

TAU

EXPERIMENTAL RULES FOR TAU ARMIES IN EPIC 40,000 BACKGROUND BY ANDY CHAMBERS RULES BY PETE HAINES AND WARWICK KINRADE

Important Note: *This issue of Epic magazine is something of a 'Tau Special' in celebration of the excellent new Tau models released by Forge World. The following Experimental army lists include all of the rules needed to use the new Forge World models, and will allow you to field allied contingents of Tau in games of Epic 40,000. In 12-18 months time we hope to produce metal models to complement the resin ones made by Forge World, and then we'll bring out a supplement with official army lists that will allow you to field full-sized Tau armies in your Epic games.*



THE TAU RACE

Far from Terra, in the galactic east, lies the empire of the Tau. Based around their homeworld of T'au and encompassing over a hundred colonised worlds the empire is expanding rapidly. The Tau themselves are a young race, but they have developed highly advanced technology. Their empire has already enveloped some lesser alien races. Foremost amongst these subsumed races are the Kroot, a fierce barbaric race who the Tau use extensively as mercenaries.

Tau society is divided into castes. The Fire caste are the warriors, whose task is to protect all the other castes. The Earth caste are artisans and workers. The Water caste are politicians and bureaucrats. The Air caste are messengers and couriers, as well as pilots. There is also the Ethereal caste; these are the rulers of the Tau, who unite the other castes to one single purpose. Tau society is strongly united, with all the castes working together for the good of all.

THE TAU ART OF WAR

The Fire caste are the specialist warrior caste of the Tau – they have always been sturdier and more aggressive than the other castes and were successful plains hunters in their races early history. Tau battle tactics still derive from the discipline of the hunt and are based on effective coordination of the hunters and correct selection of the position from which to make the kill, and the weapon with which it is to be made.

Tau military forces are organised in teams of warriors originating from the same Sept. These teams are grouped into Hunter cadres under the leadership of a Commander and/or an Ethereal.

The Fire caste are entirely committed to mobile warfare in which targets are identified, tracked and killed in an efficient and cautious manner. The Tau regard close combat as primitive and

always plan their attacks around the application of firepower. When they absolutely must storm defences, the attack will be led by auxiliary troops such as the Kroot. The assault troops are not used as pawns – the Tau way of war does not recognise the concept of expendable troops. Instead their safety is entrusted to the troops providing the covering fire who must identify and kill enemy firebases before the assault force suffers serious harm. The Kroot are frequently used as stormers because their natural fieldcraft skills allow them to make the best use of cover as they advance. There is a variant of this type of attack, where precisely planned strikes are launched (often by Crisis teams) against a careful selection of targets which, when destroyed, compromise the entire defensive position. This technique is the hallmark of a master strategist. The Tau are good night fighters and when darkness falls they move into range of the defences and systematically destroy them.

On the rare occasions when the Tau are compelled to defend a vital resource, they still apply their traditional techniques. They launch lightning fast forays out of the defences, each aimed at killing the enemy that pose the greatest threat. They also use a feigned retreat from the perimeter to draw the attacker into a well-prepared kill zone.

As the Tau empire expands, the need to fight large scale engagements has caused the purist Fire caste approach to be questioned and, at the suggestion of the Ethereal caste, large numbers of auxiliaries have been incorporated into the Tau military, the most common being the mercenary Kroot. The auxiliaries are used to maintain a battle line around which the highly mobile Tau Hunter Cadres operate. This change has allowed the Tau to fight wars on a large scale where previously they would have been limited to raids.

Tau battle plans are very complex as each Hunter Cadre is assigned specific targets, locations and times. Teams are briefed at length beforehand and simulations are widely employed. The Tau may start a battle with elaborate flowing attacks, each launched with perfect planning, but sooner or later their prepared scenarios cease to apply and they lose momentum. When this occurs they will disengage and plan anew.

It is important to note that the Tau regard territorial gain as militarily irrelevant compared to the destruction of enemy forces. Ground is for position from which to make the kill; once the kill is made the ground is for the taking. A Tau army will gladly retreat from a strong enemy attack to preserve Tau lives while it awaits its opportunity to strike back decisively.

The Tau attribute no dishonour to prudent retreat and see last stands as a lack of imagination or the last refuge of an incompetent commander. Unlike the Imperium of Man, the Tau empire cannot draw on limitless manpower, so the strategy of attrition is unknown to them.

TAU FORCES

INFANTRY

Fire Warriors Teams

These are ever present in Tau forces. They form the backbone of any Hunter Cadre. They are effective troops, well-armoured, equipped with pulse rifles and often mounted in Devilfish transport vehicles. They move and deploy rapidly and in battle rely on the firepower of their pulse rifles and avoid close quarters fighting if possible.

Pathfinder Teams

These are the eyes and ears of a Tau army, moving ahead of the main force, identifying targets and finding positions to fight from. They are masters of battlefield positioning, patience and proud. They are equipped with Markerlight target designators, which select and guide Seeker missiles fired from vehicles or aircraft.

Stealth Teams

These are the 'lone wolves' of a Tau cadre. Equipped with the XV15 Stealth battlesuit they have freedom to range the battlefield, ambushing isolated enemy troops and intervening to support their own troops when hard pressed. They are the Tau's 'wild card' and are not restricted to the Tau's more predictable tactics.

