

BATTLEFLEET

GOTHIC

MAGAZINE

Issue 17

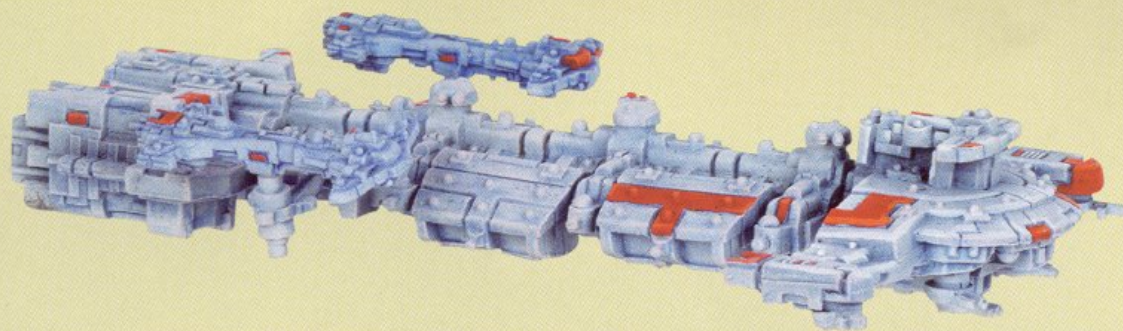
FOR THE GREATER GOOD

THE TAU EXPAND INTO SPACE

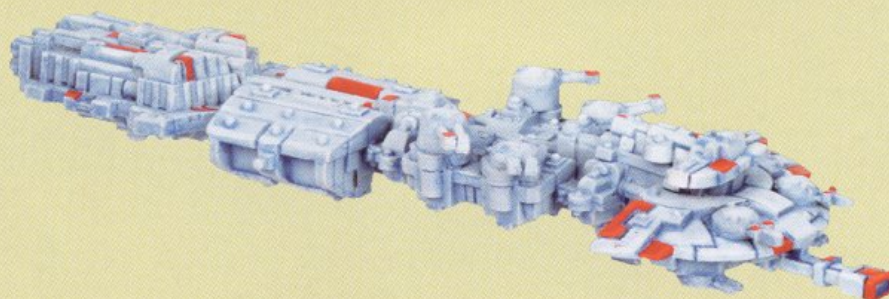
**GAMES
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FOR THE GREATER GOOD

Tau for Battlefleet Gothic



Tau Explorer Class Starship



Tau Hero Class Starship



Tau Merchant Class Starship



Tau Defender Class Starship



Tau Orca Class Gunship

EDITORIAL

As you no doubt by now aware, this month we finally release the long awaited Tau fleet for Battlefleet Gothic.

This is quite an important occasion, since it means that all the races from the Warhammer 40,000 game are now represented in Battlefleet Gothic (plus the Demiurg, who thus far feature only in Battlefleet Gothic).

So, an obvious question is what does this mean for the future and what new fleets can we expect to see for the game? Just because all the races are now represented by fleets doesn't mean we won't continue to release new fleets and models.

Battlefleet Gothic has always had a very clear distinction between two types of fleet Battlefleets and Raiding Fleets. Some of the races (Orks, Tyranids) have both of these types of fleets, while other races possess

battlefleets but no raiding fleet or vice versa, so over the coming months and years many of these gaps will begin to be filled.

Some races, inevitably won't receive both kinds of fleet (it just wouldn't be that fitting to have a Dark Eldar battlefleet for instance) while others will receive lists for multiple fleets of the same type (the Imperium has countless battlefleets after all).

We'll begin this process with the Eldar who already possess a raiding fleet (in the shape of the Eldar Corsairs). In the near future (well, within the next six months or so anyway), we will be releasing new models, rules and fleet lists for the Craftworld Eldar and their full battlefleets. First up for the treatment will be the warfleet of Iyanden, as featured in the old Doom of the Eldar board game, so check the website often since I suspect we may soon have some pics up there...

Matt

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INCOMING!

THIS MONTH'S BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC NEWS

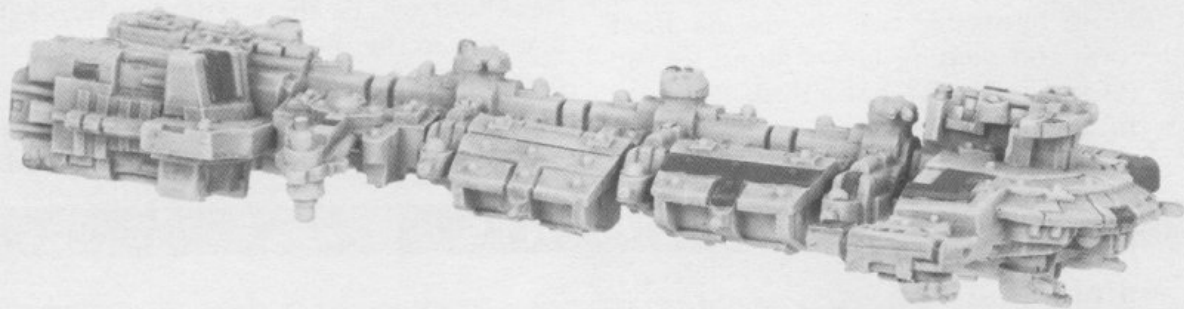
This month we release possibly the most eagerly awaited fleet since the game's original release - the Tau.

The Tau fleet is actually a huge project, so what you see this month are simply the mainstay vessels of the fleet. Over coming month we will be backing this up with

releases of alien races, mercenaries, orbitals, waystations and so on.

Full experimental rules for the Tau can be found on page 6 of this magazine, though you won't have to wait too long for the full official rules since they will be appearing in Armada at the end of year.

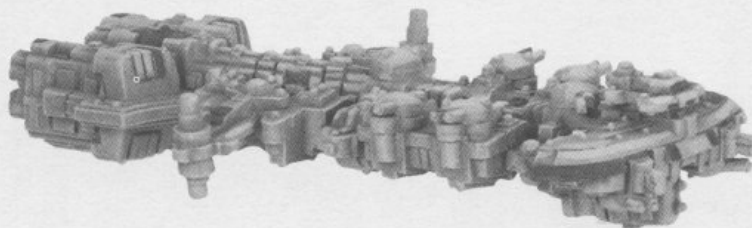
The Explorer was the breakthrough for Tau science that made the empire possible. It was the galleon of the Tau Empire and for nearly a hundred tau'cyr it was the only class of ship continually in production. Conflict with the Orks was the class's death knell. It was not a specialist warship and its weaponry was incapable of keeping terrorships and killkroozers at a distance. As a consequence work on other elements of the fleet, such as the Merchant class, was accelerated.



EXPLORER CLASS STARSHIP

The Tau Explorer class boxed set contains enough components for a single Explorer class starship in the standard configuration.

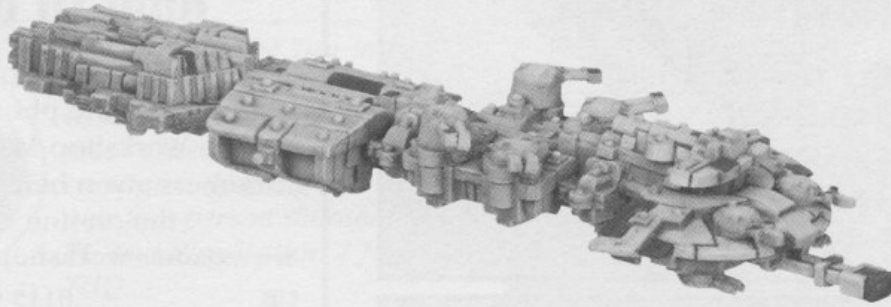
The Merchant class was originally developed to be the new workhorse of the empire. Conflict with the Orks caused significant revision of the design with field modifications that allowed virtually all the cargo space to be converted to weapons systems if needed. The continued requirements of the fleet ensured that the Merchant class remained predominantly a warship until the Hero class was laid down.



MERCHANT CLASS STARSHIP

The Tau Merchant class boxed set contains enough components for a single Merchant class starship in the standard configuration.

The pinnacle of Tau technology, the Hero class was the product of Tau experience during the Damocles Gulf Crusade. The Tau were determined that they should have a ship that could match the Imperial Lunar class. As became evident, they failed but they did succeed in producing a credible ship of the line.



HERO CLASS STARSHIP

The Tau Hero class boxed set contains enough components for a single Hero class starship in the standard configuration.

Just as the Hero is the Tau response to the Imperial Lunar class the Defender is their answer to the Imperial Sword class. The Defender is the only true escort in the Tau fleet and is used in squadrons to provide close support for the larger vessels.



DEFENDER CLASS STARSHIP

The Tau Defender class blisterpack contains three complete Defender class starships.

The Orca was designed to provide the Tau fleet with an escort. Unable to build a drive light enough to produce a normal escort the Orca is transported within a capital ship's gravitic sheath. Once unleashed, however, it is a powerful gunship able to contend with any Imperial or Ork class.



ORCA CLASS STARSHIP

The Tau Orca class blister pack contains four complete Orca class starships.

TAU IN SPACE

'Charge capacitors, time to intercept?'

Kor'uil vash'ya tozban lowered himself into his blast couch and glanced at the control surface to trigger the emergency restraints. He never locked himself down until the last moment before combat, he was air-caste born and orbital-raised, swimming in zero gravity was far more natural to him than walking. Around his couch the array of holographic displays projected by his bridge drones settled next to him, he took in the details with an experienced eye. His vessel had accelerated to optimum speed and was rapidly closing with his human quarry. Even though his bridge drones had definitely identified the target as a civilian vessel it had impressive speed, almost as fast as Tozban's Skether'qan class, and his ship was as fast as any in the Kor'vattra.

'Intercept in 72.83 centidec'.

Tozban confirmed that the intercept point had appeared on his tactical display and a countdown to intercept had started. All his railgun tubes were loaded and the huge energy charge needed to fire them could be released on his command. This was one consignment of supplies that would never reach the fighting on Arthas Moloch.

The Tau Empire has only expanded into space during the last thousand years. Despite this they have made remarkable progress in developing both civilian and military starships, and have now reached a level where their ships can be compared to Imperial designs.

The development of the Tau fleet (known as the Kor'vattra in Tau) has been given the highest priority by the Ethereal Caste. Without the Kor'vattra the manifest destiny of the Tau could never be realised and as a species their

existence would be at the mercy of celestial phenomena such as meteors or supernova.

Once unified by the Ethereal Caste the Tau made incredible technological progress. By M39 they had spread through the T'au system and ringed their homeworld with orbital research and manufacturing facilities. Further expansion required a drive system capable of spanning interstellar distances however and this proved to be a formidable barrier.

Tau vessels already used a form of gravitic drive. This projected a sheath of gravitic energy ahead of and around the vessel which was continually



re-projected further ahead, drawing the ship behind it rather like an archaic sail. For two hundred tau'cyr the Earth Caste grappled with the problem only for the breakthrough to be handed to them.

On the innermost of T'au seven's moons a routine geological survey discovered the remains of an alien vessel. The significance of the find did not disrupt Tau society as much as might have been expected. Tau theorists had long reasoned that other life forms existed and the verification helped confirm the belief that there was a greater destiny awaiting them. No Tau commented on the sheer good fortune of finding the technology that they so desperately needed on their doorstep just when they needed it.

The Tau were able to duplicate the warp drive of the alien ship but the initial test flights were disastrous. Achieving transition to the Warp required more than technology, it required psychically attuned minds and the Tau race boasted no psykers. Without them to guide the transition no amount of power could breach the dimensional barriers. The best the Tau could do was make a partial transition, forcing themselves into the void that separated Warpspace and real space before they were hurled out again like a ball held under water then released.

Data gathered at great cost during the test flights was studied closely. The Water caste scientists made the observation that the boundary between real space and warp space was not a neat line. It was closer to being a turbulent ocean fomented by the tempestuous

warp tides below. By carefully angling their descent toward the Warp and extending the field generated by the gravitic drive into a wing, shaped to hold the vessel down a Tau vessel could extend the duration of the dive considerably. The speeds achieved in the ascent back to real space were staggering and this coupled with the effect of the Warp on time and space ensured that the real distance covered by the dive was immense. Early tests lost several drone ships because they inadvertently passed far beyond the sensor range of their recovery vessels.

The details were soon resolved. There was still a major constraint, only the most powerful (and bulky) drives could sustain the gravitic wing throughout the dive and the power drain meant that considerable recharge time was needed between dives. Also by comparison to actually navigating the warp the pace was still very slow. Taking typical Imperial Warp speeds the Tau drive was slower by a factor of five. The speed was consistent though, did not expose the Tau to the perils of the Warp and enabled the Tau to expand beyond their home star for the first time.

The first major class of Starships built were the ponderous Gal'eath' (trans. Explorer). These leviathans laid the foundations for the Tau Empire and formed the basis of the Kor'vattra for its first wars with the Orks and the Nicassar. The Nicassar were less advanced than the Tau and after their speedy defeat were one of the first other races absorbed into the Empire. The Orks however posed a major problem. Their ships were faster, better



shielded and more heavily armed. Against such a dangerous enemy the Gal'eath class was simply too expensive a resource to risk. Fortunately new, more compact gravitic drives led to the introduction of the smaller Il'fannor (trans. Merchant) class. To counter the numerous Ork escorts the Tau developed their own Kass'l (trans. Orca) gunships. The Tau were slow to build a gravitic drive with sufficient power for Warp dives small enough to create an independent escort so the Kass'l would travel inside a larger vessels gravitic sheath over long distances, disengaging when back in normal space. This combined with the introduction of super-heavy ion cannons and barracuda fighters helped restore the balance but it was the power and efficiency of the Tau shipyards that prevented the Empire being devastated.

THE TAU'N CAMPAIGN.

Tau'n was a choice objective for the expanding Tau and following extensive exploration a colonisation fleet was assembled based around seventeen Gal'leath and twenty-three Il'fannor class vessels. Between them these ships could transport some forty Kass'l class Gunships. Most important however was the immense transport capacity of the fleet which was used to take components for half a dozen heavily-armed orbitals to Tau'n. Fighting off Ork raiders the Tau were able to set up their orbitals around Tau'n and control their colonisation of the world from space. The Tau fleet used the orbitals as a secure harbour from which to fight off Ork attacks including a major assault involving nine Ork Kill-kroozers and Terrorships. Tau tactics were still too static however and on numerous occasions the Barracudas and Orcas were lured too far from the rest of the fleet and destroyed. The conflict was ended when Tau ground forces defeated a hastily landed Ork army enabling colonisation to proceed unopposed. The victory cost the Tau fourteen of their capital ships for only one confirmed Ork loss of comparable mass. Important lessons were learned.

