad autocannons, but the skystrikes and lascannons missed. Paul was beginning to think that the AX-1-0 was going to make it through relatively unscathed. That was until Lightning Blue 4 unleashed a devastating volley of fire into the AX-1-0. Lightning Blue 4 passed a skill test for a sustained burst from its lascannons, and cut loose at long range. Both skystrikes hit, as did a lascannon shot, which also scored extra damage. Amidst furious impacts the AX-1-0 exploded, showering flaming debris onto the base below, with the Tau crew again failing to eject in time. Primary target eliminated! But had too much damage already been inflicted?

Finally, Barracuda 2 found himself too low to be able to engage and Barracuda 3 moved right, coming in high on the tail of the Arvus. It fired at the Arvus and failed to damage it despite hitting twice with its missile pods. The Arvus was one lucky aircraft!

TURN 3

TURN FOUR

TAILING FIRE

Barracuda 3 was in position for a tailing shot at the Arvus, but at medium range the missile pod missed and the ion cannon scored only 1 hit, which failed to damage. Any attempt to stop it from landing had now passed; the Arvus had made it to its destination.

MOVEMENT

The furious dogfight over the airbase was now in full swing, with the Tau having lost two of their ground attacking aircraft, whilst the Thunderbolts were both damaged. Ammunition expenditure had also been heavy due to all the sustained firing. The heat was on...

While Paul lamented the loss of his AX-1-0, he reflected that its job was more or less done. The railguns and seeker missile ammunition had all been expended before the aircraft was destroyed and it had wreaked carnage upon anything it targeted on the ground. He also figured that for the time being, the Orca was relatively safe and that the main fight taking place over the base was where he should commit his forces.

He chose a High-G turn for Barracuda 1 and a Rolling High-G turn for Barracuda 2 turning both planes into the fight. He chose a sideslip manoeuvre for the Orca in an effort to bleed speed off more quickly. Barracuda 3 chose to move straight. Barracuda 5 was heading away from the fight and would over shoot Blue Leader. I elected for a Half Loop to bring him back around, although his ammunition situation was dire, it was unlikely he would be in the fight much longer.

The Tau won the initiative again and, as normal, moved the Orca first, continuing its flight towards the waiting Pathfinder team. The Orca yo-yoed to slow its progress still further and dropped its speed to 3, soon it would be over the target area and be able to make its pick-up.

Then it was the Arvus' turn, decelerating to speed 1 and playing a straight manoeuvre it dropped to altitude 0 and touched down. Remarkably, it had made it through unscathed.

For the rest of the Imperial Navy, Blue 3 power dived down, losing 4 levels as it turned left and lined up the Orca, no enemy fighters were to be seen and he had a free run at his target.

Blue 4 spiralled round to meet the incoming Barracudas, whilst Blue Leader successfully pulled off an extreme manoeuvre, banking hard left and right to get on his next Barracuda target.

Meanwhile, Blue 3 was in trouble, with Barracudas closing in behind him he attempted to get away, climbing two levels (as fast as he could), in the hope of reaching safety, but with no such luck, as Barracuda 2, travelling at top speed, used its speed to catch up with him and position itself for a tailing shot. Barracuda 1 positioned himself for a strafing run against the base.

SHOOTING

As Barracuda 3 was in the most compromised position, Paul decided to fire it first, targeting Blue 4 with its ion cannon and missile pods and strafing the landed Arvus with its burst cannons. The missile pods scored a hit and caused damage to the Lightning, with its flares again failing to help, but as usual the Arvus proved impervious to Tau firepower (*Paul – What do they build them out of?*).

Blue 4 fired at Barracuda 1 as it closed in, but its lascannon powerpacks were drained and it had no remaining skystrike missiles. It failed to get a sustained burst from its autocannon, and the resulting single shot missed. This Lightning was seriously lacking firepower.

Barracuda 1 opened fire at the command bunker, and its missile pod finally destroyed it, whilst its burst cannons missed Blue Leader. The Imperial Navy's ace was living up to his title.

Meanwhile, Blue 3 had the Orca in sights and loosed its full arsenal including a sustained burst from its lascannons. The result was empty lascannon powerpacks, no skystrikes, and no damage. It too was now left with just its single autocannon, which would not be enough firepower to destroy an undamaged Orca.

With the tail of Blue 2 in his sights, Barracuda 2 fired with all weapons. Despite hitting twice with the burst cannon and once with the missile pod the Thunderbolt sustained no damage. Paul was beginning to wonder if live ammunition or blanks had actually been loaded into the Tau weapons! They were certainly live in the Imperial Navy's guns, as Barracuda 3 became kill number two for Blue Leader. He passed his skill test and unleashed a sustained burst of autocannons at short range. Barracuda 3 was torn apart in a hail of explosive autocannon rounds, and yet again the alien pilot failed to eject – he never even saw it coming!

Barracuda 5 fired its ion cannon and missile pods at Lightning Blue 4 while its burst cannon tracked a nearby Trojan. Neither vehicle sustained any hits however.

With yet another plane destroyed, it seemed the Tau could not down any of their enemies, although three of them were trailing smoke, it was 3-0 in lost aircraft in favour of the Emperor's servants.

At the end of turn 4 it seemed that the furious dogfight was starting to break-up, with many aircraft damaged and most now low on ammunition the fighting could not continue for much longer.

Lightning of 2774th fighter wing, call sign blue 4, credited with a confirmed AX-1-0 kill.

TURN 4

TURN FIVE

TAILING SHOT

Barracuda 2 was in position and opened fire again at Thunderbolt Blue 2. It had been lucky to survive last turn, and now the Tau pilot pressed the fire button again. The drone burst cannons hit and damaged, but the Thunderbolt's durable airframe kept it in the air. It was not so lucky with the missile pods, which hit despite the Thunderbolt's flares, and then destroyed the aircraft. The pilot again failed to eject as the burning wreckage plunged to the ground!

MOVEMENT

This turn both sides were looking to break away and reposition themselves for future turns. Blue 4, now damaged and with only his single autocanon still operational, disengaged from the battle and headed for home, he could be of little more aid here and would only cost Warwick more Victory points by getting shot down.