Gun Drones Squadrons

Drones are independent, artificially intelligent, machines, programmed to fight for the Tau. They are flat disks, powered by anti-grav motors and the Tau use them for tedious or highly dangerous missions. Drones may be equipped with all sorts of equipment, but the most common on the battlefield are equipped with pulse carbines.

VEHICLES AND BATTLE SUITS

Tau technology is highly advanced and incorporates many systems to allow Fire caste warriors to fight more efficiently. The Tau employ battlesuits with a variety of equipment for different roles. Likewise they have a basic vehicle design which is adapted to different roles. The vehicles are all powered by anti-grav motors, whilst the battlesuits contain jump packs for battlefield mobility.

Crisis Battlesuit teams

Those Fire Warrior teams that prove themselves in battle earn the right to wear a battlesuit. They are experienced warriors whose loyalty is beyond question. A Crisis team will have fought together for many years and are 'bonded' together, swearing to put the welfare of the team and team members before their own desires. Crisis battlesuits carry an array of heavy weapons, such as burst cannons, plasma rifles and fusion blasters, and support equipment such as targeters and shield generators. On the battlefield they lend heavy firepower to the Fire Warriors.

Broadside Battlesuits

These carry the heaviest weapons, massive and deadly rail guns, capable of destroying a tank. Their jump packs are removed to free up weight for the heavy guns. On the battlefield Broadside must engage and destroy the enemies heavily armoured targets.

Devilfish Troop Carrier

The Devilfish troop carrier is the workhorse of Tau ground forces. It can carry 12 men and is armed with rapid firing burst cannons. Skimming across the battlefield on anti-grav motors it moves rapidly to any location on the battlefield, disembarking troops and lending fire support.

Hammerhead

The Hammerhead gunship is the Tau's main battle tank. It cannot carry troops but uses the heaviest weapons available to Tau forces, equipped with either an Ion cannon or a Railgun, as well as other secondary weapon systems, such as burst cannons or missile pods.

AIR FORCE

Barracuda

The Barracuda is the Tau's main air superiority fighter. Fast and well armed it is crewed by Air caste pilots.

Tiger Shark

This is the Tau's main bomber, larger and more heavily armed than the Barracuda and crewed by two Air caste pilots. As well as its weapons, the Tiger Shark also carries drone racks, and can deliver a payload of drone squadrons, which float to earth before skimming off in search of targets.

Manta

The Manta is a dropship, many times larger than a Space Marine Thunderhawk. Each Manta can carry a full Hunter Cadre, as well as their vehicles and support equipment. Troops equipped with jump packs can be deployed from it at high altitude. The Manta is well protected and armed with railguns and ion cannons to bombard ground targets with.



	Speed	Range	Firepower	Assault	Armour	Special
Fire Warrior	10cm	30cm	1	1	4+	Rapid Fire
Path Finder	10cm	15cm	1	1	4+	Rapid Fire, Infiltrate
Ethereal	10cm	15cm	1	1	4+	Supreme Commander
Stealth Team	10cm	30cm	2	2	5+	Jump Packs, Infiltrate
Drone Squad	10cm	15cm	1	1	4+	Skimmer
Crisis Battlesuit	10cm	30cm	3	2	6+	Jump Packs
Broadside	10cm	45cm	1 x AT	1	6+	
Devilfish	25cm	30cm	1	1	5+	Skimmer, Transport (2)
Hammerhead	25cm	45cm	1 x AT	1	6+	(with Railgun) Skimmer
Hammerhead	25cm	45cm	3	1	6+	(with Ion cannon) Skimmer
Barracuda	Flyer	30cm	2	3/2	5+	
Tiger Shark	Flyer	30cm	6	2/2	5+	

TAU HUNTER CADRE

Command

You must choose a Commander.

0-1 Ethereal Caste 50 points

Consists of 1 Ethereal unit (Supreme Commander)

0-1 Tau Commander 50 points

Consists of 1 Crisis team unit + Hero

Main Force

Choose up to **10** warbands from the following list:

Fire Warrior team 11 points per unit

Consists of 1 to 2 Fire Warrior units

Extra cost to:

Mount in a Devilfish +12 pts

Crisis Battlesuit 23 points

Consists of 1 Crisis Battlesuit

Kroot Carnivore Squad 7 points per unit

Consists of 1 to 4 Kroot units

Drone Squadron 7 points

Consists of 1 Drone Squadron unit

Support

Make up to **10** choices from the following list, but you may not exceed the number of choices made on the Main Force list.

Pathfinder team 14 points per unit

Consists of 1 Stealth team

Extra cost to:

Mount in a Devilfish +12 pts

Stealth team 15 points per unit

Consists of 1 Stealth team unit

Broadside Battlesuit 23 points

Consists of 1 Broadside Battlesuit

Hammerhead (Railgun) 31 points

Consists of 1 Hammerhead with Railgun

Hammerhead (Ion cannon) 29 points

Consists of 1 Hammerhead with Ion cannon

Kroot Hounds 6 points

Consists of 1 Kroot Hound unit

Krootox 13 points

Consists of 1 Krootox

Chain of Command:

Ethereal > Tau Commander > Crisis Team > any other unit

Next issue: Rules for Kroot units, the Manta and Tau Air caste Cadres.