Firstly a better method of linking space and ground forces was needed. The result was the Manta, a machine capable of fighting in space as a very heavy bomber (it is almost large enough to be considered an Escort) and within an atmosphere as a drop ship and heavy fire support. The use of Orbital platforms to augment the fleet's firepower became part of standard Kor'vattra doctrine as did the imaginative stratagem of using small stations (called Waystations) to create harbours and rendezvous points in deep space where they were safe from detection. The problem of communication over interstellar distances had to be resolved as well. Lacking telepathic

communication a Tau fleet, once despatched, was immediately on its own, unable to communicate with its superiors or other elements of the fleet. Strings of waystations were established to relay messages but this was only effective over relatively short distances. Accordingly the Skether'qan (trans. Messenger) class starship was built. The Messenger was tiny by comparison to the rest of the fleet and was crewed by a single pilot aided by the most advanced drones. By reducing the crew to a minimum the Messenger was able to be fitted with the smallest gravitic drive capable of performing Warp dives. Its systems were optimised for storage and relay of vast quantities of data. Urgent messages could now be transmitted by relays of Messengers each diving in turn and passing its data to the next vessel in the chain. The method was still clumsy and co-ordinating separate fleet formations remains a Kor'vattra weakness necessitating extremely rigorous planning.

Beyond this the Tau made numerous minor advances. The best example was the improvements made in drone technology which allowed the deployment of spy pods to extend sensor ranges. The Fire Caste provided guidance to the Air caste-dominated Kor'vattra devising a series of training programs to hone their combat skills.

THE DAMOCLES GULF CRUSADE

Fundamentally the Tau military system remained the same until the Damocles Gulf Crusade brought them into conflict with the Imperium. It is likely that if they had been confronted by a significant Ork Waaagh! at any time during this period they would have been defeated but the destruction of Waaagh! Scraghurtz by Alaitoc Craftworld in M40 ensured their survival. The limited (by human standards) conflict with the Imperium set new standards for the Kor'vattra though. The expansion of the Empire now meant that the Tau could call upon species such as the Kroot with their own starships and Imperial Rogue Traders were a valuable source of new technology. Within twenty years of the armistice the Tau launched their first Lar'shi (trans. Hero) class cruiser, inspired by the Imperial Lunar class. A Tau fleet including a high ratio of the new ships subsequently defeated an Ork fleet of almost comparable size assaulting the D'yanoi system.

The Tau are now an established power on the Eastern fringe but it remains to be seen whether the Kor'vattra can rise to the challenge of the Tyranid Hive Fleets and the other perils of a very dangerous universe.

SPECIAL RULES

Shields

Tau shields are formed by shaping the gravitic field to repel incoming fire. They function as normal shields in every respect.

Turrets

Tau turrets are extremely sophisticated combining a range of weapon types with overlapping fire zones. Note the Tracking Systems special rules.

Ion Cannons

Ion cannon shots vaporise the object struck magnifying the energy discharge. Armour is of no value against them. They function as lances in all respects.

A note on Tau weapon configurations

Tau rail gun and lance turrets are extremely sophisticated with advanced targeting systems that allow several turrets to engage each designated target regardless of their relative positions on the Tau ship. Where individual turrets and batteries may be relatively weak, combining firezones in this manner make Tau railguns and ion cannons fearsome prospects, especially in forward firing arc, where turrets from all over the vessel can combine against a single enemy vessel or squadron.

Railgun batteries

Railguns of the size mounted on warships require massive amounts of energy to fire despite Tau superconductors. Because of this, power is routed to a single barrel at a time. The sequence is timed to ensure the first barrel is reloaded before it is charged again. Railguns function as standard batteries.

Spine Guns

Spine guns are massive railguns where mass drivers trigger the initial acceleration before the ships gravitic field is pulsed to squeeze the missiles toward the enemy at enormous speed. The missiles are drone-controlled and exceptionally dangerous. See the ordnance section for more details.

Deflector

The deflector is a specialised shield generally mounted on the prow of the latest Tau ships. It turns the gravitic sheath around the vessel into a dense wedge, which is far more effective against incoming fire. If fired

at from the front the deflector augments the passive armour which counts as armour 6. Deflectors are always mounted on the prow and will be disabled if the ship suffers a prow weapons damaged critical.

Tracking Systems

Tau Messengers boast highly advanced data storage and processing facilities to cope with the vast amounts of information they carry. When linked to ship sensors though this processing power can be used to provide a direct feed to the ships turrets. In fleet actions Messengers can route this data to nearby Tau vessels. Any Tau vessel using turrets within 10cm of a ship with tracking systems may re-roll misses and ignores the column shift when firing batteries at ranges above 30cm. Tracking systems continue to function even if a ship is braced for impact.

Critical Hits

Tau ships use the standard critical hit table.

Other Notes

Tau ships roll leadership normally.

Tau ships may not conduct teleport hit and run attacks.

Boarding strength is half normal for the size of ship.

ORDNANCE

Missiles

Tau missiles are drone-guided and are fired in salvos, each point of torpedo strength represents about 10 actual missiles. In game terms this makes no difference. Tau missiles move at 40cm but on a roll of 6 run out of fuel and are removed. They are also guided. Each move the missiles may change course by 45 degrees.

Barracudas

Barracudas are fighters with a speed of 25cm.

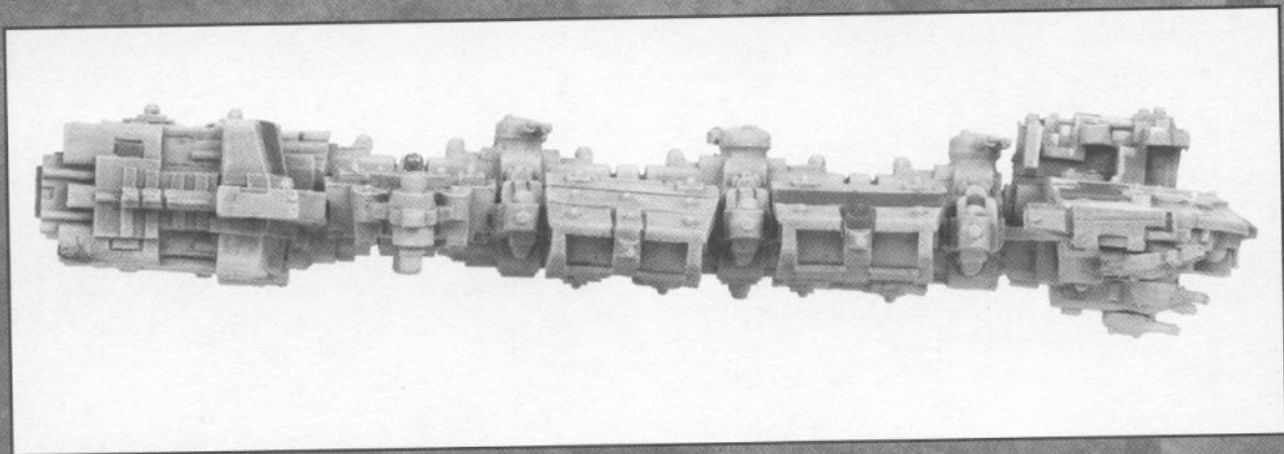
Mantas

Mantas are bombers, each marker represents a single vessel. They are well shielded and if intercepted by enemy fighters roll a d6, on a roll of 4+ the Manta is not removed. Mantas move 20cm. Whilst Mantas can carry large numbers of troops they are not used to board enemy vessels as boarding is totally contrary to the Tau's approach to space warfare.

GAL'LEATH (EXPLORER) CLASS STARSHIP 230 pts

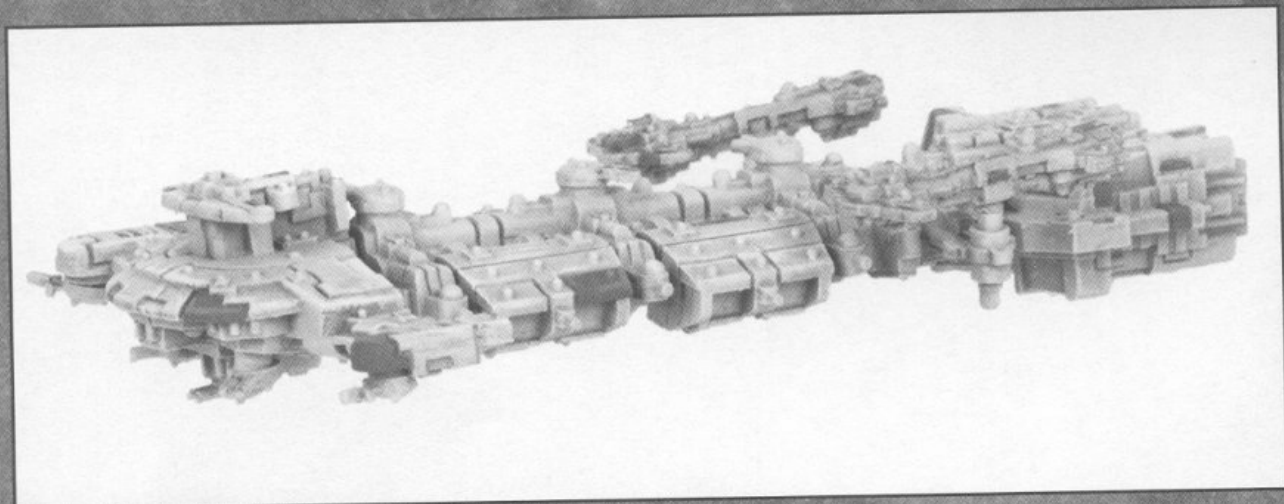
The Explorer was the breakthrough for Tau science that made the empire possible. Its massive reactor was capable of sustaining the gravitic drive over lengthy dives. Based on average speeds using full warp travel, not that the average means a great deal, the drive was slower by a factor of five. It was adequate though and the Explorer could also boast massive cargo capacity, extensive research facilities and most importantly the ability to serve as a mobile dock for semi-independent ships. Its cargo bays were large enough to carry modular orbital units, waystations and even (more recently) message boats. It was the galleon of the Tau Empire and for nearly a

hundred tau'cyr it was the only class of ship continually in production. During this time it moved from mark I to XXIII benefiting from a succession of improvements and special adaptations. Conflict with the Orks was the class' death knell. It was not a specialist warship and its weaponry was incapable of keeping Terrorships and Killkroozers at a distance. Work on the Merchant class was accelerated. When it was complete production of the Explorer dropped 85%. Refits have proceeded though and the profiles represent the most common variant in service and the most recent upgrade.



GAL'LEATH STANDARD VASH'YA CONFIGURATION MK XXIII

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/12	15cm	45°	1	5+(4+Rear)	5
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow Railgun battery		45cm	6		Left/front/right
Port Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	4 Squadrons		Left
Starboard Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	4 Squadrons		Right
Port Gravitic hook		Capacity 1 Orca			
Starboard Gravitic hook		Capacity 1 Orca			
Dorsal Gravitic hook		Capacity 1 Orca			



BOR'KAN MK XXIV EXPERIMENTAL CONFIGURATION

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/12	15cm	45°	1	5+(4+Rear)	5
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC	
Prow Spinegun	Missiles 40cm	8		Front	
Prow Railgun battery	45cm	6		Left/front/right	
Port Launch bay	Barracudas 25cm Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons		Left	
Starboard Launch bay	Barracudas 25cm Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons		Right	
Port Gravitic hook	Capacity 1 Orca				
Starboard Gravitic hook	Capacity 1 Orca				
Dorsal Gravitic hook	Capacity 1 Orca				

Modelling note. To equip a Gal'leath class vessel with a spine gun requires the replacement of one segment of launch bays with additional stowage for the drone guided missiles, reducing the vessel's launch capacity.

DAL'YTH GAL'LEATH KESSAN

This vessel may be the last of the Explorer class starships to be built on Tau. Explorer construction is now being wound down and most work involves converting the older Mk XXIII's to the Mk XXIV design developed by the Water Caste of Bor'kan. Kor'O Kessan is a veteran captain of this class of ship and together with the bulk of his crew was assigned his new vessel after surviving an attack by Ork pirates on the edge of the Damocles Gulf. The Dal'yth Gal'leath Kessan has been outfitted with Mantas and is to be the flagship for a major expedition into the Farsight Enclave under the overall direction of Aun'shi himself and including a scientific team lead by the venerated biologist Por'O Jess'I. Much of the Explorer's cavernous hold has been converted to laboratories preparatory to the mission.

TAU SHIP NAMES

As with many things the Tau adopt a very structured approach to naming their vessels. Each ship or squadron's name is made up of a series of elements.

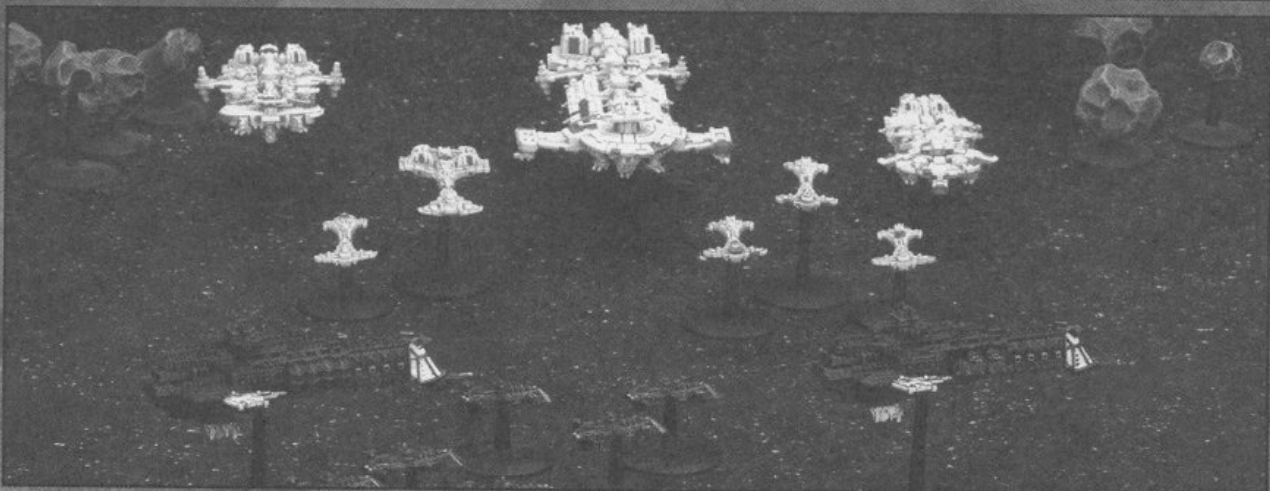
The first element is the Sept responsible for building the ship or squadron.