Meanwhile Lightning Blue 3 gave up its attack on the Orca, lacking the weapons to destroy the big shuttle, instead it looped back towards the main fray.

Barracuda 1s Double Ace pilot executed his extreme manoeuvre, but found he was still travelling too fast to get Blue Leader in his sights. Paul tried every combination he could come up with but the simple fact was his Ace had too much speed and could not bring his main weapons to bear on Blue Leader, so had to settle for getting his burst cannons into range. In the end he had to break away hard left, satisfying himself that at least his burst cannons could still track the target, and he could avoid the Imperial Ace's fire arc.

Barracuda 2 turned left but was too high to engage the damaged Lightning of Blue 4 as it turned and burned for the table edge.

Barracuda 3 was entirely out of all ammunition, so winged over and also headed for the table edge. The Orca decelerated to speed 1, on final approach, ready to land next turn.

SHOOTING

The Tau Ace had the only shot this turn. He unleashed a sustained burst from his burst cannons, scoring two hits, but failed to damage Blue Leader, so both Aces were still in the fight.

TURN SIX

MOVEMENT

With the Tau again having the initiative, the Orca just needed a Straight manoeuvre to touch down and pick up the Pathfinder team.

Both side's two remaining fighters manoeuvred in clear skies, with only Blue 3 able to bring its autocannon to bear on the distant Barracuda 1.

Barracuda 5 disengaged, reducing the Tau forces to three remaining aircraft from seven, and forcing them to disengage, not something Paul had planned for. Turn 7 would now be the final turn of the game.

SHOOTING

As the fighters jockeyed for position, the only shot was from the Lightning Blue 3 against the distant Barracuda 1 but the autocannon rounds flew wide.

TURN SEVEN

MOVEMENT

With the Tau winning their fifth straight initiative, the Orca lifted off, but was still 2" short of the table edge, so it wouldn't make it off the table in time to gain the bonus Victory points. It was now that Paul realised his mistake. By disengaging Barracuda 5, he had reduced his aircraft number to below half too soon. He had to hope that he had done enough damage on the ground to secure a Tau victory.

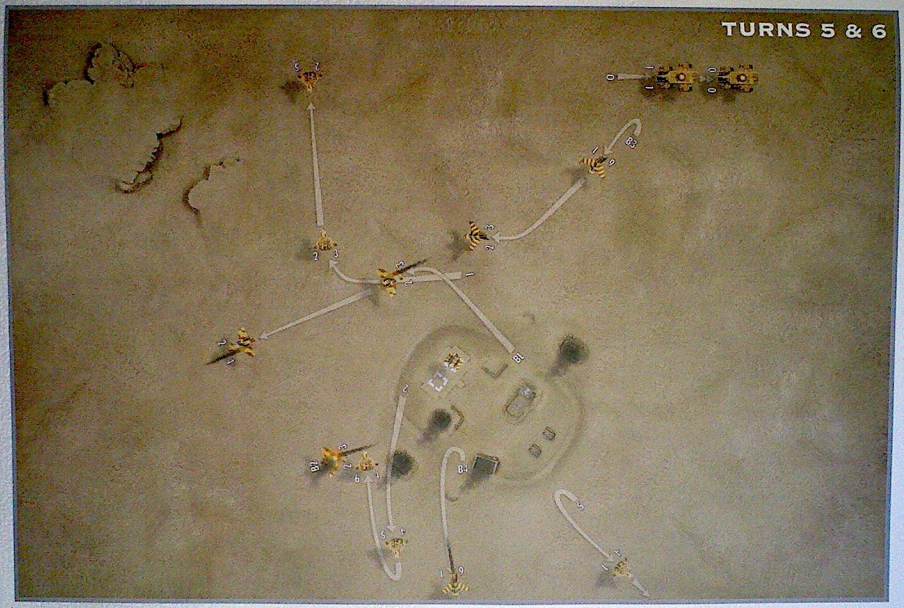
The aircraft had all broken away from each other, so this would be the final pass. The fighters moved in, in a last desperate bid to gain a few more Victory points.

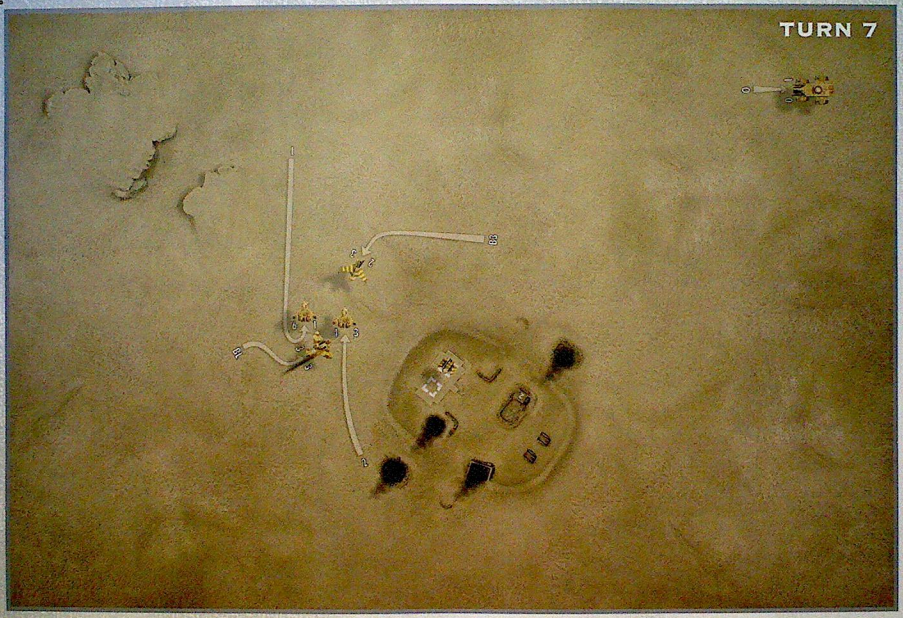
Paul opted for a Half Loop with Barracuda 1, hoping it would have enough speed to hook behind one of the Imperial aircraft. Barracuda 2 opted for a Turn manoeuvre to bring its weapons facing the predicted convergence point. In the end Barracuda 2 found himself caught between the two Imperial aircraft. Blue 3 was in front and Blue Leader's Thunderbolt was close behind. Oh dear!