The second element is the ships class name.

The third element is the personal name of the ship or squadron's first commander. This will always be an air caste member of Kor'ui rank or higher.

The fourth element is the personal name of the ship or squadrons current commander. This is omitted if it is the same as the third element.

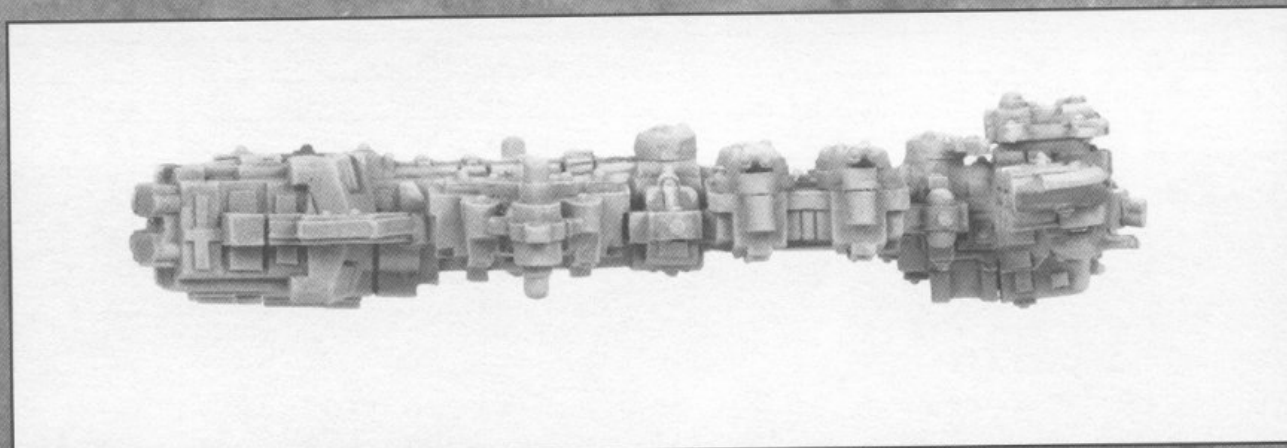
Thus Tau Gal'leath A'proh M'lath is an Explorer class vessel built by on the Tau homeworld, first commanded by Kor'O A'proh and now commanded by Kor'ui M'lath.



IL'FANNOR (MERCHANT) CLASS STARSHIP 105 pts

The Merchant class was originally developed to be the new workhorse of the empire. Its reactors were a fraction of the size of the Explorer's power plant but were capable of reaching a third of average warp speed, essential to bind together the emergent Tau empire. Conflict with the Orks caused significant revision of the design with field

modifications that allowed virtually all the cargo space to be converted to weapons systems if needed. The continued requirements of the fleet ensured that the Merchant class remained predominantly a warship until the Hero class was laid down.



IL'FANNOR KE'LSHAN CONFIGURATION

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/4	15cm	45°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow Railgun battery		45cm	2		Left/front/right
Port Railgun battery		45cm	2		Left/front
Starboard Railgun battery		45cm	2		Right/front
Port Gravitic hook		Capacity 1 Orca			
Starboard Gravitic hook		Capacity 1 Orca			

IL'FANNOR DAL'YTH CONFIGURATION

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/4	15cm	45°	1	5+)	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Prow Railgun battery		45cm	2		Left/front/right
Port Railgun battery		45cm	2		Left/front
Starboard Railgun battery		45cm	2		Right/front
Port Ion canon		30cm	Lance strength 1		Left/front
Starboard Ion canon		30cm	Lance strength 1		Right/front

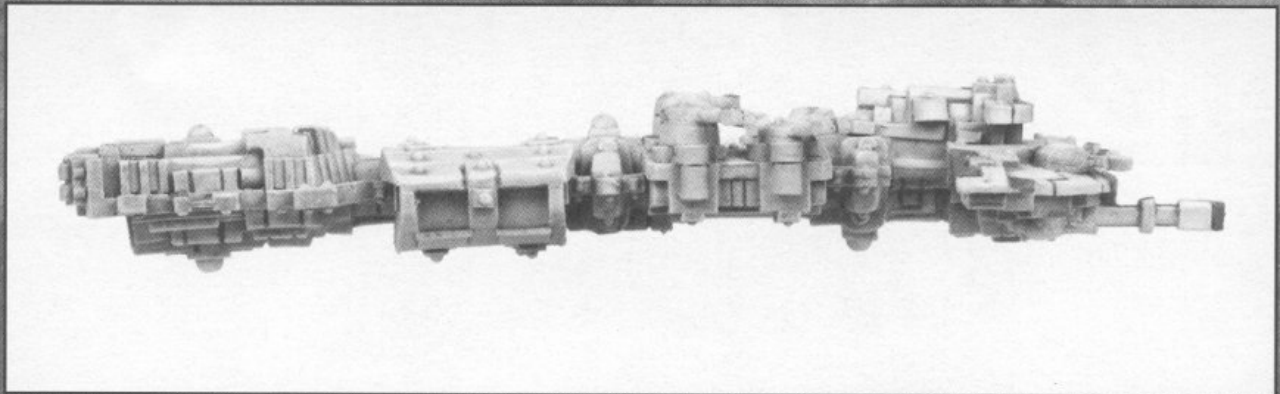
VASH'YA IL'FANNOR UR'AKYM DRIMMA

Built in the popular Ke'lshan configuration this Merchant vessel has been trading in Imperial space for almost two centuries under a succession of commanders. Operating a network of rogue trader contacts and deep space meeting points Tau goods are exchanged for Imperial technology and the services of Imperial citizens. On three separate occasions the Vash'ya Il'fannor Ur'akym Drimma has been closely pursued by Imperial frigates and on each occasion it has managed to fight them off although during the last encounter its Orcas were lost luring an Imperial Cobra squadron to fight within an asteroid belt.

LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS STARSHIP 180 pts

The pinnacle of Tau technology, the Hero class was the product of Tau experience during the Damocles Gulf Crusade. The Tau were determined that they should have a ship that could match the Imperial

Lunar class. As it became evident, they failed but they did succeed in producing a credible ship of the line.



LAR'SHI (STANDARD) VASH'YA CONFIGURATION

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	20cm	45°	2	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC	
Prow Spinegun		Missiles 40cm	6	Front	
Prow Railgun battery		45cm	4	Left/front/right	
Port Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons	Left	
Starboard Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons	Right	
Port Ion canon		30cm	Lance strength 2	Left/front	
Starboard Ion canon		30cm	Lance strength 2	Right/front	

LAR'SHI T'OLKU CONFIGURATION

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	20cm	45°	2	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR	FIRE ARC	
Prow Spinegun		Missiles 40cm	6	Front	
Prow Railgun battery		45cm	4	Left/front/right	
Port Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons	Left	
Starboard Launch bay		Barracudas 25cm or Mantas 20cm	2 Squadrons	Right	
Port Railgun battery		45cm	4	Left/front	
Starboard Railgun battery		45cm	4	Right/front	

Notes. All Lar'shi class vessels are fitted with a prow deflector to raise their frontal armour to 6. This is disabled if the ship suffers a Prow critical hit.

SA'CEA LAR'SHI KHAS'A'TAH

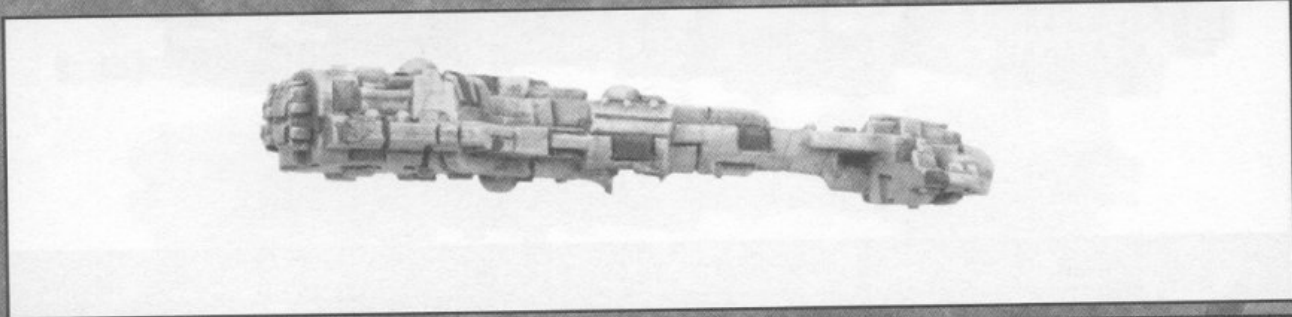
With its weapon systems crewed largely by Fire Caste warriors the Khas'a'tah has quickly developed a formidable reputation in battle. From its baptism of fire when it hunted down and destroyed no less than three Ork Onslaughts with a single salvo of missiles to its most recent encounter with the Dauntless class cruiser Jarrall's Bane when its Barracudas got inside the Imperial vessels shields and set it ablaze the Khas'a'tah has enjoyed unrivalled success. The principal reason for this is Kor'O Khas'a'tah himself, who, though a member of the air caste was raised in an orbital above Sa'cea and is therefore very familiar with the Fire Caste and their ways. His crew is an excellent example of the two castes working together for the greater good.

KIR'QATH (DEFENDER) STARSHIP

50 pts

Just as the Lar'shi is the Tau response to the Imperial Lunar class the Kir'Qath is their answer to the Imperial Sword class. The Kir'Qath is the only true escort in the Tau fleet and is used in squadrons to provide close support for the larger vessels. Its main weakness is the lengthy recharge time for its drives. It can make up to half a dozen warp dives in succession but will then be unable to do any more

for at least a rot'aa. This means it is not suitable for scouting as it either travels slowly across interstellar space or risks being unable to retreat when it arrives. This can make it a liability in rapid fleet manoeuvres consequently squadrons are spread through Tau space where heavier units can call upon them for support if required.



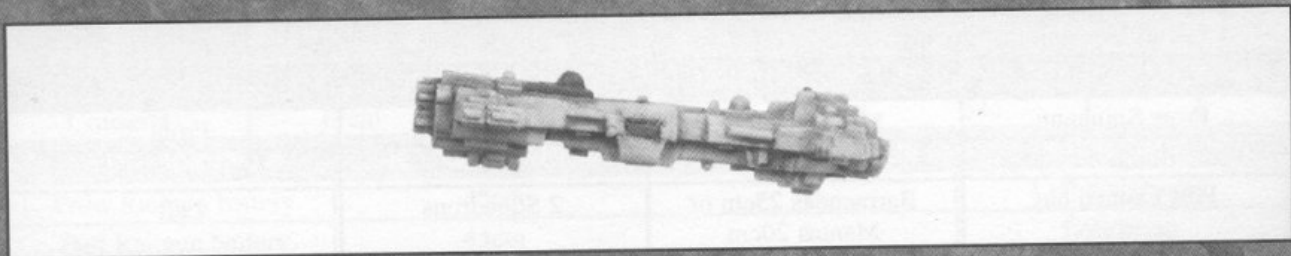
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	20cm	45°	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC	
Prow Railgun battery	30cm	3		Front	
Prow Spinegun	Missiles 40cm	2		Front	

KASSL (ORCA) GUNSHIP

25 pts

The Orca was designed to provide the Tau fleet with an escort. Unable to build a drive light enough to produce a normal escort the Orca is transported

within a capital ships gravitic sheath. Once unleashed however it is a powerful gunship able to contend with any Imperial or Ork class.



TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	20cm	90°	1	5+	1
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC	
Prow Railgun battery	30cm	2		Front	
Prow Ion canon	30cm	Lance strength 2		Left/front/right	

TAU FLEET LIST

Fleet Commander

Fleet must include a commander if greater than 750 points

Commander (Tau Kor'O)80 points
Leadership 9, 1 re-roll

Commander (Tau Kor'el)50 points
Leadership 8, 1 re-roll

The commander's ship carries a member of the Ethereal caste and therefore has an additional re-roll +25 points

Capital Ships

Explorer Class230 points each
Any number

Fleets greater than 750 points must include at least one Explorer.

Merchant Class105 points each
Any number

Hero Class180 points each
0-1 per Merchant or Explorer class

Escorts

Defender class50 points each
Any number

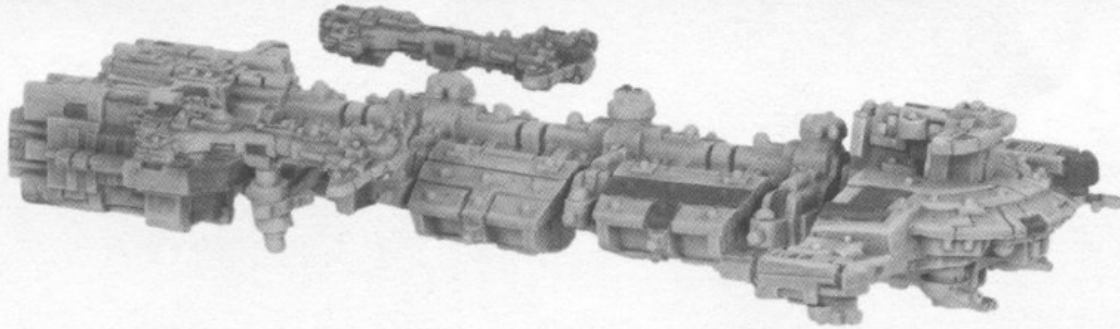
Defenders are fielded in squadrons of 2-6 ships. The two types may be combined as squadrons. They may not be combined with Orcas.

Orca – may not have more than the gravitic hook capacity of the rest of the fleet. The Orcas from each parent fight as a squadron with the same Leadership as the parent. They may deploy separately from their parent however and activate different orders. Each Orca costs 25 points as much of their cost is included in the value of the parent ship.

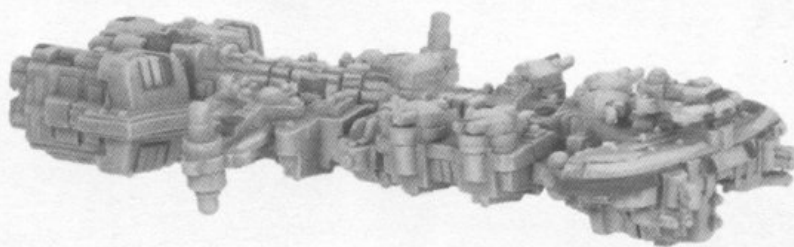
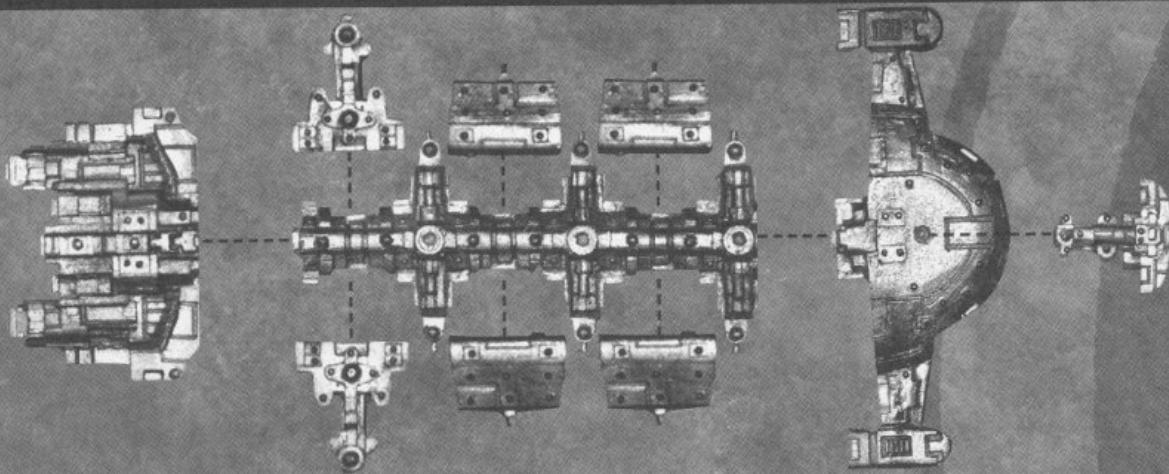


BUILDING THE EMPIRE

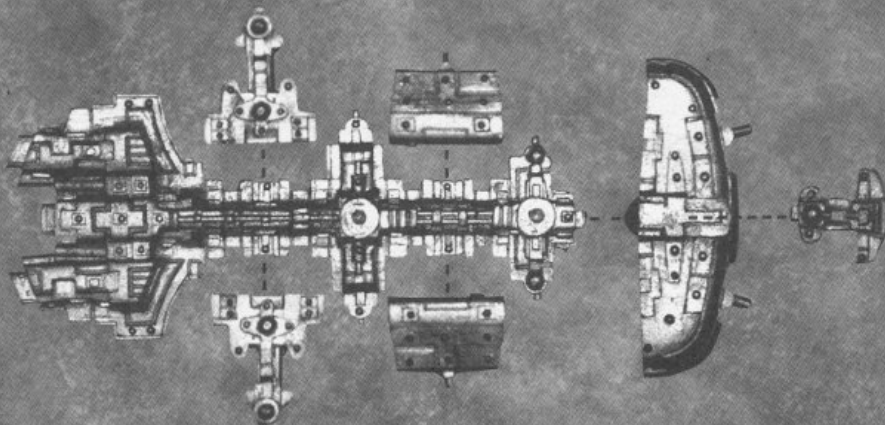
HOW TO ASSEMBLE TAU SHIPS

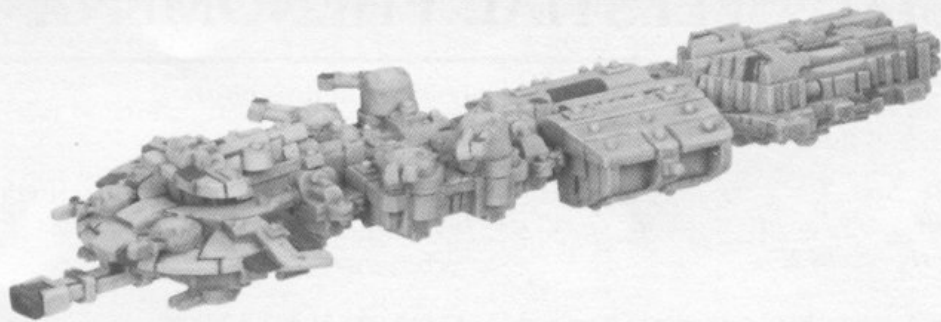


GAL'LEATH (EXPLORER) CLASS STARSHIP

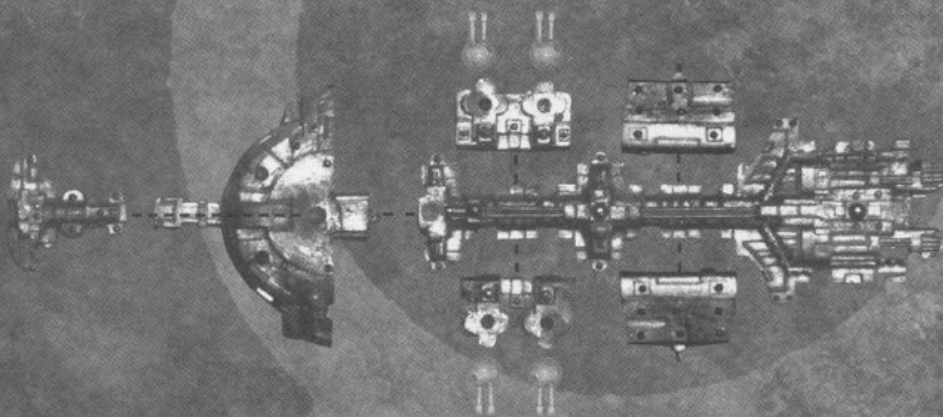


IL'FANNOR (MERCHANT) CLASS STARSHIP





LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS STARSHIP



TAU WEAPONS



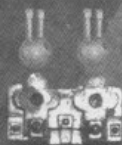
GRAVITIC HOOKS

Gravitic hooks are used by the Tau to tow the smaller Orca vessels. Orcas are incapable of interstellar travel on their own and instead must be transported to the battlefield by their larger counterparts.



LAUNCH BAYS

Tau launch bays are configured to be able to launch either the vast Manta missile destroyers (which are commonly used to transport hunter cadres) or the sleeker Barracuda fighters.

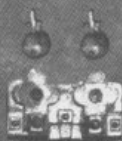


ION CANNONS

Ion cannon shots vaporise the object struck magnifying the energy discharge. Armour is of no value against them. They function as lances in all respects.

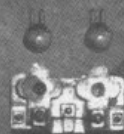
TURRETS

Tau ships are typically equipped with a substantial number of turrets configured for defence against attack craft or torpedoes, and you will notice that many of the Tau models have numerous holes on their exterior to which you can attach railgun turrets to represent these.



RAILGUN BATTERIES

Railguns of the size mounted on warships require massive amounts of energy to fire despite Tau superconductors. Because of this, power is routed to a single barrel at a time. The sequence is timed to ensure the first barrel is reloaded before it is charged again. There are two common styles of railgun - single barrelled and double barrelled, either of which may be mounted on a ship. Railguns function as standard batteries.



SPECIAL CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

Alternative rules for celestial phenomenon

By Pierre A. Dahl

Space is big. In fact, it's very probably near infinite, so even in the black silence of space battlefields can vary a great deal. Here we present some alternative rules for celestial phenomena to represent this...

The four new celestial phenomena's described in BFG magazine 14 inspired me to come up with a few more that I have been using with my friends in the campaign that I am currently running. The four results from BFG mag 14 are repeated here and I should also point out that the ideas for the Black Hole and Warp Beast are based on ideas presented by Justin Keynes in BFG magazine 7 and Gav Thorpe/Richard Curran in Warp Storm. This is an expansion of the existing Battlezone Generator from page 43 of the BFG rulebook. (Or the alternative Generator from BFG magazine 14).

Instead of re-rolling the dice when a second planet is generated, you may roll a D6 to generate a special celestial phenomenon. On a roll of 1-2, roll for a Minor Hazard. On a roll of 3-4, roll for a Moderate Hazard. On a roll of 5-6, roll for a Major Hazard.

D6 Roll	Minor Hazard
1	Double Planet
2	Asteroid Belt
3	Valuables
4	Binary Star
5	Gas and Dust Belt
6	White Dwarf

D6 Roll	Moderate Hazard
1	Debris Field
2	Temporal Vortex
3	Neutron Star
4	Comet
5	Plasma Cloud
6	Black Hole

D6 Roll	Major Hazard
1	Alien Raider
2	Meteor Shower
3	Rogue Asteroid
4	Old Battlefield
5	Warp Beast
6	Supernova

DOUBLE PLANET

Usually planets are placed quite far apart, due to various physical laws of the universe, but occasionally, particular in younger star systems, planets may appear in very close proximity to each other or may even share orbit.

Effects

A second planet is placed and treated as any normal planet, as described on page 45 of the rulebook.

ASTEROID BELT

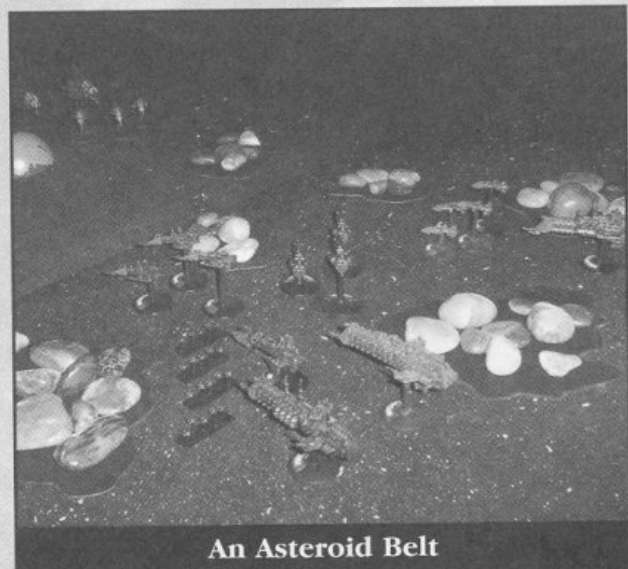
An asteroid belt, like the asteroid field, is formed out of the fragments leftover from planet collisions during the creation of star systems or the debris from the destruction of planets and moons. Asteroid belts however tend to be much larger and will often form an unbroken ring around their stars.

Effects

Aside from its method of placement, an asteroid belt is treated as an asteroid field in all respects, as shown on page 44 of the rulebook.

Placement

Use the normal pebbles and unused kitty litter to represent the asteroid belt. The belt extends in a straight line from one table edge to the opposite table edge, running parallel to the sunward table edge. It will be the normal D3x5cm in width.



An Asteroid Belt

VALUABLES

Valuables represent two different results, which may be found by rolling an extra D6. On a roll of 1-3 the result is Wreckage, on a roll of 4-6 the result is Hulks. Each is described below:

WRECKAGE

Wreckage fields are the sad remains of smashed and shattered ships of all sizes. Too battered to be considered Hulks by any standard, wreckage still presents a great deal of value to any fleet stumbling upon it.

Effects

Aside from its method of placement, wreckage is treated as an asteroid field in all respects, as shown on page 44 of the rulebook. In scenarios using Victory Points, wreckage fields are worth $D6 \times 20$ VP's to the player Holding the Field at the end of the battle.

Placement

Wreckage can be made up from small parts of ships, metal plates, pieces of armour and the like – in fact, you can probably make a sizeable wreckage field just by using all the small items that are in the bottom of your bits box!

Nominate a point on the table and roll a scatter die. The wreckage is 5cm wide and will extend for $D6 \times 5$ cm away from this point in the direction indicated by the scatter die.

HULKS

Although broken and burnt out, the shells of former mighty warships are still deemed a valuable prize for all sides in a conflict. Weapons and internal components may be salvageable and the scrap metal can be reused to build new ships.

Effects

Hulks follow the rules on page 26 of the Battlefleet Gothic rulebook. At the end of any battle that uses Victory Points to determine who won, the player who is considered to be Holding the Field, as described on page 66 of the rulebook, will receive bonus Victory Points for the Hulks. 25 points will be given for every Escort and 75 points for each Capital Ship.

Placement

You can model up your own Hulks if you wish, but you can freely use any spare ships you have to represent them instead. Place $D6+2$ Hulks, at least half of which must be Escorts, within 20cm of each other. The Hulks are stationary and will not move during the game.

BINARY STAR

Ancient Terra orbits a solitary star, but there is a great many star systems, which contain two or even more stars. These stars orbit each other around mutual centres of gravity and the massive gravitational pull between these large stellar bodies often prohibits the creation of planets, although not always. Twin stars are the most common and are known as binary stars.

Effects

When determining which table edge is sunward, as shown on page 44 of the rulebook, roll an extra D6 to establish a second sunward edge. If the same edge is rolled again, the stars are aligned and normal rules are followed. Both sunward edges will have the same effect on shooting as described on page 47 of the rulebook.

Eldar players must choose before the battle which sunward edge to use for the purpose of movement. Their delicate sails and engines must be fine-tuned to the correct stellar energies to operate properly and there is a great deal of difference between a hot blue giant star and a cold red dwarf.

GAS & DUST BELT

The gas and dust belt is much like an ordinary gas and dust cloud only many times larger. Often these belts are created from very violent solar flares or when old stars burn out and shed their outer atmosphere into space.

Effects

Aside from its method of placement, a gas and dust belt is treated as a gas and dust cloud in all respects, as shown on page 44 of the rulebook.

Placement

Use the normal flock or cotton wool to represent the gas and dust belt. The belt extends in a straight line from one table edge to the opposite table edge, running parallel to the sunward table edge. It will be the normal $D6 \times 2$ cm in width.