Blue Leader executed another yoyo and managed to drop in perfectly behind Barracuda 2, which was simultaneously head-to-head with Blue 3. In the end Barracuda 1 looped over, but didn't have the speed to get into a good firing position.

SHOOTING

Having again won the Initiative, the Tau opened fire with all Barracuda 2s weapon systems at short range, but scored not a single hit on Blue 3. The Lightning returned fire and scored a single hit with its autocannon, but caused no significant damage. Blue Leader had Barracuda 2 right in his sights, but found that his autocannons were empty, and he had no other short ranged firepower. Likewise, Barracuda 1 could only bring empty burst cannons to bear, so with no more damage inflicted, the game ended. The surviving aircraft broke away and headed for base.


TURNS 5 & 6


TURN 7

VICTORY POINTS

TAU	
Destroyed Hydra	12
Destroyed Hydra	12
Destroyed Bunker (4 hits)	40
Destroyed Command Bunker (3 hits)	30
Destroyed Thunderbolt Blue 2	26
Damaged Thunderbolt Blue Leader	17
Lightning Blue 4 disengaged	6
Total:	**143**

IMPERIAL NAVY	
Destroyed Tiger Shark AX-1-0	29
Destroyed Barracuda 4	24
Destroyed Barracuda 3	18
Landed Arvus Lighter	20
Trojan undamaged (2 hits)	6
Trojan undamaged (2 hits)	6
Small building undamaged (2 hits)	6
Landing Pad undamaged (2 hits)	6
Total:	**115**

CONCLUSION

Well, it had been hard fought, and the game had just about everything. In the end it was a Tau victory, but their attack had cost them dearly with the loss of three aircraft, including their new experimental bomber. Despite the Victory points totals, at three to one in downed aircraft, the Imperial Navy can hold their heads high, but the damage inflicted to the supply base ultimately cost them the game.

Of the Tau's 143 Victory points, 94 of these came from damage to the base, and most of that was inflicted by the AX-1-0. If (and of course there are endless ifs and buts), the AX-1-0 had missed with a few more rail gun shots (it hit five times out of six with the aid of its target lock, which also worked every turn), then the game would have been very close in Victory points and maybe even a narrow Imperial Navy victory.

Of course, Paul can always point to the amount of failed damage rolls against enemy aircraft, and probably he has a case that he should have shot down more Imperial aircraft, if the dice-gods had favoured him better. Such are the vagaries of war.

Tactically, what would both sides change?

Paul – Well the obvious one for me would be not to disengage an aircraft that reduced my force to under half strength. One more turn with Barracuda 5 on the table would have seen the Orca escape and gained me an easy additional 20 Victory points.

While the ground attack went well, I felt I'd taken the worst of it in the aerial combat. Fortunately when the Victory points tally came in, the damage on the ground had given me victory, albeit a costly one. During the game I managed to get into a couple of tailing positions, which was good, but then I did have the numerical advantage. I failed to get the Arvus, despite repeated attempts, but never got a shot at it from the same altitude level, which made it that much harder to hit and in the end meant it survived.

Warwick – For the Imperial Navy, the wingman plan didn't survive first contact with the enemy (but no plan does). I found that Blue 2 had no chance of staying with ace pilot Blue Leader as turn after turn he yoyo'd and pulled extreme manoeuvres. The wingman couldn't match that kind of flying, so the lesson here is that wingmen and aces don't mix well. Aces might be better operating as lone wolves, or being the wingman rather than the leader.

Blue 2 was my only under performing aircraft, and in the end he got shot down without contributing much to the fight. Maybe I could have used him better.

My Lightnings split up too soon, and the half-hearted attempted to stop the Orca was a waste of effort and ammunition that would have been better spent targeting Barracudas. In order to stop the Orca I would have needed a lot more firepower, and would have had to make it a major part of my plan. In the end it didn't cost me the 20 Victory points, but it should have.

Thunderbolt of 2774th fighter wing, call sign blue leader.

IMPERIAL AIR COMBAT RECORD SHEET

	NAME/TYPE	DAMAGE	WEAPONS LOAD	KILLS	AMMO 1	AMMO 2	AMMO 3	AMMO 4								
1	Blue Leader – Thunderbolt		4	II	III	II	I		1	2	3	5/6	5	7	3	8	9
2	Blue Two – Thunderbolt		4		I	I	I		2	3	6	2	8	6	7	8	9
3	Blue Three – Lightning		4		III	III	II		1	3	7	4	8	5	6	8	9
4	Blue Four – Lightning		4	I	III	III	II		2	2	6	10	10	6	7	8	9
5	Ace								1	2	2	1	5	6	7	8	9

TAU EMPIRE AIR COMBAT RECORD SHEET

	NAME/TYPE	DAMAGE	WEAPONS LOAD	KILLS	AMMO 1	AMMO 2	AMMO 3	AMMO 4									
1	Barracuda 1 Double Ace			I	III	II	III		2	2	7/1	5	5/5	8	7	8	9
2	Barracuda 2			I	III	II	II		2	2	8	6	2	8	2	8	9
3	Barracuda 3				III	II			1	2	6	1	5	6	7	8	9
4	Barracuda 4		I	I	III	I	II	III	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5	Barracuda 5		I		III	III	III	III	2	1	5	7	8	1	7	8	9
6	Ace				I	I	I		1	1	1	3	1	1	1	8	9
7	AX 1-0	III	I	III	III	III	I	III	1	1	5	4	5	6	7	8	9

HOBBY ARTICLES

TACTICA AERONAUTICA

AN AERIAL COMBAT TACTICS PRIMER

Aerial battles are very different to other forms of combat, and for players used to the certainties and assumptions of ground-based wargames, the 'feel' of an Aeronautica Imperialis battle can be rather disturbing. To the untrained eye aerial combat can quickly develop into a chaotic free-for-all, with aircraft criss-crossing – you are tailing one turn, then being tailed the next turn, and it all seems very random and difficult to know what your best move is. It is up to each player to try to impose his own order and plan onto the general free-for-all. The player that has the best plan (but is flexible enough to alter his plan as the battle develops), and who manoeuvres his aircraft into the best positions for engaging the enemy with the right weapons, will ultimately win. Tall order? Not with a little planning. Here are few guidelines to help players use good plans and tactics.