WHITE DWARF

The coldest, dimmest and smallest types of stars are known as white dwarfs. They usually represent the final stage in a normal star's lifecycle, when it has used up its energy reserves and begins to burn out. Planetary systems around these stars can barely sustain life but mineral wealth or strategic locations or settlements are present.

Effects

As a result of the reduced illumination from the white dwarf, the sunward edge will have no effect on shooting no matter what Battlezone the battle takes place in. Eldar movement works as normal of course.



DEBRIS FIELD

These are areas of space not unlike asteroid fields and such like, created from leftover natural materials, fragments of past battles or a combination of both. They are however considered a lot denser and are therefore significantly more difficult and dangerous to navigate.

Effects

Debris fields combine the effects of both gas/dust clouds and asteroid fields, as described on page 44 of the rulebook, so a ship trying to navigate through one will suffer all the effects of having a blast marker placed on it and will also have to make a Leadership test to avoid taking damage. If the test is failed, remember that the ship will count as having one less shield than normal, due to the gas cloud effect, so this can prove to be very deadly to escorts.

Placement

Debris fields can be made from either rocks or parts of ships, surrounded by flock or cotton wool. Nominate a point on the table and roll a scatter die. The debris field is 10cm wide and will extend for D6 x 10cm away from the point in the direction indicated by the scatter die.

TEMPORAL VORTEX

A temporal vortex is identical to a warp rift, in the sense that it is a hole in the fabric between normal space and warp space. However, in addition to the distorting effect it has to physical space, a temporal vortex may also affect time itself. Captains moving their ship into it, run the usual risk of being lost in the warp but successful navigation may bring valuable time for repairs.

Effects

Any ship that moves into contact with the temporal vortex, must pass a Leadership test on 3D6 to navigate it successfully. If the ship passes the test, it may repair D3 damage points and/or criticals and thereafter be turned to face in any direction. If the test is failed, the ship is lost in the warp as described under warp rifts on page 45 of the rulebook.

Placement

Use a round template of either paper or cardboard to represent the vortex. It is D3x5cm in diameter.

NEUTRON STAR

When a star explodes in a supernova, the collapsing matter in its core may coalesce and form a neutron star. A neutron star is a very small, fast rotating, extremely dense object with a strong magnetic field that emits regular and intense bursts of radiation. The frequency of such bursts naturally makes both travel and combat extremely difficult around these types of stars.

Effects

A neutron star will emit an automatic radiation burst at the start of each turn. Roll as normal for the intensity of the burst and follow the description on page 47 of the rulebook.

COMET

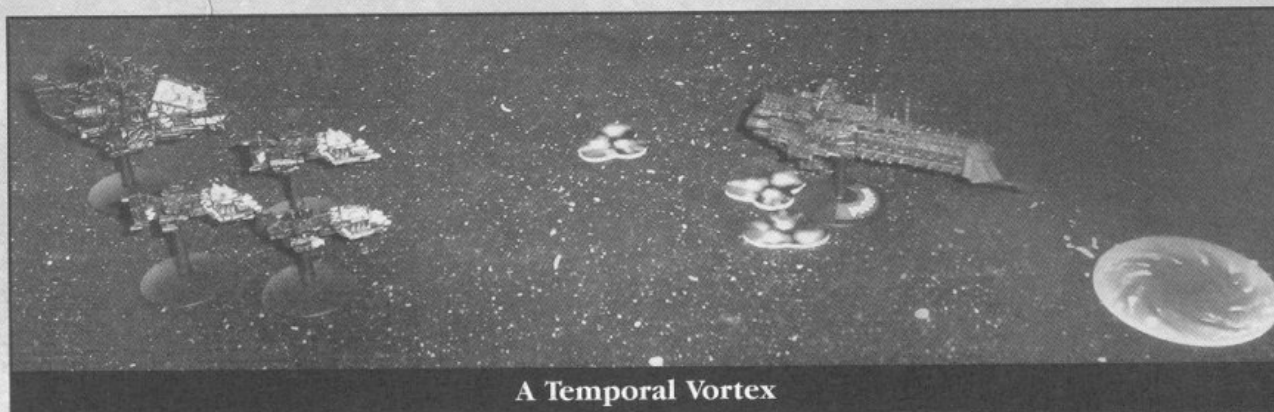
A comet is a huge ball of compressed ice, dirt and other light materials that originate from the fringes of star systems. They usually move in various eccentric orbits that take them from the coldness of deep space to the inner regions of star systems. When a comet gets close to a star, the increasing heat will melt away its surface, thereby creating its characteristic tail of gas and dust.

Effects

The comet is treated as an asteroid, as described on page 44 of the rulebook, so any ship that comes into base contact with it must pass a Leadership test to avoid taking damage. The tail is treated as a gas/dust cloud, also on page 44, with the exception that it will block line of sight due to its greater density. At the beginning of each turn, the comet will move 10cm towards the table edge furthest from its initial placement. When this edge is reached, the comet is considered to have reached its zenith and will begin moving back the same way.

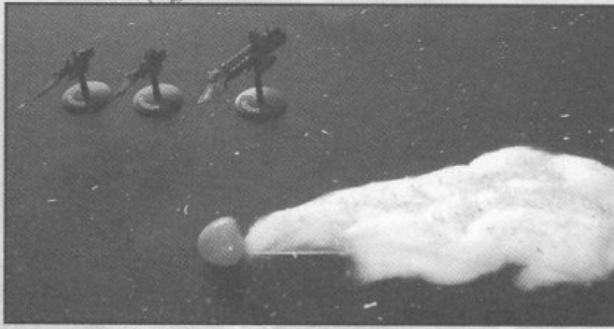
Placement

Use a small piece of polystyrene to represent the comet itself (you can use an ice cube, but



A Temporal Vortex

that will quickly get messy) and flock or cotton wool to show the tail.



The tail is teardrop-shaped and is approximately 20cm long and 5cm wide at the broad end, (about the same size as the flame template from 40K, which can effectively be used instead). The tail must be placed so that it touches the comet with the pointy end and pointing directly away from the sunward edge.

PLASMA CLOUD

Though quite similar to ordinary gas and dust clouds, in terms of origin and appearance, plasma clouds presents a far greater hazard to space travel. They consist of dense superheated gasses and highly charged particles, which resemble THE processes taking place inside stars, albeit on a much smaller scale.

Effects

Plasma clouds will block line of sight due to their greater density. Any ship in base contact will count as having a blast marker and must pass a Leadership test on 2D6 to navigate it successfully or 3D6 if on *All Aboard Full* special orders. Escort ships may reroll the Leadership test. A ship that fails the Leadership test suffers a Fire critical hit. Torpedoes and attack craft squadrons which move through a plasma cloud will be destroyed on a D6 roll of 4+.

Placement

Plasma clouds are placed just like gas and dust clouds, as described on page 44 of the rulebook. Use the normal flock or cotton wool to represent the plasma cloud but paint it in a slightly different colour to offset it from standard gas and dust clouds.

BLACK HOLE

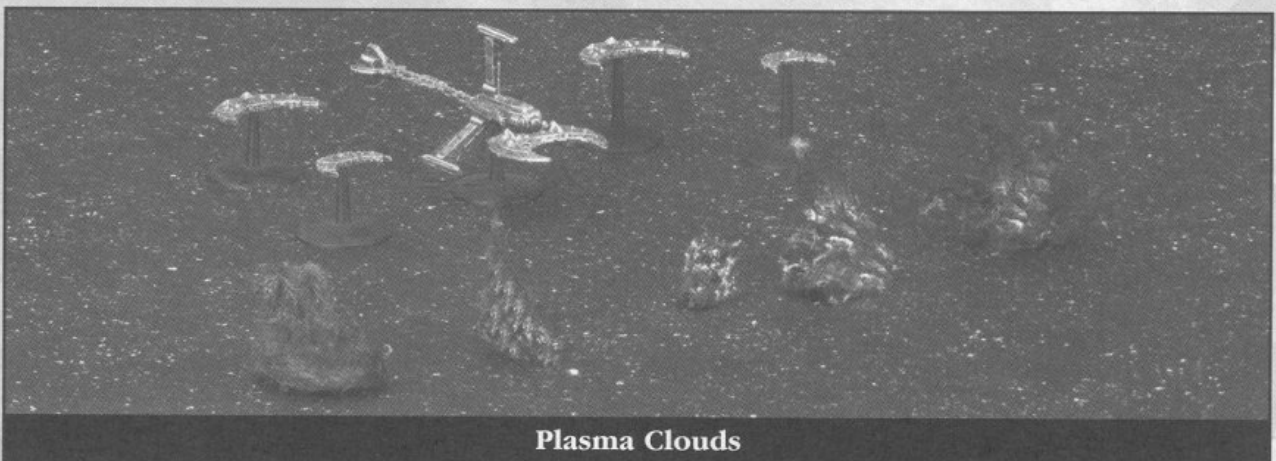
On very rare occasions, when a super heavy star eventually dies and explodes in a supernova, the resulting collapse of its core may result in the creation of a black hole. A very small, extremely massive object with a gravity pull so strong that not even light can escape it. Any object approaching too near a black hole will find itself unable to turn back and be obliterated into its component atoms in mere seconds.

Effects

At the start of each turn every ship, hulk, blast marker, tabletop feature and piece of ordnance will move towards the sunward edge, which in this case is actually the edge of the black hole and considered the "point of no return". Ships and tabletop features moves 5cm per turn, while hulks, blast markers and pieces of ordnance moves 10cm pr. turn. There is no change in the facing of any object moved in this manner. Any object that touches the sunward edge is considered to have been sucked into the black hole and is instantly destroyed. After the movement, the player whose turn it is, must roll on the following table to establish whether a new tabletop feature appears on the table edge opposite the black hole.

D6 Roll	Result
1	Nothing
2	Nothing
3	Nothing
4	Gas/Dust Cloud
5	Asteroid Field
6	D3 Gas/Dust Cloud

Because of the immense gravity pull, any ship on the board may make a free 45' turn at the beginning and end of its move, but the turn must always be made towards the sunward edge.



Plasma Clouds

ALIEN RAIDER

Operating on its own obscure agenda, an alien raider may occasionally interfere with ships of other races and in some cases may even take part in open conflicts. For what reason is hard to fathom, but safe to say is, they bring an element of unpredictability to the already complicated situation that battles are. There are countless alien raiders which have been encountered by Imperial battlefleets across the galaxy, so here we simply present a standard profile which you can use to represent the aliens.

Effects

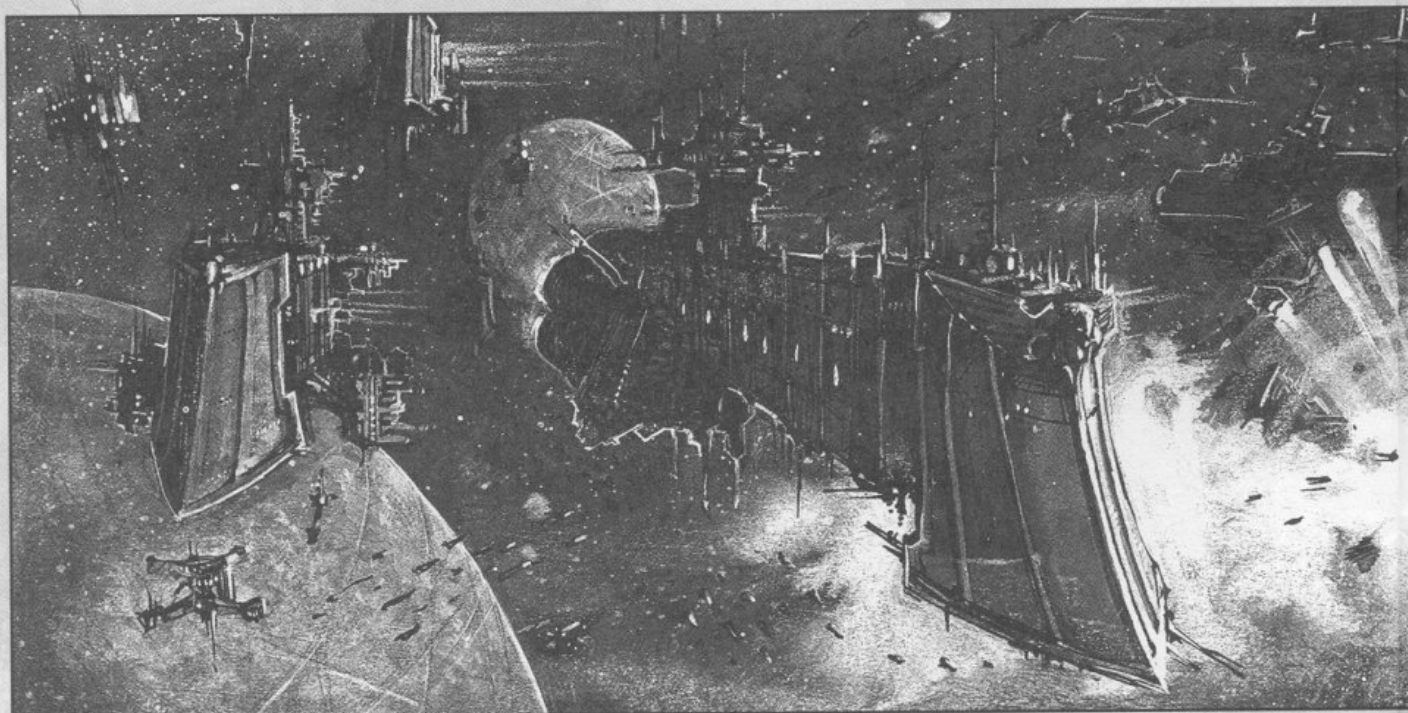
The alien raider will move and shoot at the start of each turn by the player who is not moving his own ships. It may not go on special order and will always fire on the nearest enemy ship (enemy being in this case, the player who is not controlling the raider). The Alien raider has little wish to remain in the fight too long, and once crippled must attempt to disengage, and must continue to do so in each of its subsequent turns. If it fails to disengage, the only movement the raider is permitted to make is straight towards the nearest point on the nearest table edge. It has the following profile.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	25cm	45'	3	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Port Proton Disruptor		30cm	3		Left
Starboard Proton Disruptor		30cm	3		Right
Prow Proton Disruptor		30cm	3		Front

The proton disruptor is a powerful weapon that fires an intense beam, alternating protons and electrons, designed to do heavy damage to a ship's electrical system. It is fired like a lance but on a roll of 6, all shields on the target are overloaded and shut down automatically (place blast markers to indicate as normal). Any hit will cause an automatic critical, but the roll on the Critical Hits Table is made with just a D6 instead. Against Eldar and Dark Eldar holofields/shadowfields, the proton disruptor will hit as normal but the save is only made on a 4+.