PLAN AHEAD

In conventional wargames, because of troop movement speeds, weapon ranges and the 'you-go, I-go' turn-based system it is easy to react to enemy moves. By this I mean that if, for example, the enemy moves around a building to get a shot at your forces, you can usually respond by moving one or more of your units to return fire, and then your opponent reacts to that move, and so on. Tactics generally revolve around your ability to react faster or with harder hitting weaponry than your opponent. In Aeronautica Imperialis this is not the case.

Simply waiting for your opponent to move, then reacting is not possible. Firstly, you will have already chosen your aircraft's manoeuvres by the time the enemy moves, and cannot change then. Secondly, the turn system does not allow you to counter-move all your opponent's aircraft, because you alternate. You might get the jump on one aircraft, but then your opponent will get the jump on one of yours.

So, for the best chance of victory, instead of reacting you must plan ahead. By this I mean plan for the next few turns and move at the same time as you planning these turns. To effectively do this you need to know a few things about your enemy. Firstly, what speed and altitude is he at? Because that gives you the best guess at what speed and altitude he is likely to be after he moves, and so where he is likely to be on the table. Of course, if your opponent has an objective, such as a ground target or one of your own aircraft, then this helps a lot, because it narrows down the options for you. Enemy ground attack aircraft are likely to be closing on the target and manoeuvring for a strafing run or bombing run. So, by planning ahead two moves you can get into position to meet his aircraft as they approach the target and after they have over-flown the target, giving you two bites at the cherry.

This is an important part of aerial combat, manoeuvre to hit an area of the tabletop where you think the enemy will be. Do not try to react to his moves. If you try to follow the enemy he'll find it easy to climb, dive or turn out of your fire arcs. You will find it easier to pick an area of the table into which you think an enemy aircraft will be moving. This judgement will be based on the enemy's speed, altitude and mission objective (i.e. is he trying for a strafing run, or is he likely to wing-over and come back for a head to head pass). Use this information to make a judgement call when selecting your own manoeuvres. Try to predict your opponent's movement, and then manoeuvre yourself into position to attack that area. With a bit of luck and good judgment you'll find him flying right through your gun sights!

Against other interceptors dogfighting is trickier, as you don't have the advantage of knowing where your opponent hopes to be. Cunning players do because you know enemy fighters will be looking to get shots at your aircraft, and most likely he'll want those shots to be at his most effective range for the weapons. So, if you can 'guess-timate' which aircraft an opponent is after, then you have that aircraft as a target point for reference. Once you know this, then wingmen come in handy.

WINGMEN AND ESCORTS

'Wingman' is the title given to an aircraft that flies as a reserve or second wave, covering a lead aircraft, ready to speed forwards and engage the enemy as they close in. Pairing up aircraft is a useful tactic, with one flying as the leader, and the second as his wingman. This works because if an enemy aircraft is after one of your aircraft, then your wingman can manoeuvre to cover him. Try literally teaming up your aircraft, so that one leads and each has a covering wingman that is flying slightly slower and behind the leader (not too far otherwise he'll be too far away to intervene, so he can see the enemy coming, and speed up and manoeuvre to get shots at the attacker. Of course this leaves the leader exposed as a lure, and he's going to have to work hard not to get shot down or, if he can, manoeuvre to get return shots in.

Aircraft that fly solo are especially vulnerable to the wingman tactic, because even if the solo flier gets the jump on one aircraft, the other aircraft is always on hand to extract retribution. In this way two aircraft working in tandem should be able to deal with multiple single opponents.

Aircraft with poor manoeuvrability are very vulnerable to aircraft with higher manoeuvrability; they will find it very hard to escape. To protect them, they need escorts. Escorts are fighters whose job is to intercept the interceptors. In game, where you are using bombers or transport aircraft, do not neglect a fighter escort. Beware when you have fighters in an escort role, do not be tempted to go racing off around the board in pursuit of the enemy. Escorts should stay close to their charges; manoeuvre to cover them with gunfire, thereby making any attacking

Ground Attack Tactic 1 – Divide and Conqueror

This is a simple rule but you will fare better by engaging smaller parts of an enemy force one at a time. Enemy aircraft cannot be everywhere; aircraft that are flying high are safe from low flying enemies, and vice-versa. So, when developing a plan try dividing the enemy force. This is especially useful when coming in for a ground attack mission. With aircraft flying both high and low the defender is forced to choose whether to go after the high group or the low group, or split his force. If he goes high, the low force has free run into the target, if he goes low, then the high group can quickly dive down to attack the defenders and overwhelm them with numbers, or strike at a ground target.

aircraft's job far more dangerous. Escorts will often have travel slowly to stay with, or just behind, the larger aircraft.

Fighters can operate alone, but whether flying in formation or not, a wingman is always a good idea. Two fighters operating together, with one attacking, and another hanging back to cover it from enemy fighters closing in for attack, are highly effective. The wingman will be best equipped with long-range firepower, so AA missiles come in handy.

WATCH YOUR SPEED, WATCH HIS SPEED

At the heart of Aeronautica Imperialis' movement system is speed and thrust. Your aircraft's speed dictates how far you can move, and also how easy it will be for your enemy to predict where your aircraft will be next turn.

If an aircraft is moving slowly, then it is far easier to know where it will be next turn (this also applies to low manoeuvring aircraft). So a low manoeuvre aircraft moving slowly makes a great target, because it is never going to be far away from its current position. Hence low manoeuvre aircraft are taking a great risk by travelling slowly, especially those with low thrust as well as they can't even speed up to escape. Bomber pilots beware, you have been warned, it is a good general rule to keep your speed up, and it will help make for a longer career.

Speed is most important in comparison with your target's speed, if you are moving fast and the target slow, then you'll find it hard not to over-fly the target. You need to match speed to the target as best you can to give you the best chance of getting on him and staying on him.

High thrust makes an aircraft very versatile, being able to slow down rapidly is a great advantage in a dogfight because a sudden sharp turn and brake is something most aircraft can't match. This is the Nightwing's killer move, enabling it to turn, hit the brakes hard and climb, can reduce a Nightwing's speed by 4 or even 5 points. Other fighters will struggle to get close to this extreme manoeuvring, but again, if you use one manoeuvre too often you become predictable... and then soon you will become dead!

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALTITUDE AND SPEED

To an aircraft height is speed. It is far easier to maintain a high speed, and therefore allow yourself the maximum range of possible positions when you are high up. This is because you can always trade height for speed as diving naturally speeds you up. As a general rule, if you are intercepting, it is far easier to start high and dive onto an enemy than to climb up to meet him. Climbing will slow you down, so it will take longer to reach the enemy, and will restrict the positions you can reach because your speed is low. This is especially true for aircraft with a low Thrust rating, and fighters with low thrust will find it difficult to climb rapidly and avoid stalling. From high up you can always power dive down to lose altitude quickly, you can never gain altitude as quickly as you can lose it.

In a dogfight, players must judge speed carefully, go too fast and you will overshoot, or make any weapons shots you do get at longer ranges. Go too slowly and you become an easier target. Just as important as your speed is the speed of your target, there is no point in flying slowly if the aircraft you are after is flying flat out!

BE UNPRECISTABLE

So, if both players are making educated guesses at what the opposition will do, then the player that tries the unpredictable has an edge. By being unpredictable you make your opponent's job harder. Of course there is no point in pulling hard turns or power diving just for the sake of it, because you must still seek to get some shots in – but an unexpected turn can throw off the enemy and clear the way for an attack run as your opponent tries to find you again.

Ground Attack Tactic 2 – Wave Theory

Another way of attacking is to do it in waves. The first wave draws the enemy interceptors in and engages, allowing a second wave to speed onto the target. To do this the first wave approaches at high speed, whilst the second wave approaches at a higher altitude but at low speed, allowing the distance between the waves to grow. If enemy interceptors pass through the first wave, going after the second attack wave, then they leave themselves exposed to the first wave winging-over and tailing them. If the interceptors engage the first wave, then the second wave speed up, dive down and race for their ground targets, utilising the time their first wave can buy them to hit the targets. Two waves is a simple system, but you can expand on it to attack in three or more waves, each with their own role to play.

An aircraft that is predictable is easily engaged and destroyed. Successful players throw in unusual manoeuvres to lose the enemy before moving to attack. If you just fly straight and low directly at a target, the enemy will soon be on your tail and no aircraft lasts long when being tailed. Bank hard, climb and dive, bank hard again, and generally make the enemy's job of predicting your movement difficult. Players will have to balance this sort of flying with getting to their targets. You can dodge and weave all day, but it won't help if you don't get to your target and attack it.

Power dive is a useful manoeuvre because its random nature means it is always inherently unpredictable, and opponents will find it hard to stay on your tail. Of course this manoeuvre is restricted to higher altitudes unless you feel lucky or are willing to risk a sudden impact with the ground! Of course good pilots (I mean at least Aces) might think they have the skill to power dive and then make an emergency manoeuvre to avoid crashing should they need to. This is a particularly Orky tactic to throw-off pursuit when approaching a ground target, but best only tried by Ork aces.

Remember the obvious move is often the one your opponent is planning for.

KNOW YOUR AIRCRAFT, KNOW YOUR ENEMY

A precursor to all this planning is knowing your aircraft's abilities. In order to be effective you need to know how fast you can accelerate or decelerate, how high you can fly and at what ranges your weapons are most effective. You're going to need every edge you can get, so if your aircraft is faster or better at close range then you need to know.

The reverse applies. If you don't know that your opponent can make high or very high manoeuvres, or how fast he can accelerate, or at what ranges his weapons are most effective, and therefore what ranges he will be looking to get shots at, then you have little chance in predicting his moves well.

You must know your enemy (whether you can do anything about it is another matter). But knowing your opponent's maximum altitude will help because, lets face it, he isn't going to half-loop when he's already at his maximum altitude. So if he needs to turn around, he's going to wing over, which means you now know what altitude he'll be at next turn.

FIGHT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Always seek to engage enemy aircraft to your advantage. If you aircraft has an edge over your opponent, such as greater speed or greater manoeuvrability, then use it. Fast aircraft that fight at low speeds surrender their advantage over the enemy, especially if they lack the thrust to get back that speed, or are fighting at low altitudes and cannot quickly trade height for speed.

When playing against Eldar, I like to see a Nightwing at low altitude and low speed, because I know my own fighters can match it down there, and it won't be able to shoot off quickly and gain height at the same time. If I can get above it by one level, then I'll have at least of couple of turns fighting on a level playing field. I hate to see them high up and at high speed because I know I can't catch them, and they will be able to out manoeuvre me by diving and climbing.

If your aircraft have rocket boosters, then fighting at high altitude is also a good idea because it is easier for you to disengage. It has a slight advantage, but it is a small factor which could save you vital Victory points come the end of the game.

ROUTES TO TARGET

When you are required to attack an enemy ground target, then you will need to consider your route to the target. This is the direction you intend to hit the target from and how you intend to get there.

The most direct route, whilst being the fastest route, is not always the best. It has the disadvantages of firstly, being the route your opponent will expect attack via, and therefore is likely to be the route blocked by his interceptors. It will also more than likely have the heaviest ground defences covering it. The advantage is, of course, you'll be at your target sooner by taking the direct route. You'll have to weigh up the pros and cons and decide.

Often bombers will find that a head-on bombing run over a target will require a long, laborious turn to get back for a second attack run. Whilst attacking at an oblique angle, especially at very low speeds (risky but useful if the target or target area is large), means less of a turn is required to hit the target with a second attack.