Placement

Any type of leftover ship that is not used in the battle can be used to represent the raider or you can scratch build your own type. The raider will face in a direction indicated by a roll of a scatter die.



METEOR SHOWER

Considered to be one of the greatest natural threats to space travel, meteor showers can spell doom for any ship unlucky enough to fly into one of them. Although very similar to ordinary asteroid fields they differ by moving through star systems in random orbits that are both hard to detect and map out on the space charts. Captains are well advised to keep their distance.

Effects

A meteor shower is treated as an asteroid field, as described on page 44 of the rulebook, with the exception of two things. The meteor shower will move 2D6cm in a random direction at the start of each turn and any ship or squadron caught in it, must pass their Leadership test with a penalty of -1, to navigate it successfully. Use the scatter dice to determine the random travel direction.

Placement

Use the normal pebbles and unused kitty litter to represent the meteor shower. It has the same size as normal asteroid fields, typically D3x5cm wide and D3x5cm long.

ROGUE ASTEROID

Most asteroids are situated together in large groups such as rings or fields. There is however some usually larger types, that tumble through space alone and in very eccentric orbits. These objects are considered to be highly dangerous by spaceship captains, as their random moves can result in disastrous collisions.

Effects

The rogue asteroid will move 2D6cm in a random direction at the start of each turn, determined by the scatter die. Any ship base

that is moved over or comes into contact with the asteroid is in danger of a collision and must pass a Leadership test to avoid being hit. If the test is failed, work out the collision as a ram attack with 8D6 damage. The asteroid will only sustain superficial damage and is not affected.

Placement

Use a single asteroid counter or one cut out of polystyrene on a small round base.

OLD BATTLEFIELD

An old battlefield represents two different results, which may be found by rolling an extra D6. On a roll of 1-3 the result is a Deadfall Torpedo Salvo, on a roll of 4-6 the result is a Derelict Minefield. Each is described below:

DEADFALL TORPEDO SALVO

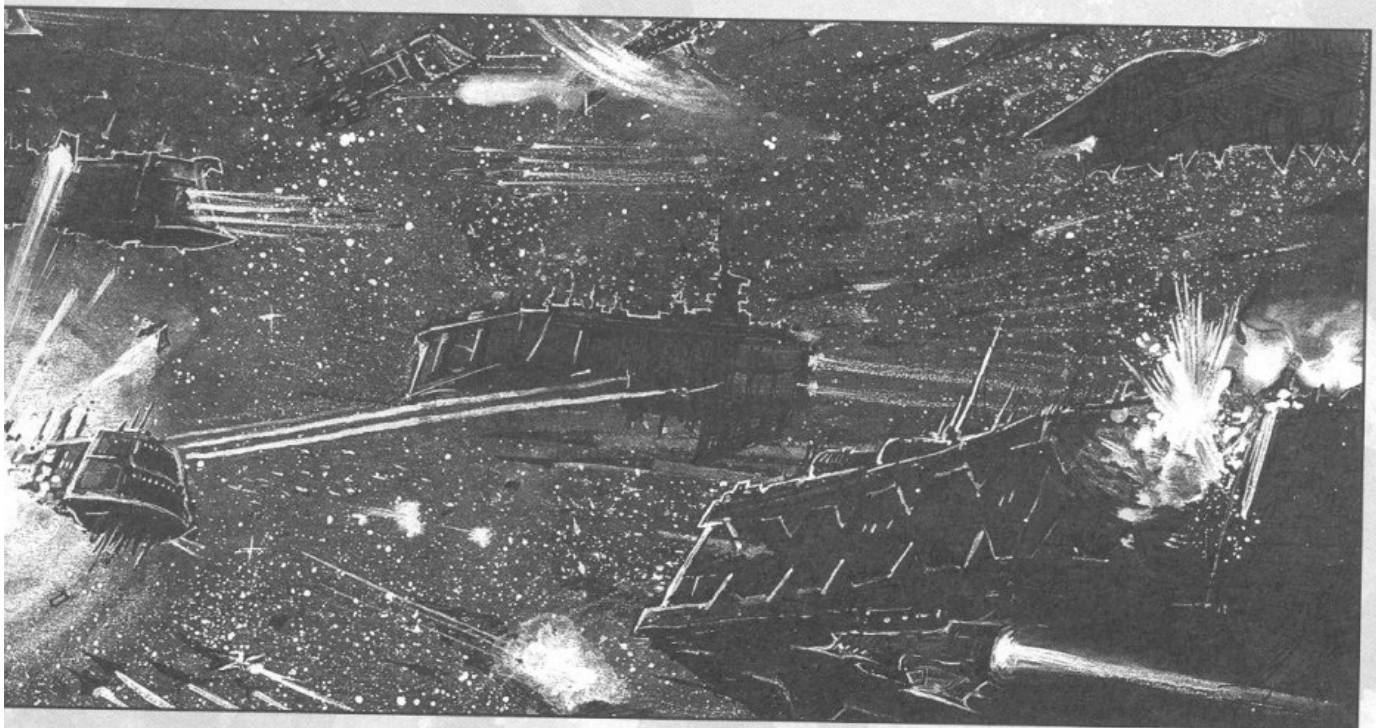
Deadfall torpedo salvos may occur in two ways, either deliberately as traps or accidentally from misfired salvos of earlier confrontations. In the first case the deadfall is set up and hard-wired to hone in on any (preferably enemy) approaching ship. In the latter case, the salvo will lurk in wait with a minimum of fuel left, waiting for a suitable target to pass and then activate for one final time.

Effects

A deadfall torpedo salvo will have a random strength of D6+2. Any ship or squadron, but not hulks, approaching within 30cm of the counter will be immediately targeted. Move the counter directly towards the ship in the next ordnance phase and resolve the attack as for normal torpedoes. Thereafter, the counter will move 30cm in a straight line at the start of every ordnance phase.

Placement

Use one torpedo counter, with a random strength as detailed above.



DERELICT MINEFIELD

Derelict minefields may be centuries old and are most often uncharted remains of former defences long forgotten. In some cases they may even have been laid out by a race no longer present in the area. As can be expected, derelict minefields are as dangerous to any ships approaching it, due to its lack of maintenance.

Effect

A derelict minefield works in much the same way as a normal minefield, as described on page 143 of the rulebook, except that any mines released from it will track the nearest ship of any fleet.

Placement

As the rules dictate, the derelict minefield must be placed near to another tabletop feature, so the players must decide randomly which one. If no other feature has yet been rolled for, pick the first one that comes along. Use the scatter die to determine the direction of its final placement. It will cover the usual area of D3x5cm by D3x5cm.

WARP BEAST

There are many horrors that stalk the empty void of space and even though space is vast, once in a while that an unlucky ship attracts the attention of a hungry or angry space monster. When tales of such warp beasts are reported and linked with certain areas of space, most captains will go to great lengths to avoid these places altogether.

Occasionally though captains will have little choice when battle commences. (Warp beasts vary a great deal in size, appearance and demeanour, so naturally there is a great many more than the one example described below. For more ideas, check out the article on warp beasts in Warp Storm).

Effects

Roll a D6 at the start of each turn, on a roll of 6 the beast appears and will move towards the nearest ship at the start of each subsequent turn including the turn were it appears. It can turn freely and will ignore all types of other celestial phenomena. This particular beast is known as The Horned Monstrosity of Talmanos. It appeared in the Talmanos system more than 20 years ago but has so far managed to evade all attempts by the Imperial Navy to hunt it down and destroy it. The beast has the following profile and a special Huge Horn attack.

Type/Hits	Speed	Armour
Cruiser/6	25 cm	6

Huge Horn: If the Horned Monstrosity of Talmanos moves into base contact with a ship it will attempt to ram it with the massive horn that juts from its bone encrusted forehead. Roll a D6, on a roll of 4+ the horn skewers the unfortunate target. Roll 6D6 to see how much, if any, damage is inflicted. For the purpose of the ramming attempt itself, the Horned one is always considered to be on *All Aboard Full* special order.

Placement

Any monster type of creature can be used although the size shouldn't be more than what can be placed on a small round base. The beast will appear in the middle of a random table edge.

SUPERNOVA

When a very large super heavy star nears the end of its life, its massive centre will collapse in on itself and self-destruct spectacularly, instantly vaporizing any and all planets orbiting it. This event, known as a supernova explosion, is one of the most destructive natural occurrences in the universe and the resulting interstellar shockwave can have a profound negative impact on all life in the vicinity of several light years. (These rules are meant to cover the supernova shockwave effect in neighbouring star systems, as any ships caught in the actual supernova blast would be blown to smithereens, creating a very boring battle).

Effects

Both players must roll a D6 at the start of each turn. If the result is a double, the shockwave of a nearby supernova explosion has reached the battlefield. Roll a D6 to determine from which table edge the shockwave originates. All ships are automatically placed on Brace for Impact special order and all shields will overload and shut down (place blast markers to indicate). Each ship will also receive a hit on a roll of 4+ on a D6 (which it may try and save with the Brace) and all ordnance is automatically destroyed. Furthermore, the intense radio interference will reduce both players Leadership value by half, (rounding fractions up). Fortunately once the shockwave has passed it will not happen again and no further rolls are made.

Note: On some (hopefully) rare occasions, the above phenomena's may result in contradictory situations, but in most cases players should be able to solve these problems easily with a little imagination. For example in one game, we rolled up both a Binary Star, which was not on opposite table edges, and an Asteroid Belt. We simply decided to bend the asteroid belt 90 degrees halfway down the table so that it only touched the two table edges that were not sunward.

THE TAU EMPIRE

The Tau Empire encompasses many more races than just the Tau themselves, and their fleets and armies reflect this fact. This article described two of the most common elements of Tau fleets - the Kroot and the Nicassar. Now, you won't be seeing models for either of these ships for quite some time, but we thought we'd feature them here as a sneak preview of what's to come.

NICASSAR DHOWS 45 pts

The Nicassar were the first addition to the Tau Empire and continue to provide ships for the Empire as they are ill-suited for ground combat. Nicassar have powerful minds though and rely on their telekinetic talents in particular to make up for their own limited mobility.

Their extended families are semi-nomadic and are driven by insatiable curiosity. This led to their exploration of their home system, however they are happiest when travelling and as they can survive for long periods in virtual hibernation have travelled far from their home world, albeit slowly. When a family travels numerous dhows travel docked together forming a larger community in which some members will be hibernating while others remain on watch.

First contact with the Tau came when a Tau Explorer was setting up a waystation in

interstellar space and sighted a Nicassar flotilla that had been in space for centuries.

Nicassar dhows are small but elegant yachts that are propelled by their captains' psychic powers. These are very manoeuvrable but lack any practical interstellar capacity and until recently any significant firepower. Since being incorporated into the Empire however their weaponry has been updated to Tau levels.

As subjects of the Empire the Nicassar must serve the greater good and do so by providing fleets to scout and explore systems on the fringes of the Tau Empire. They are transported to their station by Tau vessels and commence a leisurely circuit reporting anything they find. The Tau have carefully kept the Nicassar from the Imperium as they realise the Nicassar's psychic powers would fuel the worst excesses of human xenophobia.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Escort/1	20cm	180°	2	5+	1
ARMAMENT	RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Port Railgun battery	30cm		3		Left
Starboard Railgun battery	30cm		3		Right

Tau fleets may bring Dhows to battle on gravitic hooks instead of Orcas. Any ship equipped with Dhows can only be equipped with Dhows and may not have Orcas. These then form a squadron but for battle purposes can deploy separately and perform different orders. Their Leadership is the same as their parent ship +1 as the Nicassar are natural spacefarers.



KROOT WARSPHERE. 145 pts

Unlike the Tau the Kroot are capable of true warp travel but the exact method has been kept secret from their employers. To the Kroot warp travel is almost migratory and they seem incapable of navigating anywhere other than systems with habitable worlds. It would appear they are drawn to functioning eco-systems.

The famous Kroot Warspheres are self-contained towns wherein is kept the retained knowledge of Kroot technology and the choicest items they have received as payment for their services. As such they do not risk them in battle willingly and try to avoid direct action

against warships unless the need is great or they are being exceptionally well rewarded.

Warspheres have a single drive running through their core from north to south pole and manoeuvring thrusters along their equator. These engines are reliable but very basic making Warspheres very slow. They are powerful enough to allow the Warsphere to land and take-off from a planet although the process is not elegant. When dirtside the manoeuvring thrusters will normally be used to bury the Warsphere.



TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Defence/10	10cm	45°	2	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Kroot Grand Gun battery		30cm	10		Left/front/right/rear

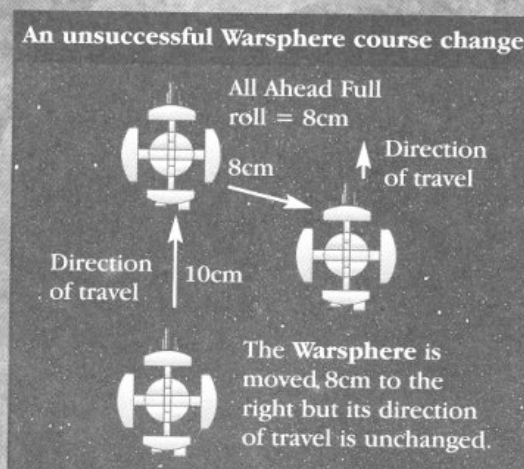
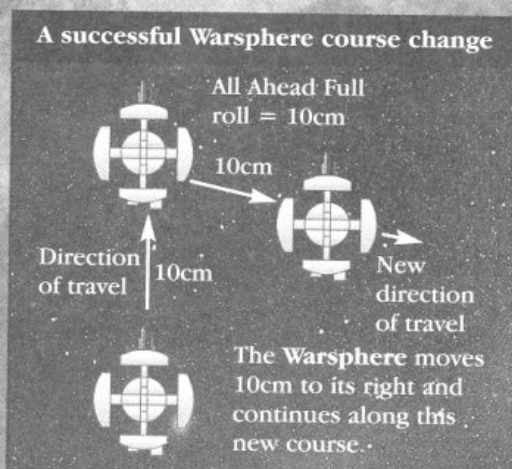
Kroot grand guns function as batteries.