PRIORITISE TARGETS

When attacking an enemy ground installation you should prioritise your targets. Before attacking ground targets any ground defences should be at the top of your hit list. Knocking out ground defences before an attack wave hits should be a mission dedicated to fighters equipped with ground attack weapons, like missiles and rockets. Ignoring ground defences means they will be a constant menace to your attack wave, and their constant fire could easily cost you.

Next priority on your hit list should be those inevitable enemy interceptors. Enemy fighters will cause havoc amongst low flying attackers, because manoeuvring to engage an enemy aircraft making a strafing run is relatively easy. You need your own escorting fighters to intercept the interceptors, to keep them busy, distract them, draw them away from the target and (hopefully), shoot them down!

MACRO AND MICRO MANAGEMENT

Macro-management is taking the larger view, seeing the big picture, or planning in more general terms than individual aircraft. At the start of the game you should have a general plan for your entire force. This might include such things as which aircraft are dedicated to attacking a target and what their route to target will be and which aircraft will be in the first wave, usually to target anti-aircraft defences and enemy interceptors. Also, decide which aircraft will be escorting them, which aircraft will fly as wingman cover and which will lead, etc. This is the macro management, a general idea of how you want your force to fight.

Micro-management is considering individual aircraft. How high it needs to be to best intercept the enemy or where it needs to be to best cover an attack run. What speed it needs to be at given what you have planned for the future.

A good example from play testing comes to mind here. A flight of Arvus fighters needed to land at an airfield. They had arrived from orbit and started very high and at maximum speed. Having to descend to the ground to land meant they would always be gaining speed, and their lack of thrust mean losing speed would be difficult. They all overshot the landing field and couldn't turn around in time to get back! Oops. Planning ahead, starting at a low speed would have been far better. Because the loss of height would have sped them up should they have needed it and would have been easier to compensate for with the Arvus' thrust.

BE ARMED FOR THE MISSION

It seems obvious to say it, but arm your aircraft for their mission. If a fighter is to be an escort or an interceptor then go for anti-aircraft weapons, if it needs additional weaponry at all! If the fighters are to go after ground defences then missiles and rockets will be needed. To destroy bunkers and hard targets I choose bombs.

Bombing runs are less risky than strafing runs, because you face less ground fire, and you have more room to manoeuvre to avoid interceptors. At level 1 the enemy know what altitude you must be at, and can pre-empty attack runs. Many has been the strafing run cut short by a well positioned interceptor who knew full well where the enemy aircraft was aiming for and just moved into position to bring all weapons to bear.

AMMO

When it comes to ammunition expenditure I'm of the general opinion that it's better to use it than lose it, so I take every shot I can get and rarely save ammunition. In the end an aircraft that is out of ammo can always disengage, make for home, and save me Victory points that way. Unlike other games, in Aeronautica Imperialis there is no need for your force to stay on the table until the end of the game, and you can always disengage and make for home – it is well worth considering with seriously damaged aircraft. Although this might mean you have to disengage from the battle altogether, just because you disengaged first does not mean you have lost. It is quite possible for your force to disengage and still win the game on Victory points. It's up to players' judgement on this, but if you are ahead and in a position to disengage your force without incurring too many more losses or giving away too many Victory points, then do it.

You are now ready to man your aircraft. Good luck and happy hunting!

AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS RULEBOOK
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. On page 22 the Valkyrie's rocket pods says 'Arc – Rear', is this correct?

No, this is a typo, they should be front firing. Damn cut-and-paste errors!

2. Phoenix is equipped with Brightlances, but the 40K model has a Pulse Laser. Is this correct?

Yes, we intend to cover other variants of the aircraft in the future when there will be various weapon fits for some aircraft – including a Phoenix with a pulse laser. For now use the Brightlances.

3. What happens if you want to make a ground attack, strafing run or bombing run against a target that is on a different height level from the ground (ie, on a height level 2 hill)?

The ground attack section doesn't cover this, but you need to be 1 altitude above the target to make a Strafing run (it the example above altitude 3). For Bombing runs the altitudes to hit are added to the target's altitude (for the example above, altitude 5-6 would hit on a 4+, 7-8 would hit on a 5+, 9 would hit on a 6).

4. About Hit values for each ground defence - are they all 2 like the Hydra/Manticore, or do some have other values, eg, Sabre is 1 as its smaller and lightly armoured?

Treat all ground defences as having 2 hits, except for the Sabre platform which would have 1.

4. For Victory Points what counts as 'Serious Damage'? Is it 50% damaged?

This is covered on page 6, but yes, half damage is serious damage for calculating Victory points.

5. Is it mandatory to use thrust every turn or can you decide to not use it for a given turn and rely only on a speed change due to manoeuvvre?

You can choose not to use any thrust in a turn and remain at the same speed until you manoeuvre.

6.When you use Thrust, do you have to use the full Thrust rate for a given airplane or you can opt to use less?

No, you can use up to that amount of Thrust, you don't have to use it all every turn.

7. About the Spiral manoeuvre – can you execute it without speed/altitude change?

The card says 'may', so it is optional, you can choose to remain at the same altitude and spiral, or climb or dive (making it far more flexible that half-loops and wing-overs). Some cards say 'may', in which case altitude and speed changes are optional. Some say 'must', in which case altitude and speed changes aren't optional.

9. Can I mix Space Marine aircraft (and Land Raider Hyperios) with the aircraft and ground units from the Imperial Navy?

Yes, you can mix them freely as they would often operate together. Or you can play a pure force of one or the other.

10. Are all models used in Aeronautica Imperialis Epic scale?

Yes they are. Aeronautica is a game that uses the same models as Epic. Forge World's aircraft are also all Epic scale, scaled correctly from the 40K models.

11. If a Thunderbolt takes extra damage from a hit that would destroy it outright, does it still get it's durable save?

Yes, it can make its save against the second point of damage, so if successful it would still take a single hit.

12. Should you roll an Eldar aircraft's holofield save against every hit or once against all hits from an attacker?

Roll separately to save against each hit the aircraft would take. So if a Nightwing would take 3 hits, then it makes 3 saves.

13. Can Grot Bombs attack ground targets?

Yes, they are not aerial attack only weapons. If a Grot bomb ends its move within 3" of ground target (and is at altitude 1) then it can attempt to collide with it as normal.

14. How do I score Extra Damage? The rule and the example seem to work differently. Do I roll a second dice or just one?

Roll one dice, if you score equal to or greater than the damage value of the weapon, it scores 2 hits.

15. How long does it take to drop troops off in a landing zone? Can I simply land in one turn and take off in the next?

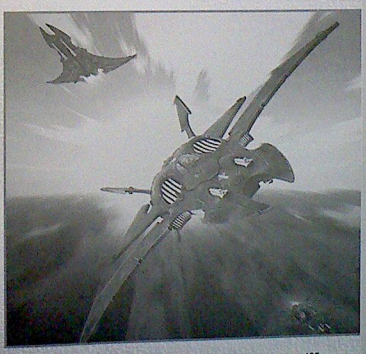
Yes, if you land then all the transported troops can get out, or some, or none – it's up to the player. You can then take off next turn.

16. Can ground fire on elevated terrain shoot at an aircraft that is at the same height as it?

Yes, but it can't shoot downwards.

17. When working out Victory points, are ground defences such as the Hydra worth 10 pts per hit, or their points value?

They are worth their own points value. Half if seriously damaged, full if destroyed.



DESIGNER'S NOTES

A wargame of aerial combat is very different to a game of ground combat. There are many differences, but the most obvious is that aerial combat takes place in three dimensions.

Writing a game that takes place in three dimensions was one of the major challenges. Many aerial combat games choose to ignore this element, the thinking behind this being that to have a dogfight aircraft can be assumed to be at approximately the same height, otherwise they couldn't engage, so no game! That quickly solves the problem, but for Aeronautica Imperialis we wanted a game that wasn't just about dogfighting. We wanted the game to include all ways that an aircraft can be involved in a battle, from dogfighting to transporting troops and attacking ground targets. In early playtesting we looked at creating a pure dogfight game, we even toyed with using 40K-sized aircraft, but in the end we already had a range of epic-sized aircraft, and that range included Marauder bombers, Orca dropships and all manner of different aircraft. If the game was just about dog-fighting, then how could we include Orcas or Marauders as anything other than targets. These aircraft needed to have a full part in the game, and they needed to have their own roles to play just like the fighters.

The decision to use Epic-sized aircraft and the full range meant altitude would have to be part of the game because we needed to know where the ground was for landing troops and ground attacks. All along I had wanted to include altitude, as I felt that the third dimension would set the game apart. I was also aware of the complex geometry it could involve, triangulating distances. I had to go with my gut feeling on this one. Many of the gamers I know are clever people, and cope with the maths involved in wargames easily, but I do not play games with toy soldiers so I can spend my free time doing mathematics. A few modifiers I can cope with, but too much just makes my head hurt and interferes with the fun of the game. Hence, no complex geometry or maths would be included. However the rules ultimately coped with three dimensions for moving and firing, it would have to be simple.

Simplification doesn't worry me, because I have always felt that the 'game' in wargame is an important part of the word. It is a game, it's about entertainment. It is not a simulation. I would not write a game that tried to simulate the complexities of real aerial combat. In the end there is nothing to be gained from that approach, and computer game flight simulators already do that far better than a tabletop game could. There are already many games out there for people seeking such an experience. Primarily this game had to focus on the models on the tabletop, because what you don't get with a computer game is a collection of cool aircraft models to collect, paint, keep and show off to your friends, and collecting is a big part of most hobbies, and certainty a big part of wargaming.

Two basic ideas formed the basis of Aeronautica, the first was the Manoeuvre cards, the second was the flying base. The flying base was important because at first we were simply writing down what speed and altitude each aircraft was at, and this was not only immensely slow and made for a lot of confusion ('is that Thunderbolt 2 or 3, no sorry I just moved Thunderbolt 4 and though it was Thunderbolt 1, so it's at the wrong speed and altitude now' – it happened). It was basically unworkable expect by the most fastidious gamer, and required very accurate bookkeeping. The flying base was the solution to this problem, and made the altitude and speed of enemy aircraft immediately available to the other side, which seemed only right because we must assume that each aircraft has advanced scanners, etc, to detect the enemy and the pilots also have their 'mark 1 eyeballs'. In reality aircraft use radar for this – but I've played air combat games before that require active and passive radar tracking, etc, and it's all actually quite dull, especially as its is also a pre-requirement to getting to shoot (the exciting bit!). Part of the abstraction of the game is that we can assume a lot of technical scanning and tracking is happening all the time – the information you can read on the opponent's bases represents your pilot's knowledge.

The Manoeuvre cards were a quick way to sum up a lot of information. I wanted movement in the game to combine restrictive elements that made reacting to your opponent's moves the best way to fly, and allowed players enough freedom to give the 'joystick control' feel of a pilot. The elements of instant reaction and speed, combined with a prescriptive element that could not be changed once chosen, so players were committed to an action. The Manoeuvre cards allowed this, and also meant that altitude and speed changes could be included into one manoeuvre, and each Manoeuvre card was actually much more than one manoeuvre, it was several combined into one. They aren't really cards, there is nothing random about them, they are quick reference templates for manoeuvring.

Aerial combat is primarily about movement and manoeuvre. A defining element in any aircraft game is that all of the participants are constantly on the move. This is where the detail in the game needed to be (not in aircraft detection systems or even shooting). Many games make the mistake of trying to be detailed in all areas, detailed in movement, detailed in firing, detailed in melee and detailed in morale. This makes for a long-winded game system that is difficult to learn and slow to play. In a game that was about detail, say a one-to-one fighter vs fighter dogfight game, more detail would be appropriate, but this game had to deal with up to 12 aircraft per side, and still be playable in few hours.

Thinking logically, and drawing heavily on my own experience, when do gamers actually get to play their games? Well, many are members of clubs or small gaming groups, and clubs or groups generally meet in evenings. So, if you can't play a game and finish in an evening (say two or three hours) then how can people be expected to play the game at all? Of course there are weekends. Well yes, occasionally I can free a day to play a larger game, but how often can you expect people to do that? And if people can't actually play the game, then the main incentive to collect and paint models is lost, and suddenly they aren't very interested and find other things to do with their free time.