The Warsphere has a boarding strength of 20.

In a planetary assault mission a warsphere will contribute 3 points for each turn it is actually landed on the target planet. It contributes nothing for being within 30cm.

Movement: Because of their unique construction, Kroot Warspheres don't move in the same way as normal ships. In their movement phase Warspheres travel 10cm forward in a straight line, no more, no less. Rok's may not turn or use Burn Retros or Come To New Heading orders.

On All Ahead Full orders Warspheres move an extra 2D6cm in any direction at the end of their move. If this causes them to move 10cm or more in a different direction to the one they are travelling in, this becomes their new direction of travel. This can be seen more clearly in the diagrams below.



Due to their low speed and considerable momentum, Warspheres which are crippled or moving through Blast markers do not reduce their speed. Warspheres in the gravity well of a planet or moon may make free turns like an ordinary ship (450) and/or place themselves in a stationary or low orbit.

Critical Hits: Warspheres lack the complex systems of true space craft, so critical hits are not rolled on the Critical table. Instead each critical hit inflicts +1 point of damage.

Catastrophic Damage: When a Warspheres is reduced to 0 damage it breaks up. Do not roll for Catastrophic damage, instead the Rok is replaced by 4 blast markers.

TAU ALLIES, SUBJECTS & MERCENARIES

KROOT VESSELS

A Tau fleet can include 0-1 Warsphere in games up to 1500 points, 2 thereafter.

Kroot Warsphere 145 pts

DEMIURG VESSELS

A Tau fleet can include up to one Demiurg vessel for every three Tau capital ships in the fleet.

Demiurg Stronghold 350 pts
Commerce Vessel

Demiurg Bastion 255 pts
Commerce Vessel

NICASSAR VESSELS

Your fleet may include Nicassar Dhows in place of some or all of its Orcas. You may not have more Dhows (or Orcas) than the gravitic hook capacity of the fleet. A ship may have either Orcas or Dhows, but not both so the gravitic hook capacity of the fleet is divided between Orcas and Dhows.

Nicassar Dhow 45 pts

The Dhows from each parent fight as a squadron with the same Leadership as the parent, but may be squadroned with other Dhows from vessels squadroned with their own parent vessel. Dhow squadrons are deployed separately from their parent however and activate different orders.

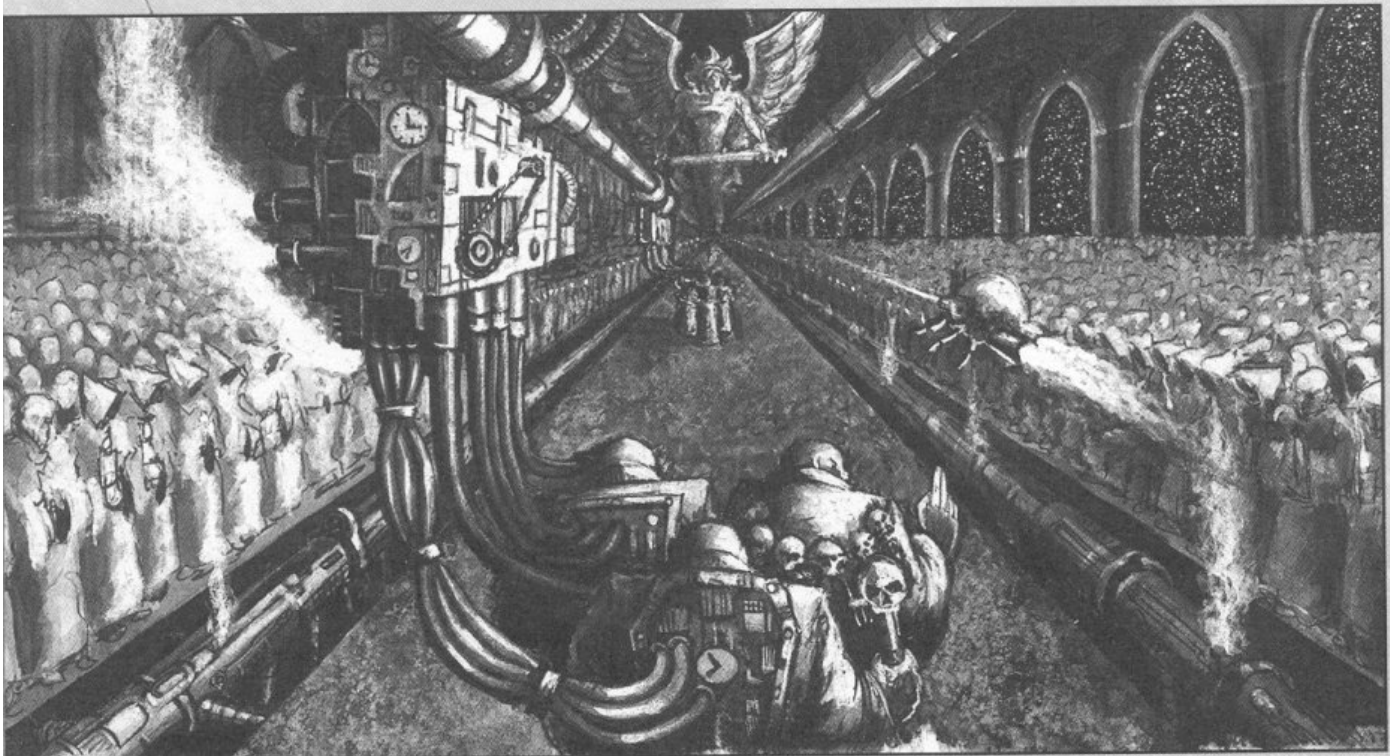
THE VAGARIES OF WAR

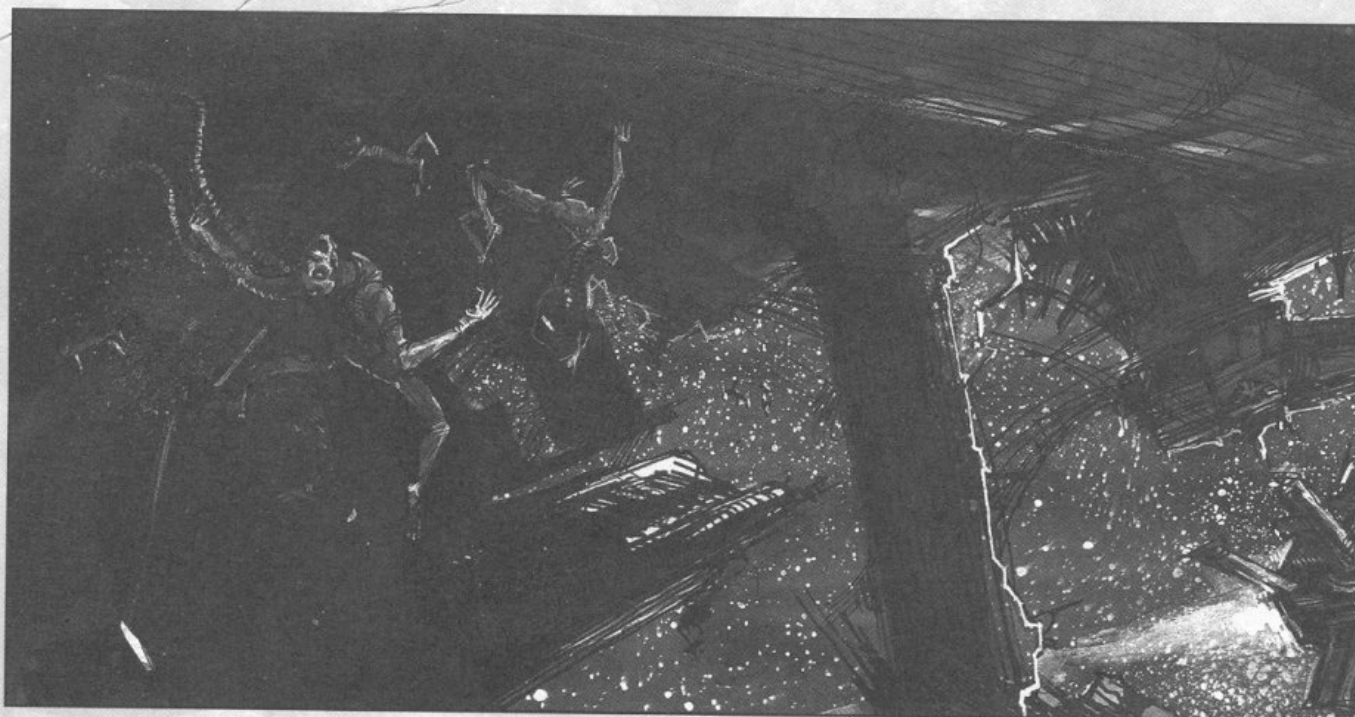
Alternative Campaign Rules for Battlefleet Gothic

By Nate Montes & Bob Henderson

When visiting Bob Henderson recently, he showed me a map-based campaign he was running that placed a great reliance on fleet movement for added realism. I was so taken by this, I decided to take the concept even further. While it is always great to put together campaigns solely for the purpose of stringing together a series of slugging battles to determine a winner, players can gain immense satisfaction by incorporating and building a background story that adds strategic complexity to the campaign. The Armageddon and Gothic Wars were much more than tests of wills between opposing fleets – the fate of hundreds of worlds and endless billions of lives hung in the balance. It is the fortuitous dispersal and concentration of forces that can win the day, and sometimes a timely withdrawal and loss of a star system can be more important in the great scheme of things than simply holding it at all costs for sake of an immediate victory. A battle won in a desperate struggle that leaves the victorious fleet decimated does nothing for the war effort if the defeated, retreating fleet is left with the material readiness to take one or more star systems while the victor withdraws half of their fleet for extensive repairs. Time and again wars have been proven to be not just which side was better equipped or numerically superior, but which side could get their forces where they needed to be fastest and most effectively.

These campaign rules remain essentially unchanged from those in the rulebook with the exception of some alterations designed to reflect the tactical challenges faced by warring forces during major conflicts such as the Gothic War, in place of simply connecting games and marking success in gains such as systems and renown. While Chaos fleets during that epic struggle (whenever possible) conducted pinprick raids and reconnaissance actions in force, Chaos fleets also excelled in blitzkrieg actions, committing the bulk of their available forces in large, one-sided fleet engagements to take individual star systems. The Imperial Navy on the other hand is responsible for maintaining security in vast tracts of space over millions of square light years. Despite having vastly more resources than the fleets of Chaos, the Imperial Navy is constantly engaged in war and beset by the threat of rebellion and the many natural disasters that befall worlds throughout the galaxy, and as such at any given moment its fleets are spread very thinly, making it extremely difficult for the Imperium to dedicate significant fleet assets to any one star system except in the most dire of emergencies. However, no force in the galaxy can bring to bear the immeasurably vast resources the Imperium can given enough time, so the key to victory against Imperial fleets is to isolate star systems and conquer defending forces before





any hope of relief arrives. The key to Imperial victory is thus exactly the opposite: hold off defeat as long as possible, retreating from star systems that they cannot hope to hold, inflicting whatever losses they can in a series of running engagements until they can muster the strength to crush their foe with overwhelming firepower. Nowhere was this better represented than in the Gothic Crusade, where Abbadon first attempted to isolate the sector from the rest of the Imperium before launching a blitzkrieg campaign of terror and holocaust that swept all before it. It was only through the actions of Admiral Ravensburg with fortuitous help from the Eldar combining in force that Abbadon's warfleets were defeated in detail just as they became overextended with the many worlds they had conquered.

While the Imperium as the pre-eminent force in the galaxy beset on all sides by rebels and hostile aliens makes an ideal defender in a campaign (as opposed to being the defender in individual raids and battles), the role of campaign defender can just as easily apply to any fleet, such as a Chaos fleet struggling to maintain possession of a fallen sub-sector against a loyalist crusade as in the Gaunt's Ghosts novels, or even Orks repelling a vast Tyranid hive swarm from their domain or the Eldar defending their Maiden Worlds against invasion from Necron raiders. Though raiders are much better suited as invaders instead of defenders using these rules, the possibilities are endless, but it is important to decide which side will be the invaders and which side will be the defenders in the campaign before getting started. Except where specifically modified below, all standard campaign rules apply as outlined on page 148-155 of the rulebook.

FLEET REGISTRY

Both sides will build up a fleet list as described in the rulebook or Annual, such as 2,000 points total for Imperials or Chaos, 1,500 points for Eldar or Orks, etc. However, the defending fleet will afterward separate out 750 points, which may (or may not!) include the fleet flagship and Commander if desired. These ships will make up the core fleet. The remaining points worth of defending ships must be divided into three task groups in any way the player sees fit. These groups will make up the dispersed fleet.

BUILD-UP

Starting Systems and Determine Initiative. Design or select a sub-sector map that has at least one route out of the sector. On the sub-sector campaign map, number the star systems in any order, after which the defending fleet picks a group of ships or squadrons from his fleet registry. Randomly determine which star system the chosen group is currently situated in. Repeat this until all dispersed fleet task groups are assigned to star systems. The defending player is assumed to own these systems for purposes of repair points. If the defender is playing a raider fleet, the pirate base (Necron harvest node, Tyranid hive or whatever) can be assumed to be hidden in one of those three systems. After this is done the invader picks a system of his choice. This is the system the invader starts out from and is essentially in possession of. For the first battle, the invading fleet will get a +1 bonus for determining initiative (after all other modifiers based on race). After the first battle, the +1 bonus will go to whatever fleet controls fewer systems normally.

RECEIVE ORDERS & DECIDE SCENARIO

Lower-echelon commanders will typically be only assigned missions of lesser significance with a smaller amount of fleet assets in the beginning of a campaign until they have proven themselves in combat, as will even admirals of high rank if untested in the sector. This level of trust by high command is their renown, as opposed to its leadership, which is a measure of a ship's (or fleet's) training and trust in its commander. For purposes of these campaign rules, battles between players of less than 21 renown should be limited to raid scenarios no more than 750 points per side unless specifically modified by the particular scenario. This means if you decide you want to start out with one of the magazine special characters as a fleet commander such as Abbadon the Despoiler or Admiral Natanico Paris, feel free to do so, but you must pay the full price against your fleet registry, and they start off with only one renown point like everyone else. This also goes for Orks wanting to field extra Warlords as described on p.139 or Chaos fielding extra Lords as on p.128.