Aeronautica Imperialis had to be a pick-up and play game, where the investment of time and money to play wasn't so great as to require a massive commitment of time and effort before playing a game, and where a good game could be played in a single evening. Blood Bowl was my inspiration here because it's a good game to play in an evening and doesn't require a full army of hundreds of miniatures to get started. It had the 'pick up and play' factor I wanted.

So, knowing that playing time should be no more than a few hours for a medium sized game (five or six aircraft), every area of the game could not include detail. I asked myself what was really important, where should the detail reside? Because, whilst a game that includes too much detail is often slow and time consuming, one that includes too little detail rapidly becomes dull and repetitive.

So I had an ideal to aim for, easy to learn and to collect a starting force, fast to play, but hard to master, to keep gamer's interest. It's a holy grail of games design.

Simple and straight forward rules also reduce the amount of 'what if' situations that the rules throw up. Any games that strive for any kind of representative elements end up throwing up situations which the rules do not cover. Rules cannot hope to cover everything, and shouldn't try to. What is important is that the core rules are robust enough to withstand the pressure of constant use. Once published, gamers will play the game so much that just anything that might happen, no matter how improbable, will happen to somebody somewhere. Loop holes will appear and players will find the 'best' way of playing, the unbeatable combination or force selection. By keeping the core rules short and concise it minimizes this risk, and means that I can add as many advanced rules as I like, which players can choose to use or not, depending upon personal taste.

Personally I do not like games that require both sides to fight to the last man. I want the game to have a definite end, be it a turn count, time, or victory conditions, games that just run on, with no clear ending have no natural conclusion, and no sense of completion. A clear winner and loser is the least requirement after investing two or three hours of time in a game, and some games suffer from a sense that you can fight on regardless, even beyond hope of victory, simply to deny your opponent victory and force an unsatisfactory stalemate.

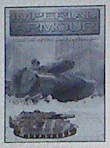
I wanted Aeronautica Imperialis to have a sense of completion, hence the 12 turn fuel limit. Obviously, fuel is a major factor in aerial combat, but we tried some playtesting in which we recorded each individual aircraft's fuel use, and the added bookkeeping (on top of ammunition and manoeuvres) was too much 'brain-strain'. In the end it was simplified down to 12 turns. Few games will last this long, the longest any playtest game lasted was 11 turns, but the fuel limit means that the game cannot just keep going ad-infinitum if players are being cautious and avoiding each other. You will get a result in 12 turns.

The Victory points system took some time to come up with. Over the years Games Workshop has been refining its Victory points system for the main games, and I was heavily involved in 40Ks 3rd edition Victory points system, which has now been refined further in 4th edition. Whilst not perfect, it has closed many loopholes, and everything learnt working on that system came in handy here. The main innovation was that I wanted to give players a genuine choice between fighting on and disengaging with damaged aircraft. This took some time to work out, but I think it succeded in the end. A damaged aircraft that has run out of ammunition is basically a sitting duck and needs to get out of there. If it still has ammo, then it is useful, but I wanted players to have to risk giving away Victory points to keep it in the fight. Also, the more aircraft that disengage, the shorter the game will be, and the system was offering an incentive that would help shorten overall game length.

Overall I'm very happy with the game, obviously I'm biased but I think that if I hadn't written it I'd enjoy playing it. Obviously, you can't please all the people all the time, but hopefully most people will also enjoy their games and return to the skies for a dogfight or two for an evenings entertainment, and occasionally try a campaign against their friends.

Warwick Kinrade
July 2007

IMPERIAL ARMOUR



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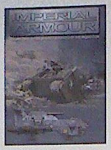

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The Imperial Armour books are Forge World's range of large format, full-colour, hard back guide books and campaign books. Each is packed full of background information, technical data, colour schemes and rules for Warhammer 40,000.

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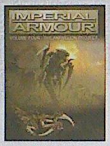

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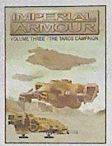

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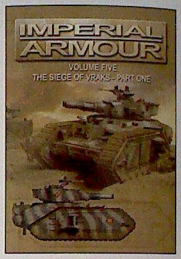
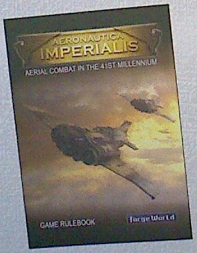


Volume 5

AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS



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THE GAME OF AERIAL COMBAT IN THE 41st MILLENNIUM

In the dark future of the 41st millennium Mankind must fight for survival in a hostile galaxy full of dangerous alien threats. The galaxy spanning Imperium of Man is the greatest empire in human history, but it must battle for its very existence. Wars rage across every planet in the Imperium, by land and now – in the skies, as the Imperial Navy, the Aeronautica Imperialis, join the battle for Mankind's survival.

Tactica Aeronautica is a supplement for Aeronautica Imperialis, a table-top wargame for two or more players, where you command the aircraft of the Imperial Navy or one of its many alien enemies. This book provides you with additional rules for Aeronautica Imperialis, as well as new aircraft, new background and the Typha-IV campaign.

Inside you'll find:

New Rules: New and expanded rules for Aeronautica Imperialis, including aircraft upgrades for all races, expanded squadron lists, and guidance for designing and building ground installations.

New Aircraft Guides: Detailed background, specifications and colour profiles for seven aircraft of the 41st millennium. You'll find the Imperium's Marauder Colossus and Vigilant, brutal Ork Bommers and Blasta Bommers, Tau Empire Remora drone fighters and the Tiger Shark AX-2-2, and the huge and powerful Chaos Harbinger heavy bomber.

Campaigns and Scenarios: Details of the Typha-IV campaign. As a well equipped Tau Empire strike force attack the industrial facilities of Typha-IV, the Imperial Navy must respond to defend the planet from the alien attack in a desperate battle. The campaign includes background, a campaign system and historical scenarios.

Hobby Articles: Contains tactics articles, rules questions and answers from the *Aeronatica Imperialis* rulebook and designer's notes.

Man your aircraft, the battle awaits...

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