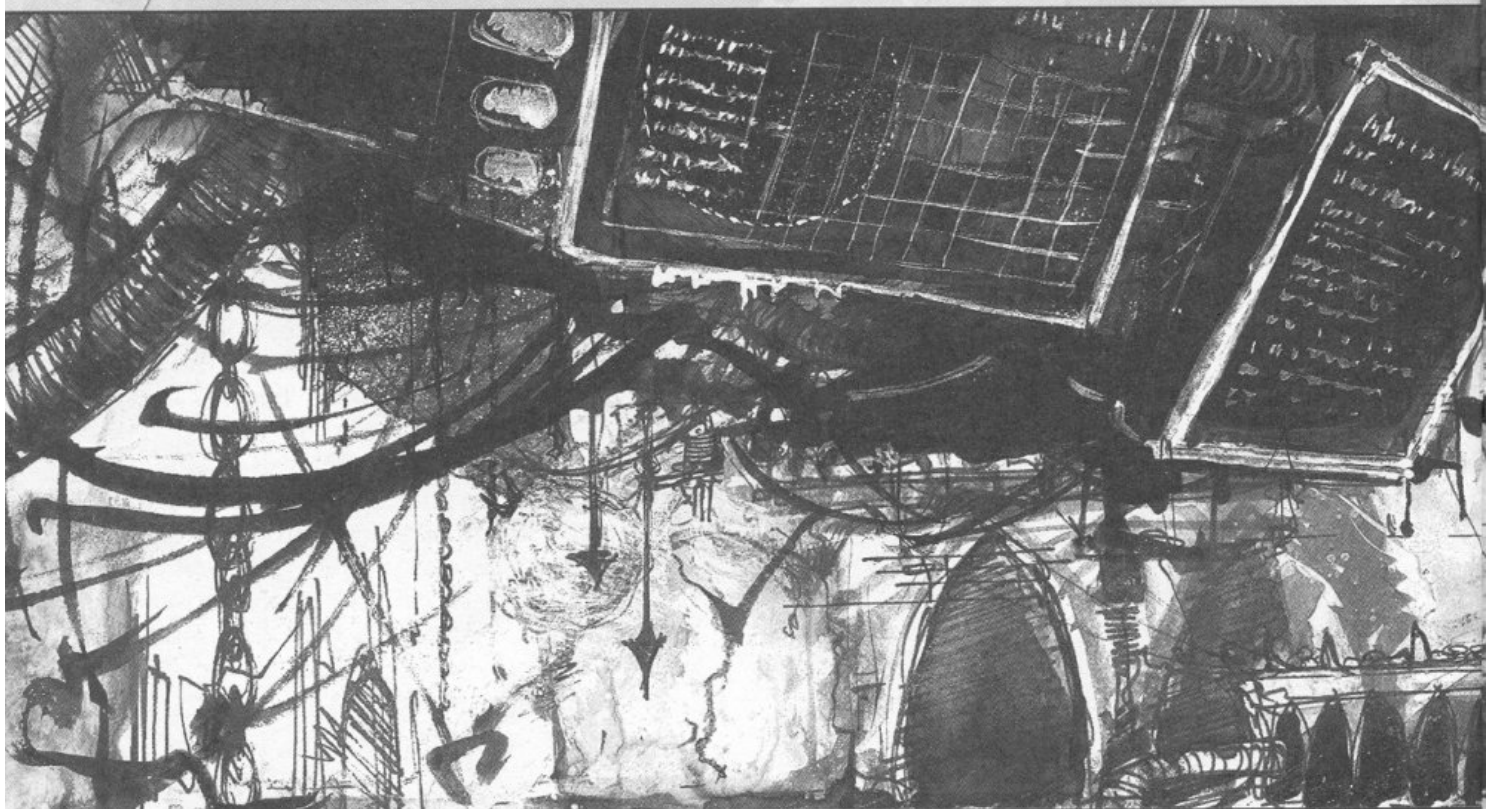
LOCATION & SIZE OF BATTLE

The first battle should be a raid that takes place in the invaded system, and like explained beforehand, it might be a one-sided running engagement against the entire invading fleet. As the campaign continues later on, you may fight battles consistent with the campaign storyline, or you may play one-off side battles as fleet elements move into contested systems.

FIGHTING BATTLES

Here's where it gets interesting. For the first battle, the invading fleet appears in its selected system with its ENTIRE fleet together, up to the full limit described in the core rules. The defenders on the other hand only have what the selected scenario allows, not to exceed 750 points. Yes, this will certainly lead to a one-sided battle, but some battles are actually geared for something like this, such as The Raiders or Surprise Attack in the rulebook, or the Reconnaissance Run scenario of BFG#8. Roll for the raid scenario normally, or if desired focus on a campaign like the Elaysion Crusade of magazine #8, or James Parry's most excellent Cerberus War campaign you can participate in at <http://www.lea2001.com/BFG/>. If you come up with a scenario that is essentially un-winnable, such as a Convoy Run scenario, you can re-roll the scenario, heroically attempt to fight it out against all odds (more fun than it sounds), or simply concede defeat and flee back into the warp. Remember that the current campaign rules provide extra renown points for facing off against a numerically superior enemy fleet, so simply showing up and getting some shots off in a running battle before fleeing may actually be worth the effort. As the defenders are initially unprepared for the invasion, strategic withdrawals in this manner at the beginning of this kind of campaign are a more viable tactic than they sound.

A fleet ONLY owns a star system if it retains at least one capital ship or a squadron of at least two escorts uncontested in a particular



star system. That means they are on your fleet registry, but you can't play with them unless you are fighting a battle in that particular system. As fleet elements move into contested star systems, possession must be decided in battle, though heavily one-sided battles that will result in nothing but the annihilation of a particular side can be avoided by the player declaring withdrawal from (and giving up) a particular system, losing one renown point but nothing else and moving to another system. Because in the beginning of a campaign everyone starts with one renown point and can be reduced no further, this is not such a bad way to start the campaign off. Also note that this will make for a larger number of small, fast-paced battles, which will do much to move the campaign and developing story along. Another result of this style of play as fleets begin to disperse in running battles throughout the sub-sector is that this will lead to odd battles where a pair of cruisers may face off against a battleship accompanied by nothing but a trio of escorts or other such occurrences. This will also make for some really interesting battles not normally encountered in the game, and you may be surprised how well nothing but a pair of light cruisers comes off against an improperly escorted battleship! This is OK as long as fleet restrictions are maintained in your registry, meaning you cannot have a battleship in your fleet list unless you already have the required number of cruisers, fleet points, etc. This ALSO means that if in the course of a battle your fleet losses reduce your number of cruisers below the minimums required for more powerful

capital ships in your fleet list, you need to earn those cruisers back before you gain any other vessels. Finally, remember that these small battles do not mean that forces will not eventually reinforce each other and converge in one or more titanic battles to take or defend vital, centrally located star systems, and it is a viable tactic to centralize a fleet and sweep out an enemy that has become too overextended trying to hold too many star systems as well.

AFTERMATH

The Spoils of War. At the end of every battle, each task group, capital ship or squadron of at least two escorts of the fleet that just won the battle can automatically move to any immediately adjoining star system before any repairs or appeals are made. The losing fleet afterward as well can elect to stay together or detach fleet elements to attack and take possession of other undefended systems, and it can immediately take possession of any system it moves into that does not have any defending fleet elements. (Planetary defences are ignored in this case for purposes of simplicity, for ships can easily avoid fixed defences, but they are still applied normally in any battles that take place.) Longer jumps are inherently more risky and are reflected as such.

To cross more than one system between battles, the ship, squadron or fleet element must first roll a D6, succeeding on a roll of 2+; on a roll of a 1 the moving fleet fails and has to exit the warp in the next star system. To cross multiple systems there is a -1 modifier to the dice roll for each intervening system. Regardless of the roll, ANY failure results in the



particular group having to exit in an immediately adjoining system to the one they are leaving from for whatever reason, regardless of whether or not it is held by the enemy. Each task group, ship or escort squadron from both sides may roll and attempt to move between systems separately, even if one or more particular groups fail. Be careful where you're ships are, for once they are sent to a system that is where they must remain until the end of the next battle. Remember that at the outset this may sound like a great idea, but you will constantly need to juggle between adequately dispersing your forces to meet the threat (and increase your available repair points), and NOT spreading yourself so thin you are defeated in detail.

ADJUSTING RENOWN, PROMOTIONS & DEMOTIONS

This all takes place normally as described on page 152-153 of the rulebook. If one or both sides have elected to pay for special characters as their fleet commanders, any earned additional re-rolls are simply added to the re-rolls already paid for. Also note that at NO time is anyone ever higher than Leadership 10, regardless of any modifiers during the course of a battle or campaign.

Ship Experience, Repairs, Withdrawals and Appeals. These remain essentially unchanged from the rules described on p.154 of the rulebook. However, both sides have available to them all the repair points provided by any star systems in their possession (including systems they have just "taken" by moving into) as described earlier, commensurate with their

renown, making those smaller battles between dispersed fleets important in their own right. Systems that become contested because both sides have moved fleet elements into them cannot be used for repair points by either side. Over time, a lot of repair points can be earned in this manner, and repair points can be used to repair damage, replace escorts or actually 'build' new escorts or capital ships if desired (this is in addition to ships earned through appeals, though in storyline terms this would constitute additional reinforcements, considering how long it takes to build capital ships in BFG). Ships or escort squadrons that are withdrawn to be repaired outside the sub-sector without expending repair points as in the normal campaign rules cannot be used in the immediately following battle, nor can they be used to take possession of an uncontested star system. However, when they do return to the fleet, they may do so fully repaired and at full strength just as described on p.154, but they have to roll dice as described beforehand if they wish to appear anywhere besides a system that connects to a route out of the sub-sector. If playing Orks or Chaos, reinforcements can include additional Warlords or Chaos lords, as long as the full price is paid for them and their total number does not exceed limits provided in the rulebook, but they must give up an appeal roll in the process to do so. Otherwise, repairs, withdrawals and appeals work exactly as described in the rulebook.

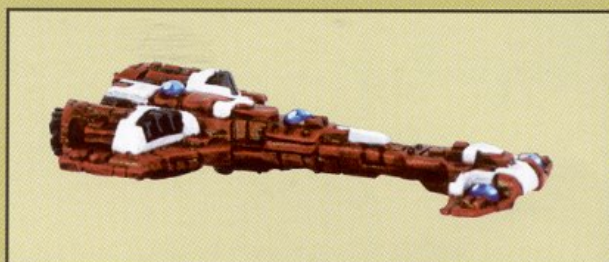
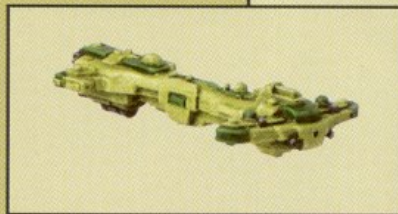
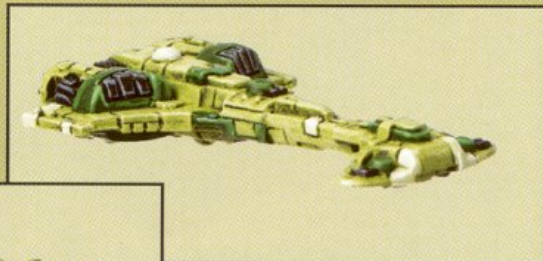
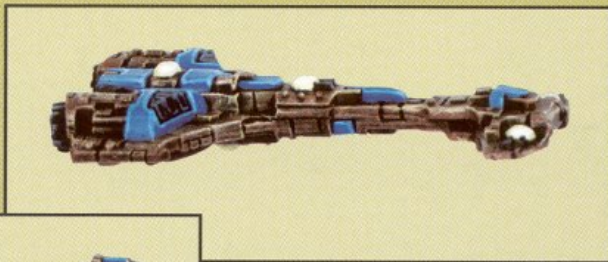
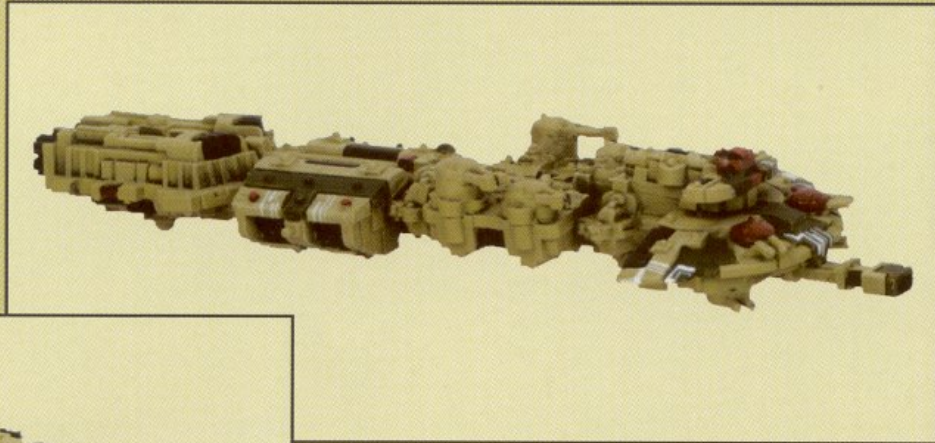
NEXT ISSUE: Nate brings us a campaign report using his new rules!.



TAU COLOUR SCHEMES

Each Tau Sept has their own distinctive colours, unique from the other septs in the Empire, so there's plenty of opportunity for painting your Tau fleet in a variety of colour schemes. Below are some examples of different sept colour schemes.

Models designed by Mark Bedford and painted by Mark Latham, Darren Bowley, Mark Bedford and Graham Bailey.



FOR THE GREATER GOOD

Tau in Battlefleet Gothic

Complete Rules & Fleet List

By Pete Haines



CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

Alternative Rules for Battlefields

By Pierre A. Dahl



THE VAGARIES OF WAR

An Alternative Campaign System

for Battlefleet Gothic

By Nate Montes



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